the HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

SPRING 1991

Featured in this issue:

Also in this issue:

J. J. Maloney • Brendan Patrick Murphy • Mona Charen
Robert C. Noble • Joan Gould • Gov. L. Douglas Wilder
plus Robert P. George & William C. Porth

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. . . FROM THE PUBLISHER

We have our usual mix of original and reprinted pieces in this issue, but it is a bit *un*usual as well. You might call it our special *Newsweek* issue: both the featured articles by Kay Ebeling and Jo McGowan stem from their respective "My Turn" columns in that newsmagazine, and you will find yet another "My Turn" reprinted as *Appendix D.* We are of course grateful to *Newsweek* for originating so much interesting stuff!

We also have two articles from "normal" (for us) sources. *Appendix G* is what we trust you will find an amusing satire that first appeared in *First Things*, the distinguished monthly edited by Richard John Neuhaus and James Nuechterlein. Unlike *Newsweek*, it takes editorial positions with which we rarely disagree. For instance, here is what Mr. Neuhaus has to say (in the March '91 issue) about the Nancy Cruzan case:

> What the Missouri court ordered and what Dr. Davis did was directly intended to terminate the life of Nancy Cruzan. There is also no blinking the fact that they intended to kill her by starvation and dehydration.
>
> We are told that death by starvation is particularly ugly. Even with heavy sedation, the body commonly goes into heavy spasms and the face becomes grotesquely disfigured. It takes a long time to starve to death. . . . Why not something quick, like a lethal injection? Once we have directly intended to terminate a life, one might argue that there would be no moral difference in doing it neatly and, presumably, painlessly. There would be this difference: we could not conceal from ourselves what we are doing. There could be no more talk about letting people die. With lethal injections, it would be obvious that we are in the business of killing people.

If you would like to get *First Things* yourself, write to The Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Avenue (Suite 400), New York, NY 10010 (the price is $24 per year).

Amanda Craig's article (which is *not* soothing) is reprinted from *The Spectator*, the well-known English weekly, which also editorially opposes abortion on demand and related horrors. We recommend it highly. It is available *via* "Airspeed" (for U.S. $99 a year) from *The Spectator*, 42 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3SL England.

We should add that it is by *no* means all grim reading; it runs many funny pieces, and consistently provides a selection of droll cartoons that keep us laughing—so much so that we have decided to share some with you in this issue. Not all of them relate directly to our regular concerns, but then "our" issues can only benefit from the addition of some good laughs? We think you will enjoy them all. (By the way, all are ©1991 *The Spectator*/NYTSS.)

As usual, you will find information about back issues, bound volumes, etc., printed on the inside back cover.

EDWARD A. CAPANO
PUBLISHER

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INTRODUCTION

THE GREAT GULF WAR was mercifully short, and cost us Americans an incredibly small number of lives (the enemy did not fare so well, nor did the hapless civilians caught in the carnage). Most of us watched the first "Total TV War" in fascination—or, as Faith Abbott puts it in our lead article, "We watched CNN with something akin to religious fervor; there seemed to be a spiritual hunger to have the war 'brought home' to us." But the long viewing hours left room for other thoughts as well: for instance, she muses, during the short six weeks of actual fighting, "another 193,200 nameless, faceless American babies were aborted." And during the six-month build-up of our forces to just over half a million, "at least that many babies died in the womb."

Those grim statistics are rarely "brought home" to Americans, and Abbott can understand why: "It is hard to visualize 1,600,000 tiny body bags" for the fatalities in just one average year of the Abortion War, precisely because they have no faces for CNN to show, no names for the roll-call of the honored dead. Yet some victims of abortion do achieve identities. In New York City, Dawn Ravenell ("She'd always been a very good girl") is well-known to tabloid readers as the 13-year old who was butchered in a legal "termination of pregnancy"—a Manhattan jury awarded her parents ("the might-have-been grandparents") well over a million dollars as compensation for their loss. In short, Abbott's point is that if CNN were famous for its "Boys in the *Aborttoir*" the Abortion War might also have turned out to be a mercifully short one.

In our second lead piece, our old friend Joe Sobran performs in like manner. Sobran too has been absorbed by the Gulf War—indeed, *obsessed* might be the better word, it explains his too-long absence from these pages—but we think you will join us in welcoming him back. True, he begins on a sour note—Joe's accustomed humor was another Gulf War casualty—but as you will see, he's ready to return to duty. He has no intention of leading the charge for the New World Order our President has substituted for his lack of "the vision thing"—to the contrary, Sobran eloquently champions the *old* order we dismiss as the Dark Ages. It's nowadays hard to imagine anyone who could do a better job of it. When Joe bristles, he's *nonpareil*, and you get a stiff dose of his peerless prose here. Along the way, you also get some powerful insights, e.g., the trouble with the Maximum State is, it forgets all about what its subjects actually *care* about (you know, like their *families*). Again, we think you'll join us in welcoming our prodigal War Correspondent home, to cover the battles

that directly threaten *our* most vital interests.

If you read *Newsweek*, you may have noticed the "My Turn" column, in which various "ordinary" people (as distinguished from the usual "experts") hold forth on some pet topic. Most of them are deadly serious, but last year Kay Ebeling sent *Newsweek* what she thought was a humorous essay; she was pleased when it appeared in "My Turn" (Nov. 19, 1990) under the headline "The Failure of Feminism"—Ebeling was described as "A single mother of a 2-year-old daughter and a freelance writer"—but not so pleased by the avalanche of mail it produced (the magazine forwarded all "replies" to her). We reprinted the column in our last (*Winter* '91) issue, after which we asked Ebeling if she would like to do a piece for us on the response it produced.

She said she sure would, and she sure *has*: her title ("Feminists Are Not Funny") nicely sums up her reaction to what she describes as "a depressing experience" which confirmed her conclusion that "women were better off before feminism"—but we're making the article sound more gloomy than it is. Ebeling is by no means "down"—her spirited commentary shows that she has enjoyed a good fight, and also "met" some impressive people who agree with her. It all makes for a good "true story" told at high velocity.

Ebeling also provides a suitable preface for our friend Jo McGowan, another veteran of the *Newsweek* wars. McGowan's "My Turn" (published in the Jan. 30, 1989 issue under the headline "In India, They Abort Females") made an obvious point: feminists had no *basis* for opposing "sex selection" abortions—they are just another "choice" any woman has the right to make. Her article also drew hundreds of letters—most of them, *a la* Ebeling, very negative. As it happens, we also reprinted McGowan's piece (*Spring* '89—count on this review to give you all the best stuff) and asked her if she would like to write more for us. As our regular readers know, she has, most memorably "Mini Moy Moy" (*Fall* '90), the story of her adoption of a "surplus" baby in India (where Jo now lives with her husband and two other children).

McGowan writes for other publications as well. One of her articles appeared in the monthly *U.S. Catholic* (April '91) as part of a debate on the question "Is there room for discussion in the abortion debate?" One Kenneth Guentert took the "Yes" side, with grating frivolity. Sample: "After the 107th 'Pope deplores abortion' headline, I vowed to never write another word about abortion." In our judgment, Mr. Guentert should have kept that vow: in any case, he obviously has little of interest to say on the subject. Whereas McGowan says plenty, with her usual verve. It makes another good story, well told. It also happens that this review figures in the plot. We reprint the whole piece here, in the expectation that you will find it as interesting as we do (of course we are also flattered by it—do forgive us that?).

Perhaps we're getting into a rut: our next article is also by a woman, also reprinted from a well-known magazine, and also includes responses from readers. Amanda Craig contributed a piece titled "Poor Woman, Poor Potential

Human" to the London *Spectator* (Jan. 5 '91); it recounts—most vividly, as you will see—her visit to the *aborttoir* at the Samaritan Hospital (it's hard to imagine a less appropriate name, given the circumstances?). Craig found the abortees, most "around 16," all had "the tired, tawdry look of poverty," yet "the surgeons are relaxed and smiling as they work"—she paints an un-pretty picture, with close attention to grotesque detail (her final sentence may haunt you).

Predictably, Craig's portrait-in-blood drew strong and emotional responses. *The Spectator* printed what we assume are the best of them in several following issues, and we appreciate the permission to add them to the article itself. Our favorite is the first, from Lord Vernon, who wastes a mere dozen words before getting full into damning "the Roman-Catholic-led anti-abortion campaign"—being RC ourselves, we're reminded of what Winston Churchill's friend Duff Cooper once said: "For the vast majority of English people [he actually meant the Upper Class of course] there are only two kinds of religion: the Roman Catholic, which is wrong, and the rest, which don't matter." Good point, that.

But abortion involves far more than strong emotions. Consider our next article, by Mr. John Payne, a tax specialist, who has painstakingly calculated the effect of 25 million abortions (the "usual" estimate—it may be *higher*) since *Roe v. Wade*. As Payne dryly notes, "whatever else abortion does, it obviously prevents potential taxpayers from being born, at a current rate of over one and a half million yearly"—that current rate would mean over *40 million* abortions by the end of this century, more than twice that by the year 2,030—that's three-and-a-half *times* Canada's current population. True, the rate may drop: there may be too few "mothers" to provide the abortion fodder; but the tax rolls will drop much faster, and sooner. We are talking, Payne says soberly, about a "projected loss of income-tax revenue of nearly $5 trillion"—a literally unimaginable sum to us, but Payne's figures add up inexorably.

At this point we traditionally attempt to provide you, dear reader, with a sharp break in the flow of hard copy. Well, our old friend Thomas Molnar certainly provides you with something quite *different*, even if we can't describe it as light reading. But we hope that you will find it, well, inspirational. Dear departed Malcolm Muggeridge was fond of saying that we learn *only* through suffering, and Molnar's author friend proves the point: Madame Chanteur would not be the formidable *persona* he describes but for afflictions none of us would willingly suffer. We often say we are concerned with *all* the "life issues"—none is more fundamental than the sanctity of *every* human life, because each one has the potential to create the modest miracles Molnar describes.

So persevere: our *grand finale* is well worth waiting for. Indeed, we've waited almost a year for it ourselves: our colleague John Wauck, basking in the praise of his "Thoroughly Modern Marriage" (*Spring*, 1990), asked casually if we would "be interested in something on Walker Percy" (who we then knew was suffering terminal cancer—he died last May). We sure would, we answered:

Percy had been a good personal friend, and a friendly critic of this journal (he did not always approve of its editor's "too conservative" views, but praised much else, e.g., Faith Abbott's eclectic enthusiasms).

So John set to work. Soon he disappeared behind his personal Mount Percy—the books and articles and commentaries cragged up on his desk—we'd be amazed if there was anything he *didn't* read, the "notes" (in *longhand*, that ancient art) challenged the other peaks, as did the "first drafts" endlessly revised—the critic's path is a steep one, etc. You now have the result, albeit scrupulously pared down to "about half" of the original (the rest remains on the cutting-room floor, for possible future viewing). In our opinion, Walker Percy would have approved—we can't venture praise higher than that. We hope that you will enjoy it too and, if perchance you have never read Percy's works, that you will discover them without delay (his first novel, *The Moviegoer*, is a good one to begin with—it's readily available—but any of them will do.)

* * * * *

Our usual appendices are, we think, unusually interesting this time. For instance, Mr. J. J. Maloney (*Appendix A*)—who says he hasn't been "inside a church in 17 years"—wonders why nobody dares to raise "the God issue" when confronting such questions as whether it was "right" for a judge to order death by "dehydration" for the now-famous Nancy Cruzan. It's a good question, and Mr. Maloney provides an eloquent answer.

Appendix B is another rare treat: Brendan Patrick Murphy, a young student at Santa Clara, violates all the fashionable "Politically Correct" rules to give the vaunted American Civil Liberties Union a verbal horse-whipping—specifically, for doing nothing about an Operation Rescue defendant's lawyer who was forbidden by a judge to utter 21 words, including "kill, killer, baby killer, fetus, murder, manslaughter, child-slaughter, holocaust, genocide, Nazi, Hitler, baby, abortion, Rescuer and all references to God or deity"! True, the arrogance of our judges is legendary, but this case beats all? We pray that Mr. Murphy's broadside will produce some kind of backlash against such outrageous behavior although, as he says, we shouldn't expect it to come from the ACLU. (We also hope to hear more from Murphy in due course.)

Of course a main reason why the self-appointed "Civil Libertarians" won't do anything whatever to protect the liberties of anti-abortionists is the ACLU's long-standing and politically-incestuous alliance with Planned Parenthood, which *vis a vis* abortion recognizes only *one* "right"—the right to kill the unborn. So we are delighted to bring you (*Appendix C*) a recent column by Mona Charen, which blisters PP's fanatic opposition to "parental consent" laws. Here, we pray that every state legislator will read this one.

Believe it or not, *Appendix D* is yet *another* "My Turn" column (*Newsweek* is becoming a prime supplier of ammunition!). Robert Noble, a professor of

medicine, takes on the fashionable "Safe Sex" nostrums and demolishes them one by one—it's a refreshing example of saying what everybody knows is true but nobody dares to say—call it a noble performance.

But perhaps the times are changing? The New York *Times* is another unlikely source of ammunition for "our side"—but it recently ran a "Hers" column (*Appendix E*) by Mrs. Joan Gould that makes another effective argument for the Old Morality. After which we serve up the *pièce de résistance*: Virginia's Gov. Douglas Wilder writes (*Appendix F*) that "it is imperative that our young—male and female alike—embrace the ultimate precaution—*abstinence*" [*our emphasis*]. And his words were reprinted in *The Wall Street Journal* too. Amazing.

And amusing as well? It's fun to find ourselves stumbling over so much common sense. And to make sure you share the jovial mood, we've provided another good laugh: in *Appendix G*, Messrs. Robert George and William Porth actually extract some satirical humor from the ghastly abortion holocaust. As we say, all this is very unusual stuff, and we hope you enjoy it.

There is a sad note: the passing of Graham Greene, in our opinion the second-greatest (after Evelyn Waugh) English novelist of the century. We never met him, but Malcolm Muggeridge often delighted us with tales of their long friendship, as for instance the one recounted in our "St. Mugg" issue (*Winter* '91); Muggeridge said "Graham Greene's great grievance" was that "he couldn't sin"—something always intervened! And, said Mr. Mugg, Greene objected to the "updating" of the Catholic Church because "there was no more pleasure in breaking the rules because there aren't any rules."

When in 1982 Muggeridge himself was about to become a Catholic, he sent us a copy of a letter he had just got from his old friend:

> *My dear Malcolm,*
>
> *I don't know whether to congratulate you or to commiserate with you on making your decision, but I can sincerely wish you good luck. I can also hope that you will make a better Catholic than I have done. Anyway you will both be in my thoughts at 12:30 (French time!) on Nov. 27.*
>
> *My love to Kitty and yourself,*
>
> *Graham*

While it is painful to lose Greene, Muggeridge and Walker Percy within a single year, it's pleasing to imagine how marvellous the conversation must be, now that they are all together?

J.P. MCFADDEN
EDITOR

The Engulfing War

Faith Abbott

FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, the Gulf War seemed personal—even if you didn't know anyone *in* it. I mean, how many wars have begun right there on your own television screen? We watched CNN with something akin to religious fervor; there seemed to be a spiritual hunger to have the war "brought home" to us. We wanted to *feel* it. We knew there would be casualties, and that the first one would be pictured on TV. *That* would bring the war home.

Even if we were not still glued to our televisions, the print media kept on bringing the war home. *Time* magazine, on its February 18th cover, had a photo of a freckle-faced, resolute, 21 year old soldier—Lance Corporal Thomas Jenkins, killed in action. Next to his photo were these words: "THE WAR COMES HOME." The story has this sentence: "Big cities may be able to absorb the death of one young man with indifference, but in places like Coulterville, California (population 115) the loss strikes home with intense personal force."

There is another war that has been going on since 1973, but it hasn't "come home" yet. The casualties are just statistics, so they don't strike us with personal force. The dead, over 26 million, don't have names. CNN has not brought this war home to us—it has no human face.

That, in fact, was the title of Anna Quindlen's column in the January 27 New York *Times*: "A Human Face." She begins: "This is the story of three kids who grew up and enlisted in the Army." They are the sons of Californian Ben Lozano who, with his wife, has been speaking out about the injustice of all the children in one family facing combat in the same area. Mr. Lozano said he was very proud of his kids for serving their country, but "I don't believe I should have to give all of them up. . . . Not all three of them."

"War has a human face," wrote Anna Quindlen, and "It is a good thing to write a story about people as well as programs and policies because it makes us understand." She recalls the end of the movie "Casablanca" when Humphrey Bogart tells Ingrid Bergman that it's easy to see why the problems of a couple of little people don't amount

Faith Abbott is a contributing editor to this review.

to a hill of beans in times of crisis, but "the fact is we'd never watch the movie if they didn't," adding "All of this war will be one little person after another." Then this: "'Are there kids in Iraq?' a kid asked me, getting to the heart of the matter." (The kid, of course, was one of hers: she has three.)

When I read that, I thought: Hold on now, Anna—you're on dangerous ground there. Anna Quindlen is a well-known advocate of a woman's "right" to have an abortion; and abortion also involves the death of "one little person after another." But that's the war *without* a human face. What would Quindlen say if asked: "Does *that* war have kids in it?" If she responded with "*What* war?" she could be reminded that the editors of *Ms.* magazine didn't think there was anything hyperbolic about calling the abortion battle a war: back in the summer of 1989 when the *Webster* case was before the Supreme Court, *Ms.* screamed—in big red letters on its cover—"IT'S WAR!" The subhead read "Gloria Steinem on the battle ahead." More recently, there was Peter Jennings on ABC-TV intoning "Abortion is this nation's new Civil War."

During one phase of the Gulf war, the word "linkage" was used a lot. It made me think of another kind of linkage we don't read about in the papers. But it was on New York Cardinal John O'Connor's mind when, in a homily at St. Patrick's Cathedral last January 20th—the first Sunday after the war started—he said that the Gulf war, euthanasia and abortion are all tragedies that reflect a growing disregard for the sanctity of human life: "Just as it would be hypocritical to speak of the lives of the unborn without speaking of our servicemen and women . . . so it would be hypocritical to speak of war without speaking of the unborn." The cardinal denounced court decisions that permit "unplugging" comatose patients like Nancy Cruzan who, you'll remember, died on the day after Christmas—twelve long days after her food and water tubes had been disconnected. "Death," said the cardinal, "comes not only through war. Death comes through what is politely called 'euthanasia,' mercy killing, even assisted suicide." He said there are people who think that the Cruzan ruling will effect only "a few" but he predicted that the day will come when millions will be put to death because of their diminished "quality of life." He noted that many consider the Catholic Church to be "alarmist" on the issue, but reminded his listeners that the Church was called "alarmist" in 1973 for opposing the *Roe v. Wade* decision: "I'm sure the Supreme Court judges in that case had no evil intention,

but more than a million and a half babies have died each year since that date."

The first baby born after the stroke of midnight gets a lot of publicity, every New Year. We see pictures of mother and child; we read their names. The first victim of legalized abortion did not have a name or a face (whoever it was, it *wasn't* "Baby Roe," who did get born and was given up for adoption.) The first U.S. soldier killed in the Gulf War had a name and a face. Nancy Cruzan may have been only the first of many more, but we will remember her name.

I couldn't help thinking about all this early in January, when I had to decide when to stop watering our Christmas tree. We live on the 13th floor of a high-ceilinged old New York apartment building, and our tree is so tall you can't just throw it outside when the season is over: somehow it has to be got into the elevator. We let our tree dry out so that it can be sawed into sizeable pieces; and every year it is up to me, as designated waterperson, to decide when to stop hydration. This has always given me a strange feeling. A tree is just a tree, but I have the power to prolong its life or hasten its death. This past Christmas, when Nancy Cruzan was being allowed to die (with *dignity*?) our Christmas tree became acutely symbolic. When on January third I approached, with pitcher in hand, our slightly drooping but still lovely balsam, I thought: "*No*, don't pour water into the stand: this has to be the cut-off time." And I thought of Nancy Cruzan's parents, and wondered if they had a Christmas tree they let dry out. For them, of course, Nancy was no longer alive—it was just a matter of making death official.

In his homily that Sunday, the cardinal said that he was not making any judgments about the Cruzans, but he *was* cautioning against relying too heavily on "technological tests" to determine death. But in some cases, modern technology *can* be relied on: Congressman Henry Hyde, comparing the abortion battle to the Gulf War, said: "You can see [on TV] the bombs being shot through buildings with the incredible technology of today. They can see a pre-born child the same way. We see that it is a baby, while others see a clump of cells . . . "

Apparently there's an ad agency that sees a baby rather than a clump of cells: Have you seen the new Volvo ad in one of your magazines? It features a sonogram photo in which the "fetus" appears to be kicking with both legs and waving its right hand; its head,

in profile, looks very human. You see the left ear clearly. The caption reads: "IS SOMETHING INSIDE TELLING YOU TO BUY A VOLVO?" And, in small print, "Volvo—a car you believe in." Now I don't know *what* message (perhaps subliminal?) this ad is trying to send: that every pregnant woman should rush out to buy a Volvo? That there *is* "something inside"? That a *sonogram* is "something you can believe in"?

But modern technology can't put a name and a real face on the victims of the War in the Womb, and if you don't have a name or a face, you're just a statistic. Statistics mount, but the victims don't count—except *up*, as numbers.

"War has a human face," Anna Quindlen repeated several times in that column. War also has statistics, but what brings *faceless* statistics home? The eyes tend to glaze over when confronted by statistics; the mind does not take them in. Or anyway *mine* doesn't: it gets bewildered by numbers with a lot of zeroes at the end. I have to find ways to make them *stick*; one way is to translate them into time. *Personal* time. For example, it is a fact that—however incredible it sounds—in the United States an unborn baby is killed by abortion every twenty seconds. I may not remember that four thousand six hundred babies are aborted every day, but I can remember that for every twenty seconds I spend at this typewriter, there's another baby gone. Of course I do not watch the second-hand while I type, but I do watch the three-minute timer when I put an egg on to boil. As I watch the sand funnelling from top to bottom of the mini hour-glass, I can realize (though I'd rather not) that there are nine twenty-second segments in those three minutes (or do you prefer a twelve-baby egg?).

As a standard of measurement, a minute seems more important than a mere second, but seconds can make the difference between life and death: there was a piece in the New York *Times* ("Surviving a Plane Crash: How to Increase the Odds") in which I read: "In a survivable crash on take off or landing, when most plane crashes occur, survival time is measured in seconds." The second is supremely important in sports: I see on TV every year those New York Marathon runners gasping into Central Park: in the final stretch, seconds make all the difference.

And, speaking of the TV screen, there are all those 30-second commercials. Such as the one with the Swiss Alpine Horn player with a bad cough. By the umpteenth time I've heard about Ricola

cough drops (which had apparently not done the horn-blower any good: I wish they'd kill the commercial or *cure* him) there's another baby gone and the next one is on the assembly line.

Another way to make statistics real is by way of *comparison.* Last winter I read an article about auto theft here in New York, where cars are disappearing at a rate of one every four minutes. Since at the time I was thinking about babies disappearing at the rate on one every twenty *seconds*, I tried the calculations: how many New York cars for how many U.S. babies, etc. This calculating was made much simpler later when I read about *nationwide* car stealing: "With an auto theft occurring every 20 seconds . . . it's time for a national initiative to put an end to this crime epidemic." Well, there you have it: one baby *and* one car disappear every twenty seconds in the United States.

The article noted that "auto theft carries virtually no chance of anyone landing in jail."

According to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, Planned Parenthood of New York *alone* performs 10,000 abortions annually. And the doctors don't land in jail. Auto theft and abortion both are Big Business.

The article about nationwide car stealing was mainly about a new anti-theft device endorsed by the national Fraternal Order of Police, which has unveiled a program called "Operation Lock-up." The national president of the FOP's "Operation Lock-up" says that most auto thefts can be prevented, but police can't do it all: "The public can take positive steps to protect their vehicles."

But when some members of the public take positive steps to protect babies, *they* become victims of another kind of Operation Lock-up.

Another way I've found to make statistics "real" has to do with a visual perception of *proportion.* Professionals in the statistics business are often very helpful in this regard: for example, in a June, 1990 summary from the Centers for Disease Control Abortion Surveillance, I read that the abortion ratio is 356 abortions per 1,000 live births. I won't remember those numbers but I *will* remember what I read next—that one baby in every three gets aborted. I will remember this because it will soon become a visual image. On warm spring days when winter coats have been shed and pregnancies show, when I see a woman large-with-child I will think, about the baby, "Hey, kid, you're one of the lucky ones."

And the lucky ones, those two out of every three, will be given those very first gifts *we* all got, long before we could write thank-you notes: names and birthdates, our totally unsolicited presents which go with us throughout life and without which we'd never even make it to kindergarten.

So "one out of every three babies" is easy to remember. Here's an interesting comparison: during the Vietnam years, we lost one soldier for every 3,000 male citizens. (And, at a minimum, thirteen *times* as many babies have died at the hands of abortionists than soldiers we've lost in *all* the wars in which the U.S. has ever been involved.)

"HOW MANY HAVE TO DIE?" asked the New York *Daily News* in big black type last October 16th. Obviously this did not refer to the Gulf war, nor to abortion: it was about murders in New York City. Under the headline was a picture of an eight-year-old boy, the eighth child slain within three months. By New Year's Day there would be more child-victims of stray bullets, and in fact the city homicide rate—as predicted—set a new record for the third year in a row. On January 6 the *News* blared this headline: "MURDER: 2,200 plus dead." If that statistic didn't sound impressive (after all, New York is a big place) the story told us that 2,200-plus dead would put *a body on every city block*, and that "By comparison, 1,432 died in Vietnam in 1965. Or to put it another way: the 1990 homicide toll was the equivalent of wiping out a town the size of Piermont in Rockland County in 1980." I don't know Piermont, but I do know that the number of babies aborted yearly in the U.S. is roughly equal to the populations of Atlanta, Denver and St. Louis combined.

When born children die by violence, or fires, the stories are in the papers. Last February there was a fire in Newark, New Jersey: five people died, three of them were children. The mayor said: "It's always a horrible tragedy when we lose lives, but it's all that more poignant when you see children who really didn't have a chance to live *have their lives taken from them.*" (Italics mine.)

"War has a human face." There *is* one sort-of "face" (besides the sonogram in the Volvo ad) often shown in the abortion war, but it hardly looks "human"; what it looks like is exactly what it is: the ghastly visage of a baby killed by chemical warfare in the womb. It is such a horror that many of us—on *both* sides—

tend to block it out and don't want our *own* young kids to see it. But late last year there surfaced a very real and a very human face of an abortion victim. It was on the front page of the New York *Daily News* on December 11. The face was not that of the *intended* victim, but of its mother; this time there were *two* victims. But it was the one with a name and a face and an age who made headlines. The story *actually* began five whole years ago. Dawn Ravenell was then thirteen years old; her parents didn't know she was pregnant, and she didn't want them to know. She'd always been a very good girl. She found out (perhaps through the yellow pages) about Eastern Women's Center in Manhattan and checked in for an abortion on January 24, 1985. Her fifteen-year-old boyfriend (presumably the father) accompanied her. Eastern does not require parental notification: all it required, in this case, was a $450 fee, which the boyfriend charged on a family member's credit card. (Did *his* family know, I wonder?) Now this was a perfectly "legal" abortion; but things went dreadfully wrong.

A nurse gave Dawn enough anesthesia for only *half* the operation: the pregnancy was further advanced than had been realized. According to clinical records, Dawn awoke in mid-operation and began gagging and choking and then went into cardiac arrest; she was again sedated, and the abortion was completed. She was then left unattended in the recovery room, where she woke up and began gagging again and this time went into complete cardiac arrest. A passing attendant just happened to notice her condition, and had her rushed up to St. Luke's hospital (from 32nd Street to *114*th Street). Dawn never saw a new day; she never came out of her coma, dying a few days later, with her boyfriend and distraught parents at her side.

Had Dawn lived, she would now be eighteen. Had her baby lived, he or she would be starting school, and would have grandparents. What the might-have-been grandparents have now is one million, two hundred twenty-five thousand dollars, thanks to a Manhattan Supreme Court jury.

The family's lawyer said that Dawn had been treated "like a piece on the assembly line."

If it was a typical day at the Eastern Women's Center, the day Dawn went there for her abortion, she would have been just one of 150 *other* pieces on the assembly line, and her baby would have been one of the 150 on the dis-assembly line. I knew about the 150 number, because it was mentioned in *New York Woman* magazine

(June/July 1988), in an article about Eastern. I remember having read it, and dug it out of the file. This magazine is, of course, for and about New York women—their life-styles, conflicts, and so on; and the story in this issue featured two "nurse-practitioners" at Eastern. Under the title "The Clinic" there is this in italics: "*The Eastern Women's Center performs up to 150 abortions a day—and the women who work there have learned to live with it.*" The author, then an editor of the now-defunct *7 Days*, had not intended to address the abortion issue, merely to write an unbiased profile of two New York women who work at an abortion clinic. But of course there had to be background information *about* the clinic, and what goes on there, so the reader could better appreciate how these hard-working, dedicated nurse-practitioners managed to separate their jobs from their personal lives.

Some readers later objected to sentences such as: "Nothing brings into focus the issues surrounding fetus viability better than a visit to the sonogram room." There the doctor "points out vital organs and body parts, speaking with the detachment of an anatomy teacher; 'there's the spine, the cardiac function,' he says softly, so the patient won't hear. At fourteen weeks, arms, legs, and some organs are identifiable. . . . A woman who is twenty weeks pregnant lies down on the table and [the doctor] flips on the machine." The editors at *New York Woman* even emphasized the next sentences by blowing them up in big italics:

> *As the sonographer tries to pinpoint the fetus' head measurement, the fetus shifts and kicks out hard. It could make even the strongest pro-choice advocate queasy.*

So it is not hard to understand why *New York Woman* got a lot of *negative* mail, from *both* sides.

Along with the graphic descriptions and clinical details, there were statistics—with a price tag. The rate for abortions at Eastern (which does mostly late-term ones) in 1988 was $740 for one type of "procedure" (a D&E) and a *minimum* of $965 for the other, a saline injection—both at the same stage of gestation, twenty-four weeks. (Either Dawn got a cut rate—"All the traffic would bear"?—or they thought she was just a *little bit* pregnant.) So Eastern's *daily* intake was then, three years ago, roughly $110,000.00, which translates into something like a $40 million-dollar-a-year business. (More lucrative than auto-theft?)

The two women featured in the article each helped to perform an *average* of twenty-five abortions a day: one said her best "personal" record was eighty-five. It's a tough job physically—they run up and down the clinic's stairs a lot—and it can be very *annoying*: it's frustrating to deal with these kids who waited so long. Why didn't they come in sooner? Why weren't they using birth control? What do you mean, you didn't know you were pregnant? And so on. And many of the kids are "repeaters." Never mind, these nurse-practioners are wholeheartedly dedicated to their job while at the clinic, but they go home each evening, one to her husband (where they would plan together for the birth of their baby: after trying for two years, they finally managed to conceive a child) and the other perhaps to go out later with friends "who are not involved in the 'pro-choice' movement. And tomorrow she'll go back to the clinic, committed to helping another twenty-five patients: but as firmly as she believes in her work, she believes that her evenings are completely her own."

When I read about Dawn Ravenell's botched 1985 abortion and then re-read the 1988 *New York Woman* article, I wondered why it had run "The Clinic" while litigation was going on. Didn't the editors know, didn't *Eastern* know? Or did "The Clinic" simply not care, because it could easily afford a lawsuit? And where were the two nurse-practitioners that day?

Eastern is still going strong. It has a large ad in the yellow pages, so apparently its reputation was not diminished by the death of one patient. The "clinics" section of the yellow pages is, in fact, very helpful for the statistically-disabled who find it hard to *believe* that so many abortions go on. There are many listings and many large ads, and most all of them say "No Age Requirement" or "No Parental Consent Required" and "Strictly Confidential." Some ads say "up to" and some say "through" 24 weeks. Oh, and some ads say "Awake or Asleep Same Cost." I have read that abortion is the only medical procedure that can be advertised.

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I wonder if Dawn Ravenell had any "counseling" before her abortion. I have read that most young women just want it over and done with. There's a lot about counseling in Linda Bird Franke's book *The Ambivalence of Abortion,* published in 1978. Counselors, she says, never refer to "the fetus" as a "baby." (Well, of *course* not.) But *after* an abortion, she says, many of the women—and often

the men who have gone with them to the clinic—ask the clinic personnel what they've done with "the baby" and they ask what sex the "child" *was*. Franke quotes a woman who was then director of nursing at the Atlanta Center for Reproductive Health: "If they want to know what sex it was and still think it's a baby, then they should have had more counseling." A nurse who worked for a short time with second-trimester patients said that when asked about the sex of the abortee, "we lied and said it was too early to tell. It was better for the women to think of the fetus as an 'it.' Then we'd scoop up the fetuses and put them in a bucket of formaldehyde, just like Kentucky Fried Chicken. I couldn't take it any longer, and I quit."

Another person who quit had been director of a Planned Parenthood clinic in Brooklyn; she worked in surgery assisting in late abortions, and said that "The doctors would remove the fetus while performing hysterotomies and lay it on the table, where it would squirm until it died. One Catholic doctor would call for sterile water every time he performed a hysterotomy and baptize them then and there. They all had perfect forms and shapes. I couldn't take it. No nurse could."

Yet another nurse said: "We had one saline born alive. I raced to the nursery with it and put it in the incubator. I called the pediatrician to come right down, and he refused. He said, 'That's not a baby. That's an abortion.'"

(This reminds me of something I heard last year on a CBS program about miscarriage: one grieving woman said "It didn't have a name, but it was my baby.")

But about counseling: what if Dawn, and all the others, were asked by the clinics to sign a consent form about the remains? Suppose they had a *choice*, and were asked "Do you want your fetus used in research, or would you prefer it used for cosmetic purposes?" Would they have second thoughts about the abortion if they knew that what they "expelled" had commercial value? And would they change their minds if they knew that "the product of conception" was human enough to be baptized (even by *one* "Catholic doctor") and human enough to be "annoying" to another doctor for whom "fetuses" became "babies" when they made a lot of noise? Here is what one (very busy) English obstetrician said:

> We do a lot of late terminations . . . I do them at seven months without hesitation . . . many of the babies I get are fully formed and are living for quite a time before they are disposed of. One morning I had four of them lined up crying their heads off. I hadn't time to kill them because

we were so busy. I was loath to drop them in the incinerator because there was so much animal fat that could have been used commercially.

I found that in the book *A Time to Choose Life*, edited by Ian Gentles: the primary source was the London *Times*, January 23, 1975. Gentles explains that "fetal fat is much in demand by the cosmetic industry."

Of course technology has improved since 1975: few babies now survive their abortions. But has the mentality of the *doctors* changed?

"Sometimes," Gentles writes, "the child on whom a surgical abortion has been performed is manifestly alive and cries and wriggles like a full-term baby." Commented one English obstetrician to a researcher after such an incident: "I don't think anyone made a fuss about it when it happened. It was a fetus which made a bit of noise, that was all." (This from an article in the London *Guardian*, March 26, 1979: "Hospital Denies 'Live Baby' Abortion.")

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And we talked about Saddam Hussein's disregard for human life.

There was no way *not* to know about the Gulf War. You could pull the plug on your TV and keep your radio off but then you'd go outside and everywhere you looked you'd see those yellow ribbons, tied on everything from trees (if you're near any) to the shiny brass poles that hold up the entrance awnings on Park Avenue. And you would see people wearing small yellow ribbons on their lapels (and you wondered if they'd be exchanged for black).

In the other war, the one that goes so impressively *un*reported, and which it seemed irrelevant or unpatriotic to think about during Desert Storm, there are no names, but the casualties mount, and there is no talk of a cease-fire.

In the one war, when a Scud hit, the casualties were rushed to the nearest military hospitals where everything possible was done to save their lives; in the other war—the invisible, silent one—the casualties are *intended*, and if they manage to survive they are killed off as quickly as possible.

Anna Quindlen, who expected the Gulf War to be lengthy and to cost many more human lives, was surprised—who wasn't?—when the cease-fire was announced and our casualties had amounted to so few. She is good at bringing statistics home: "The ground war," she wrote in her *Times* column on March 3, "took less time than

it takes to get over the flu. And fewer Americans died in combat over the six weeks of the Gulf War than are habitually murdered in New York City during a comparable period of time." (Never mind her context, which had to do with how we should guard against euphoria lest we become a cocky, trigger-happy nation, etc.) What she *doesn't* mention is that many more Americans died in that *other* war, the one without faces, than are *reported* murdered in New York City during a comparable period of time. During the six weeks of the war, another 193,200 nameless, faceless American babies were aborted. Compare that with less than a hundred dead in the Gulf War. And here's another comparison that's easy to remember: our troops in the Gulf War numbered just over one-half million; in that same six months, at least that many babies died in the womb.

The Gulf War had "a human face"—and now we are seeing the faces of those who are coming home, and we honor the unfortunate few who came home in those dreaded body bags. Some of them were only 18 years old. The first casualties of legalized abortion would be 18 this year. It is hard to visualize 1,600,000 tiny body bags. If we could, maybe this other war that engulfs us would soon be over too.

Into the Dark Age

Joseph Sobran

PRESIDENT BUSH'S HOPE that the Gulf War will usher in a "New World Order" has excited a good deal of skepticism and even ridicule. I count myself firmly among the skeptics. War, as Pope John Paul II observes, is "an adventure from which there is no return." The aftermath of war is usually impossible to predict, let alone control. History is too full of obvious ironies to require much comment on this.

But I am skeptical for another reason too. The question isn't really whether a New World Order (however you define it) will "work." It's whether a New World Order would even be new.

Sometimes the greatest changes arrive imperceptibly. They may set in long before people are even aware of them. "The style of your own time is always invisible," says the great critic Hugh Kenner. By way of illustration, he tells the story of a supposed Etruscan horse at the Metropolitan Museum of Art that turned out to be a nineteenth-century forgery. It was detected only when the nineteenth century had passed, and the features that had appeared normal or neutral to the forger (whoever he was) and his contemporaries began to look dated, so that the horse struck a keen twentieth-century eye as a strange hybrid of obviously Etruscan, and subtly Victorian, mannerisms. Scientific testing easily proved that the statue was recent, hence fake.

Alfred North Whitehead says somewhere that an age is almost defined by the things it fails to notice about itself, just as individuals reveal their eccentricities unconsciously. The same thought has occurred to many penetrating minds. C.S. Lewis notes that every age is usually on guard against the very opposites of its besetting sins; a lecherous age, for example, is full of needless warnings against prudery and puritanism. He constantly urged his students to read as many old books as possible, as a way of getting outside the limitations of the modern mindset. Even during World War II he ventured to suggest that Franklin Roosevelt and Adolf Hitler would eventually appear more alike than opposed in their fundamental assumptions.

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Whatever President Bush may envision, it's possible that we are already far into a New World Order without realizing it. This order may be far deeper and broader than any arrangements statesmen can fashion by an act of will, by passing laws or signing treaties or allocating public funds. It may also be considerably less benign than anything we intend.

"I have often thought," Albert Jay Nock wrote in 1943, "it might be amusing to write a humorous essay on how to recognize the Dark Ages when you are in them. Did the average European in the last half of the fourth century know that the Dark Ages were closing in on him? I rather doubt it. Probably he took the overspreading of ignorance, corruption, violence, and bestiality as being pretty much the regular thing, and evading or warding off their impact was merely so much in the day's work."

In a way, this is a perceptive and arresting reflection. But in another way, it shows Nock's own unconscious limitations—though they are shared by most modern people.

The very phrase "Dark Ages" expresses the modern world's reflexive repudiation of Christendom. It assumes the false idealization of the Classical world, or what used to be called "Greco-Roman civilization," that began in what we have learned to call "the Renaissance," the period of supposed rebirth.

The pretty picture in the minds of most educated modern people imagines the Classical world as a splendid sunlit era when men peacefully strolled the streets of Athens and Rome in their togas, discussing philosophy and posing for dignified statues. This picture is succeeded by a dark one, as in the film version of *The Name of the Rose*, in which the sun is literally dimmed, civilization dissolves, and superstitious monks spend their time burning heretics and manuscripts. But at last the sun returns to beam down on the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and, best of all, the twentieth century.

It should take even the educated only a moment's thought to realize how false this capsule history is. In the Classical world, as every feminist must know by now, patriarchy was taken to extremes we can hardly believe. The paterfamilias had actual life-and-death power over his entire extended family: he could, at his whim, put to death his sons, his unmarried daughters, his daughters-in-law, his grandchildren, his slaves, and even his own wife. Unwanted infants, usually girls, could be left in fields to die—a common practice. Divorce was another easy masculine prerogative; women were not much better than property.

No wrong was seen in two other common practices, abortion and the sodomizing of boys. Slavery was of course taken for granted. Freedom was a privilege of birth; hardly anyone thought of it as a human right, except for a few radical-minded philosophers whose influence was nil. The greatest of philosophers, Aristotle, vigorously defended slavery as a natural institution, and recommended abortion and infanticide for the good of the polis. Sexual license and obscenity were rife. (Much of the surviving statuary of the age has been tactfully kept out of our sight, giving a false impression of an austere prevailing chastity.)

Unbridled lust was accompanied by unbridled brutality. Petty thieves were nailed to crosses to die. The familiar Gospel accounts make this clear enough, and yet we forget: our attention is so focused on Jesus alone that crucifixion has in our minds acquired a sublime association that is the very opposite of the horror, shame, and utter degradation it assuredly had for people for whom it was an everyday spectacle. In fact we have nearly lost the sense of shock the Crucifixion must have given the Apostles, whom we are tempted to despise as mere cowards for fleeing. But they naturally thought that all was lost, when their adored Leader was unexpectedly seized and given over to the humiliating death by torture usually reserved for the most contemptible criminals. Socrates' execution was by comparison positively genteel (though it should qualify any notion that the Classical world was amiably tolerant of dissent). The Christians' adoption of the Cross as the symbol of *triumph* must have seemed to everyone an absolutely stunning paradox.

Routine brutality made the Classical world unbelievably callous. Ordinary people took their fun in going to the Colosseum to watch famished lions tear screaming men (and women) to pieces, or to watch gladiators literally bash each other's brains out. And the most damning fact is not that these things occurred, but that nobody minded them. If you read the Classical philosophers you'll hardly find a word about them, because most of the philosophers accepted them as normal, not worth protesting or even noticing. The squeamish might shrink from the popular entertainments, but the Classical world simply had no firm moral standard by which to condemn them. The same is true of all the other barbarous practices and customs I mention—and this is the short list.

Such was the daily life in the Classical world until the onset of the "Dark Ages." When the lights come back on several centuries

later, we find that nearly all the old cruel and licentious habits have quietly disappeared. No more slavery, gladiators, infanticide, crucifixion, abortion, or divorce. True, a great political order is gone, replaced by a decentralized one in which banditry thrives. Slavery has been replaced by serfdom, not by perfect liberty. Some grossly cruel punishments survive. Patriarchy survives too, but greatly modified to accommodate at least the basic human dignity of women, who are also the main beneficiaries (feminists, take note) of the stricter sexual morality that has replaced the old (essentially masculine) license.

But the point about these survivals is that they *are* survivals, not novelties. The inescapable inference is that the so-called Dark Ages were a period when Europe was becoming gradually and profoundly civilized. The process wasn't recorded in detail and there were few milestones; no holidays marked the successive abolitions of the old evils. But it's probably fair to say that the "Dark Ages" were a period of moral progress with no parallel in all of human history.

By a coincidence that can only astound the educated modern, the dominant institution and actual agent of this tremendous transformation was the Church. But of course it was no coincidence at all. The obvious truth that the monks were constantly preserving culture, not erasing it, is the least of the matter. They were also *developing* it. This in fact was the enterprise of the entire Church: the creation of a genuinely "new morality" whose ultimate secular result was a civilization inconceivably different from, and better than, the Classical. And yet that civilization was never the goal. It was only the by-product of an attempt to redeem ordinary human life from innate human brutality; or, as it was called, Original Sin.

Nobody but the depraved who remembered the Classical world could idealize it. That became possible only when Christian civilization was taken for granted, with restless discontent, and the actual daily character of Classical life was completely forgotten—long after the long deliverance of what we now call "the Dark Ages."

All this is obvious. It takes no special learning to know it. But, as G.K. Chesterton put it, "Men can always be blind to a thing, so long as it is big enough." We have long since stopped being grateful for our Christian legacy; and in the twentieth century the Christian civilization has finally dissolved like the Classical before it. It's probably safe to say that the product of a modern education feels that more gratitude is due to the Classical than to the Christian.

A basically new civilization has taken shape, based on the stupendous scientific and technical advances of modern times. Its chief institution is the territorial nation-state, which ultimately controls all wealth and makes its laws with increasing disregard for such older institutions as the Church and the family. Its legislation isn't even inhabited much by its own written constitutions, which can be interpreted according to present need, the American as well as the Soviet. Law has ceased to mean a body of accumulated rules and restraints, shaped by tradition and respect for the higher authority of God and natural law. In other words, law no longer includes firm *controls* on the state; it has come to mean little more than the *will* of the state, which is to say, the will of those presently in power.

To be sure, those in power are not totally free to do as they please. But they are limited mostly by external pressures of other powerful forces, not by any great weight of tradition, let alone reverence. All three branches of the U.S. government exercise power vastly in excess of the powers formally granted to them in the Constitution; far from checking each other, they mutually support their self-aggrandizements at the expense of the "several states" and the people at large.

The modern nation-state is so huge as to defy comprehension. Those who do try to comprehend its total operation sometimes get distracted by conspiracy theories. Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is full of profound insights, but it makes the quaint error of supposing a controlling intelligence behind the whole system, all-knowing and diabolical.

In a sense, Orwell's vision is too optimistic. It assumes that central planning can work in principle, even if the central planners are evil men. The disturbing truth is that the rulers are both uncontrolled and finally uncontrolling. They have the power to release forces they can't manage.

The historian John Lukacs has written that the difficulty of writing modern history is not the old one of a scarcity of documents, but an immense superabundance of documents; the historian hardly knows where to start. A similar difficulty faces anyone who aspires to understand a government that, for example, spends nearly $1.5 trillion per year, or roughly $6,000 per citizen. The difficulty is only increased if you take literally certain formalities, such as the Constitution or the idea of "democracy." Political scientists spend an inordinate

amount of time studying such phenomena as opinion polls, which can only be of marginal importance when 98 percent of all incumbents are regularly re-elected to the House of Representatives. Election campaigns are themselves exercises of power rather than tests of popular will. The personnel of the un-elected Supreme Court change nearly as fast as the nominally elected membership of Congress.

But the notoriously "permanent" government resides in the bureaucracies, where all the money goes. The ratio of unelected "public servants," whom the average citizen actually encounters, to elected "representatives" is so disproportionate as to make meaningless the consent of the governed. Faced with a tax agent, a federal inspector, or any other government official, you are unlikely to know just where he gets his authority, or how it's related to the electoral process, or even what your rights are. All you can be reasonably sure of is that your most prudent course is to obey.

But such encounters, unpleasant as they may be, are only a minor part of the total experience of being governed by the modern state. They merely illustrate how eerily capricious the modern state is; how anfractuously its power is delegated through the labyrinth of bureaucracy; how tenuously the state's ordinary agents are related to the elected officials they are theoretically answerable to; and how easily petty tyranny can arise from sheer complication.

As we all know too well, bureaucracy takes on a life of its own. Its character is impersonal, arbitrarily technical, and amoral. Submission to its dictates has little to do with the predictable nature of a genuine rule of law. Ideally, you should be able to be law-abiding by acting morally and reasonably. But the modern state multiplies our obligations without reference to any reasonable or easily intelligible standard. It has no real center; no rationale; no meaningful hierarchy. It is itself a form of anarchy, and in extreme cases the experience of being ruled by it achieves a nightmarish quality, sometimes captured dramatically in a *60 Minutes* segment, with Morley Safer or Mike Wallace citing Kafka. And there seems no way to change it; the system has been made election-proof. It can be controlled from neither the top nor the bottom, except in a few extraordinary cases.

And this is only one side of the modern nation-state's operation. Most of the time we have no idea what is done with the money so constantly extracted from us. We speak of "the" economy, but there are really two economies: the free economy (approximately "the private sector") and the tax economy, which is unproductive

and parasitic on the free economy. The federal government alone is said to consume 25 per cent of the gross national product, though the real figure is surely much higher. Tens of millions of Americans live off the state—and therefore, indirectly, off their fellow citizens—either through the welfare programs, subsidies, or government contracts.

One way or another, the state always acts by coercion, even in taking the taxes it uses to bribe voting blocs. We live now under the "mild despotism" foreseen by Tocqueville, without overt terror or torture, but with perpetual control exercised by hard-to-specify authorities. It involves plenty of scheming, but no grand conspiracy, precisely because the politicians in charge don't fully know what they are in charge of. They feel it necessary to keep busy with "policies" and "programs," which only increase the chaos. There is no overall purpose. The state's control over the whole society keeps growing, but without reference to the society's character and moral fabric. In a strange way, the spread of violence and other social pathologies—including downright immorality—is felt to be none of the state's business, though everything else is. It seems to be uninterested in the things that matter to us most.

There is a simple reason for this. The modern state's chief concern is the distribution of wealth. Violent crime has little effect on this; it even indirectly helps increase the number of clients for the state's welfare services, since violence causes poverty (contrary to the official assumption that poverty causes crime). The killer or rapist doesn't threaten the state; the tax evader does. And the state is far more worried about defending itself, which is to say its sources of revenue, than in protecting its citizens.

The preservation of morality is likewise no concern of the state. It is indifferent to the impact of its activity on the family. If anything, it gains more clients when the family dissolves. It has no real motive to object to abortion; if each abortion costs it a potential client, it can recover its losses by funding abortion. Even making abortion a virtual constitutional right, usually interpreted as a libertarian act and a relinquishment of government power, can be understood as an assertion of federal and judicial power against the state legislatures.

Some people within the nation-state apparatus do oppose abortion on purely moral grounds, but in feeling and acting this way they are expressing merely personal attitudes, out of sync with the state as a power-seeking dynamism. For the only consistent thing about

the state *is* its appetite for power of a certain kind. The state is a sort of economy unto itself, even if a morbid and parasitic one that will finally collapse if it depletes its host. It prospers as long as it can make ever-larger numbers of citizens its own parasites.

Ideally, from the standpoint of traditional Christian society, the state should be economically modest and marginal, taxing us only to the extent it must do so in order to support its limited functions and its few officials. Paying taxes should be like paying dues in a club. Traditionally, state relief payments were an emergency measure, and didn't create a whole class of dependents in such a way as to change the essential character of the state. Foreseeing the dangers of the welfare state, John Stuart Mill argued that those who receive welfare should be deprived of the vote; otherwise, since a voter should be regarded as having a share in the responsibilities of ruling, a conflict of interest would be created. This kind of conflict of interest is not only widespread now, it has become a major prop of state power.

Because the state's only real purpose is its own aggrandizement, with mindless disregard for adverse consequences on society, it always has to keep *inventing* purposes ad hoc. It defines conditions as "problems," and offers itself as the solution. Poverty, illiteracy, discrimination, and so forth must be "eliminated." And the state recognizes no principled or constitutional reason why it should be inhibited from undertaking such grandiose enterprises. Nor is there any point at which it recognizes its own efforts as having failed. Its persistence in apparently futile crusades recalls Santayana's definition of the fanatic: one who redoubles his efforts when he has forgotten his reasons. Private enterprises often fail; I have seen one estimate that one of every two businesses fails within five years. But state agencies rarely go out of business; as long as they are subsidized by taxes, they are under no compulsion to do so, since they have no need to turn a profit and there is no acknowledged criterion of success or failure. Bureaucracy means effective irresponsibility.

One thing is easy to overlook: that social "problems" never seem to require that the state *refrain* from interfering, or renounce any of the powers it has already assumed. The real goal is not the ostensible one of curing a given evil, but the acquisition of power itself.

Money has been nicely described as "the concretization of freedom." And so it is—in the private economy. But state-controlled money is the concretization of state power, with a corresponding lessening

of private freedom. "Greed" is now understood to be exclusively a private vice; the state's abuse of the taxing power is never called "greedy." This is only one sign of the unlimited legitimacy conceded to the state's claims. Taxpayers may complain, but they rarely deny the state's right in principle to take as much as it can get. Another telling sign of the times is the phrase "tax revolt." How can it be an uprising for the supposedly sovereign people to reclaim what they have (theoretically) delegated? Is it a "revolt" to discipline your own employee? Such phrases hint at the realities of power, in contrast to the ideology of self-government. According to our official ideology, "we the people" are sovereign. But real sovereignty is distributed through the state, even though the state is far from being a unified or well-organized entity. Most opinion polls show that strong majorities of the American people oppose abortion on demand and race-preference ("civil rights") policies; but these strongly-held convictions have no purchase on the state, which hardly responds to them at all. Some politicians profess to oppose these policies too, but for the most part they seem to have an exquisite sense of how to raise the hopes of voters without ever quite fulfilling them.

The modern nation-state is unlimited, but not necessarily "totalitarian" as the term is generally used. Even the biggest and most oppressive states (which sometimes exist in very small countries) have no interest in extinguishing *all* freedoms, so long as it's clear who's boss. Every regime allows those freedoms which are beneath its notice or don't conflict with its agenda. Even under Stalin, Russians enjoyed sexual freedom, even license, including (intermittently) free abortion. The American state (the 50 "states" are now really subdivisions, not separate sovereignties) would never dream of crushing freedom of speech; in any case, the political system has pretty effective ways of neutralizing it. The more power is centralized, the less need there is to censor; dissent can be ignored and marginalized. When the state defines the "issues" on a national scale, it's very hard to organize a counterforce of comparable audibility. This is especially true when the mass media essentially support the state in its present character.

The official ideology has virtually canonized the two-party system, as if Democrats and Republicans, like yin and yang, exhausted the relevant possibilities by their perfect complementarity. But neither party really opposes the limitless state in principle; they merely favor different rates and directions of its immediate growth. When it comes

state." The state justifies its existence to a great extent by discerning enemies abroad. And this too becomes an important economic reality, enlarging the state system, as the overused phrase "military-industrial complex" acknowledges. Large-scale partnership with industry is a good way for the state to continue its growth while maintaining the appearance of a free market system.

Conservatives, in my opinion, have been insufficiently suspicious lately of this dimension of the state. Since the Cold War, they have tended to approve anything done in the name of "defense." Even conceding the necessity of the Cold War, and the Panama invasion and the Gulf War as well, we ought to be aware of the hazards for freedom inherent in *any* war, however just. Every American war has left the federal government more powerful at home than it was before. War is "activist government" par excellence. Paul Fussell's study of World War II, *Wartime*, shows, without intending to, the close parallels between warfare and socialism: the centralizing of power, the commandeering of resources, the curtailment of freedoms, the waste and bungling, the often false optimism about intended results, the blindness to secondary effects, the corruption of language, and so forth.

At a deeper level, war presents the temptations of the *idée fausse et claire*. A supposed "enemy" may be abruptly descried and isolated with unwarranted clarity from the multifarious ills of the world, just as a domestic program may misleadingly isolate a supposed "problem." A partial interest may be misrepresented as a national one. Moral disapproval may be illicitly used to whip up a false sense of danger: "If we don't stop him now . . ." The pitfalls of dubious alliances may be ignored. Victory itself may have its drawbacks: the creation of a vacuum of power, a false sense of righteousness. Patriotic loyalty may lure people into needless sacrifices and produce undue deference to the state.

Far worse, of course, are less subtle evils: the terrible waste of lives and often gross immorality that are almost unavoidable in war. Shortly before the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, an American spokesman quoted by Fussell announced that "there are no civilians in Japan"—since everyone had been conscripted into the Japanese war effort, everyone was a legitimate military target.

And this is fully in character for the modern state. As the nation prepared for the Gulf War, an article in *Time* mentioned a remarkable

fact. Civilians in World War I accounted for 17 per cent of the total deaths; but in World War II, which claimed a total of at least three times as many lives, *70* per cent of the dead were civilians.

If these figures are anywhere near accurate, they tell a terrible story about the modern world. So does the very fact that they have received so little attention.

The Catholic Church, the chief voice of the civilization we have left behind, has warned repeatedly of the indiscriminate nature of modern warfare. One need not subscribe to the fashionable doctrine of the "seamless garment" to understand that nonchalance about war is unlikely to help promote concern for life in the womb. Innocent life *is* a moral continuum.

In every case where the "military option" is entertained, the state ideology insists that our "vital interests" are at stake. But a "vital" interest is one on which survival may depend. This was plausible when the enemy was the mighty, and malignant, Soviet Union. But Iraq? *Panama*? We are entitled to wonder why a small, weak, landlocked country like Switzerland, needing imported products and resources more than we do, manages to survive without armed forces permanently stationed abroad, while huge, rich, powerful countries need such forces to defend their vital interests. Are only tiny nations self-sufficient? Or is it that the mighty have the luxury of defining as "threats" what are really only irritants and inconveniences?

When our rulers keep changing their reasons for making war, we are justified in mistrusting them, and in wondering if a busybody foreign policy in which clients can so readily become enemies isn't really just another mode in which the state continues to project power for its own sake. An occasional intervention abroad may be justified. But so many? The state may "win" each war, but it's hard to see what the average American gains. If a war is really necessary, it's necessary. But it is no occasion for joy. The general jubilation about the Gulf War strikes me as chilling evidence that great numbers of Americans have come to identify themselves with their state in something like the way a sports fan identifies himself with the home team. What was especially disturbing was the way the war was commonly justified as having made us "feel good about ourselves again," rather than as a response to an objective problem. What sort of reason is this for killing people?

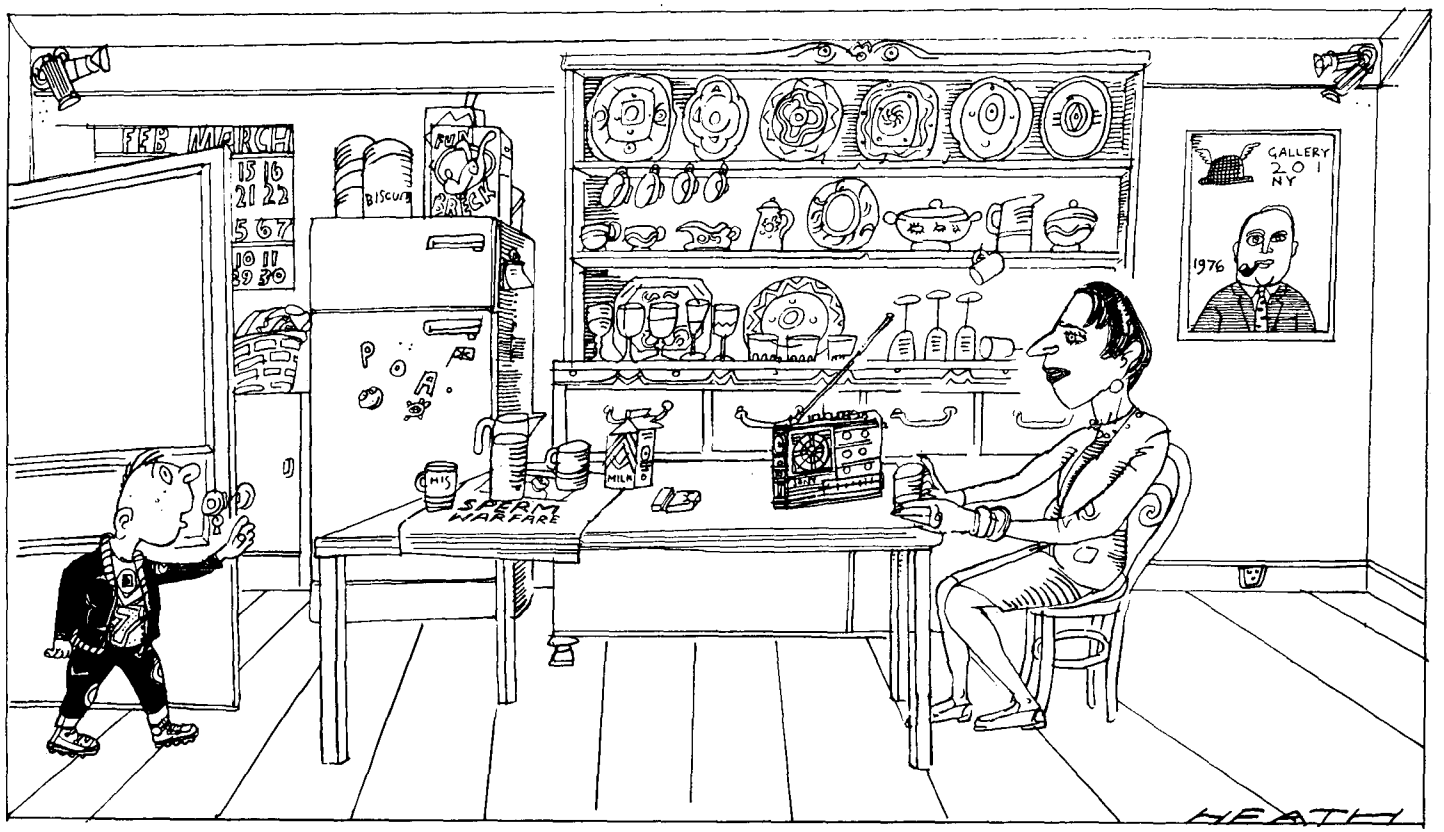
But this is the way we are apt to wind up thinking and feeling when we allow ourselves to be caught up in the modern state's

conventional way of talking. Its fortunes come to seem to be "ours." War may indeed be the state's optimal mode: the state is ideally suited for the business of organized mass destruction. Far from being an abnormality, war becomes the paradigm for various domestic undertakings: war on poverty, war on illiteracy, war on drugs, the moral equivalent of war . . . The idea of government as the modest guardian of normal social existence, playing only a background role in our lives, umpiring our disputes, seldom speaking unless spoken to, and never presuming to impose a collective mission on us—such a conception of government, second nature to our ancestors, has become almost totally foreign to us. We have become little statemen.

And yet the Dark Age of politics sneaked up on us. There has never been a point at which our rulers announced frankly that they were transforming traditional government into the modern state, whose generous services would even include giving meaning and purpose to our empty private lives. That would have alerted us to the danger that they would subvert our morals and destroy our freedoms while they were at it.

Instead, they have always preserved the illusion of continuity with our traditions, with the Founding Fathers, with the Constitution. It is as if the Catholic Church had gradually turned into the Unitarian Church, effectively teaching the very opposites of all its original doctrines, while keeping most of its rituals unchanged. We didn't realize what they were doing to us. But then, they hardly knew themselves.

PORTRAIT OF THE WEEK



'What did my sperm donor do in the war, Mummy?'

THE SPECTATOR 16 March 1991

Feminists Are Not Funny

Kay Ebeling

LAST NOVEMBER *Newsweek* published a humorous essay of mine as a "My Turn" column. It chronicled what I see as the many ways feminism has backfired against women, and argued that women were better off before the "women's movement" of the sixties and early seventies took place.

The article opened with the line: "The other day I had the world's fastest blind date." Now to me that opening lets you know that what follows is not a serious polemic, but a story to be read in light humor, written to make you laugh. I went on to describe my life in the fifteen years since I walked out of "what could have been a perfectly good marriage" with little more than the first year's issues of *Ms.* magazine and a child in diapers, mesmerized by feminists into thinking my child and I would have no trouble making it on our own.

Jokes were sprinkled throughout the "My Turn." I wrote that my ex-husband had since lived with or married a succession of women: "As he gets older, his women stay in their twenties. . . . He drives a BMW, I ride buses." I described how my blind date that day was off for a ski weekend with a single, independent feminist who was paying her own way for the trip, while I couldn't even pay for my own drink. "My date waved good-bye as he drove off in his RV and I went home to pay the babysitter with laundry quarters," I wrote, and then concluded that "feminism freed men not women," and women of my generation, feminism's "perpetrators," are now the first casualties.

I wrote the article in the spirit of coming home from the "world's fastest blind date," calling a girlfriend on the phone, and pacing around my kitchen, waving my arms in the air, ranting, getting some painful thoughts off my chest, cracking jokes all the way. I learned long ago that for me the best way to deal with painful or difficult times is to fall back on humor.

After the *Newsweek* article hit the newsstands I learned a new lesson: people who call themselves feminists don't want to hear anyone come out in the national media pointing out their mistakes. I learned

Kay Ebeling, a freelance writer, lives in California with her daughter.

that these women, and sometimes men, have a vise-like grip on what they believe is okay to say in print, and anyone who violates what feminists as a group think is "politically correct" is wide open for attack. I was called, among other things, an unenlightened reactionary who wants to lead men and women back into the dark ages.

I learned that most people who call themselves "feminists" don't have a sense of humor.

Newsweek's policy is to send all letters-to-the-editor regarding a "My Turn" to the article's author. A week before Christmas they began arriving, one big stuffed manila envelope a day for six days. The packages were crammed with letters—and they weren't cheery Christmas messages. The anger, hatred, and sheer bile that poured out at me from those letters was both frightening and depressing. Oh, there was an occasional "Hats off to Kay Ebeling," or "I could have written that article myself," from people who agreed with what I said (and appreciated the humor). But the stack of "pro" letters here in my office now is discouragingly low, next to the stack I've marked "anti" which flows over the desk and spills out onto the floor.

Most of these "anti" letters were scrawled out or typed single-spaced personal attacks on me for having the nerve to say things that are not *the* official feminist party line. A good half were from people who identified themselves as "experienced, independent college students" in their twenties. Many focused on assumptions about my personal life: "No wonder she's not successful if she spends all her time in farm town bars. . . ."

As I say, this was a depressing experience for me. As I pointed out in the *Newsweek* piece, here it is 16 years later and I'm a single mother once again. Only this time I'm completely on my own. There wasn't room in a one-page article to tell the story of my life, or exactly how I ended up in this predicament. So my hecklers made up their own versions, and then attacked me from their fictitious premises. *Newsweek* had titled the article "The Failure of Feminism" and a good 25 percent of the 300-plus letters opened up with the clever line that it "should have been titled 'The Failure of Kay Ebeling.'"

Maybe I'd better take a moment here to describe my 16 years between children, which was left out of the *Newsweek* piece. I don't think I'm a failure. When my first child was about two years old, I entered the University of Texas and in three years, working part-time and raising my son alone, I earned a degree in journalism with

high honors. Also, in those mid-70's college years, I embraced feminist maxims more and more each day. So when my son's father showed up in Austin—married now to a stay-at-home wife—my son began to spend more and more time at his father's house. I was embroiled in my career, and working on political campaigns.

After graduation, I was offered a job as a writer on the newsroom staff at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in Houston. Thus, by mutual agreement, my son stayed with his father so I could take a full-feminist jump into my career. It wasn't long before the father had full legal custody of our son.

I was proud of myself at the time. It was the ultimate feminist move to give up custody of your child to a nurturing father. Now, I thought, I was completely free to become a high-ranking official in the space program.

Instead, giving up my son left a gaping hole in my life. I tried to stuff it full of extra hours on the job, extra courses to make me a more valuable employee, and so on. I was clutching at my work for the gratification I was missing as a mother. I started coming in a half-hour early, then an hour early, and soon I became the manic workaholic so many women become when they opt for a "career" over childraising. I ended up a frazzled "Type A" wreck, so sick with ulcers that I left the job at NASA.

It's really ironic. I gave up my son for the job, then became engulfed in the job to escape from remorse over giving him up, which ultimately cost me the job. I came back to my hometown, Los Angeles, and jumped into the competitive world of free-lancing in the film and TV industry. I was a minor success, and building a portfolio, when I got pregnant again, by accident. Details aren't necessary here, except to say that the father of this child offered to pay for an abortion. (This was a man I'd attended Catholic church with!) When I refused, he figured he'd taken care of his end of the responsibility. I haven't heard from him since I was three months pregnant.

The last few years haven't been easy, and I was venting a lot of pent-up anger when I wrote that *Newsweek* piece. I work hard as a free-lancer from an office in my home. When my daughter was three months old, I picked up all our belongings and moved north, out of the smog and crime of the city. We live just a few steps above welfare in a small town, and my daughter Elizabeth is in day care more than I want her to be, even though I work only

75 percent of the time. Still, if she is sick, I keep her home with me. I don't have to explain things to a boss. As those dear feminists would say, I made my "choice" by switching to free-lance writing when I found out I was pregnant. I knew we'd live a simple, perhaps hungry life, but I can support my child and still be a nurturing, attentive mother. That's why I don't feel like a failure: I think I'm breaking new ground, maybe setting an example for other women who find themselves alone and raising children. In the *Newsweek* piece, I wrote: "The reality of feminism is a lot of frenzied and overworked women dropping kids off at daycare centers" so they can rush off to jobs they don't even like. I'm determined to find a way to avoid being a single mother who has to put her career above the needs of her child, and I think I'm doing a good job at it.

Still, I kept reading the words "The Failure of Kay Ebeling" until I grew mental callouses, so the words wouldn't hurt. More, the phone kept ringing for weeks after the article was published. Radio talk-show hosts across the country wanted me to go on their "live" shows, complete with call-in questions. I talked with people from Washington D.C. to Maui, Hawaii. I was even on Tom Snyder's ABC Radio national network program. *Now*, it amazed me that so many of the callers agreed with me. I kept hearing "I know exactly what she's talking about" as other women would give their life stories. Interestingly, on almost every show, a schoolteacher would call in to talk about the most blatant casualties of the feminist movement—the children who come home from school to houses where there is not even one parent. "You can tell which kids are latch-key," said one: "They're the wild ones, you can't get any control over them." Another teacher said that children with a mother at home are distinctly more self-confident than children who come home to empty houses.

As reactions poured in, I began to see that to make my monumental declaration that feminism had "failed" was an over-statement. The feminists have made some improvements. For instance, some letter-writers and callers pointed out that in the Fifties a woman could not get credit, or even sign certain legal papers. It's true that doors have been opened for women in both education and the work force. So I modified my stand to say that feminism had completed its work, and is now "finished." If the "movement" is to keep going from here, it will have to move toward ludicrous extremes, like the new "eco-feminists" who want to mold our culture into a "matriarchy" based on pacifism and the worship of female goddesses. "Feminism

is finished," I said on each talk show; "It's time now to go back and pick up the broken pieces." Also, one letter-writer made a point I agree with: that rather than saying "women" don't belong in 12-hour-a-day executive positions, I should have said "mothers." Many of my "anti" letters were from women who were childless and proud of it. Others wrote on letterheads showing them as partners or executives. They made some valid arguments—for example, if a woman's children are grown when she's only 40, she can step freely onto a corporate ladder. Feminism did open doors which needed to be opened.

But a frightening number of letter writers could not understand why I kept my baby. "A two-year-old almost 20 years later? It makes one furious to think," wrote a woman (on her own letterhead) from Alexandria, Virginia. "What is she doing with a two-year-old child? Children cost money" came a hand-written note from Cedar Rapids, Iowa. There I was, on my knees on the floor of my office, turning over one sheet after another with "The Failure of Kay Ebeling" line, and abortion kept coming up in the letters as an acceptable and expected alternative. A graduate student in "Women's Studies" at George Washington University wrote "The capacity to bear a child is not the mandate to do so. . . . Our biology does not dictate the life we create for ourselves." A man from Louisiana wrote "A woman who has been divorced since 1973, but who has a child currently two years old, has obviously *elected* to be a single mother" [his emphasis]. Oh well: at least he didn't say I "chose" it.

The blatant selfishness of abortion showed up in more letters than I'd like to believe: "I haven't succumbed to my biology because I control my reproductive capabilities," wrote a Colorado woman (again, on her own letterhead). A Houston woman felt I had said women should be "used as maids and breeding facilities by men." A lady Ph.D. from Minnesota wrote "For the first time in history, women are free to choose whether or not to have babies." "I don't plan on limiting my career options due to my gender," wrote an angry University of Florida student. I began to feel like a lonely voice in a crowd of people with whom I did not want to be involved.

As I mentioned above, a good half of the "anti" letters were written by "experienced" college women in their twenties. One was actually frightening. It came from two Ivy League women, evidently writing simultaneously from separate computer consoles. They said: "We have been blessed with talents in the math and science fields, which

should be used for the betterment of society as a whole, not wasted by merely raising children." They went on to rehash "a woman's right to control her own body as well as the right to a safe and legal abortion. Women have choices; biology is not destiny."

Then this: "We at least are willing to restructure our worlds so that we may all be happy as wives, mothers, and bosses. We have dreams and plans. . . ." What made their letter frightening to me was that these two women were chemical-engineering majors; what *are* their "dreams and plans" to restructure the world?

There must be many women like me, over 40 and raising children by ourselves. And there must be a direct correlation between this sad sociological fact and the rise of feminism. The "movement" opened the door for men to walk out of the responsibilities of marriage and child-raising, and the men walked out in droves. Now feminists insist that today's single mothers are single by "choice."

"CHOICE!" How that word gets thrown around these days! In one letter I circled the words "choice" seven times in just one paragraph. Another argument repeated in these letters is that feminism gave women the freedom to escape from marriages where they were being battered or otherwise abused. Well, that may be true in some cases, but I doubt that over 50 percent of women were in abusive marriages from which they escaped to become the enlightened feminist single parents of today. Yet the statistics, which have been reported in almost every women's magazine, show that over 50 percent of today's children will spend at least part of their childhood in a single-parent household. Feminists have got to start taking some responsibility for the ravaged condition of the American family: they advocated single parenthood as a way for women to live proud and fulfilled lives, but the result has been more broken homes.

I've been having an argument of logic with some people I know since the first months of my pregnancy. To me, "choice" does not come into the equation when you become pregnant and believe abortion is the killing of a human life. The thought processes involved when a woman who does not believe in abortion finds herself with an unexpected pregnancy do not include the act of "choosing" abortion. Instead, as in my case, you rearrange your life and prepare yourself—your home, your schedule—for the new child you are bringing into the world. At the time of my pregnancy, I was about to sign a contract to travel as an advance publicist with a nationally-renowned singing group. I knew I could not do that job, so I dropped that client,

and others whose work required too many hours or too much stress. I made arrangements for low-pressure jobs with text-book publishers and trade magazines—my "choice" was to provide a comfortable home for the new life I was bringing into the world.

Still, my friends, some members of my family, and even strangers kept insisting I was having my baby by "choice." Two things still alarm me today, as I look back at that tumultuous period in my life. One was the unsolicited advice I got from neighbors with whom I had little more than a nodding acquaintance. I ran into one woman in the hall of our apartment building in West Hollywood who blurted, "Why don't you just abort that baby and get on with your life?" Another neighbor, a retired singer I'd spoken with a few times down by the pool, dropped in a few days after I came home with the baby. She looked down into the cradle and clucked her tongue in disapproval: "Imagine having a baby by yourself in this day and age," she said, and left my apartment.

Also horrifying was the morning I went for my pregnancy test to a "women's clinic" in Beverly Hills (where I could pay according to my income—at that point my income was pretty low). The "counselor" took for granted that I was there to arrange an abortion, opening our conversation with something like, "Well, at least you're early enough to make it simple." I told her I wasn't there to arrange an abortion, I just needed a blood test to be certain I was pregnant. She was shocked: "What about your income?" I said: "I'll be able to support my child." Her expression was sheer anger, and she made it clear she thought I was irresponsible not to get an abortion. I left that clinic and went elsewhere.

Only one person came to my baby shower, a homosexual man who, by the time the baby was born, was the only friend I had left in Los Angeles. Kevyn sent out invitations to a list of 15 people I knew, most of them hard-driving career women such as I had been before I got pregnant. They all declined. Kevyn showered me by himself with pretty baby dresses and toys, then took me, very hungry at eight months pregnant, out to dinner in an elegant West Hollywood restaurant. But by the time I had the baby none of my former friends wanted to talk to me. I left many unreturned messages on answering machines, and received a lot of vague "Let's meet for lunch some day" remarks from women I knew when I did reach them or see them on the street.

At first I was perplexed as to why women with whom I had held long phone conversations and shared free-lance projects were now treating me like I had a contagious disease. Then I thought back over those phone conversations. Every single one of my female friends told me, when I gave them the news that I was pregnant, that they had had abortions under similar circumstances. Every one of them advised me to get one myself (like it was as casual as having a tooth pulled). I told each one "No, I don't believe in abortion, I'm going to have this baby and deal with the problems as they come up." My phone stopped ringing.

At first I took their snubs as a personal rejection. Then I realized they were probably having trouble dealing with their own guilt—they were victims of "post-abortion guilt syndrome." When they saw me still writing, still being a professional, with a newborn baby in a crib nearby, they evidently couldn't deal with the remorse and shame they felt inside. I was showing them that it could be done, that abortion is not the only way out, and most of those former friends could not handle facing up to their own mistake. One even confided that she had nightmares in which a baby girl is reaching up for her. She told me she had had *nine* abortions—in the late seventies and early eighties, she had opted for abortion as a form of birth control, and now she felt devastated. She encouraged me to go on, and have the baby. But she too was among the no-shows at my shower.

So it wasn't too hard for me to pick up baby Elizabeth and fly her to a totally new home where I continued to work and be a mother at the same time. I usually work on assignment, but occasionally I'll send out a completed manuscript to several magazines on "spec." It was a real surprise when *Newsweek* called five months after I'd sent them the "My Turn," saying they wanted to run it. I was exhilarated, and could hardly wait to see it in print. The groundswell of negative reaction was a real disappointment, but I don't want to overlook the stack of "pro" letters. It's at least an inch thick. I need to remember that people who are outraged are much more likely to write a letter than people who agree with a piece. Many of the "pro" letters are from men and women thanking me for pointing out the emperor's lack of clothes. (A high percentage of "pro" letters were from men.)

It seems feminism left many men perplexed and angry. One single father stopped mid-thought to write "Pardon me, I do not even know

what women like to be called any more." One short note from a man in Indiana read "I could have told them all back then, when I would have been dubbed a chauvinist pig, that I knew this would eventually happen. I just never thought I would ever hear it before I died." These letters and the many which thanked the magazine for publishing a "remarkably honest testimonial" kept up my spirits.

One of my free-lance jobs is to write a bi-weekly opinion column for our local weekly here in Arcata, and the editor asked my permission to reprint the *Newsweek* article, and open up *The Union's* pages for responses. This is a college town with a large population of migrants from the San Francisco and Berkeley area, so there is also a visible and vocal minority with a strong left-wing bent. So most local letters following the reprint came out adamantly against me. Two women who live together and run a local copy center even acted like they didn't want my business. It got so uncomfortable that at two Christmas parties I asked my friend not to introduce me with my last name or I'd spend the evening defending my arguments.

Though it was hard while it was happening, I'm glad the *Newsweek* piece sparked such a backlash. Now, months later, as I re-read these letters, I hear desperation and anguish in the "antis." In most cases the writers are spouting worn-out euphemisms, like the last weakening voices on a sinking ship. They may have disagreed with me, but they did read the article, and I hope some of them can see some truth in what I wrote. Feminists can't keep turning their backs on the life-damaging effects of their movement. I'm not alone in wanting the pendulum to swing back now, for a time, in the opposite direction.

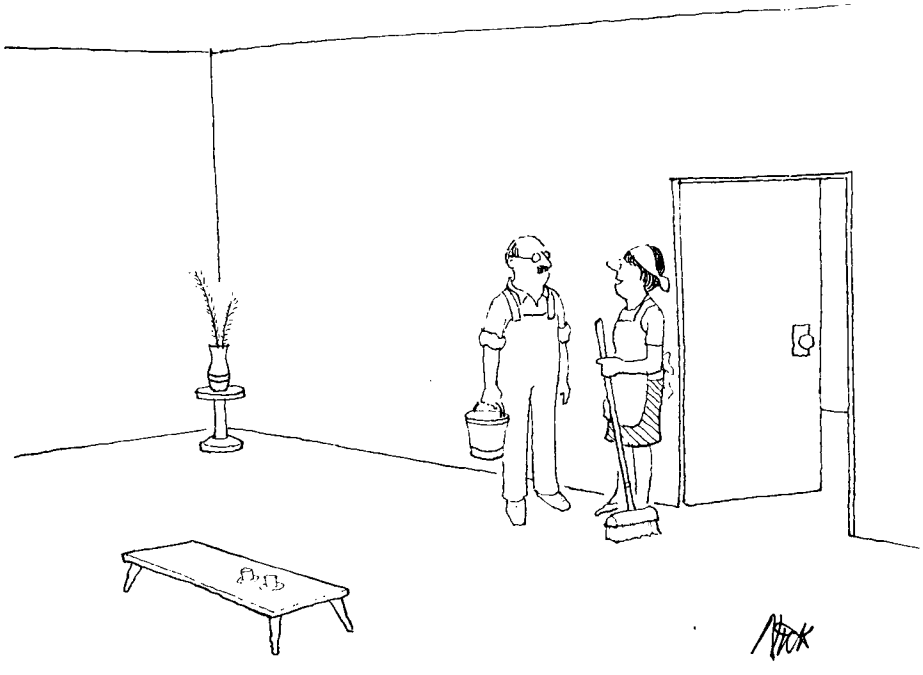
My favorite letter came directly to me from a lady named Ida in Eureka, the big city near my small town. She wrote that she'd been married in 1937, and supported me in my position on "the sad state of the feminist movement." She described her life in the years before the feminist upheaval. Her housework would be finished by noon and she'd spend her afternoons in a beauty salon or with friends. Saturday and Sunday were "family days," not filled with the frenzied housework and errand-running of today's working mothers.

Ida wrote: "I was shocked when women decided to trade their superior position for equality—the right to work in sewers or as highway workers. I don't remember ever feeling like a 'drudge' or victim of 'compulsive sex.' The real drudgery I see is single mothers struggling to raise kids. Whether on welfare or with a job, it must

be hell for most of them." She closed with "I'm retired now and grateful to not be young in this age."

Ida's letter may summarize my entire "My Turn" and all the reactions, from the angry, bilious "anti" letters to the empathetic, sometimes sad stories in the pile of "pro" letters.

I think women were better off before feminism, and it will probably take them generations to realize they were misguided. I just hope it won't be too late to bring the sanity of tradition and family back into our lives, and get back our senses of humor.



'Personally, I'm delighted they got taken over by a Japanese firm.'

THE SPECTATOR 5 January 1991

No More 'Personally Opposed'

Jo McGowan

TWO YEARS AGO, an anti-abortion piece of mine was published in *Newsweek* magazine. I received nearly 300 letters in response to it, about 75 percent negative. The effect of such a concentrated prochoice onslaught was to push me into a Mario Cuomo stance: I remained "personally opposed" but was unwilling to impose my views (except by moral persuasion) on anyone else.

I had been moved and impressed by the compassion and intelligence of those who responded to my piece and felt challenged by the objections they raised to it. Their concerns for women were genuine, and their criticisms of prolifers rang true. I felt the movement could profit from hearing their voices.

Now, however, my thinking has changed dramatically. I feel like a born-again prolifer. I am solidly in favor of a constitutional ban on abortion and am ready to go on the offensive on this issue. I believe it is the most critical question of our times.

Some personal history may help. I started my anti-abortion work at the age of 15, the year *Roe v. Wade* was handed down. I did all the usual stuff: leafleting at the polls, picketing clinics, organizing speakers at my high school, attending the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C.

At 18, I began participating in the peace movement and was soon arrested for civil disobedience at the Pentagon. Following several other arrests and jail time, I became increasingly dismayed by the almost total acceptance of abortion within the peace movement. For a year, I remained "in the closet" on my prolife views; but in 1977, when a close friend had an abortion, I felt compelled to confront the issue head-on. I joined a sit-in at a clinic and was arrested and jailed.

This event coincided with the beginning of a raging debate within the peace movement on the question of nonviolence and abortion. Because I am a feminist, my position on the issue was obviously different from the average prolifer's. I was vocally critical of the

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right-wing tendencies of the right-to-life movement and seized every opportunity to disassociate myself from it (as I still do).

On the legal question, I took an anarchist position and argued that since laws do nothing to change hearts and minds, abortion shouldn't be banned—rather, prolife efforts should be directed toward creating a world in which abortion is unnecessary. This kind of talk reassured my prochoice friends (who do not care what you think about abortion as long as you don't try to make it illegal), and an uneasy peace was maintained.

When I was 23, I moved to India with my husband. Abortion has been legal in India since 1971 and for the most part has remained a curious nonissue. Abortion debates did flare up in the '80s as "sex selective" abortions became widespread among educated, urban women. (In such abortions, amniocentesis is used to determine the sex of the unborn baby. Girls are generally aborted.) In my *Newsweek* article, I pointed out the inconsistencies of Indian feminists in objection to this particular reason for abortion when they have been so vehement in demanding the right of women to choose on all other counts.

I thought my argument was unassailable, and I was totally unprepared for the response I received. Most who wrote were furious, not only at what I had said but that I had said anything at all. They wanted to know: Who was I to speak? What did I know about the suffering of Indian women? What gave me the right to judge another human being's moral decision?

As I read through the letters, I felt more and more chastened, less and less certain of myself. In the end, I decided they were right: until I became another Mother Teresa and put my life behind my words, I would not speak out against abortion.

In the meantime, my article was reprinted in the *Human Life Review*, a quarterly journal devoted exclusively to the abortion issue. The editor sent me a stack of copies of the issue in which my piece appeared, and I was appalled at the company I was keeping. Such a collection of right-wingers! There was a lengthy piece attacking Marxism and "Green" political movements, and the journal had an overall bias that was decidedly antigay and antiliberal. Not my kind of thinking or my kind of crowd.

Nevertheless, the magazine had paid me handsomely for the reprint, and I felt obliged to write and thank them. The editor responded by sending me several back issues, and I found myself reading them cover to cover.

The authors were indeed right-wing, but they could write. Their descriptions were tough, vivid, and absolutely shocking. I read through some of the articles with my mouth literally hanging open. By the time I got through the pile, abortion had become as real to me as the poverty I see on the streets of India everyday. I thought about those babies constantly. I saw them piled up in dumpsters, flushed out of wombs twitching in agony, and torn apart piece by bloody piece.

The images would not leave my mind. Every time I reread my *Newsweek* letters and tried to construct a more tolerant, well-mannered argument based on all I had learned from the prochoicers, those mangled bodies were all that I could see.

It reminded me of an incident I had all but forgotten. In 1979, I was invited to attend a meeting sponsored by the National Organization of Women and designed to bring prolife and prochoice people together to discuss "common ground." In an article I wrote on the conference for the *National Catholic Reporter*, I noted approvingly that we agreed at the outset to "avoid the question of abortion itself because we had not come to debate or convert." The meeting proceeded predictably—there really wasn't much common ground, so we stuck to the issue of birth control—but at the press conference afterward, reality intruded in a forceful way.

Three young women from Ohio strode onto the platform and interrupted the woman at the mike. One condemned the meeting for having failed to address abortion directly while the other two unwrapped the tiny body of an aborted baby. The crowd was outraged, stunned, horrified—I no less than anyone else. Was this any way to behave? What did they mean disturbing our civilized meeting like this? Here we were trying to reach a consensus (without actually discussing the issue), and they bring in this baby to sensationalize it all.

That's how I felt then in my tolerant, tender phase. I believed it was essential not to offend prochoice women, to be scrupulously nonjudgmental, and to avoid confrontation as far as possible. I was particularly careful not to "sentimentalize" the issue by referring to the actual process of abortion and its effect on the baby.

I maintained this peculiar attitude fairly consistently for nearly ten years, with only occasional lapses into publicly stated outrage and repugnance. Now, however, I feel challenged in an entirely new

way. The articles I read in the *Human Life Review* have forced me both to recognize the enormity of the situation and to re-examine my own behavior. Why have I been so reluctant to offend or alienate those on the other side of this issue?

On other issues, I am not so wishy-washy. When I picket at the Pentagon, for example, it doesn't occur to me that the unequivocal condemnation of war is unfairly judgmental of troops going to work. If what I am saying strikes a chord in them, they will feel terribly guilty; but I don't feel it is insensitive or out of line to say it.

The abortion issue is unique, but it is wrong to say that the usual moral standards do not apply. It is, in fact, insulting to women to let them off the hook so easily—as if to say that they are children and not accountable for their actions.

Indeed, it is possible to get so caught up trying to be sensitive to the woman and her suffering that we forget the baby altogether. But weighing a woman's situation, no matter how tragic, against a baby's right to life only makes sense if we believe the baby is indeed a baby.

I *do* believe it is a baby, and this belief becomes more burdensome everyday. It is no longer acceptable to me to take a clever line about laws being ineffective and needing to change the world so that no woman ever feels an abortion is her only answer.

I can no longer say blithely that no one "likes" abortion and that the real solution is birth control. The situation is far too serious for such waffling nonstatements. Indeed, if I have learned anything from the prochoicers, it is this: we have to choose between life and death.

Prochoicers are quite clear on this, and their rhetoric has changed accordingly. References to abortion as a tragic necessity or an agonizing decision are rare now, and fewer and fewer women will admit to regretting their choice. Such language is condemned by the feminist writer Barbara Ehrenreich as "wimpy and defensive." The distinctive feature of prochoice writing today is its shoot-from-the-hip, no-apologies tone. Consider the following:

Barbara Ehrenreich in the New York *Times* writes: "The one regret I have about my own abortions is that they cost money that might otherwise have been spent on something more pleasurable, like taking the kids to movies and theme parks. . . . Would I feel comfortable getting rid of a fetus in the first few months of its life? Yes, indeed. And I have done it without qualm."

Ellen Willis, senior editor at the *Village Voice*, writing in *Harper's*: "It's a *good* thing to have an abortion rather than to have a child you don't want. Women should feel good about it."

Katha Pollitt, poet and critic, in the New York *Times*: "The fact is, when your back is against the wall of an unwanted pregnancy, it doesn't matter whether or not you think the fetus is a person . . . maybe I'm a cold and heartless person, but I find it hard to think of it as a moral question, the right to life of this thing the size of a fingernail."

Traditional prolifers, of course, have never had any problems telling it like it is. The battle lines have been clearly drawn for some time, and both sides grow more firmly entrenched. The pivotal group now, I believe, is the liberal to left-of-centers who instinctively find abortion abhorrent but are reluctant to speak out for fear of appearing fanatic or right-wing.

A further reluctance is created by a real and compassionate understanding of the difficulties women with unwanted pregnancies must face. This understanding, however, can be an advantage in the abortion debate. One can use it to break the prolife stereotype and to establish one's credentials.

Speaking personally, I know people generally assume that I am prochoice. I am an outspoken feminist and politically active in left-wing causes. When the subject of abortion comes up these days (and it generally does, because I see to it), there is usually dismay and consternation when I don't say the expected things.

I find, though, that because I have already been accepted as "one of us" (before actually passing the litmus test), my arguments carry more weight. The surprise of the unexpected keeps people's minds open a bit longer than usual.

And while those minds are open, I use every argument I think will work. I draw particularly on the wealth of prolife, feminist thought—a philosophy practically unknown to most prochoicers (and to many mainstream prolifers as well) that is startlingly persuasive.

I find myself willing to make use of the graphic, ugly realities of abortion—I want people to think hard about the enormous force that must be exerted to wrench a baby from its mother's womb—they should know that this is not a piece of tissue that glides effortlessly into the waiting pan.

Abortionists destroying a second trimester fetus are exhausted

at the end of the ordeal. I want people to consider what clinics do with all those small bodies, severed limbs, and fractured skulls. I want them to imagine their own children coming across a dumpster full of such remains and then try to come up with some explanation that would reassure their children and keep the nightmares at bay.

But my best argument is still my 10-month-old adopted daughter who was nearly aborted at sixteen weeks. Her mother was persuaded by her doctor to carry on to term and give the baby up for adoption. We have had her since she was 2 weeks old, and she has literally transformed our lives. It is unimaginable that she could have been killed. She is a constant reminder to me of all the lives we don't even know we are missing.

To add to the pathos of her story, she was born three months premature, at the end of the second trimester—a time when, in the U.S., she could still have been legally aborted. Two pounds at birth, she was simply wrapped up in cotton wool (the hospital had no incubator) and fed regularly. She not only survived but flourished.

A sentimental story, but I tell it anyway for all the truth it contains about the irreplaceable nature of each human life. The bottom line in the abortion debate is, indeed, the babies, one by unrepeatable one.

'Poor Woman, Poor Potential Human'

Amanda Craig

SEVEN ABORTIONS ARE TO BE PERFORMED at the NHS Samaritan Hospital in Marylebone Road this Wednesday between 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. The women are probably between eight and eighteen weeks pregnant. The duration of their pregnancy has been assessed by asking the woman the date of her last period; by ultrasound, accurate plus or minus seven days according to foetus size, and by the surgeon—in this case Mr. David Paintin, senior consultant obstetrician at St. Mary's Paddington—feeling the woman's uterus and abdomen.

The only check that the operation is carried out within the legal timescale of 24 weeks and in accordance with the four categories outlined in the 1967 Abortion Act is this surgeon's professional conscientiousness. There are no institutional inspections. Information is sent to the Chief Medical Officer, and thereafter only statisticians will have access to it. It is not accessible to police officers or MPs. Abortion is the most secret of operations. Mr. Paintin, and his patients, have made an exception in order for me to witness what now takes place.

Three of the women have slight but distinct bulges where their pregnancy shows, but the rest look normal. They have had two to seven days to think over their decision; prior to this, they have discussed with a GP, an obstetrician and a "neutral" woman counsellor what an abortion means. A printed sheet informs them they have one in 200 chance of infertility, after. All but one are around 16. More than half have had abortions before. Four are black, none married. All have the tired, tawdry look of poverty, with calloused feet and smudgily varnished toenails. One, a heroin addict, screams when injected with general anaesthetic because she has very few clear veins left.

"In Britain, one in five pregnancies is terminated," Mr. Paintin tells two medical students. "The most recent figures, up to March 1988, show there are 157,100 annually for women residents in England and Wales. Since 1975, the proportion of single women having abortions

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Amanda Craig writes for the London *Spectator*, in which this article appeared (in the Jan. 5, 1991 issue). It is reprinted here, along with several letters to the *Spectator* commenting on it, with permission (©1991 *The Spectator*/NYTSS).

has actually been drifting downward from 40 per cent to 35 per cent. Our proportions are half those of America and Eastern Europe. But the total number of abortions is rising because there are more single women. We expect it to go on rising to the end of the century."

The Samaritan Hospital, founded in 1840 and attached to St. Mary's, is one of the oldest gynaecological units in the world. Spotless and shabby, its floors are tiled with sea-green lino and its corridors smell of curry. Doctors and nurses dress in papery pale blue uniforms, and white clogs. The two surgeons, anaesthetist and the scrub nurse also wear green overalls and transparent rubber gloves. Mr. Paintin, in addition, wears a green plastic apron and a pair of white wellington boots.

Gynaecologists usually look like Mr. Cecil Parkinson, but Mr. Paintin is stocky, with tufted grey eyebrows and a kindly, intelligent face. His nurses radiate benign pragmatism. Most are only a few years older than the women who, every 20 minutes or so, get wheeled into the white-walled room. Already injected with a general anaesthetic, each patient is administered gas as soon as she is transferred by stretcher on to the operating couch. A blood pressure machine by her head monitors her heartbeat as submarine blips and glowing blue waves.

The couch is narrow, with three black cushions. The middle cushion has a semi-circle taken out. When the unconscious woman is on the couch, her ankles are suspended above the level of her head in a pair of medical stirrups, and the third section removed. The semi-circle funnels paper leading to a stainless steel bowl below. The angle of her legs is precisely that of making love. Before this bare V stand the surgeon, assistant surgeon, swab nurse, two medical students and myself. Above the end of the couch is a great circular lamp, made up of seven smaller lamps arranged in the shape of a stylised flower.

The woman's genitalia are swabbed, inside and out, with a soapy disinfectant. A speculum with a round weight on the end is inserted to keep the vagina open. A pulpy crimson is all that can be seen, although the surgeon can feel with two fingers all the way to the uterus.

A series of steel rods, each progressing to the thickness of a finger, are inserted. These dilate the uterus. A suction tube is then pushed in. This tube works on exactly the same principle as a hoover. When switched on, a loud noise is made, like a giant sucking on a melting ice cube.

One of the two medical students is a Christian. "Whenever I hear that horrible noise of suction, I always think, poor woman, and poor potential human. I feel abortion is right in a few cases, where pregnancy is injurious to a women's health," he says. "But even incestuous conception is a problem I haven't really sorted out yet."

The other says, "I judge a case on its individual merit. I don't really have a problem philosophically about it. I'm just observing a clinical process."

"But it's good to be informed. It's a pity that birth and death are hidden away in hospitals now," says the Christian.

Both had seen babies being born, and had taken part in heated ethics discussions. Abortion and euthanasia are the two subjects which worry medical students most.

"Between 20 and 25 per cent of all doctors feel it's wrong under any circumstances," says Mr. Paintin. "Then there is a middle ground of those who fear it's a distasteful chore. You have to go a long way to find those who, like myself, see abortion as the lesser of two evils, an ethical equation in which the needs of a potential human being are weighed against those of a fully formed one: the mother."

Blood streams along the transparent tube into one of the two glass jars on top of the suction machine. After eight weeks of pregnancy, an abortion takes 30 to 40 seconds to perform. A foetus is 1 cm. long at this stage, with a heart but no face. "Unless you looked in the suction bottle, you wouldn't know it was there," says Mr. Paintin.

By the end of the 13th week, the foetus is properly formed, but even at 24 weeks it would be quite impossible for it to scream. That, at least, is one horror story that is not true.

As the catheter is drawn out from the 17-week pregnancies, bright red flows down the speculum, and into the round steel bowl beneath. Some spurts onto the green floor, and the surgeon's apron. A damp, salt smell is in the air. The placenta, a mauvish oblong, comes with a rush. A portion is scooped into a jar; with the women's consent, it will be used for research to prevent miscarriages.

Next comes the foetus. "This is the bit people have fantasies about," says Mr. Paintin, squeezing and tugging with his long steel forceps.

A dismembered arm half the size of a finger takes two or three attempts to pull out. No head is identifiable as such, but a miniature spinal cord gushes down, and floats briefly on the bowl of blood.

In the 18-week foetus, a complete 7cm torso with the left arm and hand still attached comes out. It has the rubbery, marine sheen of those monsters of the deep envisaged by Albany in *King Lear.* The semi-transparent hand, the size of the smallest child's fingernail, itself has fingernails.

"It takes skill to use this technique," says Mr. Paintin, panting slightly. "You only acquire the expertise if you have a big caseload. The Parkside South Health Authority does about 1,100 a year, of which I perform about 250, although I'm semi-retired and every surgeon's caseload is different. Between 30 and 40 of those are pregnancies past 18 weeks. Some surgeons insist on prostaglandins [the hormones which induce labour] because they think bringing the foetus out in one piece is more reverent. That's irrelevant, in my opinion. Inducing labour is a painful experience all round, both to the patient and the hospital staff. Nurses are not always positively orientated to abortion, and find it difficult to be sympathetic towards a mother whose premature labour has been induced."

An NHS abortion (41 per cent of the national total) costs the taxpayer a mere £160. All staff are paid, irrespective of the number of abortions performed. There is no financial incentive in the NHS to increase the number of terminations; it is difficult enough to find funding for this, as opposed to all the many other operations required. Abortions performed by charitable organizations such as the British Pregnancy Advisory Service cost the patient £210. Being non-profit-making, they also have no incentive to encourage terminations. Private abortions cost around £650, their price kept down by the competing success of the charities. A top private abortionist earns little more than a top NHS consultant: £35,000. However, he or she will earn this at a younger age and without the social connections needed to rise in other branches of medicine.

Both the surgeons are relaxed and smiling as they work, discussing Mr. Paintin's difficulties in buying a new house. In order to perform competently no distressing emotions can be allowed to sway the surgeon's hand.

"People say, how can you bear to do this work?" And then, in answer to the question, Mr. Paintin remarks, "But I find considerable satisfaction in providing the entire service skillfully. I would much prefer women not to need abortions, but seeing that they do, I have fought my own way through this ethical equation.

"You are always dealing with a balance of harm, rather than good. The first time you see any surgical operation, you think, how horrid; but this is helping a woman to reproduce at a time she wants to. These women are set up by our society because they are poorly educated and lack the articulacy to discuss sex with their partner. They even see contraception as threatening. Their lives are in chaos," Mr. Paintin says, in his calm voice.

"Yes," his assistant surgeon agrees. "I've always thought it a most satisfying operation. Unlike many others, which are so variable in their effect, there is a very definite end-point to it."

After the forceps, the suction tube makes sure the womb is quite empty. Again and again, it is. Whatever was in there is bundled up and put into yellow bags, to be incinerated. The third cushion is brought out again, the machines disconnected, the woman's legs lowered. Wrapped in the long white fishtail of a blanket, she will wake in an hour—to relief, to guilt, to childlessness.

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[*For several issues after Amanda Craig's article appeared, the* Spectator *ran a number of responses in the* Letters *column; we reprint the majority of them here, along with the headings under which they were printed.*]

Abortion and emotion

Sir: What a pity *The Spectator* should appear to lend support to the Roman Catholic-led anti-abortion campaign by publishing the highly emotive article by Amanda Craig ("Poor woman, poor potential human," 5 January) with its picture on the front cover of "the tools of the trade." I am no surgeon, but would hazard a guess that the tools shown are those used or available in most operations.

Abortion has taken place since time immemorial. Surely it must be preferable for it to be carried out as a result of free choice in the hygienic and legalised conditions described in the article than dangerously by some back-street abortionist or by self-induction—which is the fate of so many unfortunate women in the poorer and predominantly Catholic countries where abortion is illegal.

The issue has been debated *ad nauseam* by Parliament where decisive majorities in favour of our present abortion law have been obtained in both Houses. Why stir the pot any further?

Vernon
House of Lords,
London SW1

Sir: I would like to add one observation to Amanda Craig's excellent article about the process of abortion. It may be impossible for a foetus of 24 weeks to scream, but it is quite possible for a foetus of 23½ weeks to grasp an adult's finger. I know, as my baby daughter of that age held my little finger, and those of her two uncles, on and off for four hours as she quietly died following a natural spontaneous premature labour.

Victor Lyon
London SW6

Sir: The account by Amanda Craig of the gruesome procedures of legal abortion reminds me of a similar description I read many years ago. At that time, I naïvely thought that people simply did not know that such things went on, and that once they were made aware of them, they would be as horrified as I was.

Of course, one soon discovered (as with the analogous barbarities of execution) that the majority of people remain quite unmoved, save to the extent that they think it bad taste to have the nasty subject pushed under their noses.

Amanda Craig quotes the consultant gynaecologist who performed the abortions she witnessed as saying that "between 20 and 25 per cent of all doctors feel it is wrong under any circumstances." That is a sufficiently large percentage and one would have thought that anyone involved in the process of tugging out of a woman's womb recognisable pieces of a human body, would feel just a little unease. Miss Craig describes him and his assistant as "relaxed and smiling as they work, discussing [the surgeon's] difficulties in buying a new house."

No doubt it is mere sentimentality to find this insouciance as repugnant as the work itself.

Martin Mears
Old Rectory,
Haddiscoe
Norwich, Norfolk

Sir: Congratulations on Amanda Craig's article on abortion. Thanks not least to its calm, matter-of-fact reporting, it leaves us in no doubt that abortion is a horrendous act.

But may I now ask two things: that we stop calling the unborn child a foetus and stop calling him or her a *potential* human being? When we resort to technical Latinisms instead of plain Anglo-Saxon we are usually trying to kid ourselves or someone else; children in the womb are potential

born children and potential adults, but are already actually human. Abortion is incompatible with civilisation. Every abortion is an affront to justice. Abortion is the supreme human rights issue of our time.

J.J. Scarisbrick
National Chairman,
LIFE House,
Newbold Terrace,
Leamington Spa,
Warwickshire

From the surgeon

Sir: "Poor women, poor potential human" (5 January)—these are the emotions we feel about abortion, but how sad that the text following this title concentrated on the distressing practical details in the operating theatre, without more than a glimpse of the tangle of events that cause unwanted pregnancy and the complexity of the decisions made by the unhappy women. At least 25 per cent of the women reading *The Spectator* will either have had an abortion or will feel that an abortion is essential at some point of their lives.

Amanda Craig's article has increased their distress considerably without giving them help in understanding the marginally controllable factors that result in unwanted pregnancy, or in coping with the associated anxiety and guilt. I support women who decide to have abortions and accept their view that the destruction of the foetus is less wrong than continuing the pregnancy at a time when they feel that they cannot cope, either with being pregnant or with being a mother.

All abortions are performed with regret, but the potential life of the foetus is of lesser value than the actual life of the women. All involved in the operating list at which Amanda Craig was a privileged observer are disappointed by her account of her experience and are disgusted by the tasteless and grotesque illustrations that appeared with the article and on the cover of the magazine.

David Paintin
Samaritan Hospital,
Maryleborne Road,
London NW1

Abortion trauma

Sir: I, too, admired Amanda Craig's article on abortion. One wishes the ghastly experience finished there. I work as a post-abortion counsellor

and every week listen to stories of mild to severe depression and, not infrequently, suicide attempts. Trauma may not surface for months, often years. The mental health of the prospective mother is one of the justifications for termination and those of us who are honest know that it is the most commonly adopted excuse. Ironically, abortion is being increasingly acknowledged as a cause of mental distress and illness. I hope one day that this aspect of abortion will receive the attention it deserves.

Josephine Quintavalle
London SW3

Sir: Amanda Craig's article raises some interesting moral and ethical issues for both the medical and the journalistic professions. Did she, for instance, seek the permission of the women whose abortions she so gloatingly observed?

Surely hospital authorities, and doctors, should be more sensitive to the emotional requirements of patients who are undergoing a tragic and often deeply regretted operation.

It is also interesting that this violation of privacy took place in a National Health hospital. A woman's dignity, it appears, comes at the price of a private health fund.

Certainly, in an ideal world there would be no unwanted pregnancies, no rape, no poverty, no desertion, no betrayal of one human being by another.

That we live in a less than honourable world is underlined by the publication of an article such as this: a sad and tatty piece of journalism from an otherwise reputable source.

Katherine Scholfield
Cremorne 2090
Australia

Not for the squeamish

Sir: I write in some relief after reading Elaine Rankin's letter (2 February) following the anti-abortionists' reaction towards Amanda Craig's account of some abortion operations. Much was made in that article of the medical gore involved in the termination of a pregnancy (yes, bodies are bloody and the clash of surgical steel and gynaecological gore does engage the reader), but moral dilemmas were presented as the preserve of the medical staff. One, a student, was defined as "a Christian." What was overlooked was that there was a strong likelihood that the women involved had themselves struggled with this deeply personal dilemma before taking the responsibility for choosing the lesser of two evils (for *them*).

Abortions are not the prerogative of the *Untermädchen* Amanda Craig patronises with her observations (did she ask their permission too?); they are performed on thousands of well-brought up, well-educated women—indeed, on People Like Us—in both NHS and private hospitals. I do not think they are undertaken lightly, as I know from consoling friends in the situation; the decision involves heart-searching thought and sometimes prayers too.

Bridget Bailey
London E8

Sir: In Amanda Craig's description of induced abortion ("Poor woman, poor potential human," 5 January) and most of the subsequent correspondence, it is implied that the procedure can be not only bloody and horrifying to the layman or woman but also hideously painful for the foetus. The first implication may be true, though the same can surely be said of most surgical procedures. I could easily describe such morally neutral operations as the removal of a cancer or even the repair of a humble hernia in terms which would have even some of your most robust readers reaching for their sick-bags.

The second implication is, however, almost certainly false. The last time I regularly delivered babies was in an Australian hospital where I was also expected by most parents to circumcise their newborn male offspring. This was done a few days after birth without any anaesthetic, as is also the case with Jewish ritual. The babies certainly screamed but I do not think that any of them will remember the event or will insist, when they become fathers, that their own sons be given a general anaesthetic. Indeed, under a light anaesthesia, patients may still move or groan when the knife goes in or the fracture is manipulated but, for practical purposes, what you don't remember doesn't hurt.

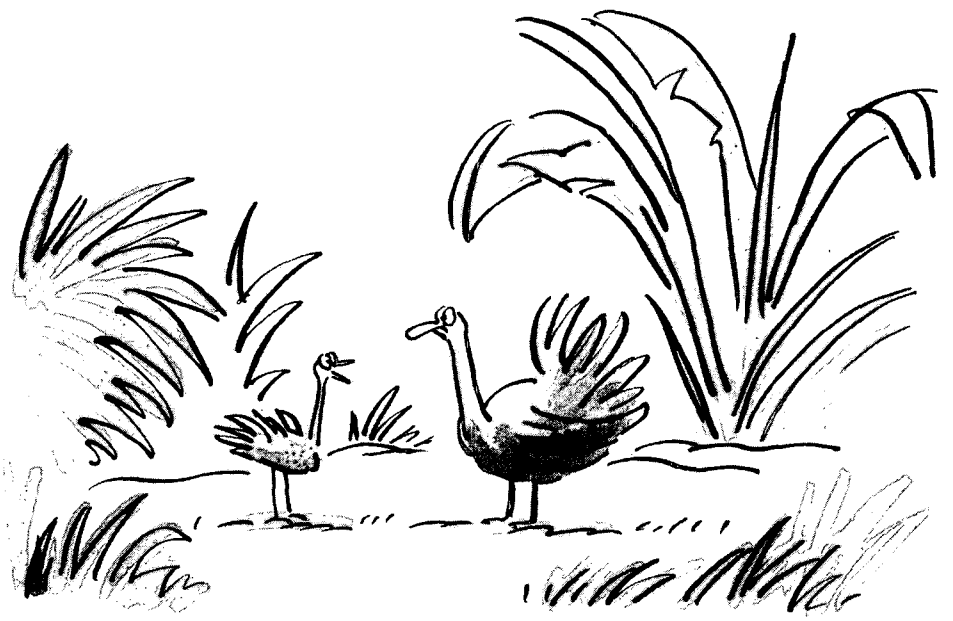
That infant circumcision without anaesthesia apparently produces no particular psychological disturbances in later life seems to call in question the whole concept of "birth trauma" which is so dear (and so profitable) to some psychotherapists. The moral of Amanda Craig's story is not that abortion is cruel but that medicine—and *a fortiori* surgery—is not for the squeamish. I have long believed that everyone should have the privilege of medical education. In the case of would-be medical journalists, I would make it compulsory. She could start by writing out one hundred times: "The rate of serious psychiatric illness after childbirth is five times higher than after abortion."

Colin Brewer
London SW1

Sir: I was interested to read the criticisms of Amanda Craig's article from Mr. David Paintin (Letters, 19 January). Perhaps what Mr. Paintin wanted was a kind of advertisement for the services of the abortionist, yet instead the truly horrific facts of the clinical practice of abortion were printed.

What Mr. Paintin has failed to see is that half-truths help no one. If abortion is so easily justifiable, why is he clearly embarrassed by the publication of what it literally involves?

Stewart Finn
Bamber Bridge,
Preston, Lancashire



'I've been designated a rare breed — and you've been designated medium rare.'

THE SPECTATOR 25 August 1990

Factoring Out Abortion

John S. Payne

SOME YEARS BACK I knew of a teenage girl (I'll call her Lisa) who was going through a most painful experience. She was only 15, the child of parents well known in the community. Pretty, a cheerleader and honor student, she was looking forward to college—and as the saying goes, she had her whole life ahead of her—but now she was also pregnant.

In our Age of Abortion, many parents would propose an obvious "solution" to her dilemma. After all, should one mistake jeopardize a young girl's entire future? But Lisa's parents had taught her that a life begins at conception, and so abortion is the murder of an unborn baby. Lisa decided to have her baby, which she did, on April 24, 1983, to be exact; the little girl (I'll call her Nicki) is now eight years old.

Lisa had a tutor during her pregnancy. She later returned to school, graduated with honors in 1985, and went on to college. Most of her friends rallied around her, and in fact Lisa's courage was a positive example to several other girls in her community who found themselves in Lisa's situation and decided against abortion. Nicki is now a beautiful, energetic and intelligent second grader who wants to learn another language. She too has the world ahead of her, with every chance that she will lead a fruitful and fulfilling life.

But of course Nicki was fortunate from the start. Because her mother was taught that abortion is wrong, Nicki was given a chance to live. What about the children who are not given this chance? Many parents do not help their daughters in similar situations. With the choice of adoption and the availability of "crisis pregnancy" centers, a woman *can* give her child a chance to live not only a full and happy life, but a productive one as well. And we can assume that the majority of aborted children, if given the chance to live, *would* lead productive lives. Which means that they would pay taxes.

Joining abortion and taxes—two seemingly unrelated issues—may seem like a pretty long leap, but if you stop to think about it at all, it's obvious that, whatever else abortion does, it obviously prevents potential taxpayers from being born, at a current rate of over one

John S. Payne is a tax analyst and freelance writer who lives in South Carolina.

and a half million yearly—the usual estimate is that 25 million unborn babies have been destroyed since the Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision.

But abortion proponents will argue that many women who have abortions are poor, and that by disposing of the "fetus" they are eliminating future welfare recipients. Careful research, however, indicates that the opposite is true. Abortion is in fact depleting the reserve of future American taxpayers. This will have an enormous effect upon America's ability to collect revenue from its two greatest sources, Social Security and income taxes. In 1990 these two taxes accounted for seventy-five percent of all federal revenue.

At the current rate, by the end of this century over 40 million abortions will have been performed; by 2030 when the last "Baby Boomers" retire, it could reach 84 million, a figure which is 355 percent greater than Canada's present population. It is equivalent to the combined current populations of California, New York, Texas, Florida, and New Jersey. Some half million more abortions occur in just two years than the total number of war casualties our nation has suffered in all our wars from the Revolutionary War to Vietnam.

In addition to the profound impact of the current abortion rate, three other facts will affect American demographics. First, U.S. fertility has declined since the early 1970s. Government projections estimate it will remain below replacement level through 2025. Some argue that even in the face of this fertility decline the U.S. population continues to increase. But this is caused by the "echo" of the baby-boom generation: when baby-boom women pass their reproductive years, several decades of below-level fertility rates will reduce the population level.

Second, Congressional immigration restrictions, such as the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, and the refusal to admit as many immigrants as have petitioned, has caused a decline in the immigration rate. Projections estimate that this decline will continue until at least the end of 2010.

Third, the percentage of elderly Americans is rapidly increasing. In 1987 the elderly accounted for one-eighth of the population. By 2030, after the baby-boomers retire, the elderly will account for one-fifth of the population. (By the sheer weight of their numbers, the baby-boomers have shaped American culture—from education and marketing to the types of movies that are made. When they

retire, one can expect the culture to shift accordingly, so as to accommodate an older population.) Decreasing fertility and longer-living elderly are increasing the median age of the population: in 1980, the median age was 30; by 2025 it is projected to be 41.6. As the elderly grow in number, so does their political power; they will transform America's priorities from those aimed at the young to those aimed at themselves. They are already the major recipients of social services, and their needs will grow with their numbers. Revenues will therefore have to increase.

The decrease in fertility and immigration and the huge increase of elderly people will result in labor shortages, which will reduce the federal government's revenue from Social Security and income taxes and force more tax increases. Without an increase in immigration, an increase in fertility is the only means to increase the future labor supply.

Legalized abortion, delay of birth of the first child, urbanization, growing use and improved effectiveness of contraceptives, and increased divorce rates are the main factors responsible for America's decrease in fertility. It would be difficult to calculate the future U.S. population in the absence of any combination of these factors. The factor of abortion, however, separates itself out. Abortion is the only factor which eliminates a person already conceived who would have otherwise been "counted" (barring miscarriage); the other factors require hypothetical calculations.

In monetary terms, what impact will the abortion rate have on the federal government's ability to collect revenue from Social Security and income taxes? The following projections, using average U.S. income statistics and tax rates, create a bleak picture.

The first point which must be made is that the abortion of the babies of welfare-dependent mothers is not the answer to welfare problems. Many claim that welfare mothers beget welfare mothers, and demand to know where the money for housing and education will come from.

The answer is, the money *could* come from the taxpayers being aborted. An ever-increasing labor supply provides the tax base and revenue needed to fund payments and benefits. A child born to a poor mother can earn in his lifetime almost fifty times more than the public costs of delivery, nutrition and housing assistance in the first few years of life. A poor person performing menial labor earning

only five dollars an hour would contribute some $800 (with the employer contributing an equivalent amount) to Social Security in a year.

In order to assess how much revenue would have been generated by aborted workers in the form of Social Security taxes, it is necessary for us to ask: How many people would have worked? At what income? How long would they have worked? What would be the Social Security tax rate?

As noted, by the time the baby-boomers retire, there could be 84 million U.S. abortions. Because 66 percent of the U.S. population is in the labor force, it is reasonable to project that two-thirds of all aborted persons would have participated in the labor force—that would mean 55 million more workers. Using the average family income of $30,850, twenty-nine years (25-54) as the average work span, and the Social Security tax rate of 15.30 percent (which by law will remain at that rate from 1990 on), we can estimate that the Social Security tax liability over twenty-nine years of labor would be $136,880 per individual. Multiply that by the projected 55 million aborted workers, and the accrued Social Security tax liability escalates to 7 trillion, 528 billion, 400 million dollars. This is approximately 260 billion per year over twenty-nine years.

Just as the Social Security system is dependent on a vast pool of taxpayers, so too is the general treasury. And in the face of unparalleled national debt and deficits, an ample supply of taxpayers is essential. In the twentieth century, deficits have become the *status quo*, occurring in sixty-three fiscal years. Interest *alone* on the national debt for fiscal year 1989 was $220 billion, or $6,984 per second. The failure to adhere to a sound fiscal policy will create extensive tax burdens on future American workers—the federal government cannot indefinitely spend more money than it collects.

This burden will be compounded by the enormous "taxpayer deficit" abortion will produce. What might be abortion's impact on the treasury? In addition to the factors used in the Social Security projection, by using standard income rates (1989), an average-size family of three, and deductions for married couples filing jointly, we can make a projection, and the results are disturbing.

An income of $30,850, less $11,200 for deductions, yields a taxable income of $19,650, which is taxed at fifteen percent. This amount yields a tax liability of $2,948 per year, per worker. When multiplied by the average 29 years of labor, a tax liability of $85,492 is accrued.

Consequently, when multiplied by 55 million aborted workers who could have been in the labor force, a loss of over $4.7 trillion would be projected.

This projected loss of income-tax revenue of nearly $5 trillion over twenty-nine years, or $162 billion per year, indicates that the possible monetary ramifications of abortion will greatly impact the U.S. to the amount of well over $12 trillion in lost Social Security and income tax revenue over twenty-nine years.

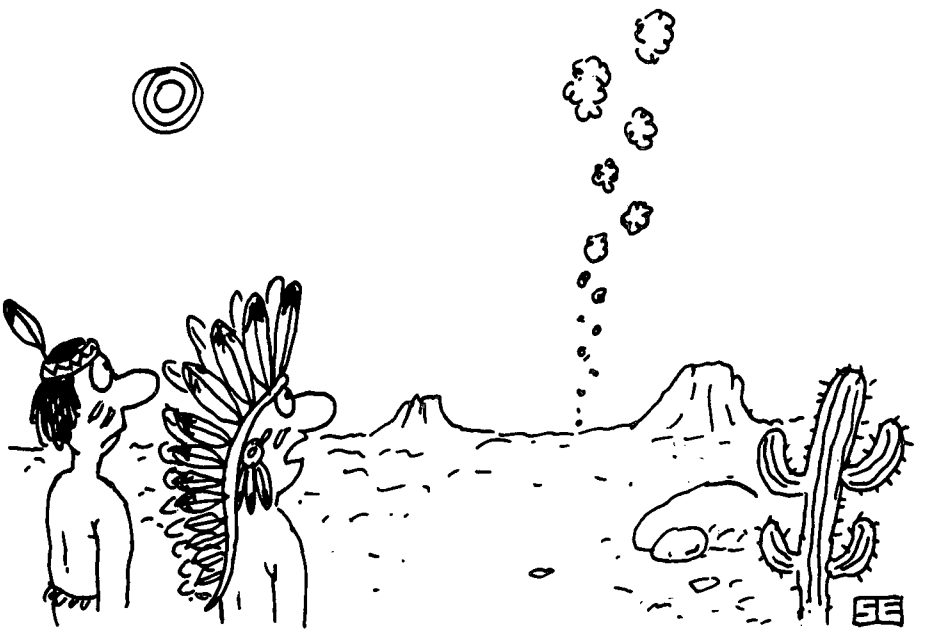
It is hard—even for budget negotiators—to comprehend the magnitude of $12 trillion. In today's dollars, how much could such revenue help the federal government? To put it into perspective, this money is some 40 times greater than the total estimated current national defense outlays, or 114 times greater than the total estimated 1991 Medicare outlays, or 309 times greater than the total estimated 1991 education, training, employment, and social-services outlays. Simply stated, it's a lot of money, and its loss could devastate America.

America need not continue to eliminate its future taxpayers. First of all, immigration could be increased to allow the labor pool to grow and allow working-age individuals to enter the work force and pay taxes. Second, the government could promote incentives conducive to increasing the nation's population, such as raising standard and personal deductions for married couples with children, and extending tax credits to mothers who remain in the home to care for children. But most obviously, the availability of abortion needs to be reduced or eliminated. For instance, the President could veto appropriations for pro-abortion recipients, such as Planned Parenthood and federal programs like Title X (National Family Planning Program) which encourage abortion—they now receive millions of dollars per year in federal government funds.

It is ironic that those not as fortunate as Nicki will have, by their *absence*, a phenomenal impact on America's future. Today's pro-abortionists, and those who are apathetic about the issue, will in a few decades be the elderly who will receive Social Security benefits and federal expenditures. Faced with a greater number of elderly who are draining federal expenditures and causing taxes to increase, future working generations may come to view the elderly as not only inconvenient but also a financial burden on themselves. This view is similar to current reasons given for aborting "unwanted" children. What is to prevent a euthanasia campaign for ridding society

of the elderly? If society can indiscriminately remove persons from one end of the age spectrum, then it can also remove persons from the other end of that spectrum.

We reap what we sow. We can only hope that the future working generations will not turn their backs on the elderly, and that Americans of all generations will come to see unrestricted abortion as a national tragedy.



'It says that their fax machine is temporarily out of order.'

THE SPECTATOR 29 September 1990

The Grandchildren of Job

Thomas Molnar

AN EXCEPTIONAL MAN seems to be made of a single block—wood, marble, or metal—but an exceptional woman is more than her intelligence: she is also a mother, a secret being, impenetrable to man's eyes, no matter how inquisitive the stare. Such a woman is my friend, Janine Chanteur, Professor Chanteur, I ought to say, because she occupies an important chair of philosophy at the Sorbonne in Paris.

The Sorbonne is still the mother of universities, and penetrating its massive buildings, walking the streets which surround it, sitting at the cafés of the *quartier*, one feels assailed by the memories that these walls exude. After all, Thomas Aquinas taught here, as did Albert the Great, Meister Eckhart, and legions of modern masters. Here Church doctrine was formulated and combatted, councils planned and opposed, heretics condemned and redeemed. Here Western philosophy and science had one of their fountainheads. If prestige has a meaning, it is here that it can be acquired, weighed, acknowledged, admired.

Janine Chanteur is a full professor at the Sorbonne, after years of teaching in lycées and other years of assistantship. A few years ago I gave a lecture to one of her seminars, some sixty students, among them retired army generals, high civil servants, and some of her colleagues as invited guests: Raymond Polin, Chanteur's predecessor, Michel Villey, the philosopher of law, and others. My overall impression was one of all-around monumentality; not only the endless hushed corridors and vaulted lecture rooms, Victor Hugo's statue down at the Cour Richelieu, but also the heavy strata of superimposed time, here where the greatest of mankind walked, meditated, debated. In short, the classical image, similar to what one perceives at the Parthenon or at the Forum Romanum, at a starting and concentration point of our civilization.

Chanteur has written two splendid scholarly books, *Platon, le Désir et la Cité* and *Paix et Guerre*, both immensely erudite and original, both the products of an intriguing scholarship of the highest

Thomas Molnar, a prolific author of books and articles published both here and in Europe, will soon be teaching in his native Hungary.

order and feminine insight. I write now, however, not about them but about a third book, just published. And what a book! A confession of near-Augustinian scope, thus an autobiography, yet not that at all but a mother's story focused on the child, and the calvary of a handicapped little girl, and a philosopher's dialogue of rebellion. Underlying it all it is a book by a woman, with equal share of heart and mind.

I am aware that in the era of feminism it is a punishable crime to mention it, since to say "woman" is to be accused of setting up a barrier because it implies that "men" are a separate entity, eventually distinct from women—who knows, perhaps at times even superior to them. But irony aside, there is a point, quite high in the human hierarchy, where men and women are equal, and both possess a quality all their own, to the fullest extent. At this level I place Chanteur, a woman thinker who touches chords that are not within the male's repertory, even in philosophical discourse. It is the *ewig weibliches*, the eternally feminine which, according to Goethe, pulls us upward.

But let us turn to Chanteur's third book, which is both unexpected and courageous, with the boldness of originality. The title is *Les petits-enfants de Job* (Job's grandchildren). Here are its antecedents. The Chanteurs (her husband, Jean, is a prominent physician) had five children, one of whom, a boy, died at birth from meningitis. Others were born, then a little girl, handicapped from birth. A microbe, insufficient breathing damaging the brain—whatever the reason, she entered life as a retarded child, unable to put two and two together, or cross a street, or concentrate. The parents tried everything, either to find a remedy or at least to make her existence less painful, her integration with other children—including her brothers and sisters—at least a near-success. They consulted physicians, psychiatrists, therapists, miracle workers, various specialists in their daughter's condition, but her condition resisted all treatment, advice, medication, and therapy. There were those who advised that the child should be put mercifully to sleep. Others discussed the accumulating hardship of bringing up a girl in a home where the other, healthy children also needed the care and love due to them. Yet others suggested that the parents give up the child, place her with a family—and forget her. The usual counsel, from professionals and from friends, so hard to resist because it is backed by what seems to be common sense—until one begins to think about it.

The parents resisted, but not without temptation. Janine Chanteur now recounts an episode that one reads with bated breath. One day she went shopping with her little girl, then about four: by chance they came along the railroad tracks. The idea of letting the child die had never touched her mind, but now the image of throwing herself *with* the child under the coming train became suddenly obsessive. It is said that just before violent death the vision of one's entire life projects itself with insane rapidity on one's mental screen. Janine saw the past and the future. Standing there holding the child's hand, she was tempted. Then she looked at her little one, who perhaps for the first time had the light of intelligence in her eyes—as if saying, "Don't do it!"

They went home, where the other children were studying and playing. Her husband returned soon after. But that terrible adventure, that nearness of death, marked my friend for life. She knew then that her child had to live, and that she must carry her burden. She, her husband, and her other children.

That was some thirty years ago. The commitment has remained intact. Yet the remembrance too is so ever present that it was able to generate a book, one of a unique character, the like of which I have never before read. A woman philosopher re-lives the calvary of her daughter's life—a theme whose counterpoint is the life of the rest of the family—and her own, the mother who must work with an undistracted mind, teach demanding courses, give lectures, prepare courses, write books.

But to the point: Why is this book called *Les petits-enfants de Job*? The first 30 pages read like a Beethoven overture: drama, revolt, malediction, calling on God to give account, to justify the evil side of his creation. Others write theodicies and explain the justness of God and its perceived flaws; Chanteur builds it into her own life, makes the issue palpable. In a brilliant move, she adopts the stance of an opponent of Job. Job, patiently suffering to the end and beyond, his God an increasingly cruel and irrational torturer. The more meek is Job, the more extravagant his God becomes, and Chanteur, in these superb pages, meditates with her reason but also with her betrayed and injured maternal instincts. This first chapter should find its place in an anthology, it is "revisionism" at its best, the relocation of Job on the screen of our religious habits. It also shows that behind the near-destroyed mother—the life-long suffering mother as in the

Stabat Mater—there is, there has been, the thinker, the dialectician who engages the Biblical suffering man in a dialogue, a trial of moral strength and of religious arguments.

It is appropriate here—it is a moral and literary obligation—to quote Chanteur: "Job, I hate you. You submitted to an ignoble treatment, through you evil has come to be ruler of this world. Obedient as you were, you achieved the opposite, you made place for the rebellion of others. . . . You were a coward, Job, and I, neither obedient, nor just, pure or loyal, I do now what you did not, I stand up before God, in revolt. You said Yes to Him; I say No. You accepted the test; I refuse." And so on in like tones, an act of accusation for thirty fiery pages. And, as old as man and woman, the great question: Why is there evil, why does God permit it? And, appropriate to *this* book: Why do the *innocent* suffer?

Yes, a trial of strength, an audacious one on Chanteur's part, since she interrogates God like a prosecutor, erupting in accusations in the name of life miscarried. If you created life, why mutilate the life of my child? Why not choose me, who had lived enough. Why her, to remain forever unaware of the world's splendors, the colors of dawn and dusk, the smiling faces, the friends, the joys? And Job, poor Job, remains diminished, burdened with further charges as if his misery were not enough. He is called a coward, a hypocrite. In short, a good part of the book is an act of accusation directed at Job and his irrational God, a list of reasons to rebel, as if motherhood were the ultimate of existence, blocking all other considerations.

Among many other things, the book is thus a piece of original meditation intertwined with the laments of crippled motherhood. An unusual *genre*, to be sure. We know of funeral orations over great men (Bishop Bossuet, at the court of Louis XIV, was a master of it); we know the parents' cry over a child taken while in bloom. Indeed, other friends, the Belgian philosopher Marcel de Corte and his wife, lost a son fifty years ago, when he was 14, a promising boy. Years later the two wrote a book of memoirs of which I have a copy, a book measured in tone, but with tears still showing although they are now in their eighties. But I never saw a book of philosophy *and* motherhood, written by a proud woman always in command of herself, always the good friend, hostess, delightful and deep conversation partner, and, last but not least, the professor at the Sorbonne. Yes, a new *genre*, true *Lebensroman* and *Lebensphilosophie*, comparable only to Pascal's fiery writing between life and death.

The originality of addressing Job in other than the language of compassion, the boldness of cursing him out, is not only a *trouvaille*, a piece of witty irony, but also a catharsis for the mother. The raw pain that a handicapped child represents is perhaps mitigated, years, decades later, by the book placed over the wound. The negative of life reversed by the positive of creativity; the never-absent human Yes to existence, and in this case transcending what is, after all, an every-day tragedy with a work which consoles.

Still, the mother is unappeased: "What I cannot forgive, Job, what others too cannot forgive, is that you encountered the greatest occasion and missed it, you let it pass, you abandoned God to the vertigo of evil. He could have become a real God, a good one, but you condemned him to injustice through your obedience. You allowed evil to legitimate itself, unmindful that when we do not stand up to evil, it gets fat on our suffering and renunciations."

We should not imagine Janine Chanteur, the woman and the teacher, as a fashionable atheist, the kind to be met a thousand times in one short day around the Sorbonne. She is light-years away from the professorial negators of God like the Lacans, the Derridas, the Althussers. Indeed, the last-mentioned, a flag-bearer for years of rockbottom marxism, an idol of students, recently died an old, decrepit man—at liberty despite the fact that one morning, some ten years ago, he was found screaming in front of his door, "I have just strangled my wife!" It was true, but given his position and prestige, *and* his *Weltanschauung*, the court was lenient. At no time did they envisage punishing him, the murderer of his old wife. They produced favorable witnesses, and extenuating circumstances. After all, he was exhibit number one of the fashionable ideology at that super-institution, the École Normale Supérieure. Why did he deserve a better fate than Janine Chanteur? Why did Job's God keep him alive to do evil for 75 years, while He allowed the little Chanteur girl to suffer hell on earth?

These are, however, questions between Janine and Job. We, the readers, know only the story: the many humiliations at the hands of curers and quacks, the commiserating look in the eyes of doctors who tried, reported success, but then gave up.

And finally the light! Through contacts with some of her own students—who combined the virtues of courtesy and understanding—she had a long talk with André Clément, the dean of a Catholic university and a sponsor of a network of young people. You may

have heard of the Lazarists who back in the time of the Crusades and Turkish wars visited prisoners' camps and bought back Christians held by Moslems. Cervantes was one such ex-hostage. The youths around Clément happened to be in charge of handicapped of all ages. A new chapter was being written, not only in Janine's life, but also in the Book of Job. The handicapped girl, by then thirtyish, found a home, friends, even responsibilities as a helper. For the first time there was a smile on her face: "They like me and want me to help!" Such a sentence was God-given; it was no cure for her incurable sickness, but it rescued her from the sombre hell of a near-vegetative life.

I shall not forget, long before I heard of the book project, the relief in Janine's voice and the happiness on her face. That was some years ago when her child (for Janine she will always remain one, in her dire needs) had escaped from one of her temporary shelters: it was then that the solution was finally found. No, this was no miracle-at-Lourdes, only the company of compassionate young people, mostly students. They were the ones who persuaded the mother, their professor, to write the book.

Who were they? Their "leader" was Marie-Hélène Mathieu, president of the Christian Bureau for the Handicapped. "A strange young woman," Janine told me. "Conversation with her was easy. She combined common sense with a tireless energy in the service of those she met. She had intense blue eyes, as if she saw behind you, beyond the words you uttered. . . . It was her idea to help the child and, later, for me to write this book, not as a story but as a testimony. . . . It was she who found the physician . . . then again it was she who took over my burden so that I became almost jealous of her.

"She used to have a wonderful time with my daughter, in the kitchen, the workshop, the laundry room. They laughed a lot. . . . My daughter discovered a friend, then more friends in those who surrounded Marie-Hélène: young men and women of *good will*, talking, working, praying, in short a company she quickly began to love, perhaps because they took her as she was."

Reconciliation with Job followed as the bitterness subsided. "I used to curse you, Job, insult you, trample you underfoot. I betrayed you, I suffered. God does not use compulsion, He waits: and Jesus is in agony until the world ends. . . . Obedience to Him demands that we purify ourselves, although in our suffering we search for scapegoats. When it seems useless to blame humans, we turn on

God. . . . I am no theologian, but Scripture has slowly become a source to quench my thirst. There are many clouds in my sky, but I can better resist my fears. . . . People helped me, Job, and I who refused angrily the marvels of this world, I know now that they are there, all around me."

Just about the time the book was published, I had lunch with Janine Chanteur. At a restaurant near the Sorbonne, fittingly, since this multi-secular institution is somehow at the center of the story. In fact, the Chanteurs live nearby, on the Boulevard Saint-Michel, and this neighborhood has stamped her life, that is the other side of it, when care for her little girl—and the other children and later grand-children—allowed her to study, write her dissertation, prepare courses, and be a friend to her students. How not to admire a woman who shares her life between a demanding family with a "special" child, and the thorough and profound scholarship displayed in her books—the ingenious and meticulous knowledge of Greek philosophy in one, and the splendid treatise on modern political thought in the other?

We had lunch and talked about mutual European friends. I had not read her Job book yet, I had not been at home in the states when Janine sent me a copy. She presented me now with another one. I was no longer in Paris when I finally read it, and was overwhelmed by its qualities. How does one go about, I asked myself, writing a book of such an intimate nature, yet a book so discreet in spite of all it tells, and from which you lock out any possible note of complicity with today's usual feminist radicalism, aggressiveness, blasphemy? Janine Chanteur has obviously mastered the art. Her style is always in command, discretion spreads over the pages. Pain, the deepest kind, is ever-present, and even if not hope, then reconciliation. Job finally wins the argument, God *is* merciful, and the trials He visits upon men and women are compensated for by the virtues that suffering calls forth.

* * * * *

The Grand-children of Job, I must emphasize, was like an explosion on the Parisian book market, and I expect it will be that wherever it is translated.

Speaking now of the technique of writing, her dialogue with Job, at the beginning and at the end, is a superb invention which, even by itself, would raise the work to enviable level where the personal

and private becomes universal. The story, moreover, of a mother's child (not a father's, as in the case of Job) provides a masterly description of maternal psychology, of souls in conflict with irreducible reality.

Every page, in addition, is a challenge to fashionable notions: a Sorbonne professor's complaint to the living God, her non-feminist womanness, her motherhood shouldered in the face of what passes today as the common-sense solution: abortion or euthanasia. Janine Chanteur's story is both the philosopher's treatise and the narration of the mother's anguish, a very rare, perhaps unique, combination. Above all, it is a great book, not only because it is true, but mainly because it is conducted with delicacy and a sure style, with no loose ends. In spite of the subject, there is at no point the kind of plunge into subjectivity that makes so many contemporary memoirs grotesque reading. One must learn, in speaking of oneself, to exclude as much as possible of the self. In this respect too, Chanteur can give us lessons.

The characters in the book, if I may put it this way, are neither overworked nor are they puppets in a show. Janine's other children, for example, are presented with their demanding concreteness, caring for the innocent child yet in need of the parents' undiminished and undivided love; painfully aware that their friends and their games can never be shared with the handicapped. Perhaps most impressive of all is that Chanteur, mother but also professor, guesses what the impaired child may think and feel as she compares her fate (but does she? how do we know?) with that of her brothers and sisters. They will grow up, know love, have children; she will never know what these things are. She is condemned to the dark cell of the mind and of the heart.

Let me say once more that such a book (but are there such books?) is nowadays dynamite. It flatly contradicts all the slogans and *idées reçues*, it has the value of a hundred feminist, pro-abortionist, anti-family, anti-religious manifestos. Yet, *they* will ask: Why all this hullabaloo, why not have aborted in the first place, then gone to a psychoanalyst for treatment of the trauma? Why not, indeed. Ask Job—and ask Janine Chanteur.

Fables of Alienation

John Wauck

> *To begin with: though it was probably the case that he was ill and that it was his illness—depression—which made the world seem farcical, it is impossible to prove the case.*
>
> *On the one hand, he was depressed.*
>
> *On the other hand, the world is in fact farcical.*
>
> —Williston Barrett contemplating suicide on a North Carolina golf course in Walker Percy's novel *The Second Coming*

Because psychiatry plays a prominent role in his novels, and his heroes have notably fragile psyches, it is sometimes assumed, by those who know that he attended Columbia Medical School, that Walker Percy studied psychiatry. Even the biographical notes in the new Ballantine paperback editions of his novels inform the reader that he intended to be a psychiatrist. In fact, however, the closest he came to being one was three years of psychoanalysis during medical school. Percy was trained as a pathologist, and, in a sense, he remained a pathologist all his life.

Doctor Percy's path to literary fame was not a straight one. Born in Birmingham, Alabama in 1916, he was orphaned after his father, a Harvard-educated lawyer, committed suicide in 1927 and his mother was killed in a car accident two years later. Percy was raised by his uncle William Alexander Percy, the well-known author of *Lanterns on the Levee*, a lamentation on the decline of Southern patrician virtue.

After studying chemistry at Chapel Hill, Percy attended Columbia Medical School in New York. But in 1941, while interning at Bellevue Hospital, he contracted tuberculosis, and he spent the next few years in and out of sanatoria at Lake Saranac (in upstate New York) and in Connecticut (where, as it happened, he slept in Eugene O'Neill's old bed). During this period, he read a great deal of philosophy and, in the words of Flannery O'Connor, "he and St. Thomas became friends." Indeed, Percy and Aquinas became such good friends that,

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shortly after marrying Mary Bernice Pratt in 1946 (the writer Shelby Foote, a childhood friend, was his best man), Percy and his wife converted to Roman Catholicism.

Financially independent, he decided not to practice medicine, and turned instead to reading, writing, and social observation. He became what might be called a spiritual pathologist—not a healer but a diagnostician of the modern soul. During the 1950s, he published several philosophical essays in scholarly journals. His first novel, *The Moviegoer*, won the National Book Award in 1962, after which he wrote a novel about every five years until his death from cancer in 1990. Along the way, he published two non-fiction works: a collection of essays entitled *The Message in the Bottle* (1975) and *Lost in the Cosmos: The Last Self-Help Book* (1983).

In one essay, "Notes for a Novel About the End of the World," Percy imagines the work of a novelist with an "explicit and ultimate concern with the nature of man and the nature of reality where man finds himself." This imaginary author is in the tradition not of Jane Austen or Charles Dickens but of Tolstoy, Camus, Faulkner, Dostoyevski, and Flannery O'Connor; his fiction might be described as philosophical, metaphysical, prophetic, eschatological, religious.

Of course, the novelist is Percy himself (one of his own novels is set "at a time near the end of the world"). Percy's novels and essays make up a single, consistent *oeuvre*, an extended meditation on the nature of the human condition in modern America, tied together by not only a common theme but also a common perspective and tone of voice. Having read Percy's essays, most of which, although not collected and published until 1975, were written before the novels, one easily detects characters in the novels—they are often rather thinly "disguised" as comical crackpots—who directly or obliquely speak the mind of their creator. Although Percy's novels are not autobiographical in the conventional sense (they are not *about* their author or his life), all of Percy's heroes are essentially the same person—an aimless Southern doctor or lawyer whose sensibility, preoccupations and predilections faithfully echo those of Walker Percy himself. The narrators of his novels speak remarkably like Walker Percy the essayist, even drawing on the same experiences and examples. The novels thus constitute an illustrated version of the essays, a fictional elaboration of his philosophical preoccupations.

As an essayist, Percy's characteristic attitude before the modern world is that of a musing observer—a perplexed clinician struck

by an anomaly in the medical chart. He has hunches, he starts asking questions:

> Why is a man apt to feel bad in a good environment, say suburban Short Hills, New Jersey, on an ordinary Wednesday afternoon? Why is the same man apt to feel good in a very bad environment, say an old hotel on Key Largo during a hurricane? . . .
>
> Why is it that the only time I ever saw my uncle happy during his life was the afternoon of December 7, 1941, when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor?

It is with such questions that Percy begins his examination of contemporary man. What sort of strange creature fails to follow the scientific principle that an organism should flourish in good environments and decline in bad ones? Even in the best possible surroundings, modern man seems sad, anxious, and frustrated. For no apparent reason, he is unhappy.

And what is Dr. Percy's diagnosis? He believes that modern man suffers from a spiritual malaise—an "alienation" from his own life. The source of this alienation, he says, is a view of man derived from modern science and Cartesian philosophy. In 1989, Percy told an interviewer from *Crisis* magazine:

> To oversimplify vastly, I work on a couple of premises. One is that twentieth-century man is deranged, literally deranged. In this society, which is post-Christian, post-modern—the era doesn't have a name yet—there is no coherent theory of man . . . . The only theory of man in the air is what comes from the popular media, which is a kind of a pop scientific idea which I say is fundamentally Cartesian and incoherent.

"There is a kind of knowledge," writes the Romanian epigrammatist E. M. Cioran, "that strips whatever you do of weight and scope." Walker Percy would say that our Cartesian, pop-scientific idea of man is one such kind of knowledge. This sort of "knowledge" is not genuine science, but its bastard child, which Percy calls "the theoretical mindset," which is regularly applied to matters that science is not equipped to handle: "The scientific method is correct as far as it goes," he writes, "but the theoretical mindset, which assigns significance to single things and events only insofar as they are exemplars of theory or items for consumption, is in fact an inflation of a method of knowing to a totalitarian worldview."

Modern science discovers ways to describe or explain a class of things or phenomena. The particular thing or action is always an instance of a type. A grain of salt, for example, interests the scientist only as an instance of a type (a specimen of NaCl), not as a unique

grain, this one and no other. Because science is not designed to cope with the individual as an individual or with choices inasmuch as they are free but only inasmuch as they are predictable by general principles, the flip-side of science's project of generalizing is inattention to the individual as such. Thus science is not concerned with a crucial truth about all created things: the act of existing is performed not by types or species but by unique, one-of-a-kind, here-and-now things. In the real world, there is no such thing as "a cat," i.e., a feline mammal; there are only particular cats—this cat, that cat. In its pursuit of general truths, science looks beyond the individual act of existing which for every single thing is unique. The result, in Percy's words, of this "oversight of the act of being" is "the loss of the creature."

Modern man has inevitably come to view himself through the eyes of the scientific theorist. He sees himself as an instance of *homo sapiens*—an example of a type with definable general characteristics—but he has lost his feel for the individuality of things, places, and people. As a result, in the modern world, "Everyone becomes an anyone," as Percy's narrator Binx Bolling puts it in *The Moviegoer*.

In effect, our generalizing theories of science have written the individual out of existence. According to Percy, the theoretically-minded modern man makes himself an alien in his own world. Through his theories, he constructs a world in which he is himself inexplicable; the theory explains everything except the theorist. For example, in a 1990 article in *Crisis*, Percy writes:

> Darwin, Newton, and Freud were theorists. They pursued truth more or less successfully—from which, however, they themselves were exempt. You will look in vain in Darwin's *Origin of the Species* for an explanation of Darwin's behavior in writing *Origin of the Species*.

This phenomenon exposes the characteristic inadequacy of the modern theoretical mindset: "No matter how powerful the theory, whether psychological or political, one's self is always a leftover. Indeed the self may be defined as that portion of the person which cannot be encompassed by theory, not even a theory of the self." To the degree that one partakes of the theoretical mindset—to the degree, that is, that one is educated nowadays—one's self becomes inexplicable and meaningless, and life as we know it (an endless stream of passing moments, particular events and encounters) is stripped of significance. A man exists in a world where there is no reason to exist as an individual, surrounded by particular realities that have

no meaning in themselves, a world where to understand something is to make it irrelevant.

Early on in *The Moviegoer*, Binx Bolling describes his futile search for a scientific theory to explain the meaning of his life:

> I sat in a hotel room in Birmingham and read a book called *The Chemistry of Life.* When I finished it, it seemed to me that the main goals of my search were reached or were in principle reachable, whereupon I went out and saw a movie called *It Happened One Night* which was itself very good. A memorable night. The only difficulty was that though the universe had been disposed of, I myself was left over. There I lay in my hotel room with my search over yet still obliged to draw one breath and then the next.

The "loss of the creature" and the meaninglessness of life are not our only infirmities. While the theoretical malaise has infected his soul, the modern American has also caught a bad case of Cartesianism. Indeed, Percy approves of Alexis de Tocqueville's observation that Americans, without having read a word of Descartes, are all Cartesians because they view the human person as chiefly a rational soul and, consequently, see the body not as an essential constituent of the person but as a machine or tool at the service of the "real person," the immaterial mind.

As the modern person is a disembodied psyche—all head, no body—the body becomes not the true home of the self but an extraneous possession, an appendage which is, in some sense, beside the point. According to Percy, the theoretical mindset and the Cartesian view of man alienate man from his body. His flesh is now "seen through and canceled, rendered null by the cold and fishy eye of the malaise"—just another instance of mammalian evolution, a fairly common arrangement of nuclear particles.

Walker Percy, the metaphysical novelist, remains enough of a medical doctor never to neglect the body. Always eager to give biology its due, he can't resist bringing his abstracted characters down to earth with a good shot of embodiment. In *The Second Coming*, Will Barrett's philosophical sojourn in a North Carolina cave is rudely interrupted by sinus problems; Dr. More, the brilliant psychiatrist, is plagued by hives. Waging war on the tendency to see man in abstract terms, Percy is constantly dropping technical anatomical terms: fossa, axillae, sacrum, pineal glands, sclerae.

The peculiar predicament of man, in Percy's view, is that though he is constantly drawn to both the spiritual realm of angels and

the fleshly realm of beasts, he cannot be at home in either without doing violence to his nature. An odd creature that is at once animal and spirit, immanent and transcendent, a "who" and a "what," his true home, neither angelic nor bestial, is somewhere in between. According to Percy, to exist as a whole human being, to be truly alive, one's soul must fully animate one's body and the body must fully incarnate the soul: the angel, in other words, must lie down with the beast.

In Percy's 1971 novel *Love in the Ruins: The Adventures of a Bad Catholic at a Time Near the End of the World*, the "bad Catholic" of the title is a psychiatrist named Thomas More, a distant relative of Saint Thomas More (because his head was separated from his body, St. Thomas More seems an appropriate patron saint for Walker Percy's alienated hero). Like Doctor Percy, Doctor More is a diagnostician of the soul. In fact, he is the inventor of a "stethoscope of the spirit" (More's Qualitative Quantitative Ontological Lapsometer) which measures alienation. By measuring the distance between spirit and body, the Ontological Lapsometer measures how far one falls short of full existence. As the traditional definition of death is the separation of the soul from the body, "giving up the ghost," Percy believes this separation has ushered mankind into an age of death—"not the death people die but the death people live," as one of his heroes puts it.

The only cure that Dr. More prescribes for this malaise of the living dead is a new, un-Cartesian way of looking at ourselves:

> To see man not the less mysterious but of a piece, maybe even whole, a whole creature put together again after the 300-year-old Cartesian split that sundered man from himself in the old modern age, when man was seen as a 'mind' somehow inhabiting a 'body,' neither knowing what one had to do with the other, a lonesome ghost in an abused machine.

Whenever Percy speaks of the modern era, he refers to it as "the old modern era," to signify that we are living in a post-modern world:

> It is post-modern because the Age of Enlightenment with its vision of man as a rational creature, naturally good and part of the cosmos which itself is understandable by natural science—this age has ended. It ended with the catastrophes of the twentieth century. . . . the most scientifically advanced, savage, democratic, inhuman, sentimental, murderous century in human history. (*Crisis*, 1990)

World War I—particularly the battles of the Somme and Verdun,

in which "two million young men were killed toward no discernable end"—holds special significance for Percy, for it was in that conflict that the world of confident all-comprehending scientific humanism received its *coup de grâce.* Dr. Thomas More calls it "the beginning of the hemorrhage and suicide of the old Western World. . . . the beginning of a new age, an age not yet named," and claims: "The world really ended in 1916 . . . we've been living in a dream ever since."

The scientific humanism that typified the post-Enlightenment West has ceased to make sense; it no longer accounts for the human condition. And we have yet to replace it with another explanation of the human condition. In this spiritual no man's land where Percy's characters dwell, people are numb, lifeless. The platitudes of the "old modern world," the enlightened nostrums of scientific humanism, leave them cold. In *The Last Gentleman*, the well-meaning Rita makes a wish for her estranged husband Sutter's dying little brother: "I desire for Jamie that he achieve as much self-fulfillment as he can in the little time he has. I desire for him beauty and joy, not death," she declares, to which the cynical Sutter replies, "That is death." In *The Moviegoer*, Binx notes bitterly: "It happens when I speak to people. In the middle of a sentence it will come over me: yes, beyond a doubt this is death."

Thus, as Percy observes in "Notes for a Novel About the End of the World," the Everyman of twentieth-century America lives in despair, surrounded by death: "the hero of the postmodern novel is a man who has forgotten his bad memories, and conquered his present ills, and who finds himself in the victorious secular city. His only problem now is to keep from blowing his brains out." Under ordinary circumstances, he has no reason to live, to exist, or to act. Modern theories of the world—whether sociological, psychological, or political—are no help to the man who has no reason to go on living when things get dull. Percy asks in the 1990 *Crisis* interview: "Even if one becomes passionately convinced of Freudian theory or Marxist theory at three o'clock of a Wednesday afternoon, what does one do with oneself at four o'clock?" Indeed, at four-o'clock on a Wednesday afternoon (Percy's favorite example of quintessential ordinariness, when the farcicality of things weighs most heavily), modern man is utterly expendable. He views his own body and own life from such a dizzying height of theoretically-abstracted

alienation that they are a matter of profound indifference to him. His life as he has learned to see it has so little connection with his life as he actually lives it that he exists as a stranger to himself. As the hours and days pass, the unevolved, immaterial, scientifically inexplicable self looks on from a distance.

Percy believes that lust is one of the chief symptoms of modern alienation. Toward the end of *The Moviegoer*, Binx Bolling makes a confession, a profession not of faith but of despair:

> Now in the thirty-first year of my dark pilgrimage on this earth and knowing less than I ever knew before, having learned only to recognize merde when I see it, having inherited no more from my father than a good nose for merde, for every species of shit that flies—my only talent—smelling merde from every quarter, living in fact in the very century of merde, the great shithouse of scientific humanism where needs are satisfied, everyone becomes an anyone, a warm and creative person, and prospers like a dung beetle, and one hundred percent of people are humanists and ninety-eight percent believe in God, and men are dead, dead, dead; and the malaise has settled like a fall-out and what people really fear is not that the bomb will fall but that the bomb will not fall—on this my thirtieth birthday, I know nothing and there is nothing to do but fall prey to desire.

For the alienated soul, sex holds enormous promise. Indeed, in *Lost in the Cosmos*, Percy refers to "the erotic encounter" as "the last remaining unfailed festival of the 20th century," and quotes the psychologist Paul Ricouer's observation that, "at the same time that sexuality becomes insignificant, it becomes more imperative as a response to the disappointments experienced in other sectors of human life." For many, sex becomes ever more truly what someone called it early in this century: "an irresistible bore." According to Percy, the man dispossessed of his own body by the spirit of Cartesian abstraction tries to compensate by increasingly compulsive and decreasingly satisfying recourse to sexual indulgence:

> The Self since the time of Descartes has been split off from everything else in the Cosmos, a mind that professes to understand bodies and galaxies but is by the very act of understanding marooned in the Cosmos, with which it has no connection. It therefore needs to exercise every option in order to reassure itself that it is not a ghost but is rather a self among other selves. One such option is a sexual encounter. . . . The pleasure of a sexual encounter derives not only from physical gratification but also from the demonstration to oneself that, despite one's own ghostliness, one is, for the moment at least, a sexual being.

In *The Last Gentleman*, the suicidal doctor Sutter declares that "lewdness" is "the sacrament of the dispossessed." Sex, the contact

of flesh upon flesh, is the only connection with reality that the dispossessed man has left. According to Sutter, lewdness pervades contemporary society because lewdness characterizes "the climate of the anteroom of science," that is, not the laboratory of genuine science but the pop-scientific world of modern society where everyone has adopted the theoretical mindset. He pities "women in the suburbs for whom pseudo-scientific articles in Reader's Digest are the natural prelude to dirty novels," because, as Percy explains in *Lost in the Cosmos*, the theoretical view of sex is inextricably linked with the pornographic view. Percy says that pornography is a

> . . . salient and prime property of modern consciousness, of three hundred years of technology and the industrial revolution, and is symptomatic of a radical disorder in the relation of the self to other selves which generally manifests itself in the abstracted state of one self (male) and the degradation of another self (female) to an abstract object of satisfaction.

Pornography, in Percy's view, is the dalliance of the alienated modern man with meaningless modern flesh. Indeed, most of today's sexual immorality involves habitually transcendent creatures attempting to reacquaint themselves with their neglected bodies, a phenomenon Percy calls "re-entry." In *Love in the Ruins*, Dr. Thomas More describes the man whose spirit has been totally disconnected from his body "winging it like Jupiter and spying comely maids and having to take the form of swans and bulls to approach them":

> . . . he'll live like a ghost inhabiting himself. He'll orbit the earth forever, reading dials and recording data and spinning theories by day, and at night seek to re-enter the world of creatures by taking the form of beasts and performing unnatural practices.

Lancelot Lamar, the raving cuckold and murderer-hero of *Lancelot*, gives Percy's analysis a regional twist. For him the quintessential alienated man is a Northerner:

> The Northerner is at heart a pornographer. He is an abstract mind with a genital attached. . . . His soul is at Harvard. . . . His body lives on Forty-second Street. Do you think there is no relation between Harvard and Forty-second Street? One is the backside of the other.

Dr. Percy detects signs of sexual alienation in speech. For him, immodest speech is the native tongue of the alienated soul. Whenever women are speaking, the men in Percy's novels are sticklers for modesty. To speak of sexual matters with scientific objectivity seems as offensive to them as "dirty" language—indeed the two ways of speaking are different sides of the same alienated coin. To them,

the high-tech "Love Clinic" in *Love in the Ruins*, staffed by doctors, psychiatrists, and ex-priests, is as obscene as any brothel; Dr. Ruth is as obscene as Linda Lovelace.

In *Lost in the Cosmos*, Percy notes that the word "boredom" and pornography as we understand it both first appear in the 18th century, and he sees them as twin products of post-Enlightenment ennui. The sexually explicit words fail to make Percy's female characters blush because one blushes when one is self-conscious, but nowadays the body and its doings are beneath contempt; to speak of them is not to speak of oneself. The body and the language applied to it have been emptied of personal meaning.

The sensual indulgence that Percy considers a typical reaction to alienation is related to another important symptom of alienation hinted at in an entry in Binx Bolling's notebook: "Explore connection between romanticism and scientific objectivity. Does a scientifically minded person become a romantic because he is a left-over from his own science?" Like sensuality, romanticism is a dialectical reaction to the inadequacy of theoretical mindset.

People are not content simply to exist; they want not just to live but to revel in living—to live ecstatically. Although they are essential to the life of men, some notions—right and wrong, good and evil, beauty and ugliness, the "self"—are not scientific categories. And so, just as Cartesian abstraction paradoxically fosters a pornographic sensuality, the theoretical mindset fosters an anti-scientific romanticism to account for what science leaves out.

The type of romanticism that Percy dissects most thoroughly is "moviegoing." It doesn't refer to attendance at the local cinema. It is an approach to life, an effort to find aesthetic rather than scientific criteria by which to guide one's life. In *The Moviegoer*, Binx spots a young man on a bus reading a novel by Stendahl and asks himself:

> How does he read *The Charterhouse of Parma*? Immediately as a man who is in the world and who has an appetite for the book as he might have an appetite for peaches, or mediately as one who finds himself under the necessity of sticking himself into the world in a certain fashion, of slumping in an acceptable slump, of reading an acceptable book on an acceptable bus? Is he a romantic?
>
> He is a romantic. His posture is the first clue: it is too good to be true, this distillation of all graceful slumps. . . . He is a moviegoer, though of course he does not go to movies.

Percy claims that the romantic "moviegoer" experiences an intolerable pressure to live up to the "gestural perfection" he observes in movies,

art and literature, where every look, action and word is fraught with significance, style and beauty. He wants, in short, to be a legend of the silver screen. To be like that, he thinks, would be *to live* (don't movie-stars seem to possess a magical vitality, a heightened reality, that everyone yearns for?). But the moviegoer's (rare) moments of "real living" are only "successful impersonations" of the movie star. When he feels most alive, the life he lives is not even his own; he is watching himself on stage. Moreover, he is destined for despair, for the deck is stacked against him. Clark Gable, Cary Grant, John Wayne, and Humphrey Bogart are never asked to do what everyone else does: spend one third of their lives asleep, brush their teeth, go to the bathroom, watch TV, and die long, boring deaths in comfortable beds.

"Oh the crap that lies lurking in the English soul," says Binx Bolling in *The Moviegoer*, "Somewhere it, the English soul, received an injection of romanticism which nearly killed it. That's what killed my father, English romanticism, that and 1930s science."

Because the victim of romanticism finds ordinary life intolerable, he seeks dramatic experiences—adventure, romance, exoticism—to make life tolerable. By providing a reason for decisive action, extraordinarily bad circumstances (the hurricane at Key Largo) can make him happier than comfortable ordinary circumstances (Wednesday afternoon on a train bound for Short Hills, New Jersey). He wants to live not easily but heroically, but opportunites for heroism are hard to find. Percy's second and fifth novels, *The Last Gentleman* and *The Second Coming*, are meditations upon the suicide of Will Barrett's incurably romantic father, who killed himself because he couldn't stand the ordinariness of life. He was born for heroic virtue but lived in an unheroic age: he "could not even walk down the street on Monday morning," says Will, "without either wanting to kill someone or swear a blood oath of allegiance with somebody else."

There are more mundane ways to escape from the crushing ennui of going through the motions of day-to-day living, ways to escape from the haunting, ghostly self that stares over one's own shoulder; there are other ways for the alienated man to "get into himself," to inhabit his own flesh and be a whole person, which cause the "ghost self" to evaporate. When he can lose himself in an intense experience, for a while at least the person seems whole; soul and

body act in unison, as a body-soul. So he seeks experiences that distract him from himself: laughter, horror, sexual pleasure, alcohol, drugs, pain, intense physical ordeal or exercise, or novel experience—any sort of ecstasy that will erase the sense of split consciousness. A particularly effective sort of ecstatic experience is the threat of death; a secret pleasure shared by the invalid and the soldier, it helps them feel alive. Indeed, as Percy quotes Churchill: "Nothing makes a man feel better than to be shot at without effect."

But what does one do after the distracting exhilaration wears off? What happens when, say, the music from the Walkman no longer distracts but merely provides the soundtrack for the haunting? After writing "the great American novel," watching a superb film, listening to a magnificent symphony, or narrowly escaping a brush with death—what do you do? What did Lazarus do *the day after* Christ raised him from the dead?

In fact, because they remind one that escape tactics are no match for the malaise, temporary stretches of ecstatic living only aggravate one's alienation. The malaise is most intense after exaltation and ecstasy. Of Will Barrett's suicidal father it is said in *The Second Coming*:

> The war came. His father was happy. Most people seemed happy. Fifty million people were killed. People dreamed of peace. Peace came. His father became unhappy. Most people seemed unhappy.

Shortly thereafter, Will's father kills himself.

Despair follows short-lived ecstasies. Sutter, the renegade doctor in *The Last Gentleman*, develops a theory of "post-orgasmic suicide" to explain suicides sparked by the failure of sex as a method of ecstatic living, as a way of "re-entry" to overcome abstraction. Sex between alienated people is utterly incapable of overcoming the malaise. In one famous scene in *The Moviegoer*, Binx and his cousin Kate make a desperate stab at sexual intimacy, but they fail miserably:

> The burden was too great and flesh poor flesh, neither hallowed by sacrament nor despised by spirit (for despising is not the worst fate to overtake the flesh), but until this moment seen through and canceled, rendered null by the cold and fishy eye of the malaise—flesh poor flesh now at this moment summoned all at once to be all and everything, end all and be all, the last and only hope—quails and fails.

"Romanticism" is most pernicious when it substitutes for ethics. The name that Percy gives to the hybrid ethical sensibility that incorporates both scientific objectivity and romanticism is "scientific

humanism." Its fundamentally incoherent message is: "You are a clever ape, a chemical accident. Now be nice to your neighbor." Modern science, the "1930s science" that killed Binx's father (not the science that Percy's own father knew—his father killed himself in 1927—but the science that Walker Percy embraced at Chapel Hill and Columbia Medical School), offers neither a reason for moral behavior nor a definition of what "moral behavior" might be. When science of this sort informs one's vision of reality, when it is taken for the one truly rational, modern perspective upon man, then one looks outside the realm of reason for the moral truths that men need; one's morality becomes a species of emotionalism. Everyone may be "nice," but science can't explain why, and people have no reason not to commit a horrible deed when science or "niceness" seems to dictate it. In *The Message in the Bottle*, Percy reflects on the apparent paradox:

> Yes, it's true; in fact there seem to be more nice people around now than ever before, but somehow as the world grows nicer it also grows more violent. The triumphant secular society of the Western world, the nicest of all worlds, killed more people in the first half of this century than have been killed in all history. Travelers to Germany before the last war reported that the Germans were the nicest people in Europe.

Flannery O'Connor once wrote, "In the absence of faith, we govern by tenderness," and taking the theme one step further, Dr. More's troubled pastor Fr. Smith says, in *The Thanatos Syndrome*, that tenderness leads "to the gas chamber."

As the horrors of the twentieth century make clear, feelings are an unreliable protection against horrible deeds. "We've got it wrong about horror," says Father Smith, "It doesn't come naturally but takes some effort." In an interview with Phil McCombs of the Washington *Post*, Percy himself observed: "People have learned to accept everything. You have to *cultivate* a sense of horror."

Men, especially doctors, for whom the sight of blood and mangled human flesh—life and death—is a professional routine, can get used to anything. That's why we have euthanasia or "mercy killing"—murder made innocent by reason of niceness, for even murder can be "nice" when the victim has a sufficiently low "quality of life." In 1971, two years before the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion, in *Love in the Ruins* Percy was already satirizing the nice "quality of life" ethic subscribed to by liberal jurists. At one point, he mocks "the late William O. Douglas":

> a famous qualitarian who improved the quality of life in India by serving

> as adviser in a successful program of 100,000,000 abortions and an equal number of painless 'terminations' of miserable and unproductive old folk.

In the same novel, Percy foresaw the debate over euthanasia that would characterize American ethical culture "at a time near the end of the world":

> Here's the hottest political issue of the day: euthanasia. Say the euthanasists not unreasonably: let's be honest, why should people suffer and cause suffering to other people? It is the quality of life that counts, not longevity, etcetera. Every man is entitled to live his life with freedom and to end it with dignity, etcetera etcetera. It came down to one curious squabble (like the biggest theology fight coming down to whether to add the *que* to the *filio*): the button *vs.* the switch. Should a man have the right merely to self-stimulation, pressing the button that delivers bliss precisely until the blissful thumb relaxes and lets go the button? Or does he not also have the right to throw a switch that stays on, inducing a permanent joy—no meals, no sleep, and a happy death in a week or so? The button *vs.* the switch. And if he has such a right and is judged legally incompetent to throw the switch, cannot a relative throw it for him?

Because we are alienated not only from ourselves but also from other people, it is emotionally a small step from suicide (when we pity ourselves or decide that we're "a burden") to killing others (when we pity them or decide that they're a burden). In Percy's final novel, *The Thanatos Syndrome* (*thanatos* is, of course, Greek for "death"), the United States has officially progressed beyond euthanasia to "pedeuthanasia" and "gereuthanasia"—the killing of sickly children and senile old folks.

When we see ourselves and others through the eyes of theory, the horror is removed from killing; cool, black-and-white statistics can make a hecatomb look quite bloodless.

> Marx and Stalin, Nietzsche and Hitler were also theorists. When theory is applied, not to matter or beasts, but to man, the consequence is that millions of men can be eliminated without compunction or even much interest. Survivors of both Hitler's holocaust and Stalin's terror reported that their oppressors were not "horrible" and "diabolical" but seemed, on the contrary, quite ordinary, even bored by their actions, as if it were all in a day's work.

Nazi Germany preys on Percy's imagination because, at 18, he was in Germany when Hitler came to power, and was struck at the time by both the scientific brilliance and the tender sentimentality of the Germans (Teutonic technical expertise and romanticism—German cars and scientific instruments, Strauss Waltzes and Brahms—appear frequently in Percy's novels). "Don't forget that the Germans used to be the friendliest, most sentimental people on earth," he

writes, but adds, ". . . euthanasia was instituted not by the Nazis but by the friendly democratic Germans of the Weimar Republic." And Percy sees a parallel between Weimar Germany and contemporary America: "Americans are the nicest, most generous and sentimental people on earth, yet Americans have killed more unborn children than any nation in history. Now euthanasia is beginning."

Sexual immorality, Cartesian indifference to the body's claims to personhood, the theoretical mindset, and ethical emotionalism all come together in abortion, the ultimate conflation of sex and death, the epitome of twentieth century *eros* and *thanatos*. When two alienated people engage in sex, the last thing on their minds is the creation of the body of another person. But that is exactly what their bodies—no matter how alienated—are designed to do. And if a woman finds herself "in trouble," we are of course "nice" enough to let her kill the unborn human being inside her.

The pro-abortion view of the unborn human being is a classic instance of the scientific mindset's power to alienate. The new creature is labeled "a fetus." Not a baby. Not a particular boy or girl waiting to be born, known, and named. Just "a fetus"—as if, though the words "fetus" and "unborn baby" refer to exactly the same thing, the changed name somehow changed the reality. What the names do in fact change is one's emotional reaction and, consequently, our morals and our laws. In an age of ethical emotionalism, when we govern by "tenderness," morality follows emotions (it's not that we cry because something is wrong; rather it's wrong because we cry about it). The language of science—the language of "fetuses" and "blastocytes" and "products of conception"—does not indulge in emotional connotation; it is designed to arrive at the objective truth. It inspires neither tears nor laughter nor morality.

In the 1990 *Crisis* interview, Percy said: "It may be quite true what Mother Teresa said—if a mother can kill her unborn child, then I can kill you and you can kill me—but it is not necessarily horrifying. . ." Indeed, Americans are not horrified by abortion. Overcoming the aversion to human bloodshed, it seems, was as easy as changing a name.

And once the sense of horror is lost, it is hard to retrieve. Ethical emotionalism presumes that morals derive from feelings rather than logical arguments; in such a climate, it is virtually impossible to argue for a feeling. In January of 1988, Percy wrote a letter to the

New York *Times*, the tenor of which expressed his hopelessness at the task of changing men's hearts about the act of abortion:

> . . . it hardly seems worth the time to enter the controversy on the present terms. Thus while it may be argued that in terms of Judeo-Christian values individual human life is sacred and may not be destroyed, and while it is also true that modern medical evidence shows ever more clearly that there is no qualitative difference between an unborn human infant and a born human infant, the argument is persuasive only to those who accept such values and such evidence. . . . Rather than enter the fray with one or another argument which, whether true or not, seems to be unavailing, I should like to call attention to certain social and historical consequences which may be less well known . . .

Percy goes on to describe the policies of the pre-Nazi Weimar Republic, referring particularly to the influential book *The Justification of the Destruction of Life Devoid of Meaning* by the renowned law professor and one-time chief justice of the Imperial German Supreme Court, Karl Binding, and Alfred Hoche, a prominent psychiatrist. He writes:

> . . . the ideas expressed in the book and the policies advocated were not the product of Nazi ideology but rather of the best minds of the pre-Nazi Weimar Republic—physicians, social scientists, jurists and the like who with the best secular intentions wished to improve the lot, socially and genetically, of the German people—by getting rid of the unfit and the unwanted.
>
> It is hardly necessary to say what use the Nazis made of these ideas. . . . once the principle gains acceptance—juridically, medically, socially—that innocent human life can be destroyed for whatever reasons, for the most admirable socio-economic, medical or social reasons—then it does not take a prophet to predict what will happen next, or if not next then sooner or later.

The New York *Times* refused to print Walker Percy's letter, which was subsequently printed in this journal. Two years later, shortly before his death, in an article in *Crisis*, Percy was more blunt:

> . . . it should not be surprising that present-day liberals favor abortion just as the Nazis did years ago . . . . Nor should it be surprising that for the same reason liberals not only favor abortion but are now beginning to favor euthanasia as the Nazis did.
>
> Liberals understandably see no contradiction and should not be blamed for favoring abortion and euthanasia on the one hand and the "sacredness of the individual," care for the poor, the homeless, and the oppressed on the other. Because it is one thing for a liberal editor to see the poor and the homeless on his way to work in his own city and another to read a medical statistic in his own paper about one million abortions. A liberal may act from his own consumer needs (guilt, sentimentality) and the Nazis

may act from theory (eugenics, racial purity) but both are consistent in an age of theory and consumption.

Percy's last word on abortion is in *The Thanatos Syndrome.* Speaking from his watchtower, where he is on the look-out for forest fires, Father Smith makes a plea which (according to Phil McCombs, who interviewed Percy for the Washington *Post* in 1987) is Percy's own "personal plea":

> Listen to me, dear physicians, dear brothers, dear Qualitarians, abortionists, euthanasiasts! . . . If you have a patient, young or old, suffering, dying, afflicted, useless, born or unborn, whom you for the best reasons wish to put out of his misery—I beg only one thing of you, dear doctors! . . . Don't kill them!

Dr. Percy's response to the alienation he saw all around him and depicted in his novels—to a meaningless "living death" in an age of incoherent "scientific humanism," driven to and fro by desire and battered by manifestations of the "thanatos syndrome"—was a religious conversion. In *Esquire* magazine in 1977, Percy wrote:

> This life is too much trouble, far too strange, to arrive at the end of it and then be asked what you make of it and have to answer "Scientific Humanism." That won't do. A poor show. Life is a mystery, love is a delight. Therefore I take it as axiomatic that one should settle for nothing less than the infinite mystery and the infinite delight, i.e., God. In fact I demand it. I refuse to settle for anything less . . .

For Percy, two things escape the grasp of the theoretical mindset of scientific humanism and reveal its inadequacy; they are signs pointing the way out of the malaise. One is the self. The other is the Jews. Speaking of his search for the meaning of existence, Binx Bolling says, "Jews are my first real clue." At one point in *The Message in the Bottle,* Percy himself asks:

> Where are the Hittites?
>
> Why does no one find it remarkable that in most world cities today there are Jews but not one single Hittite, even though the Hittites had a great flourishing civilization while the Jews nearby were a weak and obscure people?
>
> When one meets a Jew in New York or New Orleans or Paris or Melbourne, it is remarkable that no one considers the event remarkable. What are they doing here? But it is even more remarkable to wonder, if there are Jews here, why are there not Hittites here?
>
> Where are the Hittites? Show me one Hittite in New York City.

The existence, phenomenon and experience of the Jews is unaccountable to "the theoretical mindset, which assigns significance

to single things and events only insofar as they are exemplars of theory or items for consumption." The Jews are a scandal of particularity: it is an outrage to the theoretical mindset that this tribe—this particular man Abraham or Moses—should be essential to history. But history is not a process, and its "truths" are not general. Its truths are the sort that are only accessible through stories.

To view the story of God and man as an example of a familiar phenomenon called "religion," is to kill it off, to castrate it. Kate sums up Percy's view when she says something that, because of the powerful influence of the theoretical mindset, may at first seem nonsensical: "God is not religious." Yahweh is not a thing, a type, a category of phenomena, because He, God Himself, is a person—a unique irreducible self.

Percy goes on to say, "By 'the Jews' I mean not only Israel, the exclusive people of God, but the worldwide *ecclesia* instituted by one of them, God become man, a Jew." Discussing Christian and Jewish literary sensibilities, he told Phil McCombs: "Oh, we're talking about the same thing. We're talking about a Jewish sect, you know—the Catholic Church." The point of Percy's essay "The Message in the Bottle" is that Christianity also resists the theoretical mindset by focussing on "not a piece of knowledge *sub specie aeternitatis* but a piece of news," and by being "not a member in good standing in the World's Great Religions but a unique Person-Event-Thing in time." As Percy sees it: "the object of the Christian is not the teaching but the teacher."

Percy sees man as a Robinson Crusoe figure, who is stranded on the shores of a cosmos he doesn't understand, unsure of where he came from and what he is here for, but who unexpectedly receives a message in a bottle from beyond the sea which reveals the truth about man to man. The "message" is the Word of God, which came that men might have life and have it abundantly.

Most of Walker Percy's essays and novels can be seen as arguments for Roman Catholicism—not so much for the religion as for its "anthropology," its philosophy of man's nature. This is a response to not only the theoretical mindset but also the Cartesian alienation from the body, for the heart of Christian anthropology is that we are neither pure spirits nor merely biological creatures. Catholicism and Judaism—religions of ritual, tangible religions—have no truck with disembodied souls; both body and spirit are important. These religions embrace the solution to the "Cartesian split" that Dr. More

perceives when he says: "Perhaps it was not a case of exorcising the ghost, as the scientists wanted to do but of discovering a creature who was neither ghost nor machine." To overcome the malaise, man must learn to live and see himself as Jews and Christians have traditionally done, as both mind and body—an incarnate soul, a spirited body.

The "bad Catholic" Thomas More has great difficulty explaining his faith to his two Protestant wives, who seem to subscribe to the abstract version of "religion." Indeed, seeming to date the origin of the alienated modern soul to a time well before Descartes and closer to the Protestant Reformation, Dr. More refers at one point not to the "300-year Cartesian split" but to the "chasm between body and mind that has sundered the soul of Western man for five hundred years." For Percy, Protestantism seems to represent a spiritualized, abstract religion—a distillation of religious "insights"or teachings—from which the personal, tangible substance has been removed. Not surprisingly, the wives cannot comprehend the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist which for Percy is the ultimate embodiment of spiritual reality. Of his first wife, Thomas More says:

> What she didn't understand, she being spiritual and seeing religion as spirit, was that it took religion to save me from the spirit world, from orbiting the earth like Lucifer and the angels, that it took nothing less than . . . eating Christ himself to make me mortal man again and let me inhabit my own flesh and love her in the morning.

More's second wife, Ellen, a Presbyterian, suffers from a similar disability:

> What horrified her was the mixing up of body and spirit, Catholic trafficking in bread, wine, oil, salt, water, body, blood, spit—things. What does the Holy Spirit need with things? Body does body things. Spirit does spirit things.

In language guaranteed to shock both his wives and modern readers who tend to see the Eucharist as a "symbol," Percy drives the point home at the conclusion of *Love in the Ruins*, when Dr. More describes his return to the Church: "Fr. Smith says mass. I eat Christ, drink his blood."

Walker Percy's novels are usually both love stories and case histories of a sort—the stories of sick souls healing each other. The complete cure for the malaise seems not to stop at religious conversion; Percy's answer to an age-old question—What do I need to be happy?—seems to be simple but two-fold: God and a girl. As Adam learned

in the Garden of Eden, it is not good for man to be alone, but as Binx and Kate learn in the train, escape from loneliness and alienation is not as easy as it sounds. One must fully inhabit one's flesh before one can give oneself to another through it. Percy captures the genuine escape of sexual love, of "conjugal bliss," from Alison's perspective in *The Second Coming*: "It was a marvel this yielding and flowing against him, amazing that I was made so. . . . Will I for the first time in my life get away from my everlasting self sick of itself to be with another self?" To yield to another person—to share one's deepest secrets, one's body and one's freedom, with another—is to escape from one's "sick self," from the loneliness and pointlessness of being *nothing but* a self.

The ecstasy of sexual love points to a cure for the theoretical malaise: a kind of knowledge utterly unlike scientific knowledge, a knowledge—not unrelated to "knowledge" in the Biblical sense—that is a communion of persons. This is a new type of seeing and knowing, for knowing something and knowing someone are distinct types of knowledge. "Eyes examining are different from eyes meeting eyes . . . a look at a book is not a look into a look," quips Will Barrett in *The Second Coming*. In *Lost in the Cosmos*, Percy himself wonders: "Why is it that one can look at someone's finger as long as one pleases, but looking into the eyes of another person is, if prolonged past a second, a perilous affair?" The first is the look of the scientific-theoretical mindset, which sees eyes as specimens of a type, while the former is the look of personal knowledge, which barely sees the eyes as eyes at all; it sees instead a living, looking self. Love is a celebration of the particularity of personal "knowing." Indeed, it almost seems to invent a uniqueness, a specialness ("you are the *only* one for me"), that does not, objectively-speaking, exist, but which everyone in love sees as true.

At one point in *The Second Coming*, a friend of Will Barrett's attempts to convince the reluctant Will to join him for a drink and listen to Beethoven: "Name one thing better than the Ninth Symphony," he demands, to which Will responds, "Kitty's ass." Percy's point is that though the Ninth Symphony, considered from the universal, objective point of view of the theoretical mindset, seems to be of a much greater significance than Kitty's *derrière*, it is merely of a different order of significance. No doubt, mankind, taken as a whole, would be more impoverished if Beethoven had stopped composing after the Eighth Symphony, than it would be if it were denied Kitty's

bottom. Nevertheless a particular man can very well do without the Ninth Symphony—the life of the individual, the life every person actually leads, will go on without it. Great though it may be, a man does not need Beethoven's symphony the way he needs the woman he loves, the woman without whom he literally can not go on. One man's need for another person is utterly unlike mankind's need for Beethoven, and love is the expression of this unique need. Percy makes the point explicitly in a scene from *The Second Coming*: "There is something I need," Will Barrett confides to Alison; "Moi aussi," she answers in her awkward manner, "Entirely apart from the needs of society and the family as a unit, or the group."

Love is also an antidote to abstraction and alienation and ghostliness—an ecstasy that helps us inhabit our bodies. Before meeting Will Barrett, Alison personifies the quandary of the alienated person: "Nowhere could she find a clear explanation of the connection between 'being in love' and 'doing it.'" What in the world, she wonders, does this peculiar "spiritual," psychological relationship have to do with the act by which human beings beget children? Doctor More's first wife, an Episcopalian who eventually runs off with a fruity theosophical guru from England, had also succumbed to this idea that personal love is a "spiritual" thing:

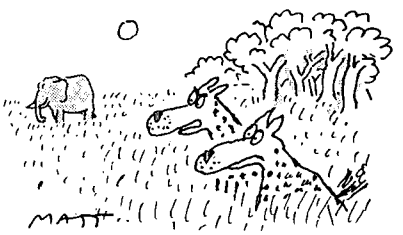
> Somewhere Doris had got the idea that love is spiritual. . . . I do truly believe that she came to look upon her solemn spiritual adultery with that fag Alistair as somehow more elevating than ordinary morning love with her husband.

When Will Barrett embraces Alison and tells her he loves her, she asks in her stilted way, "Is what you're saying part and parcel of what you're doing? . . . Tell me the single truth, not two or more separate truths." Will answers in the same spirit: "The single truth is I love you. The several subtruths are: I love your dearest heart. I also love your dear ass, which is the loveliest in all of Carolina. . . ." The point is clear: there are not two coincidental truths about personal love and about sexual desire; "spiritual love" and "physical love" are simply corollaries of personal love.

The relatedness of love is an affirmation of one's own existence as an embodied self. To know that one is thought of and loved by another person makes it possible to really exist, to live ecstatically, to revel in living. This knowledge is the one thing that can save man from despair. *The Moviegoer* ends with Binx Bolling giving

simple instructions to his psychologically fragile wife Kate, who can carry out even the simplest tasks only if she knows that Binx is thinking of her as she does them.

Finally, love is the solution to Percy's oft-repeated question about what one does with oneself at four o'clock on a Wednesday afternoon—whether one is Adam strolling in Eden or Will Barrett contemplating suicide on a golf course. Summing it all up, in *The Second Coming*, Alison concludes simply: "Late afternoon needs another person."



'I hate his more endangered than thou attitude.'

THE SPECTATOR 23 February 1991

APPENDIX A

[*The following appeared as a* Page One *editorial in* The View, *a weekly newspaper in Kansas City (Mo.), and is reprinted here with permission of the author.*]

A quiet holocaust

J. J. Maloney

Nancy Cruzan is dead. The once pretty Missouri woman lay in a vegetative state for years, until a Missouri probate judge recently allowed her feeding tube to be removed at the Rehabilitation Center in Mount Vernon, Missouri. After that she basically died of thirst—the sanitized word is "dehydration."

Less than a month later an even thornier euthanasia case emerged from the Rehabilitation Center in Mount Vernon—that of Christine Busalacchi, who exhibits more movement than Cruzan, movement that nurses attending her equate with intellectual activity. At this time the state of Missouri is preventing Busalacchi's father from moving her to Minnesota, where state laws allow considerable leeway in removing life support systems from disabled persons.

Thus begins the incremental definition of "brain dead"—the criteria by which euthanasia may be imposed (actually, in the Cruzan case, it required a combination of vegetative coma with evidence that Cruzan had expressed a wish to die should she ever be reduced to such a state.) While we debate the meaning of brain death, vegetative coma, the quality of life, etcetera—the largest question of all is deliberately ignored because, I fear, writers, lawyers, judges, and all others involved in the debate are afraid to raise the issue—the issue of God. For whatever reason the issue of God makes the general reading public uncomfortable. I'm guilty of it myself. If I were sitting in a public place, and the person next to me began talking about God or religion, I would immediately explore my options, with option number one being a hasty exit. But you cannot meaningfully discuss the public's position on euthanasia (or abortion) without confronting the God issue. Do we, as a people, believe in God? And if we do, what does that mean in the context of the Cruzan case?

The court ruled that Nancy Cruzan had said she would not want to live in a vegetative coma. The court did not ask—nor did anyone else ask—whether Nancy Cruzan believed in God.

The sole issue before the court was the ability of modern medical science to deal with Nancy Cruzan's condition. But anyone who believes in a Christian God—the God embraced by most Americans—necessarily believes the power of God is infinitely superior to the power of man, and of man's pseudo-sciences. A belief in God entails a belief in miracles. Even disregarding God, what is fatal today may not be fatal tomorrow. There are countless "fatal" diseases for which cures have been found. Who can say, with certainty, that a month from now, or six months from now, we will not discover a cure for vegetative comas?

There was a saying when I was a child: "Where there's life there's hope."

For Nancy Cruzan there is no longer hope. She is dead, and it would require the greatest miracle of all to restore her. Her brain is full of formaldehyde, the cells disintegrated—much like melting the circuitry of a computer and then expecting it to function.

I haven't been inside a church in 17 years, and even then I went to appease my wife's family. I haven't been inside a church by choice since the late 1940's. Even so, I do not profess to know whether or not there is a God.

For years I studied metaphysics, theology, and eastern philosophy. I came away with many questions and few answers.

But I look up at the heavens occasionally and realize what an awesome spectacle I am part of. I find it intellectually repugnant to believe that something came from nothing, so I reject the Big Bang theory of the universe. I also have trouble believing that the universe has always just been here—*from whence did it come* is the natural question.

I am therefore humbled by the question. It is beyond me, any of us, at this juncture in history.

Which is why people believe in God. With my early Catholic upbringing I occasionally feel I was put here for a purpose, and I thrash around trying to figure out what that purpose is.

Yet, I am a cynic. I know many cynics—but when pushed, most of them shy away from total renunciation of God. Most of the people I know harbor latent religious feelings, and many of them are overtly religious. My mother could not live without religion.

If a poll were taken I would venture that 90 percent of the people in the state of Missouri would express a belief in God. I believe that 90 percent, or more, of the judges in Missouri would express a belief in God.

Which brings us back to Nancy Cruzan. Why, in all of the arguments thrown around during the years when her life and death were debated, did no one raise the issue of God? Because, if Nancy Cruzan believed in God, really believed, then she would be led, ineluctably, to the conclusion that there was a reason for her condition or, in the alternative, that she might be brought back to consciousness at any moment, when it suited the purposes of God.

The truth is, Nancy Cruzan was killed because she represented an inconvenience. I have as much compassion for her family as anyone, but facts are facts. If Nancy Cruzan was, in fact, brain dead, then her vegetative state bothered her not at all, since she was oblivious to it. It wouldn't have bothered Nancy Cruzan one whit to stay that way another 30 or 40 years.

So the removal of her feeding tube was done for the sole reason of allowing the remainder of the family to get on with their lives. But what of people who have children who are profoundly retarded, with no hope for improvement? Perhaps they'd like to get on with their lives, and many unquestionably would. Euthanasia would solve a lot of problems in our society, and may well be a

seductive solution to many people.

We like to believe that the excesses occurring in Germany prior to and during World War II were an aberration—something peculiar to the German personality and the times. I would argue that World War II Germany is a mirror into which all of us must look.

The earliest manifestation of the Holocaust was euthanasia, instituted by the Nazis and first practiced on incurable mental patients. It wasn't long before political dissidents were being declared mentally ill, shipped off to mental institutions where they were then diagnosed incurable, so they could be legally killed.

That was the origin of genocide in Nazi Germany. It began with a decision that some people are better off dead, or that society will be better off for having gotten rid of some people.

In the mid-1970's, as a reporter for the Kansas City Star I toured the state school for the retarded at Marshall, Missouri, and was shown a child in the hospital who had no brain to speak of. He lay curled in his crib-like bed unconscious to all around him. The doctor explained that this child did not have a brain in the normal sense of the word, but instead had a sliver of grey matter sufficient to support his basic life functions. This child would never achieve consciousness. So it lay there, oblivious, being kept alive at a total cost of $10,000 a year.

This child, far more than Nancy Cruzan, brings into focus the question of euthanasia. Nancy Cruzan had friends, she had a body of knowledge stored in her brain—she had a history. The child at Marshall had never known consciousness, had never once changed expressions from the moment of birth.

For what purpose was it being maintained?

Because it was *alive.*

Therein lies the dilemma before us—to define life, and what life means.

And to realize that, in the course of defining life and its meaning, we define ourselves.

APPENDIX B

[*The following column appeared in* The Santa Clara *(Sept. 20, 1990), the student newspaper of Santa Clara University, and is reprinted here with permission. Brendan Patrick Murphy is the paper's Opinion Editor and a regular columnist.*]

Liberty and Justice for Some

Brendan Patrick Murphy

There's an old joke that goes something like this:

American: The best thing about America is that we have freedom of speech. We can even criticize our president.

Soviet: What's so great about that? We have that same freedom.

American: Really?

Soviet: Sure. We criticize your president all the time.

In this era of glasnost, the joke has lost some of its sting, but the principle remains the same. Freedom of speech with countless restrictions is really no freedom at all.

There are some restrictions on free speech in our country, of course, as there should be. The First Amendment does not protect perjury, slander, speech used to incite riot, or other destructive uses of speech or press.

But if we truly believe in freedom of speech, we should live by the adage attributed to Voltaire: I may disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.

The most vocal advocate for free speech in this century has been the American Civil Liberties Union. Though I have not always agreed with its causes or points of view, the ACLU has definitely made a name for itself as the defender of the weak and unpopular.

Whether defending the right of flag burners to practice their hobby, or of the Ku Klux Klan to march in Alabama, the ACLU has proclaimed that freedom of speech must be guaranteed to all, no matter how unpopular, or someday it will be denied to all.

Tell that to Cyruz Zal. According to William Tolson in *The Sacramento Union*, Zal was the general league counsel for Operation Rescue and defense attorney for some members of OR who were on trial last spring for trespassing during a "rescue" in San Diego.

Deputy District Attorney John Williams asked the judge to prohibit Zal from speaking 21 words in his defense of the accused. According to Tolson, these words included "kill, killer, baby killer, fetus, murder, manslaughter, child-slaughter, holocaust, genocide, Nazi, Hitler, baby, abortion, Rescuer and all references to God or deity."

Incredibly, Judge Larrie Brainard upheld this request and charged that every time Zal violated the rule, he would be guilty of contempt and given a maximum penalty of five days in jail and a $500 fine. At the end of the trial,

his "offenses" were added up, and Zal was given 90 days in jail and a $10,000 fine. Because he could not pay the fine, 200 days were added to Zal's sentence.

Imagine a situation in which an attorney, defending Greenpeace members charged with trespassing while protesting against an oil company, is instructed that he may not use the words *dolphin, dolphin slaughter, global impact, oil spill, disaster, ecology,* or even *greenpeace* in his defense, and will be jailed if he chooses not to comply.

The outcry from the ACLU and others would be swift and terrible. The local court case would immediately become a national event, with front-page newspaper coverage and perhaps a Special Report on CNN.

Zal is still in jail, and he's not holding his breath for the ACLU to come rushing to his defense. If he were a Nazi (which is one of the words Zal was forbidden to say in court), his would have been a cause celebre for the ACLU.

But Zal believes that abortion is murder and the unjustified taking of an innocent human life. And simply because this is not a belief shared by the California court system, the majority of the press or the ACLU, Zal's right to free speech has been violated with little outcry, ignored and covered up by those who claim so vehemently to uphold "civil liberties."

The ACLU, under its present leadership, will never ally itself with a person who opposes abortion, regardless of the violation of civil liberties that person may endure. Zal's case shows how desperately confused and lost the organization has become. While ostensibly founded as an advocate for the underdog, the ACLU has become a political organization designed to further its own goals and retard the progress of its opponents.

The next time an ACLU representative defends the American Nazi party, or the Ku Klux Klan, or ACT-UP, remember the case of Cyruz Zal and ask yourself why an attorney who attempted to defend his clients in the best way he knew could have his civil liberties stomped on with no outcry at all from the self-appointed watchdogs of freedom.

The answer is politics, plain and simple.

If you disagree with Zal's views on abortion, maybe you think there's nothing particularly wrong with the penalties imposed by Judge Brainard. If so, I wish you luck when your views come under fire, when you are not popular or politically "correct."

"Liberty and justice for all" has become "liberty and justice for some," and the ACLU thinks that's the way it should be.

APPENDIX C

[*The following column first appeared in the Washington* Times *(Oct. 24, 1990) and is reprinted here with permission of the author and Creators Syndicate.*]

Families Cast as Culprits

Mona Charen

The Planned Parenthood television commercial features a teen-age girl coming home from a date, happily chatting about "the game" with her boyfriend. The mood changes abruptly when her father enters the picture. Furious and irrational, he screams at his daughter, "I told you to be home at 10 o'clock, not 10:10, not 10:30."

The kindly voice-over then asks, "If this is what happens when she comes home a few minutes late, what will he do if she tells him she is pregnant?"

The commercial tails off with the sounds of the ever-more ferocious father seeming to threaten violence, "I'll give you something to cry about. . . ."

The commercial is aimed at parental consent laws that require underage girls to inform their parents before undergoing an abortion, but they really hit another target: the family itself.

The implication couldn't be clearer—families are part of the problem. The abusive father is not presented as an aberration. Planned Parenthood is not making the case that if even one teen-ager is fearful of parental rage, then parental consent laws cannot be permitted.

Instead, the message of the commercial is that the family is by nature abusive and dangerous. The last person who can be trusted to have the best interests of the child at heart is a parent.

It's important to distinguish issues here, which Planned Parenthood has muddled by insinuating the suggestion of abuse into its little family scene. A good case can be made that our society is too reluctant to remove abused children from the care of their parents. But that is not to endorse the Planned Parenthood generalized vision of the horrific family—tormentor of children.

I don't know what world the Planned Parenthood folks are living in, but it strikes me that it is not the presence but the absence of fathers that most ails American families today. And frankly, without sanctioning the violent tone of the father's remarks in the commercial, I must say that if more fathers took an active interest in how late their daughters were staying out, there would be far fewer teen-age pregnancies to worry about.

I'll go even further. When you consider the wreckage a teen-age pregnancy causes in the life of mother and child (whether aborted or born), it might be a healthy thing for young girls to worry—before hopping into bed with their boyfriends—about how their parents would react to the news of an impending abortion.

Indeed, parental consent laws do seem to serve that salutary purpose. Prof.

James Rogers of Wheaton College has traced the impact of the Minnesota parental consent law. The law took effect in 1980. By 1984 Wheaton found that there had been a 20.9 percent drop in pregnancies among teen-agers and a 32.2 percent drop in the number of abortions.

Planned Parenthood and its ideological confederates are always claiming to be realists. They ridicule the idea that young people should be discouraged from having sex, insisting that "they're going to do it anyway," so we might as well avoid the worst consequences of their behavior—disease and pregnancy—by distributing condoms. They regard sexual promiscuity as like the weather: You can talk about it, but you're not going to change it.

But if sexual conduct is immutable, how has it changed so dramatically over the past 20 years? In 1970, most 17-year-old high-school students—girls and boys—were virgins. Today most are not. Has sex become less resistible in the intervening years?

The answer, actually, is yes, but only for reasons Planned Parenthood seems to slight. It is because the culture has undergone a sea change. It is because adults decreed sex to be the new religion and preached it daily in movies, magazines and TV shows. Only when the culture regains its senses and recognizes sex for what it should be—an expression of love between (preferably married) adults, and not, by itself, the key to happiness—will kids get the message.

When Planned Parenthood tries to stop parental consent laws, they are not protecting children, but merely contributing one more damaging cultural voice suggesting that children's behavior is none of their parents' business.

APPENDIX D

[*The following article is reprinted with permission of the author. It first appeared as a "My Turn" column in* Newsweek *(April 1, 1991), which described Dr. Noble as a "professor of medicine at the University of Kentucky College of Medicine, Lexington, Ky."*]

'There Is No Safe Sex'

Robert C. Noble

The other night on the evening news, there was a piece about condoms. Someone wanted to provide free condoms to high-school students. A perky, fresh-faced teenage girl interviewed said everyone her age was having sex, so what was the big deal about giving out condoms? Her principal replied that giving out condoms set a bad example. Then two experts commented. One was a lady who sat very straight in her chair, white hair in a tight perm, and, in a prudish voice, declared that condoms didn't work very well; teenagers shouldn't be having sex anyway. The other expert, a young, attractive woman, said that since teenagers were sexually active, they shouldn't be denied the protection that condoms afforded. I found myself agreeing with the prude.

What do I know about all this? I'm an infectious diseases physician and an AIDS doctor to the poor. Passing out condoms to teenagers is like issuing them squirt guns for a four-alarm blaze. Condoms just don't hack it. We should stop kidding ourselves.

I'm taking care of a 21-year-old boy with AIDS. He could have been a model for Donatello's David, androgynous, deep blue eyes, long blond hair, as sweet and gentle as he can be. His mom's in shock. He called her the other day and gave her two messages. I'm gay. I've got AIDS. His lover looks like a fellow you'd see in Sunday school; he works in a bank. He's had sex with only one person, my patient (*his* second partner), and they've been together for more than a year. These fellows aren't dummies. They read newspapers. You think condoms would have saved them?

Smart people don't wear condoms. I read a study about the sexual habits of college women. In 1975, 12 percent of college women used condoms when they had sexual intercourse. In 1989, the percentage had risen to only 41 percent. Why don't college women and their partners use condoms? They know about herpes. They know about genital warts and cervical cancer. All the public-health messages of the past 15 years have been sent, and only 41 percent of the college women use condoms. Maybe your brain has to be working to use one. In the heat of passion, the brain shuts down. You have to use a condom every time. *Every time.* That's hard to do.

I can't say I'm comforted reading a government pamphlet called "Condoms and Sexually Transmitted Diseases Especially AIDS." "Condoms are not 100 percent safe," it says, "but if used properly will reduce the risk of sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS." *Reduce* the risk of a disease that is 100

percent fatal! That's all that's available between us and death? How much do condoms reduce the risk? They don't say. So much for Safe Sex. Safe Sex was a dumb idea anyway. I've noticed that the catchword now is "Safer Sex." So much for truth in advertising. Other nuggets of advice: "If you know your partner is infected, the best rule is to avoid intercourse (including oral sex). If you do decide to have sex with an infected partner, you should *always* be sure a condom is used from start to finish, every time." Seems reasonable, but is it helpful? Most folks don't know when their partner is infected. It's not as if their nose is purple. Lots of men and women with herpes and wart-virus infections are having sex right now lying their heads off to their sexual partners—that is, to those who ask. At our place we are taking care of a guy with AIDS who is back visiting the bars and having sex. "Well, did your partner use a condom?" I ask. "Did you tell him that you're infected with the virus?" "Oh no, Dr. Noble," he replies, "it would have broken the mood." You bet it would have broken the mood. It's not only the mood that gets broken. "Condoms may be more likely to break during anal intercourse than during other types of sex . . ." Condoms also break in heterosexual sex; one study shows a 4 percent breakage rate. "Government testing can *not* guarantee that condoms will always prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases." That's what the pamphlet says. Condoms are all we've got.

Nobody these days lobbies for abstinence, virginity or single lifetime sexual partners. That would be boring. *Abstinence and sexual intercourse with one mutually faithful uninfected partner are the only totally effective prevention strategies.* That's from another recently published government report.

What am I going to tell my daughters? I'm going to tell them that condoms give a false sense of security and that having sex is dangerous. *Reducing* the risk is not the same as *eliminating* the risk. My message will fly in the face of all other media messages they receive. In the movie "The Tall Guy," a nurse goes to bed with the "Guy" character on their first date, boasting that she likes to get the sex thing out of the way at the beginning of the relationship. His roommate is a nymphomaniac who is always in bed with one or more men. This was supposed to be cute. "Pretty Woman" says you can find happiness with a prostitute. Who are the people that write this stuff? Have the '80s passed and everyone forgotten sexually transmitted diseases? Syphilis is on the rise. Gonorrhea is harder to treat and increasing among black teenagers and adults. Ectopic pregnancies and infertility from sexually transmitted diseases are mounting every year. Giving condoms to high-school kids isn't going to reverse all this.

That prim little old lady on TV had it right. Unmarried people shouldn't be having sex. Few people have the courage to say this publicly. In the context of our culture, they sound like cranks. Doctors can't fix most of the things you can catch out there. There's no cure for AIDS. There's no cure for herpes or genital warts. Gonorrhea and chlamydial infection can ruin your chances of

ever getting pregnant and can harm your baby if you do. That afternoon in the motel may leave you with an infection that you'll have to explain to your spouse. Your doctor can't cover up for you. Your spouse's lawyer may sue him if he tries. There is no safe sex. Condoms aren't going to make a dent in the sexual epidemics that we are facing. If the condom breaks, you may die.

'I've also agreed to buy a 37-volume set of encyclopaedias.'

THE SPECTATOR 8 December 1990

APPENDIX E

[*The following article is reprinted with permission of the author. It first appeared as a "Hers" column in the New York* Times *Sunday Magazine (Jan. 27, 1991).*]

The Virtues Of Virtue

Joan Gould

Until the day I was married, I'd never seen a naked man, nor had I spent a night away from my parents' home except for camp and college. I'd been out of college for two years, held a good job, but by night, if not by day, the world was my cloister.

When I met my future husband, I was 22 and he was 30, an age difference that was common in the 1950's. Since we women took it for granted that we'd become full-time mothers a year or two after marriage, we tried to pick men far enough along in their careers to support a family. This profoundly shaped our relationships, including our expectations of widowhood. On the first date I made up my mind to marry this man or else stay single for life. By the fifth date we were engaged; we remained married for 28 years until his death. No one worried about my blind leap into matrimony, I least of all.

Today my courtship seems as out of place as the angora sweaters I used to store in the refrigerator to keep them from shedding, sweaters that might have been designed by our mothers to keep dangerous young men in their dark blue suits at a safe distance from daughters. Among young women nowadays, virginity is considered a failure of courage; at the very least, it's a form of immaturity that has to be discarded, like losing baby teeth, with a show of blood to prove that the body has moved along to a more adult and all-embracing level.

Experience has displaced innocence as a virtue—which leaves us wondering why, with all the new options available, women don't seem to be in notably better control of their lives than they were 30 years ago. Liberation is apparently more complicated than it looks; freedom is not the same thing as happiness. Eden recedes as fast as we advance.

Is it possible that when we discarded the idea of virginity—or at least the pretense of virginity, which was a fetter in itself—along with our girdles and garter belts, we also discarded a source of feminine strength without understanding what we were throwing away? For my generation, being single was a stage of growth, a spiritual as well as physical condition, full of the fear of damage (which was in itself a form of damage, no doubt), but also a time of glory. Every woman was rich the first night she got into bed with a man because of what she carried inside her.

In spirit at least, we lived in the Secret Garden, lush but uncultivated, where each woman sits alone, a garden that might look like a desert to some women and a prison to others, but was always a place of silence amid the noise of

the city, surrounded by a wall that had only one door. Our question was whether we were locked in or out.

Now that I look back, I see the years between college and marriage as the period when I learned I was alone, committed to a self that I didn't encounter again until my second adolescence during the early seasons of widowhood. I dated a different young man every night in the week, I lived in my parents' home, but nonetheless I knew that I belonged to no one but myself. There was terror in this knowledge, of course, especially since an expiration date had been stamped on my forehead: if I wasn't married by 25, why then I'd never marry, according to popular wisdom, and my precious virginity would shrivel into spinsterhood. No one I knew dreamed that it was possible to bear a first child after the age of 30.

Since I had no choice, I absorbed solitude, I lived inside my own skin. In our present society, however, solitude has become such an aberration that 2-year-olds are sent to nursery school and schoolchildren learn to "interact with peers" rather than work at desks alone. By the time they're grown, they find it's seductively easy to stave off the pangs and shivers of loneliness—indefinitely, they imagine—by coupling together in a series of relationships, or pseudo-marriages, that may go on for years. The Secret Garden has been converted into a tenting ground.

Let's not fool ourselves into believing that these new customs are any less tyrannical than the old. In my day, women were cautioned by their parents to "save" themselves or else risk terrifying consequences. Nowadays, in tones no less dire, they're warned by their peers to "use it or lose it"—in other words, make themselves sexually available or else stand accused of abnormality or even the most vicious form of teasing. A women who chooses not to fall into bed with a man finds herself branded with the scarlet letter A, which now stands for Abstinence.

In the past, an ignorant and fumbling young husband and wife could easily turn into an ignorant and fumbling old couple without even knowing what opportunities they'd missed—but what about the equally natural joys that are sacrificed today? What has a women of 30 or 35 who's still single lost during the years she spent coupling and uncoupling with assorted partners?

She has lost time. I don't mean time simply in the sense that it's more difficult to find a good man after the age of 30 than before. And I don't mean to imply that every woman ought to marry, or that any marriage is better than none. Someone once said that no one who is not married understands the true meaning of loneliness. The chief difference between living together and living as man and wife is this underlying sense of the passage of time, which means one thing to a man but quite another to a woman.

When a woman is involved in a relationship without permanent commitment, she lives solely in the present tense. She doesn't experience the security and burdens of wifehood, or its confinement and boredom for that matter, nor does

she know the subtler pleasures of homemaking, all of which involve a sense of the future bearing down on the present moment. At some point, however, a rustle of dry leaves reminds her that the time has come to move to a new level of experience that will more nearly touch her soul.

And what does this woman know about motherhood? She hears her unborn children cry out in the night; they ask when their mother is coming home. If she wants children, she realizes that she may never get them, and she can't understand how she landed in this predicament, when she always went more than halfway to embrace life and the men whom life was gracious enough to bring her.

It's possible that our society has not served single women nearly as well as men. If women give up years of their lives without making demands of their own, they allow their men to remain children, with no need to think of themselves as husbands and fathers because a fresh crop of younger women is always coming along to companion them. With the most generous intentions we've raised a generation of childish men and frustrated women, frustrated because motherhood and wifehood are bottled inside them where sex energy used to be bottled and wasted inside my generation. Twenty years after the sexual revolution, it seems that all we've accomplished is to change one form of repression for another.

How did we go wrong? Everyone assured us that we have a right to happiness, and so women left the Secret Garden forever, but no one pointed out that we also have a need for growth. Maybe that was what we learned while virginity was still in fashion: The hymen was a reminder that some part of ourselves was reserved for ourselves, and that our bodies ought to be used to promote our inner growth.

When two people contemplate getting into bed together, there are two appropriate responses they can choose. "Why not?" isn't one of them.

APPENDIX F

[*The following article first appeared on the editorial page of the* Wall Street Journal *(March 28, 1991) and is reprinted here with the Governor's permission. It is adapted from an article for the quarterly* The Responsive Community.]

To Save the Black Family, the Young Must Abstain

L. Douglas Wilder

Each and every day, we in Richmond, Va., are burning the proverbial "midnight oil" to ensure that the youth and families of this state are not burned beyond recognition as we enter the 21st century. But we know that gubernatorial speeches and legislation are no safety net for the free-falling American family. If we are to be brutally honest the families of this state and nation are going to have to do more themselves if the family unit is to have any hope of remaining intact.

Recent surveys paint an extraordinarily bleak picture of today, and of what tomorrow may hold for many black families across the nation. We need only look at one statistic: approximately 1 in 4 young black males in America is behind bars, on parole or on probation. Twenty-three percent of black men 20 to 29 are under the watchful eye of the criminal justice system, while only 1 in 16 white, and 1 in 10 Hispanic, males of the same age group have a similar, disturbing familiarity with the law.

And although an alarming number of young males are having extreme difficulty staying clear of the law and making a future for themselves through honest work, all too many are having no problem whatever making babies. But contrary to what many of today's young people may believe, making babies is no act of manhood. Rats and rabbits are more virile than the most virile male in this country.

More than ever, our young people must come to understand that making mature decisions; making life-long commitments; making structured and loving families—rather than merely making babies; and making the most of the opportunities that do exist in every aspect of life; these are the actions that constitute the beginning of a passage into manhood.

How are this and future generations of children to re-dig the wells of their forefathers, when so many do not—and will not—know their own fathers; when they have no male role model to which they can look? Of course—given some of the lifestyles of many young fathers in this nation—it's actually a blessing that these fathers (and I use that term only in the biological sense) are not spending time with their children lest the child suffer a fate worse than having no role model: looking to, and learning from, the wrong kind of role model.

And yet, tragically, the only male role models that many of our children ever see are those not working real jobs, but pushing and helping to push self-destruction in our neighborhoods. They have the jewelry; the cars; the girls.

Some say that they have no future. But we know that they do—a future in jail; a future in an early grave.

As unfair as it may be, in light of absentee fathers, the responsibilities of being a parent in many instances fall to the financially and emotionally deserted, single mothers. Nationally, 55.3% of black families with children under 18 are maintained by the mother, many of them living in inner cities, most of them single, rather than divorced.

Worse yet, in many of the houses and apartments across this country headed by single, black females, we are witnessing a disturbing double-standard between what is expected of male and female children growing up under the same roof; with the latter often having household chores assigned to them, curfews imposed upon them, and greater expectations for academic success placed upon them; and the former having little discipline, even less responsibility, and much later, if any, curfews imposed upon them. Not surprisingly, while many young females are being encouraged to develop at least some of the skills needed to rise to the challenges of the classroom, adulthood and eventual parenthood, many of their male counterparts have learned nothing more than the ways of the street, and the first names of all too many guards at city lock-up.

Perhaps because of the total lack of discipline and responsibility throughout their formative years, black men in inner-city neighborhoods are less likely to reach the age of 65 than men in Bangladesh, one of the poorest countries in the world. In 1990, violence was the leading cause of death for blacks between the ages of 15 and 25. Given these statistics, it's no surprise that in many communities—especially in the inner cities—the black family is teetering near the abyss of self-destruction.

But—as common sense tells us—there are precautions to be taken by the young and by the unmarried, especially for those who know that they are not remotely close to being ready for the unending responsibilities of parenthood. If they want to have a future, it is imperative that our young—male and female alike—embrace the ultimate precaution—abstinence. For as others have noted, "The essence of chastity is the total orientation of one's life toward a goal," and—in this instance—that goal must be a life of self-discipline, self-improvement and an abiding spirit of selflessness—a willingness to work for the common good of family and community alike; to take full advantage of all opportunities which do exist, and to make full use of the freedoms that are rightfully theirs.

APPENDIX G

[*The following article appeared (in a slightly different version) in the monthly* First Things *(October, 1990), and is reprinted here with permission. Mr. George is an assistant professor in the Department of Politics at Princeton; Mr. Porth is a lawyer in Charleston (W. Va.).*]

French Scientist's Findings Create Abortion Dilemma

Robert P. George and William C. Porth

WASHINGTON, Nov. 1: Recent reports from a French laboratory contain some good news and some bad news for the pro-choice movement.

The good news is that abortion may not be the taking of *human* life at all. Studies conducted by French zoologist Phillipe Salade d'Epinard of the famed Institut Genetique in Paris provide a startling new confirmation of "Recapitulation," a scientific theory long thought to have been exploded. Recapitulation posits that the developing human fetus repeats in accelerated and miniature form the stages of historical evolution by which man progressed from a single-celled marine creature into the highest known primate.

It is a commonplace of high-school biology that the human embryo more or less resembles at different stages a fish, a frog, a pig, and so forth. Now, using advanced techniques of ultrasound and electron microscopy, Professor d'Epinard has identified twenty-eight separate and distinct fetal phases. At each of these stages the human fetus appears to be indistinguishable from a specific form of "lower" animal life. Indeed, an earlier summary of d'Epinard's conclusions was hailed by abortion activists as conclusive proof that, up until the final stages of pregnancy, abortion has no connection with the taking of human life.

But the release of the Professor's full study last week has generated unexpected controversy. Even more seriously, it has splintered the coalition of interest groups which once whole-heartedly supported the constitutional right to abortion announced by the Supreme Court in 1973 in its landmark *Roe v. Wade* decision.

The most troublesome aspect of the new scientific discovery is that, at three of the stages of fetal development identified by Professor d'Epinard, the human fetus assumes the form of a federally protected animal. Consequently, pro-choice activists are alarmed that the application of existing laws and regulations could lead to the erosion of abortion rights.

During much of the first trimester, for example, the fetus bears an uncanny but unfortunate resemblance to the snail darter. Although states can have no compelling interest in protecting the human fetus during its first three months, the Supreme Court has already acknowledged that the Federal government has a powerful interest in protecting snail darters, from the fertilization of their roe onward. Since well over 75% of all abortions are performed during the first trimester, a ban on terminations during the snail darter phase could prove a devastating restriction.

The situation does not improve during the second trimester, when there is a stage at which, according to Dr. d'Epinard, the human fetus bears an unmistakable resemblance to a Northern spotted owl. Although ultrasound photographs have revealed no feathers, amniotic echoes have been recorded which ornithologists identify as the bird's distinctive hoot. Recently promulgated regulations of the Department of the Interior prohibit the killing of the owls or the disturbance of their environment. This has prompted abortion activists in the Pacific Northwest to align themselves with the timber industry, expressing concern that the regulations will cause serious unemployment among loggers and the proprietors of abortion clinics. The Sierra Club has attacked this unlikely alliance, calling it a conspiracy to value the rights of people over the rights of trees.

In the final trimester, Professor d'Epinard's research reveals that the fetus enters a *pinnepedic* phase, during which it assumes the form of a young harp seal, once prized for its valuable white pelt. Of course, baby harp seals are protected somewhat less strictly than snail darters and rare owls. Congress created a special exception in the Baby Seal Preservation Act of 1987 for the Okeach Eskimo tribe of Northern Alaska, which has historically relied on the seal's meat and fur for food, clothing, and shelter. However, even under this exception, the abortion of seal-stage fetuses would be permissible only when performed by members of the Okeach tribe and with traditional Okeach hunting weapons.

Harvard Law School professor Susan Estrogen denounced this "return to abortion by the club and spear." In a departure from her prepared address to the National Press Club yesterday on the *real* reasons for George Bush's 1988 election, she remarked: "The Baby Seal Act insures that only the rich who can afford charter plane flights into the wilds of Alaska will now have access to back alley abortions."

However, Indian rights groups reject criticism of the Okeach exception, likening it to opposition to the exercise of their treaty fishing rights in Wisconsin and Minnesota. In testimony before a congressional subcommittee, Clarence Red Feather of the inter-tribal Alliance of Annoyed Indians (AAI) charged that depriving the Okeach of the right to develop a new service industry in the counseling and treatment of pregnant women would be another example of "immoral economic exploitation by the White Man."

This wide-ranging controversy has drawn a strong reaffirmation of abortion rights from the feminist community. At a hastily called press conference, Kate Maggleman of the League of American Women for Reproductive Freedom (LAWRF) attacked Dr. d'Epinard's findings. Despite the resemblance of the human fetus to other animals, she contended, studies demonstrate that it remains *genetically* human throughout gestation. Asked by NPR legal affairs correspondent Mimi Totempole whether such a concession did not "play into the hands of the right-to-life crowd," Maggleman responded: "LAWRF has

always maintained the fetus was a non-person, but we have never disputed that it was a *human* non-person."

Nevertheless, Maggleman predicted that, because of the importance of protecting the right to abortion, her organization would seek a Supreme Court ruling declaring federal laws protecting snail darters, baby harp seals, and Northern spotted owls unconstitutional.

This announcement produced one of the most serious rifts in the pro-choice alliance. While Gays and Lesbians United for the Environment (GLUE) has stood by LAWRF, suggesting that Dr. d'Epinard is probably Catholic and therefore presumptively reactionary and homophobic, most other environment groups have broken ranks. At a separate press conference, leaders of the Society for Animal Rights (SAR), a long-time political ally of LAWRF, made it plain that they would not back down from their historic commitment to the protection of endangered species. According to Lisa Billings, the group's spokesperson, the reports from France have compelled SAR to rethink its endorsement of the pro-choice position. "As long as it was believed that the fetus was unequivocally human, we had no problem favoring the rights of a full person over those of a merely potential person," said Billings. "But if abortion is in fact the killing of animals, then it amounts to nothing less than species-ism."

A representative of the American Civil Liberties Union, reached by telephone, declined comment.

'It's only a rough draft.'

THE SPECTATOR 23 February 1991

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Special Notice: we also have available copies of *Abortion and the Conscience of the Nation* by President Ronald Reagan, which has been published in a hardcover book by Thomas Nelson Publishers. The book includes the complete text of the President's essay (which first appeared in the Spring, 1983, issue of this review). To order send $7.95 per postpaid copy.

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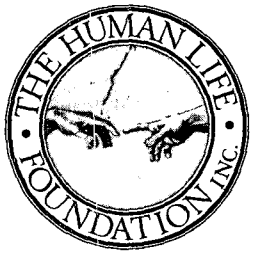
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