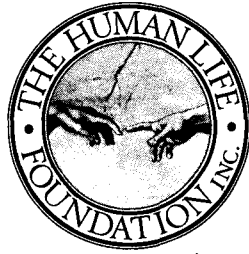


the HUMAN LIFE REVIEW



WINTER 1995

Featured in this issue:

William Murchison on What the Voters Chose
Robert M. Patrick
& Eileen Rosen on Creation 'For Research Only'
Ellen Wilson Fielding on The *Taboos* Are Gone
Colleen Boland on Whitehead Strikes Again
Rita Marker on The Woodstock of Bioethics
Melinda Tankard Reist on Feminism and Cairo
John Muggeridge on Red in Tooth and Claw
Faith Abbott on The Lovely Girls

Also in this issue:

Ray Kerrison • Paul Greenberg • Mary Kenny • "Roe v. Wade: Death
Warrant for Homosexuals?" • Senator Brian Harradine • Senator
Francisco S. Tatad • Martin Mears • Steve Benson • John Deering

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE . . .

This past year was, as my grandmother used to say, a real doozy. Challenges to human life came in many forms, from the UN's Conference on Population and Development in Cairo to the National Institutes of Health's recommendations for embryo research. And yet most of the challenges were repelled, and the New Year ushered in a new Congress with many new anti-abortion members. All the activity, of course, has provided us with good material to put together for you—starting in this issue with contributing editor William Murchison's gleeful summation of the election results. We note (for those who may have missed it) that Mr. Murchison's *Reclaiming Morality in America* was published last fall and is available from Thomas Nelson Publishers (Nelson Place at Elm Hill Pike, Nashville, Tennessee 37214; \$16.99).

Contributing editor Faith Abbott is also recently published: *Acts of Faith* came out from Ignatius Press last fall. We have reprinted "The Lovely Girls: They Don't Come Any Betta," a delightful story from the book, as an article in this issue. Copies of Faith's book are available from Ignatius' distribution office (33 Oakland Avenue, Harrison, New York 10528; \$14.95).

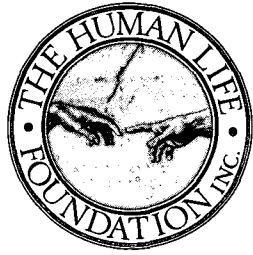
Our thanks to Melinda Tankard Reist for her kind permission to reprint her article "The Feminist Challenge to Cairo," which appeared as a chapter of *The New Imperialism: World population and the Cairo Conference*, edited by Michael Cook and available from Little Hills Press (37-43 Alexander Street, Crows Nest, New South Wales, Australia). Admittedly, this book may be a bit difficult to find in your local bookstore, but we can assist those who may be desperate for a copy. Inquiries may be directed to Mrs. Reist, care of the *Review*.

Many long-time readers are familiar with Frederica Mathewes-Green, who is project director for Real Choices, a research service of the National Women's Coalition for Life. She too has recently published a book, *Real Choices*, focusing on the way women make decisions about abortion. It was published by Multnomah Books and should be available in your bookstore (if not, request it?).

This issue has a regular complement of cartoons from *The Spectator*, which we hope you will enjoy. We also have reprinted two editorial cartoons; one from Steve Benson and one from John Deering. Both are eloquent and succinct, and we are glad to have them in our journal.

Bound volumes for 1994 will be available soon; please see the inside back cover for details. And we wish you a safe and happy New Year.

COLLEEN BOLAND
for the *REVIEW*



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INTRODUCTION

THIS ISSUE BEGINS our twenty-first year of publication. We certainly had no expectation of celebrating a 20th Anniversary when we began in that now-distant January of 1975. Our intention then was simply to put out the best stuff we could find on the abortion controversy, which had only become a national issue with the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision; we hoped for reversal of the Court's *fiat*, which seemed to us an untenable one that could not long stand.

In the event, *Roe* has indeed remained standing, with only slight (and largely ineffectual) amendment, as precisely what it was 22 years ago—the world's most “liberal” abortion legislation, sanctioning the killing of preborn human beings throughout the full nine months of pregnancy.

The question naturally arises: Why go on publishing a journal that has so manifestly failed its original intent? We admit that there are times when we don't have a very good answer to that nagging question—when all that seems to sustain our resolve is what the late Malcolm Muggeridge, that great journalistic warrior, told us in the early days: the only cause *worth* fighting is a lost cause. In fact, that wry paradox is not dismaying but rather invigorating: you can't *lose* a lost cause, whereas defeat *can* be turned into victory. Who actually believed that what Ronald Reagan aptly called “the Evil Empire” would suddenly collapse under the weight of its own inhumane contradictions? We'd say only the present Pope, and perhaps Mr. Reagan himself (we note that, in 1982, he contributed an article to this journal—a rare thing for a sitting president to do).

But there were other reasons to persevere. For instance, it became early and painfully obvious that most anti-abortion journalism would be ephemeral: the “Major Media” were and remain monolithically pro-abortion, providing us the opportunity to make a unique contribution—a “permanent record” of the Abortion War, preserving the evidence that the battles have by no means been one-sided—indeed, that the “vanquished” have had all the best of the arguments!

Too bold a claim? We don't think so. Another thing we realized early on was, there would be no serious competition from the “other side”—that few if any fine writers would be willing to put their reputations on the line to promote the slaughter of the innocent unborn. We'd say that expectation has proved to be quite accurate, whereas, from the beginning, we were favored by writers of renown like Muggeridge, and the late Clare Boothe Luce—surely the outstanding woman *and* true feminist of our time—not to mention (as we already have) a sitting president. We doubt that the incumbent, Bill Clinton, would be rash enough to do likewise even if there were a serious “Pro-choice” journal available to him.

Certainly not after what happened last November 8? As our friend Ray Kerrison vividly describes it (see *Appendix A*), American voters are “astonishingly and

mercifully revolting against abortion.” To be sure, that is not the message broadcast by the pro-abortion Major Media, which stubbornly resists any such perception. But surely it is a *fair* perception: Ronald Reagan won two landslide victories on a “pro-life” platform and his heir George Bush did likewise once.

Naturally, all this is of great importance to us. But a quarterly journal is hardly suited to covering news (our beat is the *meaning* of it all), which must needs be stale by the time you read about it here. On the other hand, we do take seriously our appointed job of recording the major battles of the war we are in, so that, in years to come, anyone happening upon our yellowed pages will discover not only what happened but also “how it seemed”—what was said and thought at the *time*—in short, history not re-written by hindsight. Accordingly, we asked Mr. William Murchison to “cover” the November election for us, like the professional newsman he is, and in our lead article you get his “morning-after” reporting just as we received it. As you will see, what struck *him* as the “lead” was the fact that pro-abortion leaders obviously agree with Mr. Kerrison—the voters inflicted a massive defeat on the “pro-choice” forces.

You will of course note (with appreciation, we trust) that quite a bit of Murchison’s own punditry has already proved accurate, not least that the election results would “nullify” the rantings of ex-Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders, who has already got the unceremonious boot from her old Arkansas friend Bill Clinton—may his other predictions prove equally prescient! In any case, he certainly catches the *feel* of what happened, in his unique style.

As it happens, our second piece is also a “contemporary” report, by two more professionals (Miss Eileen Rosen and our own Robert M. Patrick), on the “human embryo research” controversy. The urge to “create” human life for the convenience of “scientific” researchers is by no means new, nor surprising—the *credo* of “Modern Science” being “If it *can* be done, it *should* be done”—but it was frustrated during the Regan Era, for the obvious reason that it is inextricably joined to abortion. Mr. Clinton having repealed all the anti-abortion bans, the “Scientific Community” was quick to find such research “ethical” enough for federal (i.e., tax-payer) support. Here, you get the inside story of how it was done, and who did it. At the time of writing, it seemed virtually certain that this latest “advance” would proceed unhindered—but then November 8 happened, and President Clinton backed away from funding embryo-creation “expressly for research purposes”—what his post-election qualms will actually *mean* remains to be seen. But we can’t resist noting the irony of it all: How can a days-old “embryo” be so undeniably a “human being” of value while a near-born “fetus” remains only a “potential” one?

The social scientists have also been busy: late last year a University of Chicago group released a new survey of American “sexual habits”—it was instant front-page news nationwide, even though its “findings” were hardly sensational. Indeed, the consensus is that “we” are far less aberrant than the notorious Kinsey

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Report claimed. What lessons should we draw? We asked our old friend (and erstwhile editor) Ellen Wilson Fielding to give us her own insights which—as our oldtime readers will surely remember—she provides gracefully.

She gets to the heart of the matter by posing her own question: If “things” are actually much better than we feared, why do Americans clearly suffer a general uneasiness about the sexual state of the nation? Well, because they *should* be uneasy; even if the great majority are not themselves doing all the terrible things we see portrayed (*and* advertised) on TV, such horrors nevertheless signify a sea change in our sexual mores which has produced horrendous social consequences, including countless abortions, millions of children “crippled by divorce, or physically and emotionally harmed by what is euphemistically called ‘early’ sexual activity”—in short, many are fearfully uneasy “about the wrong turns taken by an America we love,” but don’t know how to set it straight again.

A prime cause of the “deserved uneasiness” Ellen describes is that now-pervasive thing called “Sex-Ed”—as Colleen Boland next tells us, many states already mandate “comprehensive” sex-education courses, and most others support forms of it that would have scandalized earlier generations. In fact, they scandalize even “modern” parents who somehow discover what’s actually *in* the fashionable *curriculum*, which is as closely guarded as the Sex-Ed votaries can keep it. But their gnostic prescriptions have now been exposed from an unlikely source: *The Atlantic Monthly*, an oldline liberal journal, recently ran a major article by Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, who gained earlier fame with her startling conclusion (in the same journal) that “Dan Quayle Was Right” about Murphy Brown. This time, Ms. Whitehead zeroes in on “The Failure of Sex Education” with equally devastating effect. Put briefly, the “Sex-Ed Establishment” is industriously producing *more* of the problems it claims to solve, yet it continues to demand and *get* more public funding—it’s a growth industry. But, as Colleen makes clear, it offers no substitute for the family-based morality it so successfully subverts.

We use the adjective “gnostic” because it *fits*: secret, superior knowledge is precisely what far too many of our “scientific” professionals think they possess, and while they won’t initiate ordinary folk into their mysteries, they are more than happy to share the wisdom among themselves. Mrs. Rita Marker managed to penetrate one such inner-sanctum meeting—she calls it “The Woodstock of Bioethics,” which neatly summarizes what she saw and heard. It was quite an affair, as you will learn for yourself as you read her in-depth reportage. Not surprisingly, much of it has to do with another fashionable prescription, namely, how “we” ought to be willing to die should we become “inconvenient” or “messy” near the end. We wonder: Will such professional death merchants willingly fill out their own prescriptions when they are the patients? As Mrs. Marker describes it, they hadn’t given it much thought, until one woman had the audacity to bring the subject up only moments before the conference ended—Marker is a first-rate story-teller, and she’s got a good one for you here.

Perhaps the most dramatic story of 1994 centered around the ballyhooed Cairo

Conference on “world population” which the forces of *de*-population convened to stunt proliferation of the non-Western masses. It seemed destined to be no contest: arrayed on one side were the UN’s entire *globacracy* backed by the irresistible money-power of the U.S.—President Clinton himself played *Generalissimo*—while on the other side it seemed that only the Pope of Rome dared stand athwart the march of history. In the event, John Paul II (fittingly, *Time*’s Man of the Year) won an historic victory. There were many reasons for the totally-unexpected result, not least the reality that “Feminism” speaks for an elitist *minority* of the world’s women. Mrs. Melinda Reist gives you just one facet of the whole story here, but we think you will find it a fascinating one.

Which brings us to another media-supported cause, Animal Liberation. Like both fetal experimentation and “population control” it is intimately joined to the over-riding issue of abortion. As our friend John Muggeridge makes clear, pup seals and cuddly piglets—even rats—are considered worthy of the compassion denied to butchered pre-born humans. It’s another good story—few realize that Animal Lib has been media-promoted into a world-class movement, despite the derisory excesses of its votaries, e.g., one insists that “there are no clear distinctions between us and animals”—such bizarre stuff stems, says Muggeridge, from the “liberal” mentality that has rejected the very basis of Western civilization.

You might call our final piece a 20th Anniversary present to ourselves and—we trust—to you too. It has nothing whatever to do with abortion or any other weighty issue; rather, it’s just something Faith Abbott wrote about her early working-girl days in Gotham, a ham-on-wry sketch that she never thought to publish. But when Faith decided to publish her memoir *Acts of Faith*, the editor talked her into appending the sketch on the grounds that it was too good *not* to publish. Well, the book has drawn much fan mail, and virtually all of it mentioned (*and* praised) “The Lovely Girls”—no surprise to your servant, it *is* unusual. So why not let our own readers see it? Why not indeed: you’ll find it on page 73, and if the following 20 pages don’t amuse you, let me know.

Our appendices this time are also rather unusual, but we think they all belong in our permanent record, beginning with friend Ray Kerrison’s rundown (*Appendix A*) of what the recent elections meant to the anti-abortion movement—it’s the story you did *not* get from the Major Media, but Kerrison nails it down with his accustomed verve. In *Appendix B*, you’ll find confirmation of what you already knew: editorial cartoons have a powerful impact on readers—the case in point involves Mrs. Susan Smith’s “termination” of her two little boys, a grotesque example of “choice” in action. Next, Mary Kenny (*Appendix C*) writes from London about a series of BBC radio lectures by “a very distinguished and experienced shrink,” a disciple of Sigmund Freud, who nonetheless has some quite un-repressed opinions about what the Permissive Society is doing to its children.

As everybody knows, “Gays” have been highly-visible, vociferous allies of the “Pro-choicers”—but not *all* of them as *Appendix D* demonstrates (if you’re

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surprised, so were we!). We don't know how much influence the Pro-Life Alliance of Gays and Lesbians wields in its own "community," but we're sure it is *not* a media favorite—reason enough for us to record the document you get here.

We then switch back to that historic Cairo Conference: here again, the U.S. media gave it the politically-correct spin—the de-populators were Good Persons, battling the benighted, etc.—a view decidedly not shared by prominent persons elsewhere, for instance Australia's Senator Brian Harradine (*Appendix E*) and the Philippines' Francisco Tatad (*Appendix F*), both of whom leveled withering blasts at the "New Imperialism" the UN seeks to impose worldwide. As you will note, the "cultural difference" is especially evident in Senator Tatad's speech—he actually uses "religious" arguments in a political debate!

Our concluding piece (*Appendix G*) first appeared in the London *Sunday Telegraph* (for which Mary Kenny writes a regular column) the week before Christmas; Mr. Martin Mears wonders why the abortion debate has been effectively ended in Britain, which "now has the most 'liberal' abortion laws in Europe"—a good question, eloquently put. We hope to hear more from Mr. Mears in future issues, which we trust you anxiously await.

J. P. MCFADDEN
EDITOR

Postscript: on December 28, 1994—the Feast of the Holy Innocents—Robert Arthur McFadden II died of cancer (had he lived to The Epiphany, January 6, he would have been 35). It was a fitting day for him to leave us: due to the happenstance of parentage, Robert was recruited willy-nilly into the anti-abortion battle at age 13 and, through high school and college, he worked for the cause. Some eight years back, he decided to "delay" his career plans and make our cause his priority. Robert handled our affairs (and that of other anti-abortion groups as well) in Washington with unfailing high humor almost to the end—certainly long past the time when even *his* preternatural optimism might justly have flagged. Nor did he ask "Why me?" Rather, he accepted his lot like a man, as his father knows. The first-born son, he was named after his uncle Robert Arthur, who was killed, aged 21, in an air battle over Germany in 1943; their two lives together fell well short of the biblical three-score and ten, which seemingly justifies the maxim that the good die young. He lived to see the birth of (and be Godfather to) James Anthony Maffucci, the first-born son of his closest sister Maria—Robert rejoiced in that, despite his by-then-failing strength. He leaves his bereaved young (27) wife Mary (one assumes that the cancer prevented progeny), his four siblings, his mother (our Faith Abbott), your servant, and a legion of friends (I'm told that the funeral cortege was 50 cars long). Had he been able to leave us all that optimism (his last words to me were "I don't think it's the end yet, Dad, everything is still working"), victory here—and not too long delayed—might have been assured. But with him we know in faith that it will come, whether here or hereafter it does not matter. *Requiescant in pace.*

Is “Do it!” Done?

What the Voters Chose

William Murchison

“The 104th Congress,” moans a despondent Kate Michelman, “could well be the most anti-woman, anti-choice Congress in our history.”

Oh really? A Congress that intelligent, that hopeful? It seems almost too good to be true. Of course, you have to discount the linguistic brutality in which Ms. Michelman revels as president of the National Abortion Rights Action League. An “anti-woman” Congress, now or ever? Come on, Ms. Michelman, cool off. You’ve been standing in the sun longer than is becoming.

But when the sour and exasperated rhetoric has faded away, Ms. Michelman has a certain point: The 104th Congress, thanks to the voters’ and the candidates’ exertions, will take a dimmer view of abortion “rights” than has been the case since *Roe v. Wade*, 22 sad and sordid years ago.

Most morning-after surveys agree that the 1994 elections sent to Congress more than 40 new pro-life House Members and at least five new Senators. Estimates come easily, of course, and are subject to variation. The Republican National Coalition for Life, headed by the redoubtable Phyllis Schlafly, says with a little more exactitude that, of the newly-elected House Republicans, “48 are solidly pro-life, five will vote with us most of the time, 14 have mixed views on abortion, and five are pro-abortion.” Mrs. Schlafly concurs with the estimate of five “solid pro-life” seats picked up in the Senate.

The president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Pamela Maraldo, has her own calculation: 224 solid anti-choice votes in the next House, 47 in the Senate.

The fact remains, and it remains gloriously: the pro-life cause has a whole bunch of new congressional recruits, and a lot of dismayed folk on the other side. “Look out, Patricia Schroeder!” cries the Colorado congresswoman’s old antagonist, Mrs. Schlafly, “Several Republican women were elected, at least four of whom are expected to play a leadership role

William Murchison, our contributing editor, is a syndicated columnist based at the Dallas *Morning News*; his new book *Reclaiming Morality in America* was published by Thomas Nelson Publishers (Nashville, Atlanta, London) late last year.

on behalf of the unborn.” Moreover, “Despite the millions they raised and spent for pro-abortion Democrat female candidates, EMILY’s List made no net gains in Congress. Instead, they *lost* radical feminist, pro-abortion stalwarts Leslie Byrne, Karan English, Marjorie M. Mezvinsky, Karen Shepherd, Josele Unsoeld, and Susan Stokes. Many, many FOCA (Freedom of Choice on Abortion Act) supporters lost.” (Author’s note: EMILY’s List is the feminist fund-raising organization that distributes campaign contributions to feminist candidates across the country. EMILY stands for Early Money Is Like Yeast.)

Clearly the 104th is not the 103rd, which sat by while a “pro-choice” president regularly flouted his own expressed intention of making abortion “rare.” It is useful, if not in fact essential, to ask: What happened? What’s going on here? Because clearly something *is* going on.

Is the problem negligence and sloth on the part of the pro-choice faction? Pamela Maraldo offers that slightly comforting—from her own standpoint—explanation: “Comforted,” she says, “by the presence of a pro-choice president in the White House and a pro-choice majority in the U.S. Supreme Court, voters may have been lulled into believing that the abortion issue was off the public agenda. But for forces on the far right, abortion is never off the agenda.”

Leave aside Ms. Maraldo’s stridency, which is one of the various attributes for which she gets paid. Is she right or wrong? There is a certain validity to what she says. Pro-life folk found, in the ’80s, that their zeal flagged as Uncle Ron, in the White House, seemed prepared to carry the ball for them. They knew at all events that during his tenure as president things would not get *worse* and—Who knew for certain—they might get better. When one has soldiered hard and long, as had the pro-life warriors, there is the ever-present temptation to lean on one’s rifle and snore. It may be, as Ms. Maraldo suggests, that this is what happened to pro-choice, as formerly to pro-life, people. Certainly the Supreme Court’s recently expressed unwillingness to reverse *Roe v. Wade* has dulled both parties’ combative edges.

But, when all’s said, Bill Clinton, with his innate desire to please everyone, and his demonstrated inability to cleave to a single course of action, would seem a poor excuse for lethargy among his supporters. Despite Hillary Rodham Clinton’s feminist fervor, Clinton’s ineffectiveness and unreliability as a national leader must have been borne in on pro-choice leaders fairly early in his presidency. The lethargy explanation rests on the assumption that we’re in the majority, and the only reason we got crept up on is that we relaxed. On this view, pro-life people are extremists and

kooks—a force existing and flexing its muscle on the fringe, and therefore effective only when they fire, as it were, from ambush. In a fair fight, they couldn't possibly win! The corollary to the lethargy explanation is that next time we'll be ready. No more ambushes, no more shooting from behind trees, as if this were Indians *vs.* Gen. Braddock. When the combatants meet in a fair political field, troops and weapons out in the open, that's it!

But is it? Is such an analysis wholly reasonable? There is good reason to think otherwise. On any modern battleground, it is possible to see pro-life forces at a minimum holding their own, at a maximum forcing their adversaries into nervous retreat—and some day total rout.

The two sides are more evenly attached than the pro-choice elements in society would care to acknowledge. If anything, it may be the pro-life cause that is gaining. There is some evidence of this from the election itself. Richard Wirthlin, the noted Republican pollster, said that 51 percent of actual voters consider themselves pro-life, as opposed to the 43 percent who say they are pro-choice. It may be no wonder that so many pro-life candidates prevailed.

Twenty-six percent of actual voters said abortion influenced their vote. Of those who thus replied, 18 percent voted for pro-life candidates—twice as many as who voted the pro-choice line. The pollsters persisted: What kind of presidential candidate would you favor? Forty-eight percent of actual voters said they wanted a pro-life Republican candidate, as against 35 percent who said they wanted a Democrat who supports abortion rights. And only 36 percent wanted a pro-choice Republican—a revelation that might startle Republican Senator Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, whose presidential candidacy is based on the supposition that the GOP needs to hack away pro-lifers and other prehistoric species preserved in amber over on the religious right.

There was yet more at which Specter would wince: the finding that 49 percent of actual voters are *less likely* to vote for a pro-choice Republican presidential candidate, *vs.* the 31 percent who consider themselves more likely to do so.

And what of the supposedly fearsome “religious right,” which all right-thinking Americans are invited (by left-thinking Americans, of course) to repudiate? For pro-choicers there is bad news here, too. A *Washington Post* exit poll identified evangelical Christians as 25 percent of those who showed up at the polls. And there's worse—if you're pro-choice. The Christian Coalition claims that religious conservatives accounted for fully

a third of the national vote. In particularly close races, such as Republican Congressman Rod Grams' successful Senate contest with Democrat Ann Wynn in Minnesota, the role of the religious conservatives was pivotal. (Grams won by only four percentage points; according to the Coalition, six points came from religious conservatives.)

Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised: the Christian Coalition says that the weekend before the election, it mailed *33 million* voter guides, and made an additional two million appeals by telephone to get out the vote. A back-handed tribute to the Coalition's effectiveness comes from Arthur Kropp, of People for the American Way: "They've established themselves clearly as the nuts and bolts of the Republican party. There isn't a more loyal constituency within the party, there isn't a more active constituency, there isn't a more hard-working constituency." You would think Pat Robertson himself had spoken, rather than a sworn adversary. From one such as Kropp, who has not the least intention of praising, this is high praise indeed.

Two questions present themselves for consideration—one practical, the other more theoretical. The first is: What now? And then: What's going on around here?

First things first. For the next two years certainly, and for years beyond that very probably, the abortion cause in Congress is dead. Goodbye to any hope of a law such as FOCA, which in truth got nowhere in the 103rd Congress, which was far better disposed than the 104th will be toward the elevation of abortion rights. Plainly there will be no legislative advancement of claimed rights to "terminate" a pregnancy. Nor should the National Institutes of Health count on congressional funding of research aimed at experimentation on human embryos. The heat sure to be raised by such a proposal ought to suffice to melt the polar ice caps.

Nor will judicial nominees with pro-abortion track records mount to the federal bench. The Clinton administration has had its shot at advancing such like. It's too late now. Only judicial "moderates" such as Judge, now Justice, Stephen Breyer are going to get confirmed by the present Senate. Even those liberals appointed and confirmed already to the federal bench are suddenly going to find themselves shorn of effective power. At the district or appellate court level, they may enter decisions favorable to abortion rights—but not in the expectation that such decisions will stand up on appeal. The judicial stand-off on abortion will continue a while longer, in other words. But that is manifestly better than the repulsion of hopes for shrinking the scope and compass of *Roe v. Wade*.

The election results probably nullify any remaining claims by the militantly pro-abortion Surgeon General, Joycelyn Elders, to the exercise

of moral authority. General Elders in the best of times never commanded much respect, owing to her loose tongue, extremist theories, and marginal credentials. Little should be heard from her during the next two years except random yelps of anguish as her policies come under attack in the new Republican Congress.

But all this is negative in a sense: a repelling or retarding, rather than a sweeping back of the tide. What happens when the trumpet blows to call the advance? “We see a window of opportunity,” says Paige Cunningham of Americans United for Life, “to make a difference—to do something positive and to be focused.” The right-to-life movement as a whole might make such a claim—and appears to do exactly that. “We are farther along than in the ’80s,” says Colleen Parro, executive director of Mrs. Schlafly’s Republican National Coalition for Life. “The movement is stronger, there are more of us . . . I think we have a grassroots political movement that is not going to allow the question of abortion to be left hanging . . . I see a far more active stance on their part.”

The Republican “Contract With America”—the famous list of legislative proposals the Republicans pledge to call up for a vote in the first 100 days of the new session—includes reinstatement of the Reagan-era rule that prevented physicians in federally-funded clinics from discussing abortion with patients. Clinton, in his second day as president—it was also the 20th anniversary of *Roe*—aborted the rule, sending the clear signal that on the right-to-life questions his was a new kind of presidency. A fair guess would be that, this time, the rule is enormously likely to pass. Likewise likely is reinstatement of the full, unvarnished Hyde Amendment, which prevented the spending of federal funds for abortion save those undertaken to save the mother’s life. Under Bill Clinton, the exceptions were enlarged to include abortions performed in cases of rape or incest. The Racketeer-Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) may be amended to make plain that it never was intended to apply to anti-abortion activity.

What we may look for, in short, is the intensification rather than the resolution of the abortion controversy. Intensification is the road to resolution, if that is not too large a paradox to ingest. Ms. Maraldo, of Planned Parenthood, has a point. Her supporters had been lulled into a kind of complacency. All was going too well. The suddenly cloudless sky was lovely to bask in—for those of Ms. Maraldo’s persuasion. Once again the thunder growls, the wind whips up, and the smell of impending rain is in the air. Ms. Maraldo’s picnic is about to get rained on. The abortion controversy is not going to get more peaceful; it is going to get livelier.

But in what sense? Is the right-to-life movement on the verge of triumph? That would be far too facile a prediction. After all, James Davison Hunter, the noted University of Virginia sociologist, has recently called abortion “the centerpiece of our postmodern politics . . . the knottiest moral and political dilemma of the large culture war” That hardly makes it sound as though consensus were in the works.

So what’s going on around here? Possibly a slow transformation of the terms by which we think about the dilemma. No one can speak with certainty when it comes to cultural trends. Nonetheless, certain factors are worthy of remark.

Abortion is a phenomenon of the 1960s, the vexed era we now seem, by the grace of God, to be leaving behind, if only through chronological progression. Though the *Roe* decision came down from the U.S. Supreme Court in 1973, its philosophical roots were struck in the soil of the decade immediately previous, when the appeasement of appetite was the key to everything. Was it needful, for purpose of self-fulfillment, to spurn the gift of life? If so, here was the modern spirit to rationalize and explain away the “termination” of a pregnancy. Here, in fact, was the modern spirit to provide the linguistic cover—“termination of a pregnancy”—for an act abhorrent to the moral leaders of our civilization.

Moral “leaders”? There was debatable matter even in terminology of this sort. The moral leaders—pedagogues, parents, priests, pastors—had over the previous decades become radically uncomfortable with the authority they exercised; it came to the point that, when called on to lay down that authority or hand it over, they willingly did both. The ’60s spirit of permissiveness was anything but the spirit of civilization as Westerners had come to know it. In 1973, given the strength of the social and political forces abroad in our society, *Roe v. Wade* was likely the inevitable decision, as *Brown v. Board of Education* was the inevitable decision in the social climate of 1954.

But time passes, as do particular spirits of particular times. The spirit of *Roe*—the spirit of have-it-your-own-way—seems ever more ill-suited to the modern age. The consequences of individual choice, unfettered by ties of obligation or responsibility, are clearer and more disheartening than ever. When Newt Gingrich said the drownings of two South Carolina children by their own mother showed the need for social change—an obvious point—the Democratic media accused him of blaming Clinton for the deaths. In fact, what he did chiefly was to call attention to the casualness with which human life is viewed in modern times. Mothers going back to Medea have

killed inconvenient children. Mrs. Smith might have done as she did 50 or 60 years ago. The point was, the moral climate of the *Roe v. Wade* era didn't exactly restrain her.

The elections of 1994 were about abortion, to the extent that large numbers of Americans made abortion a pivotal issue, but they clearly were about much more. The principal victims of election day were Democrats, and Democrats, on the whole, support abortion more strenuously than Republicans. The point to notice is that Democrats likewise support more strenuously than Republicans the whole idea of throwing restraint to the wind (save, of course, when the individual in question lights up a cigarette as he thinks it over!). Voters told pollsters they thought this business of moral do-it-yourselfism had gone about as far as possible, and probably farther. A *Wall Street Journal* poll of voters found 54 percent inclined to view our national problems more as moral than financial. A *Newsweek* poll at the same time discovered 57 percent unfashionable enough to ascribe modern problems to the "moral decline of people in general." There can be no surprise, on such a showing, that anti-abortion sentiments played a powerful part in shaping the result. Abortion—the massacre of unborn life—apotheosizes choice in a moral vacuum: *Me* first! *Me!*

A recent poll commissioned by Dr. James Dobson's Focus on the Family organization (and conducted by the Roper organization) queried adults as to their views on abortion. How many thought abortion "wrong under any circumstances"? Nineteen percent. That's a lot, but wait. How many thought abortion wrong "except to save the life of the mother"? Seven percent. And how many thought abortion wrong "except to save the life of the mother, and in cases of rape or incest"? Another 18 percent. Eighteen, seven, 19—they add up to 44 percent. We are getting up there for certain. But the pollsters aren't through. How many find abortion wrong "except in instances of rape or incest; to save the life of the mother; and in cases of infant disease or deformity"? Another 11 percent. Throw in "quality of life" and you've got yet another 11 percent whose consciences stir at the thought of abortion. The grand total: 66 percent, virtually two thirds, unwilling or reluctant without important (to the respondents) exceptions that abortion should take place at all. How many favor abortion with no restrictions, even as to time? A mere seven percent.

The pro-choice lobby is welcome to dispute the Roper/Dobson findings and to offer, in the spirit of democratic interchange, its own poll. Will such a poll show dramatically different results? The election returns would not suggest as much; they seem to suggest, in fact, that public sentiment on

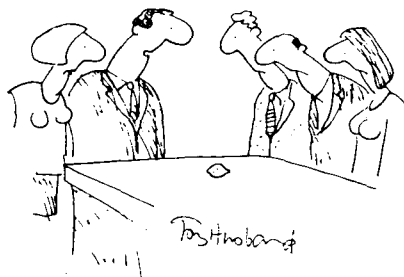
abortion is changing, moving away from the it's-her-body-let-her-do-what-she-wants-with-it sort of thinking that prevailed in the years just after *Roe*, before letting-her-do-what-she-wants had been tested as a social and moral proposition. The pro-life cause's triumphs were hardly unlimited. Oregon, at the very moment voters were electing two new pro-life Republicans, narrowly approved a referendum allowing physician-assisted suicide. Here is a whole new front—euthanasia—on which the battle for life must be waged in the coming decades.

Still, the '80s were not the '70s; the '90s are not the '80s; the next century, the next millenium—who knows what it will be like, as the generation of the counterculture grays and droops, and as the hand of God works its beneficent purposes in a fallen universe? The election of 1994 is less important in terms of political balances reshaped than of moral imbalances weighed and found wanting.

We seem at this particular point a long way from the Hyde Amendment and RICO. But, then, moral retrieval has to begin somewhere, with some human instrumentality or the other.

What's wrong with the ballot box for so sublime a purpose? At that revered symbol of choice, millions have said no to the social and political cause masquerading as Choice. The people's freely chosen representatives may be about to embark on an agenda different from that which has been fashionable in Washington, D.C., these last couple of years. If Americans do not yet speak with old-time unanimity about matters of life and death, still the political power of those who affirm the value of life is growing and expanding.

Life as a political, rather than a moral, question? How odd it sounds! But, then, that's what all this political business is about: namely, the de-politicizing of morality; its rescue from government officials and opinion polls; its return to its rightful place—the grateful, prayerful heart.



'Well, there it is in a nutshell.'

THE SPECTATOR 29 October 1994

Creation “For Research Only”

*Robert M. Patrick
and Eileen Rosen*

Many believe that the government panel on human embryo research reached its most important conclusion before it even held its first meeting: that is, that research on human embryos is not only ethically acceptable, but a praiseworthy endeavor.

In fairness to the panel, that conclusion was pretty much preordained by a previous panel. An ethics advisory board to what was then called the Department of Health, Education and Welfare concluded in 1979 that research on embryos, if performed to establish the safety and efficacy of *in vitro* fertilization and embryo transfer, was ethically acceptable. It should be noted, however, that the 1979 panel’s recommendations were just that: recommendations. For a variety of reasons, mostly political, they were never adopted as any formal government policy.

It should also be noted that the 1979 panel limited its *imprimatur* to infertility-related research, whereas the new panel has expanded it to cure all that ails humankind, from birth defects to cancer. But this is a detail for Congress to worry about.

The bottom line is that the panel, which was convened by the National Institutes of Health, not only baptized federal funding for human embryo research, but crossed another ethical line in determining that it would be permissible to deliberately create embryos for research purposes, and then to destroy them once the experiment was finished. The panel was persuaded that there wouldn’t be enough “spare” embryos left over from pregnancy attempts in infertility centers to meet the “need.”

Expecting that most of its opposition would come from religious and anti-abortion groups, panelists were stunned to see the *Washington Post*, a strong supporter of abortion rights, come out strongly against this recommendation when their report was issued last September. The *Post* called the notion of creating embryos for research purposes “unconscionable” and said the government has “no business funding it.”

A month or so later, the November elections happened. A pro-life majority landed in both chambers of Congress. And some of these elected officials started making noises about government-funded embryo research. Suddenly President Clinton developed qualms about the proposed research and

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A human embryo is smaller than the
period at the end of this sentence
and so is the conscience of those who
want to experiment on him or her.

BENSON
1984

STEVE BENSON (reprinted by permission of UFS, Inc.).

directed NIH not to fund research using embryos created solely for experimental purposes.

Members of the human embryo panel have long known that their task—to determine which areas of embryo research were acceptable or unacceptable for federal funding, and to draft corresponding guidelines—was controversial. Several noted at public meetings that even their “liberal” friends questioned why they were involved in such an area.

In fact, after the panel issued its report, one of the drafters, Duke University President Nannerl Keohane commented that much of the furor about the proposed research might have been diffused if the human embryo panel had a more neutral name—one that didn’t conjure up images of “*advanced* embryos and fetuses.” The NIH Director’s Advisory Committee, of which Keohane is also a member, discussed this issue at its Dec. 1-2 meeting, but dropped it after University of Florida’s David Challoner, MD, commented that “given the scrutiny at this point, it would be considered transparent and manipulative.”

Concerned about public response to its work, the panel had NIH host a carefully-choreographed science-writers’ “briefing” so that all journalists covering the release of the panel’s report the following week would “understand” what the issue was really about, and therefore report it in an appropriate manner.

The highlight of that briefing was the graphic given to every single attendee: a blank, white, standard-sized paper with a tiny dot the size of a period on it. Journalists were told repeatedly that the dot on that paper was bigger than the embryo on which scientists would soon be experimenting.

As intended by NIH, the dot analogy was picked up by several networks and print reporters. And by one cartoonist, although not in the same vein. Steve Benson of the *Arizona Republic* (see facing page) penned a cartoon that consisted of a totally blank white space with a tiny dot on it. In miniscule print beneath, it said, “A human embryo is smaller than the period at the end of this sentence and so is the conscience of those who want to experiment on him or her.”

Benson was not the only one who suggested that the panel was ignoring the important matter of the embryo’s moral status. From February to September, 1994, when the panel issued its report, it heard from more than 58,000 members of the public, the vast majority of whom disapproved of the proposed research on grounds that it was wrong to use unconsenting human beings for destructive experimental purposes.

With some frequency during its deliberations, panelists acknowledged

that they had to confront the issue of the embryo's moral status and the corresponding "respect" that was due it. But they had trouble articulating how research on embryos conveyed this "respect."

Ultimately, they determined that the human embryo "warrants serious moral consideration as a developing form of human life [but] it does not have the same moral status as infants and children." This is so, the panel said, because it lacks developmental individuation, sentience, "and most other qualities considered relevant to the moral status of persons." Another item contributing to the embryo's lower moral status, the panel said, is the fact that there is a high rate of natural miscarriage at this stage of development.

On the corresponding issue of "respect" due the embryo, the panel was assisted by Charles McCarthy, former director of NIH's Office for Protection from Research Risks, who suggested to the group that "using or involving an embryo in research may in and of itself be a mark of respect . . ."

Brigid Hogan, a Vanderbilt University cell biologist on the panel, commented that "for a scientist, the way you can show the most respect to the embryo, one of the ways, would be to say you could do the very best possible research . . . I could make a strong argument to myself that to do the very best possible work, you could justify creating embryos for research purposes," she added.

The McCarthy-Hogan "respect" theory held the day.

Included in the research that qualified for the "approved" list was that aimed at improving pregnancy outcomes, studying the process of fertilization, improving preimplantation diagnosis techniques (to detect genetic defects before implantation), and developing embryonic stem cells (ostensibly for future use in bone marrow transplants, cancer treatments, and other therapies).

The "warrants additional review" category included research that goes beyond the appearance of the "primitive streak" (the point at which "individuation" occurs and the nervous system begins developing) but stops before neural tube closure, cloning without transfer to the uterus, and research using eggs from aborted fetuses.

In the "unacceptable" category (meaning only such research should not be funded "for the foreseeable future"), the panel included research beyond the onset of neural tube closure, preimplantation genetic diagnosis for sex selection, except for sex-linked genetic diseases, cloning with transfer to the uterus, and attempts to transfer human embryos into nonhuman animals for gestation.

When issuing the report, members of the panel—and the accompanying

press releases—made repeated reference to the “strict” guidelines drafted by the group. An example of some of these “strict” guidelines are: the research must have a valid design and promise significant scientific or clinical benefit; donors may not be financially induced for their efforts, but may be given “reasonable compensation” in accordance with federal regulation, and out of “respect” for the “special character” of the embryo, research should be limited “for the present” to embryos up to 14 days old. The report also says that research aimed at identifying the primitive streak may go beyond 14 days, and once it is reliably determined when that occurs in a petri dish, all research may progress to that stage.

These “strict” guidelines, however, do not seem to be any more stringent than guidelines for other federally-funded research. In fact, the possibility of doing “research” on embryos more than 14 days old seems to indicate that America would be less strict than any other country in the world that has agreed to allow such research.

Actually, the new recommendations on human embryo research would place the U.S. in the “liberal” category, along with France, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Countries allowing only limited research on embryos are Australia, Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland. Norway completely forbids it. Nine states in the U.S. have passed laws banning general research on embryos, and any new federal regulations would not affect them.

The panel’s recommendations, if accepted by NIH director Harold Varmus, would not affect practices in privately-funded research, which has been going on unmonitored, except for institutional reviews where required.

The push for public funding of this controversial research came from infertility researchers, who felt government “sanction” of such research in this manner would add legitimacy to the field and provide enough money to attract more high-caliber scientists to the field.

Of course the panel *could* have adopted the “Hyde Amendment” approach and decided that the proposed area of research was so terribly divisive that it was not prudent to spend taxpayers’ money for it. Certainly that’s what the vast majority of the public who wrote or testified before the panel petitioned it to do.

But the choice of panelists virtually eliminated that “option.” A public witness at the first meeting charged that the panel was “stacked.” Steven Muller, the panel’s chairman and professor emeritus of Johns Hopkins University, responded by saying “to some degree, that’s true. . . . There is presumably nobody on this panel who believes that there ought to be no

federally-funded human embryo research at all.”

When asked by a fellow panelist whether the group should seek out views of those who disapprove of such research, Muller said: “I don’t think we have to take a view into account that there should be no human embryo research, period.” (It should be noted that on several subsequent occasions, he denied making these comments, but the transcript proves that he did.)

Stunned by the overwhelming public attacks on this research and the panel’s role in promoting it—particularly when analogies are made to Nazi experiments—Muller has concluded that his detractors are just plain “ignorant” of the facts and don’t understand what the issue is really about.

He is reportedly asking for a government-sponsored public education campaign to explain why Americans should want their tax dollars spent for a program that would deliberately create “experimental” human embryos.

Some of the NIH’s director’s advisers—at their December meeting—suggested enlisting medical and disease groups in this endeavor. One even recommended that members of Congress be researched to discover who has family members with conditions that might be helped by such research. These members, ostensibly, could be lobbied to become advocates for government funded experimentation.

The report is now in Dr. Varmus’ hands, with full approval of his advisory committee. Having been directed by Clinton not to fund projects using embryos created expressly for research purposes, Dr. Varmus has one hand tied. The embryos that researchers will be allowed to use—ones leftover from *in vitro* fertilization attempts—may be few in number and compromised as well. After all, people in fertility programs have pregnancy as their goal and may not be willing to share “extra” embryos with researchers. Additionally, they are in fertility programs because of reproductive problems. Their embryos, more frequently than not, may be abnormal and thus not provide the best source material for scientists.

But some skeptics are afraid that if spare embryos are the only source that the federal government will fund, the U.S. may suddenly have a surplus of “spares,” because some of the more unethical *in vitro* fertilization programs will just keep some of the client’s eggs and save them for themselves, to fertilize later.

The Taboos Are Gone

Ellen Wilson Fielding

The appearance late last year of a new survey on the sexual habits of Americans was a banner topic of conversation for the opposite reason the Kinsey Report achieved immortality 40 years earlier. Kinsey claimed to peer below the twin-bed marital hypocrisy of the “Leave It to Beaver,” Doris Day era and expose alarmingly heterodox sexual practices, inclinations and orientations. Suddenly American lives were assumed to be much more interesting than had hitherto been suspected—and this before the advent of the Pill and all the walls that came tumbling down in the Sixties.

The University of Chicago researchers who conducted the new survey used much greater care and caution in seeking out respondents likely to be representative of the general population. Their investigations into an adult population dominated by middle-aged witnesses to Woodstock produced widespread evidence of unadventurousness. American couples remain largely faithful, and American singles are not very promiscuous. As we have long suspected, there are many fewer homosexuals than Mr. Kinsey led us to believe. Most people’s sexual habits, judging by, say, Hollywood standards, appear quite tame. The survey produced the occasional piquant detail, such as the greater-than-average degree of sexual satisfaction claimed by religious couples. But that would seem to be that.

Or are there wider or more profound lessons or conclusions that we ought to draw from what is touted as a national portrait of sexual moderation? Perhaps we should just browse around for interesting details, give thanks that things are no worse, and move on to other topics.

But let’s look at the picture from another angle, or perhaps another two or three. The survey had the official press drawing a kind of sigh of relief. It somehow counteracted all those dispiriting studies showing how minimally educated young people are nowadays in history, literature and the like. “You have no idea how bad things really are out there,” these studies tell us, “but wait till you hear this.” They tell tall stories that happen to be true.

In contrast, the new sex survey allays our fears, assuring us that, contrary to what we had thought, there is no bogeyman. We can go on doing whatever we were doing because, in the aggregate, our nation’s behavior does not appear to be *outré* or extreme. It is not so very much worse, after

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all, than behavior in resolutely traditional societies.

This might be fully convincing if our anxieties were vague and formless, comparatively unanchored in specifics, like a national anxiety attack or a Jimmy Carter case of *malaise*. But let us consider why we have doubts and second thoughts, at the very least, about that bundle of attitudes and behaviors we file under the Sexual Revolution. For real data underlie our discomfort over the path we have taken.

Among the most difficult to ignore is the staggering abortion rate, topping that in all but totalitarian countries which rely on abortion as belated birth control. Divorce and repeat divorce are commonplace, no matter how serially faithful we are to current mates. That leaves all too many of the children who managed to get born spending much of their growing years in divided families. And because of the economic stresses of such truncated families, many of these children are farmed out to a series of more or less satisfactory caregivers for most of their waking hours, or left to handle an empty apartment after school.

Homosexuals, however fewer in number than Kinsey claimed, are much more politically powerful than a generation ago. This means that their reading of the meaning of sexual union is widely and sympathetically broadcast and hence influences public opinion. In their terms, and insidiously in the general understanding, the validity of a sexual union is subjective and personal, almost entirely impervious to outside judgment, and by rights outside social regulation. It is chiefly egoistic in source, expression and result. In modern times and among modern people, sex is only incidentally and self-consciously attached to procreation and the creation of family—to one generation's inheritance from its forefathers and its bequest to children. Sexual relationships exist only in the spotlight of the present and, unencumbered by offspring, do not reinforce our understanding of ourselves as links in a chain, attached persons, our lives resonating with meaning from the messages we bear to our offspring.

I do not think we understand well enough how closely the Sixties' contraceptive view of sex is akin to homosexual sex. Sex untied to children (and, relatedly, to vows) is like making love to oneself. Satisfaction of one's own needs and desires must be the predominant criterion for who, how, when, where, and why if one is no longer bound for better or for worse, till death do us part—if children are a deliberate choice *separated* from the decision to surrender oneself sexually.

Indeed, the very term "sexual surrender" is becoming anachronistic, since no real surrender remains possible so long as one is free to pack up and

leave at any time. Surrender requires some relinquishment of self-will, of freedom to decide, and to act unilaterally. For people who reserve the right to leave, and the right to withhold egg or sperm from the ultimate act of self-donation, any seeming surrender is mere playacting. It is (we cross the boundary into the world of perversions so easily once we separate ourselves from the profoundly normal) a kind of game of bondage and dominance.

For those “in love” such surrender may be emotional, but it is frustrated and rendered literally sterile once it is cut off from the objective realities of surrender, the marriage vow and the unobstructed womb. “I surrender my body—minus a few parts; I surrender myself—minus my future”—what sort of wild abandon is that? No wonder the love of religious couples is reported to be more satisfying: it permits, encourages and even baptizes generous and open-ended self-giving.

And here I approach the reason for my uneasiness with our willingness to be calmed and comforted by the apparently “moderate” results of the sex survey. For as we see, all that moderation has spontaneously combusted into decidedly immoderate statistics on divorce, teenage pregnancy, abortion, single parenthood, condoms-in-the-schools, and more. We are overwhelmed by stories of sexual abuse and child pornography rings, and in our leisure moments we read, in the social pages of our more broadminded newspapers, announcements of homosexual “marriages.” Which lens is accurate, which set of data lines up with reality?

Both do, so far as we can tell. But they must be put together and seen in the right relationship if we are to draw any legitimate conclusions. What first comes to mind on juxtaposing the two is how great the havoc so seemingly incomplete and unconsolidated a revolution in sexual mores can cause. How would the statistics on social dysfunctions read if most married couples were unfaithful and everyone experimented earlier and more widely with greater numbers of sexual partners—would the situation be measureably more dire, or do we soon reach the point of diminishing returns? Have we gone about as far as we can go, barring complete collapse?

Perhaps the chief multiplier of bad effects is the broad-mindedness which causes the relatively unmodern to connive unwittingly with the *avant-garde* by pretending that the revolutionaries are no threat to the moderate. They so connive because they have lost their certainty about the objective superiority of traditional morality—because all but the most obstinately religious have lost confidence in their ability to argue reasons for their choices (and arguments in defense of one’s own position seem ill-mannered).

Many Americans have already left behind them the religious or philosophical underpinnings of sexual moderation. Thus, when that

moderation is challenged—as have all verities and virtuous habits that escaped challenge in the previous century—it cannot be defended, and so the former, more demanding vision of moral virtue—which supported the preferential status of marriage, and all the *taboos* and even “double standards” that supported it—is in danger of being relegated to the quaint-but-irrelevant category of, say, the Amish.

Consider, for example, abortion. A generation ago it was rare, illegal and shrouded in scary secrecy. Only a few wild-eyed “progressives” and doctors sickened by botched abortions favored its legality. More important, abortion was not yet a defining political issue, to be argued in public debate and then voted up or down. It was *taboo*, beyond the pale. A daring novelist might include a back-alley abortion in his plot, piling on suffering for all concerned. Women who’d undergone one kept silence.

But legality changed matters, and not just for potential candidates and practitioners of abortion, or professional supporters like Planned Parenthood. Most damningly, it changed things for those who would never have considered having an abortion. Many such people found themselves maneuvered into a kind of neutrality that we have come to know as “I’m personally opposed, but . . .” Their attitudes and opinions had depended far more than they knew on united public opinion, so that when public opinion—as expressed in public *policy*—began to cave, they lacked the moral courage or philosophical wherewithal to condemn it unilaterally. “How can all these people be wrong?” asked our good American, whose internal church/state conflicts had heretofore been practically nonexistent. “And in any case, what right have I to tell them they’re wrong?”

Quite quickly, as the abortion mills proliferated and the numbers of the never-to-be-born rose to previously unimaginable heights, another motive for silence entered the picture, affecting the rhetoric and reactions of even principled opponents of abortion. For soon everyone knew someone who had had an abortion, or knew someone who knew someone. And since growing numbers of these women were willing to *let* those around them know, abortion opponents knew that they knew these people, because they were family members or in-laws, neighbors, college roommates, co-workers. What to do? Follow Lady Astor’s eccentric example and ask them why they were killing all those babies? Surely that would be not only unpleasant but unsuccessful and perhaps counterproductive? Perhaps all one could usefully do was faithfully abstain from undergoing an abortion oneself.

That’s the kind of thinking that supported and still supports a slaughter of innocents in a country where most of the women of childbearing age

have not had an abortion and perhaps could imagine few or no situations in which they would choose to have one. The problem is, they cannot bring themselves to deny them to others. From their example it is clear that external conformity to public virtue is not enough; even internal conformity will be undermined if it is not based on a principle that can be explained and defended universally, and not just for oneself.

Plainly, it has not been enough for God-fearing Christians to say “I believe abortion is wrong, but my unbelieving neighbor does not, and it will do no good to try to impose something on him until his heart is converted.” It has not been enough for honest agnostics to say “I choose the choice which affirms the value of human life, but I can’t hope to persuade others who operate from a different scale of values or who do not recognize universal principles of morality at all.” It has not been enough because such diffidence has landed us in the situation we are in today, where a minority favoring abortion on demand, substantial though it may be, undermines the moral climate of the nation as a whole.

This same plague of counter-productive toleration creates havoc in other areas where sociologists’ surveys (and our own common sense) tell us that a majority still behaves more or less rightly, but no longer has the power or will to render deserters from the moral code uncomfortable enough to reconsider matters. Teenage pregnancy, elected single parenthood, and value-free sex education are good examples. To help people who rue their failings is common decency; to cover over the fact that what occurred was either a crime or a blunder is misguided kindness, doomed to multiply its objects.

So the results of this latest survey of Americans’ sexual lives are not as happy as they might first appear. What proves alarming is how so small a deviance from the past has resulted in social upheavals of earthquake proportions. The majority who do not cohabit before marriage encourage a large and unstable minority by fussing to Miss Manners about how to address envelopes to the “living together” couple, whom to invite where, and upon what occasions to bestow gifts. The majority who wish their teenage children to remain, as the modern phrase puts it, sexually inactive, squirm uncomfortably over issues like condom distribution in the schools and value-free sex education. The majority who long for lifelong, faithful marriages tolerate no-fault divorce and other public policies that undermine the solidity not only of others’ marriages but also their own.

In each case the majority is motivated chiefly by its confused ambivalence toward the universal applicability of moral norms whose force they acknowledge in their own lives. In each case this failure to uphold a common code—or to have faith in one’s ability to defend rationally moral

choices that affect the social order—not only encourages misery and wrongdoing by a sizable minority but eats away at the vitality of the majority's attachment to virtue.

Ideas have consequences, and the idea that contradictions can be smoothed over by chanting “I’m OK, you’re OK” is producing disastrous ones. During the Civil War Abraham Lincoln said that in the eyes of God both North and South could be wrong or one could be right, but both could not be right. This admirably clear thinking is what we largely lack today. But then, Lincoln also said that wrong things don’t become right by saying so. Today we try to paper over such distinctions by talking about differing viewpoints and valid choices.

Lincoln’s intransigent attachment to rational thinking led to a horrifically bloody war. But eventually it also led to the freeing of the slaves. Our own muddled thinking has led us to tolerate forms of destructive behavior that may make the price of that emancipation appear more reasonable. Millions of the unborn have been aborted, millions more children have been crippled by divorce, or physically and emotionally harmed by what is euphemistically called “early” sexual activity. By contrast, the news that X% of survey respondents waited until Y age to become sexually active—or limited themselves to three or fewer sexual partners, or never committed adultery—comes as cold comfort. Even liberal journalists can be conflicted. The same pundits who gnaw away in print at the “Religious Right” and those dangerous anti-abortionists return again and again to the very issues the “bad guys” worry about: drug and alcohol abuse among the young, sex roles, the agony of divorce, the vertigo of middle-aged single status, the pain of infertile women who waited too long.

The Washington *Post* recently ran an unpatronizing article about arranged marriages in India, followed a week or two later by a description of a Hindu festival which requires wives to fast for a day to effect the longevity of their husbands. Most major newspapers have not yet managed to treat Christian denominations as respectfully, but one can detect, here and there, a journalistic uneasiness with the course of contemporary life.

It is a deserved uneasiness and, magnified many times, it is akin to the pain and occasional near-despair that many of us feel about the wrong turns taken by an America we love, and want the best for. The newest sex survey may while away the time on a supermarket checkout line or provide water-cooler conversation, but it does not attempt the futile task of convincing us against the evidence of our own eyes that all is well with the soul of America.

Whitehead Strikes Again

Colleen Boland

Barbara Dafoe Whitehead has a knack for controversy. She is “only” vice president at the Institute for American Values in New York City, but she startled the major media in 1993 with her article in the *The Atlantic Monthly*, “Dan Quayle Was Right,” which took a serious look at the brouhaha the then-Vice President ignited by questioning the use of TV’s Murphy Brown as a “role model” for single mothers.

Whitehead’s article neatly cut through the silly charges that Quayle had “insulted all single mothers” and other such outraged reactions to make an in-depth case against the plague of single motherhood.

Then, last October, Whitehead struck again with another *Atlantic* piece, “The Failure of Sex Education.” Once again, she stuck to the on-the-record facts to build up a case against sex education “as we know it.”

The national statistics tell a grim story indeed. Whitehead cites 1990 figures that show nearly 70 percent of births to teen-age girls are to unmarried mothers; in the inner cities the numbers increase to 85 or 90 percent. Twenty-five percent of these children are not the first for their mothers, and the earlier a girl begins to have children, the more children she is likely to have, despite the fact that some 37 percent of teen-age pregnancies end in abortion and another 14 percent in miscarriage. Twenty years ago, in 1970, only five percent of 15-year-old girls had had sex, but by 1988 the figure was 26 percent. Thirty-two percent of 1970s 17-year-old girls had had sex, compared to 51 percent in 1988. By age 19, over 70 percent of girls have had sex, and almost 60 percent have had sex with two or more partners. One-third of 15-year-old boys and 86 percent of 19-year-old boys have had sex, according to 1988 figures. Well over 350,000 children were born to unwed teen-age mothers in 1990 and less than 10 percent were given up for adoption, according to the *New York Times* (June 10, 1994), which says that the reasons for this high number are “complex and not entirely understood,” but does concede that it could be due to “increased sexual activity among most teen-agers.”

No doubt about it, the statistics are frightening. Yet some people (former Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders was prominent among these) claim that the answer to the problem is *more* comprehensive sex education. But 17 states already have mandates for comprehensive sex education, and some

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30 more support it. Whitehead focuses her attention on New Jersey, which has had a mandate for comprehensive sex education since 1980. And it has strong state-wide support: over 80 percent of residents favor it, and 61 percent of parents with school-age children would allow their children to receive condoms in school. Whitehead notes that this popular support has increased since the mandate was passed, which would lead one to conclude that sex education has been successful. This is not the case: New Jersey now has the fourth-highest percentage of unwed teen-age births in the nation. Nonetheless, the state continues to promote comprehensive sex education.

Susan Wilson, one of the members of the New Jersey Board of Education which in the late 1970s drafted and passed the mandate, now runs the New Jersey Network for Family Life Education (“family life education” is the favored term in New Jersey for comprehensive sex education). The Network has a \$200,000 yearly budget, which is partly state-funded. Its small staff roams the state, drumming up support for family-life education and combatting opposition.

Proponents of such education clearly have an orthodoxy of unquestioned assumptions. For instance, children are “sexual from birth,” which means that “even throwing your arms around grandpa for a hug is a sexual act.” But these young sexual beings are surrounded by confusing and distorted messages about their sexuality. On the one side, the media bombards children with the view of sex as a commodity. On the other side, parents “burden children with moral strictures” about sex. Supposedly, schools stand in the middle and can mediate these opposing points of view for children. Children probably can’t trust their parents, but teachers can be safe people to talk to and get “unbiased statements of fact” for guidance. Ms. Wilson offers an example of how a teacher might help students to understand masturbation: “Some people think it’s okay to masturbate and some people think it’s not okay to masturbate, but most people think that no harm comes to you if you masturbate.” This fuzzy avoidance of “right or wrong” gives the student license to do what his inclinations might lead him to—he is only making a decision for himself—never mind that he is unequipped to decide based on what he has “learned” from his teacher.

More, family-life advocates insist that family life education must begin in the earliest years. They compare it to math: like calculus, sex can only be done properly when grounded in knowledge. In primary school, students begin with basic terminology; fetus, not baby, uterus, not tummy. Supposedly, a sense of trust is gradually built up in the classroom as students become more confident in talking about sexual matters, and healthy sexual development will result.

These dogmatic assumptions are presented with little explanation: “sexual from birth” is hardly a precise term; throwing arms around grandpa is an act of affection, not sex. But Wilson seems to expect that people will accept her definitions unquestioningly. Whether or not schools are safe havens for sexual education is unresolved, but is that what schools *should* be for? Although too late for Whitehead’s article, the Committee for Economic Development, an organization of corporate executives, issued a report last September titled “Putting Learning First.” As the *New York Times* said the next day, the report claims that schools are over-extending themselves by trying to offer students social services. Schools’ primary job is to teach, but employers are finding that “a large majority of their new hires lack adequate writing and problem-solving skills”—schools are spread too thin, and the children are the ones who suffer. The report was greeted with support by Education Secretary Richard W. Riley, President Albert Shanker of the American Federation of Teachers, and Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich, who evidently agree that in attempting to be trusted friends with whom children can talk to about personal matters like sex, teachers are failing students who need them to *teach*.

But sex-education advocates begin with the assumption that parents and children cannot have a trusting relationship in which they can talk about things like sex. And they don’t worry about skimping on *teaching* to remedy that problem, nor about the problem they create: by taking away from parents the right to teach their children about sex, they undermine family autonomy and authority, as well as the discipline that a parent should exercise over a child. It is ironic that proponents of “family life education” do not believe that the family is the appropriate place for young people to learn about family life.

Back to New Jersey: Whitehead recounts how the state-owned Rutgers University Press formed a panel with Susan Wilson to develop a sex primer. Called *Learning About Family Life*, it was written by Barbara Sprung, a former elementary-school teacher who now runs Educational Equity Concepts, which produces “nonsexist, multicultural, disability-sensitive, early childhood” materials. The format of the primer follows a fictional “Class 203” that deals day-to-day with issues such as sexual intercourse, AIDS, drug abuse, and different kinds of families. In the course of confronting these issues, young boys are encouraged to “unclog” their emotions, and girls are given equal time to talk about topics like masturbation. If boys feel reluctant about nurturing lessons, teachers are told to say, “In school, talking about feelings is a part of learning.” If girls’ parents are

uncomfortable with their daughters learning about masturbation, teachers are reminded, "Assure parents that your approach will be low keyed and will stress privacy, but also make it clear that you will not perpetuate myths that can mar children's healthy sexual development."

The vignettes featuring Class 203 are intended to show children real life, but Whitehead points out some of the flaws in the approach: amicable divorce is portrayed, but not amicable or long-lasting marriage. Love is demonstrated through sex, but not commitment. Men make few appearances: the male teacher, Mr. Martin, is peripheral except once when he cries—and another time when he talks about masturbation. There are only two fathers in the 43 stories, one who "makes a cameo appearance to show off his nurturing skills" and another who is "divorced and a plane ride away." One story, "Joseph Is an Uncle," describes a boy whose 17-year-old sister is unmarried and has a child. The child's father is gone, and the sister is tired. But eventually everyone pulls together to help out with the newest family member.

Whitehead sees three problems in this approach. First, illegitimacy is trivialized to a family problem that can be overcome with cooperation, not something that can lead to poverty, welfare dependency, or other social problems associated statistically with unmarried motherhood. Second, *Learning About Family Life* fails to address teen-age pregnancy as a consequence of sexual activity. It just seems to have happened, through nobody's fault. Third, the baby's father has expressed his love through sex as described, but when he leaves his pregnant girlfriend, there are no repercussions for him. The story never makes the connection between action and responsibility for the male.

Whitehead makes it clear that this is not "fact-based" instruction at all. It avoids an honest discussion of what teen-age parenthood can entail. Of course, it is intended for young children, and with the large number of broken and single-parent families today one does not want to appear to condemn the students' own parents, but Whitehead asks: "If the classroom is the source of unbiased factual information, how can the problems of illegitimacy and broken families be dealt with without touching on the key facts in the matter?" Obviously they are not being dealt with in New Jersey.

As students get older, sex education becomes more technical. Since Wilson and other sex-education advocates believe that "it is developmentally appropriate for teenagers to give and receive pleasure," they are taught how to protect themselves from sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs) and pregnancy when they have sex. Abstinence-based teaching, they say, does not work. One teacher says: "How can I teach abstinence when there are

three pregnant girls sitting in my eighth-grade class?" The answer is, of course, that if abstinence had been taught in the first place, maybe those three would not be sitting there pregnant. Is teen-age pregnancy "developmentally appropriate?"

Sex-education advocates believe that responsible sex is supposed to be marked by freedom from fear and repression. Students must learn not to be shy or hesitant about making their wishes known during sexual encounters. Students practice role-plays and gender-reversal activities in the classroom. A lack of reticence will allow students to indulge in what is called "noncoital sex"—such as petting, full body massage, mutual masturbation, etc.—said to be "sexual expression without risk." A study by William Firestone for the New Jersey Network for Family Life Education shows no evidence that noncoital sex reduces the incidence of coitus, but adherents continue to tout its virtues.

To help students feel more comfortable talking about their own sex lives, teachers are encouraged to share personal stories. One guidebook for New Jersey teachers describes a high-school teacher who told his class about his vasectomy. But teachers are not to impose views on students—if asked when students are old enough to have sex, teachers are encouraged to ask the students how *they* would answer it.

Unfortunately, surveys show that many students give the wrong answer. An article in Planned Parenthood's *Family Planning Perspectives* (January/February, 1990) reports that 84 percent of sexually-active young teen-age girls, when asked what topic they most wanted information about, answered "How to say no without hurting the other person's feelings." In a 1991 article in the *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, 83 percent of sexually-experienced upperclassmen at inner-city schools said that the best age to start having sex was older than *they* were when they started.

The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights ran an ad campaign in New York City subways recently that highlights the situation: a student tells a teacher, "I want to drink." "No, abstain," replies the teacher. "I want to smoke." "No, abstain." "I want to use drugs." "No, abstain." "I want to have sex." "Here's a condom." Such nonsense is causing some re-thinking in programs around the country. Whitehead discusses "Postponing Sexual Involvement," a program for eighth-graders at Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta. The program is short (only five sessions long) and is described as "not therapeutic, but normative." Students are required to act out skits in which they refuse sex. Each skit must end in a successful rebuttal. The program is not an unqualified success; 24 percent of those students who

had taken the course had had sex by the end of ninth grade—but of those who had not taken the course, 39 percent had sex in the same time period.

Abstinence programs are more effective than those that teach the kind of “decision-making skills” New Jersey promotes, according to Douglas Kirby, a researcher for ETR Associates, a non-profit health-education firm in California. Whitehead describes Kirby’s studies for the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and for the Centers for Disease Control, in which he found that knowledge about sex gained through sex-education classes does not affect teen-agers’ decisions about having sex *or* the incidence of pregnancy, but teaching abstinence *is* effective, and the most successful programs reinforce “the behavior of abstinence among young adolescents who are practicing that behavior.” Whitehead writes that Grady Hospital found that teen-agers who have already begun having sex show diminished results after the course as compared to teen-agers who have not, so it has recently begun a program for sixth-grade students, to catch them before they have become sexually active.

Of course, many sex-education advocates believe that teaching abstinence is foolish and blind to reality. Joycelyn Elders once sniffed “Get real” at the whole idea of abstinence-based sex education. But minds are changing, not only nationally but even in New York City. Last spring, the Board of Education became another battleground over curriculum when some members of the HIV/AIDS Advisory Council voted to insert the phrase “secondary virginity” into the eighth-grade AIDS curriculum. New York *Newsday* (May 17) reported the phrase was used to “encourage sexually active students to stop engaging in sex,” according to meeting minutes. This move came several weeks after two council members quit in protest over changing the curriculum from condom usage and anal sex to lessons on abstinence and condom failure. The debate continues, with the abstinence side ahead.

There are other national stories: a new organization called “True Love Waits” encourages teens to pledge to wait until marriage to have sex; even President Clinton surprised many when his administration came out with a plan in June to give grants to 1,000 schools across the country to establish Grady Hospital-style abstinence programs. Also, the former Clinton Administration AIDS Czar, Kristine Gebbie, who had voiced complaints about those who lived in a “repressive Victorian society” and didn’t want to admit that sex is “pleasurable,” was replaced in November by Patricia Fleming. In her first interview as AIDS Czar, Fleming said her advice to teen-agers was “to try to abstain from sex until you find a partner you

want to stay with for a long, long time” (maybe she just couldn’t bring herself to go all the way and say “marriage”?).

It’s possible that a truly fact-based approach to sexual education will expose most programs for what they are: a mish-mash of “popular theories and philosophies, including self-help therapies, self-esteem and assertiveness training, sexology, and certain strands of feminism” (as Whitehead puts it). There is a world of disinformation out there being taught to young people.

Whitehead recounts what she heard at one workshop, where a “family-planning expert” spoke to participants about

all the things we can do without sexual intercourse: we can have children; we can show love and affection; we can gain self-esteem; we can achieve success in life. Reaching her summation, she proclaimed, We can have orgasm without sexual intercourse. After a moment, in the back of the room, one of the few men attending cleared his throat and politely protested this ideal of intercourse-free sex.

Surely it’s not a “get real” idea to teach that intercourse-free conception is the ideal? But for the sex-education proponents, “novel” ideas and experiments come easily: consider the case of Baltimore, where the Lawrence T. Paquin School is now reserved for girls who are either pregnant or have already had a baby. The *New York Times* (May 3) reported that since January, 1993, the school’s clinic has been offering Norplant, the contraceptive implant, to students. The story featured a picture of three girls proudly baring their arms for the school’s director, who beams happily over their implants, and quotes one girl who says, “You know, I’ve seen a lot of girls who had babies the same time I had my son, and they’re getting ready to have another one. I feel as though that probably would have been me if I hadn’t gotten the Norplant.”

But there are increasing reports of problems with the implants. One New York law firm has run newspaper ads asking women to call if they have had serious complications—the ad lists scarring, difficulty in removing implants, excessive menstrual bleeding, weight gain, emotional changes, headaches, nausea, and severe acne. And a Chicago law firm has filed a class-action suit against Wyeth-Ayerst Laboratories, the makers of Norplant, on behalf of over 400 women who have experienced severe scarring or pain during the removal of the capsules. There are similar suits elsewhere, with thousands of women involved.

The Baltimore Commissioner of Health denies that there are dangers associated with the birth-control devices: “There are rumors about Norplant that are just not true,” says Dr. Peter Beilenson. Indeed, Baltimore wants to make the implants available in more school-based clinics—but not everybody in Baltimore is so keen on Norplant. Rev. Gregory Perkins, of

St. Paul Community Baptist Church, is leading local efforts to stop Norplant in the schools, which he says leads to promiscuity and risky sexual relations: “You don’t have to have a Ph.D. in child psychology to know that if you give a 13-year-old this kind of birth control, they will feel you are sanctioning this kind of behavior.”

Unfortunately for young people like the three girls in the picture, this “technological” approach to problems of teen-age sex has been the approved one for quite some time. With readily-available contraception, the canard goes, women can have the same freedom as men have in pursuing pleasurable activities, i.e., sex. But the facts show otherwise, and the consequences for young people in particular and society in general can be, well, awful. A bleak story in *New York Newsday* (October 24) reports that as many as 53 percent of recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) are headed by mothers who gave birth to their first child while still teen-agers. Rates of STDs are increasing. And new AIDS czar Fleming admits that “one in four new HIV infections is among people under the age of 20.”

To be sure, sex education did not create all the “social problems” of today, nor will eliminating such teaching wipe out sexual promiscuity among teens. Whitehead has considerable sympathy for sex educators who think they are responding to the needs of young people in the post-sexual-revolution world—but in the final analysis she calls their line of attack a retreat: for all its claims of “getting real” and facing hard facts, sex education today is delusional, relying on technocratic methods that have been proven unreliable and often useless. The answer to the mess of sex education is not simple, and Whitehead does not claim to offer one.

Instead, she offers a clear-sighted picture that cuts through the rhetoric and false assumptions behind the sex educators’ approach. Her point is that the mess will only get worse if we refuse to admit that most existing programs are *not* solving the very real problems involved. Such an admission is highly unlikely: the Sex-Ed Establishment has a huge investment in perpetuating and *expanding* what’s going on now (after all, their jobs are at stake!). But given the evidence Whitehead provides, it’s clear that “school-based” theories cannot replace family-based morality.

The Woodstock of Bioethics

Rita Marker

Announcements of a “Bio-Ethics Mega-Meeting” to be held in Pittsburgh began arriving at my office late last summer. At first I ignored them. Just reading the brochures for conferences and meetings that fill the post office box could consume hours of time and lead to nothing but a waste basket in need of emptying.

But, by the time the third or fourth program for the October 6-9 conference landed on my desk, I decided this might be a big one. So I took a closer look.

The conference—whose planners later dubbed it the “Woodstock of Bioethics”—was the first concurrent meeting of four groups: American Society of Law, Medicine and Ethics (ASLME); Society for Health and Human Values (SHHV); Society for Bioethics Consultation (SBC); and American Association of Bioethics (AAB). After looking over its objectives (which included discussions of ethical, legal, and economic aspects of life-sustaining or life-ending care and identification of international challenges for American bioethics) and after reading about the topics that were to be covered (such as physician-assisted dying, family decision-making for incapacitated patients, the human genome project and health care reform), I decided this was one conference I didn’t want to pass up.

And so, I and close to nine hundred others spent four days in early October immersed in presentations and discussions that will touch lives and guide deaths in years to come.

Unquestionably, the interest in bioethics has burgeoned in the last few years. The 1987 Boston meeting of the ASLM (the group just recently added the “E” for ethics to its name) drew only a couple hundred people. The big issue then was personhood, and attendees were overwhelmingly policy makers and academics.

There, Supreme Court Justice Harry A. Blackmun had been honored for his “profound impact on medicine.” Along with the rest of us, Blackmun heard speakers introduce the concept of “permanent unconsciousness,” a category which was to encompass anencephalic infants and individuals

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diagnosed as being in either a coma or a persistent vegetative state.

At the time, the “food and fluids” debate was moving into high gear. A hot-button issue was whether those classified as permanently unconscious were persons within the meaning of the law, and whether they should be permitted to receive medical treatment. There, also, those who “did ethics” still considered themselves to be primarily physicians, philosophers, attorneys, etc.

Now, seven years later, the debate had moved on. With few exceptions, speakers indicated that assisted suicide and euthanasia are acceptable options that should be provided to certain patients. The American Medical Association had decided that organs could be taken from anencephalic babies even though they were still alive.¹ The question was no longer whether one had “personhood” but whether one had a “meaningful life.” Physicians in clinical practice, nurses and others who provide direct care were in attendance to learn and be guided by “ethicists.”

A Field in Search of Itself

While those who call themselves ethicists wield incredible power in the fields of medicine and law, their authority rests on a perception of undefinable principle. Any firm foundation, any acknowledged truth, is notably absent.

In his luncheon address on the “Future of Bioethics,” Arthur Caplan, Ph.D., described the “ironic facts and tensions” that characterize contemporary American bioethics. Caplan, who is director of the Center for Bioethics at the University of Pennsylvania and president of the American Association of Bioethics, said that bioethics is a growing field, but “it’s a field that has no idea what it is.” While it is expanding faster than other areas of scholarly pursuit, it still “has no sense of self-definition”—it’s a field in which one can now get a Ph.D., but “nobody knows what study for the degree should constitute,” Caplan added.

Professional ethicists are “obsessed with equity, rights, justice and advocacy for the poor and the vulnerable,” yet, he said, they are remarkably lacking in diversity and generally operate out of elite academic centers.

Although American bioethics has erupted into international activity and influence, the bioethicists themselves, as Caplan pointed out, are at a loss to explain their work, even to their own parents.

Nonetheless, Caplan said that this profession—which has no sense of its own history other than knowing it was “born in rebellion and dissatisfaction”—is ready to meet and mold the future. The challenge, he explained, is for bioethicists to position themselves to be on panels, boards and other

decision-making bodies where public policy positions will be established—where the exploding changes in health care that are now underway will be addressed.

These ethicists mean to shape the future of legal and medical practice for decades to come.

With such an ambitious goal, one would expect the clergy to offer a sense of foundation upon which to ground such important decisions. If those whose backgrounds were in the fields of medicine and law were lacking in a sense of history as it pertained to ethical decision making, surely religious wisdom could shed some light on basic principles?

Pastoral Guidance for the Challenges Ahead

Guidance and a sense of moral absolutes were, however, in short supply for the handful of participants who attended a special pre-conference session, “Ethics Consultation and Pastoral Care.” According to the conference brochure, the session was to include discussion about “current understandings of ethics, healthcare ethics, and pastoral care.” In fact, the extra fee paid to participate in this workshop bought only the opportunity to talk with some nice folks whose prime concern seemed to be never having to consider any decision wrong, no matter what it might be.

Two of the three discussion leaders were priests: Rev. James “Jim” McCartney, O.S.A., of Villanova University and Rev. John “Jake” Foglio, an assistant professor at Michigan State University’s College of Medicine. The third was Sarah Vaughan Brakman, Ph.D., also from Villanova. All three teach ethics to physicians and medical students and are deeply involved in ethics committees at health care institutions. Foglio is also active in “campus ministry.”

McCartney has written extensively on ethical issues. Among his articles on the withholding of food and fluids (written when he was director of the Bioethics Institute of St. Francis Hospital in Miami Beach) is one that has been widely distributed by the Society for the Right to Die. He has consistently favored removing food and fluids from not only the terminally ill but also from the severely brain damaged. Those who would disagree with him he has labelled “radical vitalists.”² Along with Dominican priest Kevin O’Rourke, McCartney espouses the view that if one has insufficient cognitive ability to “pursue the spiritual purpose of life,” food and fluids “should be considered useless and therefore medically optional.”³

McCartney has shown himself to be most willing to expand the definition of “terminal illness” to include individuals diagnosed as being in a persistent vegetative state⁴ and has suggested that “imminent” death for the purpose

of applying state laws to hospital policies should include persons for whom “death will occur within one year.”⁵

While he has never indicated support for assisted suicide or euthanasia by lethal injection,⁶ he has called the “slippery slope” argument against such practices unpersuasive, claiming that “a major weakness of this argument is that the law can clearly distinguish between voluntary and involuntary assisted suicide and mercy killing.”⁷

McCartney and the other speakers at the pastoral-care session gave virtually no time to any discussion of controversial topics or basic moral principles. Yet McCartney insisted that the role of the ethical consultant was primarily that of helping an institution shape policies.

Vaughan Brakman stressed that the goal of ethical counselling was to “assist professionals and patients to make subjectively prudent decisions in light of their own value systems” and to enable them “to live at peace with their own decision-making.”

Asked if there was anything at all that could be considered always objectively wrong, McCartney pondered the question and then replied that female genital mutilation could fall within that category. When pressed by a chaplain about treatment decisions that a patient or family may make, McCartney replied that he didn’t think the principle of autonomy can allow a patient to demand treatment that others may deem futile since “concern for the community and just distribution of resources does not allow for autonomy in all cases.” However, on the *other* side of the treatment decision, he said that a patient can always demand to receive *no* treatment “because that’s death with dignity.”

Foglio’s contribution to the session was confined to suggesting that one in the role of pastoral worker or ethics consultant should take care to counsel before guiding: “Our great gift as human persons is to make generalizations out of specific data.” He went on to add that the “curse is making these generalizations with insufficient data. And that’s prejudice.”

Prejudice, or any semblance of discrimination, seemed to concern him greatly, as was apparent when, in the most firmly stated position of the entire session, he said, “I’d rather be grammatically incorrect than sexist.”

Trial by Ethics Committee

While the clergy at the pastoral care session appeared to be primarily concerned about being “nice,” a clergyman’s outburst during another pre-conference session epitomized mean-spirited arrogance. The incident, which was the subject of table talk throughout the conference, took place during a group discussion that was intended to heighten caregivers’ sensitivities

to the rights, needs and feelings of families. It was occasioned by Barbara Hall's account of obstacles she had faced in caring for her daughter.

Hall is the mother of four children. When the youngest, Danielle, was born in 1985, she was diagnosed with anoxic encephalopathy, severe retardation and spastic quadriplegia. Hall had made it clear to the hospital that she wanted her daughter to receive necessary medical treatment. This was no small request, nor was it made without an understanding of the difficulties Danielle would face in the years to come. Mrs. Hall's brother had also been disabled from birth and has needed constant care and supervision throughout his life.

Over the course of the next two years, Danielle was in and out of the hospital. (Hall had gone through intensive training so that she could care for her daughter at home, but numerous medical crises made hospitalization for Danielle a frequent occurrence.) Generally the problem was pneumonia, which would be successfully treated with antibiotics.

During one such hospitalization, when Danielle was two years old, Hall (who had gone home to get some sleep and to be with her husband and other children for a few hours) returned to the hospital one morning and was told: "You have to go before this committee because the doctors don't want to treat your child." Without informing Hall or her husband, the members of the ethics committee (most of whom had never cared for or even visited Danielle and had little or no information about the family's circumstances) had decided that it was time to stop treating Danielle.

Hall said she felt as though she was on trial when she walked into the committee room. She was asked over and over again why she would want her daughter to be treated. She was questioned about her marital and insurance status. According to Hall, these latter questions indicated that the committee was assuming she was unmarried and uninsured.

Yet that was not the case. "Here they had a black woman who had private insurance" on their hands, she explained. On top of that, she had been married for years. When the committee realized that Mrs. Hall didn't fit their preconceived notions of someone who could be intimidated, they shifted their attempts to bully her into appeals for her to be reasonable.

"They kept pushing me to 'let her die with dignity,'" she said.

"I asked them to explain. They said I could stop food. I told them, 'I know how I feel when I'm hungry.'

"They said she couldn't feel pain. I told them when I pinched her, she jumped.

"They said she was in a coma. But it was a coma from the drugs they'd put her on." After leaving that meeting, Hall contacted an attorney and

fought for her daughter's right to medical care.

"If I had given in to those people, I wouldn't have had my daughter," she said. Danielle hasn't had a bout with pneumonia for seven years. She is cared for at home and can be off the ventilator for up to eight hours a day. Her mother says that the goal right now is for Danielle to reach the stage where a ventilator will be needed only at night for sleep apnea.

Throughout her presentation, Hall was careful to point out that other parents may have decided differently; that it should be the parents, not an ethics committee, who decide what's best for a child.

Barbara Hall had refused to be intimidated by that committee seven years ago. The same quiet poise and gentle strength that saw her through that ordeal was apparent during her presentation.

When one physician asked her about medical journal articles⁸ that had portrayed her as cruel for keeping her daughter alive, Hall responded calmly: "I think it's cruel to see somebody struggling for breath and not do something about it. I think it's cruel, if she has pneumonia and her lungs are filled with gunk, not to give her antibiotics. . . . No, I don't think I was being cruel. I think it was the hospital being cruel."

Caregivers and policy makers in the audience were clearly moved. There was, however, one person who took great exception to Hall's presentation. As though he felt an irresistible urge to lessen the impact of Hall's words, Rev. John Paris, S.J. took the occasion to confront her. (Paris, a Boston College ethics professor, served as consultant to the hospital in Danielle Hall's case, although he had never met Mrs. Hall until this conference.)

"What did experts project the lifetime expected medical costs for Baby Danielle would be?" he asked.

Hall was reluctant to answer. "I don't think that's a fair question," she replied.

Paris pushed on. His voice rising, he asked again, "How much will her lifetime care cost?"

The moderator of the session turned to Hall and told her that the question didn't need to be answered.

Paris became belligerent, combative: "I'll tell you," he shouted—Danielle's care could run into millions of dollars during her lifetime, he said—concluding "I think Mrs. Hall's child was a ward of the state economically."

Hall sat quietly, refusing to dignify Paris's outburst by a response. The moderator announced the session had ended.

Participants rushed to talk to Hall, thanking her for offering such insights into parents' concerns. Paris also remained, to introduce himself to Hall, who smiled and courteously shook his hand.

As he was leaving the room, Paris was asked why he had felt a need to question Mrs. Hall about the cost of her daughter's care, since he obviously knew it would be costly. He replied that others in the room needed to know as well. Asked why he couldn't have just *said* that rather than handling it in the way he did, he became agitated: "If every parent wanted to have this . . . think of what that would mean when we move to managed care," he muttered, and strode away.

Nurses and Assisted Suicide

A number of nurses attended the Pittsburgh conference. If they had hoped to find affirmation that a nurse's role was always to care, never to kill, they did not find what they were looking for in a special session on "Dying Assisted by Nurses, Other Professionals, Friends, or Family."

From the outset of the session, it was evident that presenters believed suicide assistance was a task that nurses could (and possibly should) perform. According to Patricia Murphy, Ph.D., R.N., of the New Jersey Nurses Association, the jury is still out on exactly what the nurse's particular role in this new option should entail.

Introducing the session, Murphy explained that those who would summarily dismiss such participation as wrong "haven't thought it through." A clear answer about whether nurses, family, friends or clergy should be involved in assisting the suicide of another would indicate thoughtlessness or lack of experience: "If you think you know the answer," she told participants, "you really haven't listened to the stories or been involved in the day to day work that happens."

Present to shed light on what should go into the thinking-through process was philosopher-nurse Carol Taylor, an assistant professor from the Center for Clinical Bioethics at Georgetown University. Taylor described the new public expectations that influence health professionals, imposing upon them a sense of obligation to make each new option available to those who want or need it.

Taylor compared the contemporary value placed on human life to that which is given to a paper product: usefulness of a product determines its value. By many, life is seen in the same way. When no longer useful, it's thrown away. Society already views children through the prism of utilitarianism, she said: "Having a child is now producing a product and there's a whole set of quality control mechanisms. The same thing, I think, is happening at the end of life."

As but one example of the quality control that can be exerted at the time of death, she described an account she had read concerning a young

AIDS patient who had orchestrated his “good death” by taking an overdose of drugs washed down by a fine Bordeaux. Although she found it to be of “great interest” that the account had evoked no mention of its ethical dimensions, she seemed untroubled by it. Rather, she indicated that planned death had now become only one among many choices that constitute good medical care for AIDS patients. “I think medicine has played an extremely important role in the public’s acceptance of these options,” she said. “So has the bioethics movement.”

The particular role of the bioethics movement, according to Taylor, has been “to put the good housekeeping seal of approval” on new practices as they develop. She explained that bioethicists, by arguing the pro and con of a controversial issue, can give any perspective a patina of acceptability. Since there are a number of highly respected people in the field who hold very divergent views, one can always find an expert who will agree that a course of action is appropriate.

In the area of assisted suicide and euthanasia, this can create not only expectation *by* the public but also *of* the public. The latter expectation, she said, could well become what former Colorado Governor Richard Lamm once referred to as the “duty” to die. The expectation that one not only can, but should, elect to avoid an “inconvenient” or “messy” death may guide the new way of thinking about one’s responsibility to others.

Taylor explained that such expectations could result in a complete change in attitude by some who previously would have never thought they’d request euthanasia. The need to spare one’s family may make planned death the primary option, with “dying in the old-fashioned way” (as Hemlock Society co-founder Derek Humphry has often described a natural death)⁹ merely a rarely-selected alternative in years to come.

(A hint that induced death has already begun to be elevated to the level of the “norm” was apparent within days after the November 8 Oregon vote legalizing assisted suicide. In news reports following the passage of the new law, a spokesperson for a Portland, Oregon, hospital explained that the facility would be encouraging physicians to offer “alternatives to assisted suicide.” While the spokesperson was clearly against physician-induced death, her choice of words nonetheless indicated a subtle change in language that could be the harbinger of death on demand. Do we really wish to relegate palliative care, hospice services, and death from natural causes to mere “alternatives” to euthanasia and assisted suicide?)

After a painstaking discussion of possible answers to the question about nurses’ involvement in assisted suicide, Taylor declared the question unanswerable. “For some people, not all,” she said, there’s an “objective

moral order that would end the debate. But unfortunately, we don't all subscribe to an objective moral order that would make pronouncements like that."

For now, nurses who had hoped for guidance from the assembled ethicists were given only one absolute on which to base their decision-making: There are no absolutes.

The Model Law Discussed

Perhaps the session that revealed most about the current thinking among bioethics leaders was "Physician-Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia: The Model Statute from the Boston Working Group," chaired by Professor Dan Brock of Brown University. Brock has been an outspoken supporter of both physician-assisted suicide and physician-administered euthanasia.¹⁰

Speakers for the session were Marcia Angell, M.D., and Bernard Lo, M.D. Angell is executive editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine*. By virtue of her position with a journal that has 240,000 subscribers, she can exert tremendous impact on public opinion, clinical practice, and even health policy. Articles published in the *NEJM* often receive front-page coverage in the mainstream media. Lo is an associate professor of medicine and director of the program of medical ethics at the University of California School of Medicine at San Francisco.

Together, Angell and Lo walked the audience through the intricacies of a model physician-assisted suicide statute drafted by what has become known as the "Boston Working Group."

To understand the significance of the Boston Group's model being used as *the* design around which the session's discussions revolved, it helps to know a bit about both the Working Group and its model act, known as the "Massachusetts Model."

The Boston Working Group

It appears that the suggestion for the Boston Working Group may have come from Marcia Angell when, during a 1992 conference on assisted suicide sponsored by the Massachusetts Bar Association, she suggested that a prescription-only statute be designed. (Two members of the Group—Sidney Wanzer and Nancy Dorfman—were also on that MBA program.)¹¹

After spending more than a year drafting the model law, the Boston Working Group revealed its existence and its purpose in May of 1994. It used Jack Kevorkian's acquittal¹² as the springboard for launching support of its model law.

While their names probably won't ever appear as answers on *Jeopardy*,

Working Group members' influence in the field of bioethics is significant. They include Dan Brock (who chaired the session about the Massachusetts Model); Sidney Wanzer, a Harvard University physician, member of the advisory board of the Hemlock Society U.S.A., and former member of the advisory committee of the Society for the Right to Die (now known as Choice in Dying) who was one of the twelve co-authors of a 1989 landmark article in the *New England Journal of Medicine* that declared physician-assisted suicide to be ethical in certain circumstances;¹³ James Vorenberg, former dean of the Harvard Law School; Lowell Schnipper, an oncologist at Beth Israel Hospital; Nancy Dorfman, head of the Hemlock Society's Massachusetts chapter; attorneys Clyde Bergstresser and Garrick Cole; and Professor Charles Baron of the Boston College Law School.

Both Baron, who served on the steering committee of the Boston chapter of Hemlock, and Wanzer have been openly supportive of Jack Kevorkian. Following the death of Kevorkian's first victim, Baron exclaimed: "You've got to admire him. He had the nerve to do this."¹⁴ It took Wanzer a few more years to endorse Kevorkian's methods. By the time the Working Group's model legislation was ready to be unveiled, he acknowledged that, while he had earlier considered Kevorkian to be "too far out," he had revised his opinion.

"If Dr. Kevorkian does it a little outside the niceties of proper practice, I can't condemn him for that. If I do this privately and discreetly, it doesn't force the issue. But he does. I think it's a good combination of the quiet people who go ahead and do what they think is right and the Dr. Kevorkians who do it more flamboyantly," Wanzer said.¹⁵

The Massachusetts Model

According to Brock, the Working Group's model wasn't intended for one state only, but as one that could be used by lawmakers across the country. Plans include its publication in the near future. (It would come as little surprise if it were to appear in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.) The model act is strikingly similar in some ways to Measure 16 which was approved by Oregon voters in November. As in Oregon, it would permit a physician to provide lethal drugs. Unlike the Oregon "Death with Dignity Act," it requires in-person request for death and further requires careful witnessing procedures for all requests. While it seems to be a tightly-drafted act, closer examination shows that it has enough loopholes to drive a fleet of hearses through.

Marcia Angell doesn't equivocate about her support for legalized euthanasia. At the 1992 Massachusetts conference where she had suggested

drafting a model statute, she had used the power of the well-told story to enhance her argument. Describing how her father had shot himself to death, she said that “it’s time that we, as a society through our legislatures, move to respond to the needs of patients who want help in dying.”¹⁶

Now, two years later in Pittsburgh, she told the packed conference room, “We do indeed have a need for an explicit public policy that would permit physician-assisted dying.” And she insisted that statutes passed by legislatures, not by voters, would result in the best type of law.

Angell’s endorsement of the Massachusetts Model was explicit. She took great care to insist that, while she was going to concentrate on what she saw as flaws in the model, she wanted it clearly understood that she was doing so in the spirit of “constructive criticism.”

“I want this bill or something like it to pass,” she said. “I do not want it to fail. . . . I also want it understood that I have nothing but admiration for this group (the Boston Working Group), for the way they’ve gone about their business and for the intelligence that they’ve brought to bear on this effort.”

She was not so willing to attribute intelligence to those who do not favor assisted suicide laws. After erroneously stating that “poll after poll has indicated that roughly 70% of the American public would like to see physician-assisted suicide made legal,”¹⁷ she decried the fact that “every time they come to the brink of translating this belief into action, they pull back.”

(Less than five weeks after the conference, an Oregon assisted-suicide measure passed by a 51-49 margin. However, its passage could be attributed as much to political pacifism on the part of opposition campaign leaders as it could be to a clear embrace by Oregonians of induced death.)

According to Angell, voters had rejected the 1991 Washington and 1992 California right-to-die measures because the proposals were too hard for the average person to understand. She contended that it was not lack of safeguards, but complicated reasoning that doomed the proposals to failure at the ballot box. They were “simply too complex for the public to get its mind around and to understand,” she said. Unless a law is simple enough for people to grasp, “what we risk is having physician-assisted suicide defeated for the same reason that the Clinton Health Care Plan was defeated.”

Angell’s assertion that voters were equally incapable of comprehending the more than 1300 pages of double-speak in the Clinton health plan and the implications of giving doctors the power to kill their patients with lethal injections or fatal overdoses was patronizing and inaccurate. However,

she compounded what could only be described as arrogance when making her suggestions for improving the model act.

Safeguards too Complex and Costly

Steps must be taken, she said, to reassure the public by having certain safeguards in place. Among the safeguards she considered acceptable was that of preventing murder. “If you permit euthanasia, it’s conceivable that this could become murder in the sense that people who didn’t even ask for it, who were perhaps incompetent, were killed, not voluntarily, but involuntarily,” she said.

Coercion was another public fear that needed to be assuaged. “One can easily imagine a very old, poor person whose resources are dwindling during a long terminal illness who decides to commit suicide in order to preserve his estate for his children and grandchildren,” she said. Her failure to recognize that a “poor person” is not going to have an estate to preserve was indicative of her total lack of touch with the realities of poverty that many people face every day.

While the rich may experience some pressure to choose the option of death to preserve an estate for children and grandchildren, the poor will be far more likely to have lethal drugs foisted upon them by virtue of its being the only type of “medical treatment” they can afford.

Angell also expressed concern that there be safeguards against what she termed the “casual use of physician-assisted dying.” This, she said, would be “the use by young, otherwise healthy individuals who perhaps are undergoing a treatable depression.” Apparently she would not consider it unreasonable if the depressed person were old, unhealthy, or disabled.

Those three “safeguards” were acceptable to her. However, much of the documentation provided in the Massachusetts Model was not—she said that the stringent procedures would make induced death “so complex and so daunting” that it could be unavailable to patients who “need” it.

“Patients,” she explained, “would require extraordinary resolve and energy to comply with all of the hurdles that they have to get over. And these are the very things that dying patients tend to lack—resolve and energy.” She seemed unaware that any lack of resolve to be poisoned just might have positive results.

Financial burdens—for the physician—were also cited by Angell as a reason for eschewing what she referred to as unnecessary procedural safeguards. Paperwork might be time-consuming and problematic for physicians: “A conservative estimate would be that this would take many

hours of work,” she said. “And doctors, unlike lawyers, are not paid by the hour. They’re paid fee for service or they’re paid by salary.” So, the procedures to facilitate carrying out the death decision should, in her estimation, be curtailed to prevent financial hardship for physicians.

A Call for Trust

Angells’ solution to maintaining adequate safeguards while preventing undue burdens on physicians was similar to the “Trust me” exhortation often used by politicians. However, a mistake in electing an untrustworthy candidate can be remedied the next time at the ballot box. Trusting a physician who gives lethal drugs carries a far higher risk.

She acknowledged that risk. “Nothing in life is risk-free,” she said. “Everything in life involves some degree of trust”—but, she said, since patients are already accustomed to putting their lives in the hands of doctors, trust about induced death really shouldn’t present a problem.

In addition to specific medical chart notes, a second opinion, a reasonable waiting period, and limiting induced death to certain patient categories, Angell said she would favor accuracy in reporting the cause of death: “I do believe that the suicide should be noted in the chart *just like any other serious medical procedure* [emphasis added]. All of these things make sense to me.” But about other restrictions in the Massachusetts Model she said “I believe, if you’ll excuse the expression, it’s overkill.”

Voice of Moderation

In a conference whose organizers prided themselves on objectivity, Dr. Bernard Lo’s contribution to the discussion on the Massachusetts Model may have been intended as the voice of moderation. Lo cautioned listeners about legalizing induced death. However, he should not be mistaken for one who opposes the practice of physician-assisted suicide. He had been among the twelve physician-authors whose landmark *NEJM* “report” concluded that physician assistance for a patient’s suicide is morally acceptable.¹⁸ That article was called the “strongest public endorsement of doctor-assisted suicide ever published in a major medical journal.”¹⁹

To illustrate the type of patient for whom assisted suicide would be appropriate and helpful, Lo described his own mother’s death from cancer. Although she received excellent care, before her death she had repeatedly asked why she couldn’t just be given a drug that would put her to sleep so she’d never wake up. According to Lo, his mother would have been the type of person for whom legalized assisted suicide could be appropriate.

After warning that there could well be other patients where the choice

to die was based on inadequate care, he told listeners about a San Francisco woman he had recently encountered. In the late stages of cancer, she was dying at home. Her suffering was intense. Her drug-addict son often stole her pain medication. She was ineligible for hospice. She had no primary caretaker in her home. Even visiting nurses were fearful of coming to her house because of the dangerous neighborhood.

This woman, too, asked for something to end her life.

Lo explained that, although she was competent to make the request, he would question providing lethal drugs for her and “would feel very uncomfortable saying that’s appropriate care.” He urged participants to put efforts into addressing problems such as those encountered by the woman he had described and asked that assisted suicide be viewed as only one aspect of the response to dying patients’ needs. But, before the option of assisted suicide can be offered to patients, it must be accepted by the public.

Lo moved on to suggestions about how assisted suicide can best be approved and integrated into the types of care available to patients: “What we’re talking about today is public policy,” he said. “Law has to express community values” which can be problematic and politically volatile.

“We have assumed today, as taken as a given for the purpose of discussion, that people really want this kind of legislation enacted,” he said. Yet he pointed out that there are “very vocal people who are ardently opposed to the idea.” These people “will be hurting the debate” and will mobilize political and community support. Their impact will have to be taken into account if measures to legalize assisted suicide are to succeed.

“Because this is a new departure in public policy, there are sound arguments for making the first step a modest step,” he said. “If you try to do too much too soon, you may risk not being able to do anything at all.” And, if a law is not well written it will cause greater problems than it attempts to solve.

Since any law permitting physician-assisted suicide will apply to all physicians, Lo called for inclusion of minimum standards for physician conduct as an integral part of any legislation. “It’s not just going to apply to the Tim Quills of the world who are caring, dedicated physicians,” he said. And thus Timothy Quill—who referred a patient to the Hemlock Society for suicide information, wrote the prescription for the lethal drugs that killed her, and then falsified the information he wrote on her death certificate—was held up as the model of the ideal physician.²⁰

The ensuing question-and-answer session was indicative of the atmosphere that had been created throughout the entire conference. Attendees had spent hours in sessions which assumed that the debate about assisted suicide was

virtually over. The implication was that from now on, discussions would center on how, not whether, it should be done.

As one speaker at a subsequent workshop admitted, without any indication of discomfort, “In the absence of principle, what do we have to fall back on? We fall back on procedure.” The how, not the what, is paramount.

Questions and comments from the audience seemed to indicate that the prime concern was establishment of practice guidelines for assisted suicide.

Brock, Lo and Angell were commended for their clear and forthright discussion. Further details of the Massachusetts Model were queried—one law professor even suggested that the planning be ratcheted up another notch or two by focusing on the possibility that assisted suicides could be legally carried out in some states already.

Professor John Robertson of the University of Texas School of Law suggested that the Boston Working Group expand its efforts to include not only a model law but also work on clinical guidelines. He contended that, since a number of states have no specific law prohibiting assisted suicide, a law permitting it isn’t needed. Guidelines, if drafted, could be used by physicians who “will assist in suicides where it’s already legal.”

He pointed out that, just as Jack Kevorkian had acted in the absence of a specific ban in Michigan, “There are other states where it’s legally appropriate.” For this reason there should be attention to the clinical guidelines for those who may wish to act in those states.

The Spell Is Broken

It appeared that all who had been in attendance would be left with the impression that no one questioned the advisability of giving doctors the power to prescribe lethal drugs. The speakers and all of the questioners from the audience had presumed its acceptability. The line of people waiting to question or comment was still long; the time for the session to end was only moments away when Joanne Lynn, M.D., a professor of geriatrics from Dartmouth University, reached the microphone.

Lynn is no ivory tower academic. She has spent years working with the impoverished elderly and has gained the respect of health professionals throughout the world.

In an impassioned voice, she cut through the rhetoric that had filled the room throughout the preceding hour to say, “The fact is that I, as a hospice physician, am going to be asked to see to it that a person is not alive tomorrow because today they’re in awful circumstances.” She went on to describe just what type of conditions many people face.

As a hospice physician in Washington, over and over again she has had

to find ways to get someone out of a rat-infested place to prevent their being eaten by the rodents. She has seen horrible circumstances where there are no resources, no food, no phones, conditions so bad that for some people it could be considered reasonable to want to die.

“Hell’s bells, of course it’s rational,” Lynn said. But she went on to declare that, rather than giving them drugs to kill themselves, “it seems that we must instead find a way to take that pressure and move it to change the supportive care system so people can count on having food and shelter.”

Mincing no words, she said, “I’m being asked here to be the executioner so that those people are not there as a drain on resources.” She asked that all of the discussion about physician-assisted suicide be seen for what it is—an attempt to find a quiet and complacent way of pushing people who are “drains on society” off the face of the earth.

The audience was spellbound.

“They aren’t going to be young lawyers with AIDS,” she said, her voice quivering with emotion. “They’re going to be us women when we get to be 85 and have outlived our families. They’re going to be people who have no effective voice. And if we don’t stand up for them, they’re going to be dead at our hands.”

When she was finished speaking, the audience erupted in applause. This was no polite acknowledgement of her courage to confront a given and turn it on its ear. Looks were exchanged, conveying the message that she had said for many what they’d been too timid to express.

Marcia Angell was clearly not pleased. As soon as the applause stopped, she took Lynn to task. After acknowledging that the poor and the marginalized receive inadequate care, she said that should be an even greater reason for offering them assisted suicide. In a hard-edged voice, Angell asked if we’re supposed to tell people to “keep suffering because we as a society have deprived them of all the things that Joanne Lynn just told us we’ve deprived them of.” That, she said, is “punishing them twice.”

Gentle Audacity

With her brief but incredibly powerful remarks, Joanne Lynn had shattered the illusion that had permeated the entire conference. Had she not spoken up, there can be little doubt that many of the physicians, nurses and other caregivers who had attended would have returned home with the impression that assisted suicide is ethical. Any qualms they may have had about it would likely have been shoved aside. Fear of being considered unprofessional or intolerant may well have prevented them from realizing that, indeed, there are real reasons to resist euthanasia and assisted suicide.

All it took was the gentle audacity of one person—whose obvious compassion and concern for others outweighed what her colleagues might think of her—to eloquently say what needed to be said—and perceptions were changed. It is just this type of bravery that can make a difference in conference rooms, board rooms, hospital rooms and school rooms across the country.

If only we have the courage to do it.

NOTES

1. Brian McCormick, "Council: Use of anencephalic organ donors ethical," *American Medical News*, June 27, 1994, p. 9.
2. James J. McCartney, "Prolonging Life and the 'Right to Die': Perspectives from the Catholic and Jewish Traditions," (1988). Unpublished. On file with the author.
3. James J. McCartney and Jane Mary Trau, "Cessation of the Artificial Delivery of Food and Fluids: Defining Terminal Illness and Care," *Death Studies*, vol. 14, p. 439.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 438.
5. "Prolonging Life and the 'Right to Die.'"
6. During a break between sessions at the Pittsburgh conference, McCartney was asked about his opinion on the provision of lethal drugs or fatal injections. He said that he opposed both practices.
7. James J. McCartney, "Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide: Elements of Church Teaching," *Health Progress*, January/February 1992, p. 73.
8. In the literature, Danielle Hall was referred to as "Baby L." See, for example, John Paris, Robert Crone, Frank Reardon, "Physicians' Refusal of Requested Treatment: The Case of Baby L," *New England Journal of Medicine*, vol. 322, no. 14, April 5, 1985, pp. 1012-1014. Barbara Halls' efforts to protect her daughter were described more favorably in a lengthy article in *Boston Magazine*. See Seth Rolbein, "A Matter of Life and Death," *Boston Magazine*, October 1987.
9. During a public debate, "'Aid-in-Dying': The Right to Die or the Right to Kill?," held in San Francisco on April 6, 1988, Humphry declared that the right to physician-induced death is the "ultimate civil liberty." He contended that those who don't agree can "die in the old-fashioned way" if they choose.
10. See, for example, Dan Brock, "Voluntary Active Euthanasia," *Hastings Center Report*, March-April 1992, pp. 10-22, and the transcript of "The Health Quarterly: Choosing Death," a March 23, 1993 PBS broadcast.
11. Susan Brink, "Conference tackles doctor-assisted suicide issue," *Boston Herald*, November 30, 1992.
12. On May 2, 1994, a Michigan jury found Kevorkian not guilty of violating a Michigan law that expressly forbade assisted suicide. Following the verdict, jurors acknowledged that Kevorkian provided 30-year-old Thomas Hyde with the carbon monoxide that caused his death, but contended that he was only trying to ease Hyde's suffering.
13. Wanzer, Federman, Adelstein, Cassel, Cassem, Cranford, Hook, Lo, Moertel, Safar, Stone, van Eys, "The Physician's Responsibility Toward Hopelessly Ill Patients: A Second Look," *New England Journal of Medicine*, March 30, 1989, vol. 320, pp. 844-848. See also, Marker, "A Dutch Treat," *Human Life Review*, vol. 16, no. 4, Fall 1990, pp. 13-14.
14. Allan Turner, "Experts at odds over doc's 'suicide machine,'" *Boston Sunday Herald*, June 10, 1990, p. 14.
15. Richard A. Know, "Verdict touches off deliberations," *Boston Globe*, May 3, 1994, p. 10.
16. "He felt he had no other choice," *Boston Herald*, November 30, 1992.
17. Gallup polls on the subject of physician-assisted suicide clearly indicate that public support for the practice is declining. A November, 1990, Gallup poll found that sixty-five percent of those surveyed approved of physician-assisted suicide for a person with an "incurable disease."

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In Gallup's December, 1992, poll, that figure fell to fifty-two percent. The 1992 poll also found that sixty-four percent of the adults questioned supported doctor-assisted suicide for those "suffering great pain" with "no hope of improvement" (*Gallup Poll Monthly*, December 1992, p. 34). By December 1993, however, that figure had fallen to only forty-seven percent. (*Gallup Poll Monthly*, December 1993, p. 47).

18. The panel of physicians who drafted the report had been convened by the Society for the Right to Die (now called Choice in Dying). Bernard Lo was on the advisory committee of that organization.
19. *MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour*, PBS, March 30, 1989.
20. Quill's account of assisting his patient's suicide was published in 1991. (Timothy E. Quill, "Death and Dignity: A Case of Individualized Decision Making," *New England Journal of Medicine*, vol. 324, no. 10, March 7, 1991, pp. 691-694.) For additional information regarding Timothy Quill, see Rita Marker, *Deadly Compassion* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1993), pp. 186-190.



'That's a nasty splinter . . . have you ever considered euthanasia?'

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Whose Consensus Is It?

The Feminist Challenge to Cairo

Melinda Tankard Reist

The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo has been portrayed in the media almost solely as a battle between the Vatican and the rest of the world. The debate has been cast primarily in sectarian terms; anti-birth control forces led by the Pope have been pitted against the guardians of the planet—enlightened humanists, libertarians and environmentalists who have only the good of man/womankind at heart when they call for fewer people on the earth. The Pope is depicted as a spoiler of the great get-together under the pyramids. Why does he have to wreck everything? There'd be a perfect "consensus" and we'd all be one small happy global family if it weren't for him.

But would there? If the Catholic Church didn't exist and there was no such thing as a Pope or a magisterium or *Humanae Vitae* or Catholic teaching would the UN Cairo showboat sail smoothly on its way to population control around the world?

No, it would not. It may come as a surprise to learn that there is another voice of opposition to the draft document for the ICPD and the entire agenda of the international population control lobby. It's not a religious voice (far from it). It's the voice of a swelling group of feminists, most of them from developing countries, who understand the coercion and abuse endemic to target-driven programs. And they're doing all in their power to wreck any so-called consensus.

A Canberra *Times* columnist recently argued that "the Vatican claims the Cairo statement will undermine women's rights. At the same time international women's groups, who actually represent the gender most affected, say precisely the opposite." No, they don't. This is the myth being perpetuated *ad infinitum* in the run up to Cairo. Perhaps it is too confusing for the media to acknowledge the feminist opposition to the draft document. It muddies the waters. Let's just keep things nice and compartmentalised

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and not confuse things. It's better to ignore international women's groups such as the UBINIG and Resistance Network (Bangladesh), the Research Foundation for Science and Ecology (India), the Third World Network (Malaysia), the People's Health Network (India), the Asian Women's Human Rights Council (Philippines), the Feminist International Network of Resistance to Reproductive and Genetic Engineering (FINRRAGE), the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights and the Boston Women's Health Collective. All of these also see the draft proposals as oppressive and harmful to women. They recognise their profound consequences for women, especially non-white, non-Western women, of an over-emphasis on a world-wide reduction in birth rates.

This emphasis, reflected in demographic goals and fertility targets, paves the way for an increase in social pressure, incentives and disincentives, punishments, and coercion, both physical and psychological, to ensure that ambitious targets are met. It's not enough to dump piles of contraceptives on a country: people need to be made to comply. In its 1984 World Development Report, *Population Change and Economic Development*, the World Bank made a distinction between family planning and population control and argued that the former is an insufficient response to population pressures. American population control proponent Kingsley Davis has criticised his population control associates for thinking that all they had to do was make contraceptives available and the birth rates would go down. Why is that? Because couples just might *want* more than the 2.1 children they had been allotted. All of a sudden choice shouldn't be so free. At a Public Health Association conference in Canberra this year to prepare the position of non-government organisations for the ICPD, some of those attending appeared to think that over-population was such a problem that human rights and social justice might be luxuries that we can no longer afford and that coercion might be necessary to forestall destruction.

Abuses Are Ignored

But anti-population control feminists know what happens to the women they represent when the population establishment regards them as "breeding disasters."¹ Amsterdam-based women's health activist, Sumati Nair, author of *Imperialism and the Control of Women's Fertility: New Hormonal Contraceptives, Population Control and the WHO*² writes: "There is enough documented evidence from different parts of the world to show that whenever targets are set to be achieved by family planning programs, they have been achieved only through coercion and false promises."³

So how will these feminists rock the boat at Cairo? What better way than to stage an international public hearing on crimes against women related

to population policies on September 7. There will be no theoretical debates, no numerical analysis and no academic papers at this event. We'll hear the testimonies of the victims—the women coerced, bullied and harassed to comply with population and family planning programs, women denied food or access to credit and loans to agree to contracept, women lured into family planning programs with promises of food and clothing and land, women being left destitute because of the ill effects of contraceptives; women who have suffered uncontrollable bleeding but who have met with refusal when asked for their IUD or their Norplant rods to be removed. There will be personal stories of women forced to abort or to be sterilised, of women who have borne “illegal” children outside the official birth plan. Others will describe what it was like to be used in experiments for long-acting hormonal contraceptives, trials of the immunological anti-hCG vaccine to “vaccinate” them against pregnancy, while being told there were “no risks” even though the trials were still in their experimental stage. (Whatever happened to “First do no harm”?)

The organisers believe these abuses have been ignored for too long as a “lesser evil” in the quest for population control. They're going to lay them on the table at Cairo. And they're asking: with all the evidence of violations of human rights in so many population programs, why doesn't the draft document propose sanctions against the practitioners of coercion? The Cairo proposals do state that “any form of coercion has no part to play” in family planning programs, but it is a toothless recommendation. There are no sanctions against governments or organisations which employ such practices—no condemnation, no penalties, not even a smack on the hand. But how could anyone expect criticism from the conference conveners, the United Nations Population Fund, when that same organisation has bestowed awards and money on countries such as China, whose brutal population control measures have been well documented?

A View from Bangladesh

Plans for the international hearing were first suggested at an international symposium in Bangladesh entitled *People's Perspective on "Population."* It was here that the activists drafted their position paper on the Cairo conference. It was not a symposium that population control advocates would have liked to attend. The population control bureaucracy was accused of “draining women's bodies and filling them with disease.” “How many people know they're killing us?” asked prominent Indian physician and health activist Dr. Mira Shiva. “We've got the right to contraception but we haven't got the right to eat. What does choice mean for women who don't have basic food? The question of the basic needs of

the poor does not come on the agenda.”

The 70 delegates from 23 countries included Australian anti-reproductive technology activist Dr. Renate Klein and Susan Hawthorne of Melbourne’s Spinifex Press.

The activists condemned population control programs for being anti-women, racist and eugenic. The programs eliminated the poor and not poverty and diverted money from much-needed health care and social services, they argued. Women are defined as “tubes, wombs and targets” and their value and dignity lost in the rush to control population growth, they complained.

The women who met in Bangladesh argued that over-emphasis on “unmet demand for contraception” had marginalised other unmet needs such as literacy, toilets, assurance of minimum wage rates, social and political awareness, freedom from violence and not least of all—an unmet demand for food. The symposium declaration was a feminist critique of the logic of domination that underlies population control policies. It warned that:

This conference [at Cairo] will pave the way for more population-control policies in the coming decade, based on the false assumption that population growth threatens the survival of the planet. We must reveal the underlying aims being set for the ICPD, which include the myth that the population growth of the South is the problem, while obscuring over-consumption and the wasteful life style of the rich and the elites of the world.

Population control programs were devised already in the 1950’s in the name of “poverty eradication” and containment of communism. Today they are used, supposedly, to curb environmental destruction and to ensure “sustainable growth.” In fact, however, all over the years these programs have subjected women in the South to a whole range of coercive technologies and methods which have often ruined their health and their lives. The population establishment attempts to hide these horrors by cloaking them in words hijacked from the women’s liberation movement, and thus tries to convey the message that they fall within an ethic of care and human rights; and that they expand “reproductive choice,” especially for women . . . Women’s basic needs of food, education, health, work, social and political participation and a life free of violence and oppression should be addressed on their own merit. Meeting women’s needs should be delinked from population policy including those expressed as apparent humanitarian concerns for women.

U.S. author Gena Corea, who attended the Bangladesh symposium, points out that the population control drive is fuelled by militaristic language to make it sound like a war. “The so-called expansion of population in the South [is seen as] a threat to national security in the North,” she told me. At U.S. hearings on contraceptive developments those testifying “sounded like generals talking about weapons—‘target organs,’ ‘target population,’ ‘vaginal delivery system.’” Professor Roger Short of Monash University

in Melbourne, told the Ministerial Seminar on Population and Development in Asia in Canberra last November that contraceptives would be much cheaper than defence and would achieve the same results. "Let's turn bullets into contraceptives," he quipped. Also declaring war on population is the chairman of the national committee to advise the Australian Government on the Cairo Conference, Richard Woolcott. Beneath the headline "People replace nuclear threat," he writes that population growth could become the new global nightmare, replacing the Cold War threat of nuclear conflict.⁴

Fears for Women's Safety

One of the major concerns of women's health activists is the development of long-acting hormonal contraceptives and "vaccines" which they believe pose unlimited potential for abuse. Methods controlled by the provider and not the woman are becoming the favoured means of population control in developing countries.

The developers and promoters of new contraceptives are not trying to hide their population control motives. A glaring example is seen in the film *Antibodies against pregnancy: the dream of the perfect birth from the laboratory* by Ulrike Schaz, a German activist for FINRRAGE. The film is about the new anti-hCG vaccine which causes a woman to produce antibodies to attack the embryo.

In the film, Dr. G. P. Talwar of India, described as the "father of the vaccine idea," blames population for everything from overcrowded buses to terrorism. Another family planning authority says slum dwellers and lower economic groups who have more children than the upper classes "are spoiling the whole demographic pattern of Bombay and India."

Adelaide Professor Warren Jones, who has worked with the World Health Organisation on the vaccine, has lauded it as vital to controlling overpopulation which "threatens to be the real misery of the world—it makes the AIDS problem look like a tea party."⁵

Developed in the research laboratories of the World Health Organisation in Geneva, the vaccine was first trialled in Australia in 1986. It has been suggested that testing is now concentrated in the Third World because of the absence of strict liability laws. It is now being trialled on women in India who sign consent forms written in English and who are told the vaccine is "100 percent safe"—even though it is still in a trial phase. The vaccine is effective for one year.

According to biologist Dr. Renate Klein, the reversibility of the vaccine is not guaranteed and long-term risks of experimenting with the complex interplay of female hormones are unknown. She said the history of hormonal drugs showed that long-term effects may not show up until the next generation.

Dr. Klein says the use of the word “vaccine” takes advantage of the popularity and acceptance of vaccines. “But the anti-hCG vaccine is not the same as preventative injections against diseases, since it depends on auto-immunisation which works against body substances, as opposed to immunisation against disease. Pregnancy is not a disease and the foetus is not a foreign micro-organism, or a germ or a virus.”⁶ The three-monthly injectable Depo Provera, another injectable, Net-En, and the new contraceptive implant Norplant are also causing major concern. Documented abuses and health risks of the latter, which consists of six hormone-releasing rods implanted under the skin of a woman’s arm for five years, are rife. The book *Norplant: Under her Skin*⁷ documents the negative experiences of women with Norplant in Indonesia, Finland, Thailand, Brazil and Egypt. In Bangladesh, an Indonesian women’s health activist told me that Norplant was promoted in Indonesia as something which would make women beautiful, popular and lucky. In the U.S., 200 women have filed a class-action lawsuit against Wyeth-Ayerst seeking damages for ill-effects they suffered.

The Facts and Maternal Mortality

The anti-population control activists accuse international bodies of marketing contraceptives in the absence of proper research, information about possible health risks and informed consent. Sumati Nair says International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and WHO have approved and recommended drugs such as Norplant for use in family planning programs while admitting that not enough is known about their long-term effects. Nair says private population control agencies sponsor contraceptive research and select their own scientists, institutes and private agencies to do the studies, thus controlling the research and being able to suppress negative findings. She accuses them of co-opting feminist language (such as “expanding choice”) and groups to achieve their goals.

The appalling tragedy of maternal mortality is often cited as the reason why women need access to family planning. What do these feminists have to say to that? Yes, they do believe a woman should have the right to determine her family size. But Nair and her colleagues say that this argument is used to justify trials of inadequately researched hormonal contraceptives on third world women. “The major causes for the deaths of women are evidently not childbirth and related causes, but respiratory diseases and other parasitic infections . . . Poverty, malnourishment and poor health services that bring about high death rates are the very factors that give rise to high maternal mortality rates. It is the same women that are most likely to be the worst affected by the indiscriminate promotion of the new hormonal contraceptives,” says Nair in her book.

This is other evidence for the case that it is not childbirth *per se* that is ending women's lives. A study titled: "Too far to walk: Maternal mortality in context, Part 3"⁸ states:

Delays in the delivery of care are symptomatic of the inadequate care that results from shortages of staff, essential equipment, supplies, drugs and blood as well as inadequate management. Later or wrong diagnosis, and incorrect action by the staff are other factors [which] contribute to delays in the timely provision of needed care . . . In addition to identifying the diagnoses in cases of maternal death, some hospital-based studies determine whether or not the deaths were avoidable. They generally find that while a small number of maternal deaths are unavoidable, the large majority are either entirely or probably preventable.

For example, 98 per cent of institutional deaths studied in Tanzania, 94 per cent of maternal deaths studied in Cali, Colombia, 88 per cent of those studied in Vietnam and 80 per cent of those studied in Jamaica and in Lusaka, Zambia, were judged preventable by the respective investigators.

According to *Women's International Network News* (WINN), the highest maternal mortality figures in the world are in sub-Saharan Africa. WINN says the highest maternal mortality occurs in countries where female genital mutilation is widely practiced.

Unvaccinated and anaemic women are also more at risk. These are the conditions which need to be rectified but are not, because of the emphasis on population control and family planning which are diverting money from health care and social services. At the Ministerial Seminar on Population and Development in Canberra last November, Bangladeshi women's activist Farida Akhter (of UBINIG which convened the Bangladesh symposium) appealed to Prime Minister Paul Keating: "If you're giving any money at all, don't give it to the population controllers. We don't have money for health programs. Please, divert it to health programs."

Governments, not People, Are to Blame?

The anti-population control proponents refuse to disengage structural issues such as consumerism, distribution of wealth and resources, poverty, landlessness, and militarism from the debate. It is all too convenient to blame the numbers of people instead of government ineptitude and mismanagement. The oft-heard refrain that population growth is eroding government's ability to provide social services, infrastructure, etc., presumes that governments want to do this in the first place. The director of the Population and Development Program at Hampshire College, Massachusetts, Betsy Hartmann, points out that "the amount of resources a country devotes to generating employment and providing social services has much less to do with population than with

the priorities of governments and international financial institutions.” It is estimated that developing countries spend a meagre one-tenth of their national budgets on human development priorities such as health and education.

In her book *Taking Population Out of the Equation: Reformulating I=PAT*, H. Patricia Hynes writes about the explosion of the military population:

How can any of the 1.1 billion poorest and least intensive resource-using people, who are mainly women and children, be compared in environmental impact to the military population, a numerically small, sheltered male elite who are responsible for as much as 20 percent of all global degradation? . . . Zero Population Growth announces that “it’s time to break the silence on overpopulation”; but the best-guarded secret, the most pervasive silence engulfs the subject of military overpopulation, that is, the growing global traffic in weapons and the intensifying military usurpation of land and natural resources.⁹

In Bangladesh, Dr. Mira Shiva of People’s Health Network, India, condemned “Northern-imposed models of maldevelopment and the acquisition by the North of valuable resources from the South” for causing many of the problems of developing countries. She and her colleagues condemn structural adjustment programs for increasing disparities and indebtedness. “Yet somehow we are supposed to hold population growth responsible for the dismantling of state welfare measures, not World Bank and IMF-induced budget cuts and worker lay-offs. Nor are we supposed to note that less than seven per cent of official development assistance goes to human development priorities,” says Hartmann.

The poor take a fraction of the resources for their needs, compared to multinationals. Forests are felled for disposable chopsticks, toilet paper, tissues and cattle farms for hamburgers for the North, yet the poor are accused of “destroying the forests” when they collect sticks to meet their basic needs. The poorest 20 percent of the world’s population receives only 1.3 per cent of global income, 0.2 percent of global credit, and participates in only 0.9 percent of global trade.

The delegates at Bangladesh said high birth rates are a result of impoverishment rather than a cause, because children are the only economic security in places where all other security has been taken away. The Latin American delegates pointed out that if tough population programs were really anti-poverty measures, why have countries in Latin America, where 80 percent of women have sometimes been sterilised, become poorer? A Brazilian activist at the symposium told of the murders of three street children and how media reports denounced opponents of family planning as the culprits, contending that if the children had not been born in the first place, they wouldn’t have been killed.

Access to contraception would solve everything from unwanted street kids to the felling of forests, population control advocates appear to think. Everyone talks about “empowering women,” “improving women’s status,” “educating women”—and these steps are, of course, all vital. But how is this to happen without vast overhauls in the existing social and economic order? Contraception is promoted as a means to these ends. But in Thailand, for example, which is held up as another family planning success story, millions of rural couples remain educationally neglected under the current government program. According to Johns Hopkins University, these couples are “poorly educated” although they have been “successfully schooled in the use of birth control technology.”¹⁰

IVF and the Population Debate

It is not just population and birth control programs which are being harnessed in the task of population control. Dr. Klein and Gena Corea, both of FINRRAGE, make a strong connection between the new reproductive technologies and population control and predict “horrendous scenarios for the future.” IVF and embryo screening will be used to ensure that only the perfect are born.

According to Corea, there are two sides to the population control coin: “One side is decreasing the numbers of people who someone has decided are surplus and should not live on the earth and those are largely the people in the South as well as the poor and people of colour in the countries of the North. The other side is increasing the population of those people who it has been decided by these powers are desirable human beings and ought to live.”¹¹

Reproductive technologies helped achieve this. Klein explains: “It’s a most fundamental link [and] it has been clear from the beginning,” she says.

There is this push for more and more control over the production of the human species. Of course what we are being told is it’s for people’s good. But really the motivation is with doing all this we improve on this very imperfect nature and we help humanity to become really good . . . the dream is really to produce the perfect child in the lab. The technology will come. You fragment women. You use bits and pieces. You could then use eggs from any women from all over the world. This technology fulfils dreams of people who thought that it was really important that one takes population not as people but just as a variable to be manipulated.

What it was developed for is to have a simple and provider-friendly instrument that will allow people sitting at their desks in the main cities of the world to decide who, in which part of the world is going to have how many children, what kind of children and of what sex.¹²

IVF scientists are sometimes criticised for adding to the population in

already “over-populated” countries. “They would probably turn that around and say, well, we really want to have good babies, we really want to have perfect babies,” Klein responds. “They shouldn’t just breed, they should be the best. [It’s the] whole eugenicist theory of ideas—not everybody should have children, only those who are worthy. Not just any old egg and sperm to have a child.”

These women say there can never be such a thing as a feminist population policy, because it contradicts the basic premises of feminism. Any focus on population blames the victims and fails to address inequitable economic systems, unjust world trade practices and mistreatment of the poor.

“We feel that if there is an idea of control, if it is governments and international agencies that are actually focussing on grassroots women, if one sees women as simply the generators of population, these are all extremely dehumanising presuppositions,” says Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, lecturer in Feminist Theory at Columbia University, New York.

The women’s activists who have opposed population control programs have paid a price for their opposition. Ostracised by other women’s groups, they have been labelled “fascist” and even “papist.” Attempts have been made to shut them up. But they have a powerful weapon to back them up. In their ranks are women who can speak personally about what it is like to be a target of the population control crusade.

NOTES

1. “Breeding disaster: For poor countries, population control is essential” *Age*, 30 October, 1993.
2. Campaign Against Long-Acting Hormonal Contraceptives: London and Amsterdam, 1989.
3. Personal communication, 13 April, 1994.
4. *Canberra Times*, 24 August, 1994.
5. Alison Puchy, “Pregnancy Immunisation Could be Available In Eight Years,” *AAP*, 12 October, 1987.
6. “Contraception vaccine threatens health,” Letters, *Australian*, 23 May, 1994.
7. Women and Pharmaceuticals Project, Women’s Health Action Foundation and WEMOS, Eburon: The Netherlands, 1993.
8. S. Thaddeus © D. Maine, (Women’s Global Network for Reproductive Rights, Newsletter 37, October/December, 1991).
9. Institute of Women and Technology: North Amherst, Massachusetts, 1993. “I=PAT” is Paul Ehrlich’s simple formula for calculating the impact of population upon the environment.
10. *Population Research Institute Review*, January/February, 1994.
11. Author’s interview with Gena Corea.
12. Author’s interview with Renate Klein.

Red in Tooth and Claw

John Muggeridge

In 1973, the High Court of the U.S. handed down *Roe v. Wade*; just two years later, Peter Singer, the high priest of “Animal Liberation,” handed down a book of the same name.¹ The first marked a defeat for the belief that all human life is sacred and, despite a strong anti-abortion backlash by a dedicated “pro-life” movement, *Roe* has not been reversed. Meanwhile, the second inspired a dozen or so university professors to launch a campaign to sacralize “animal rights” which, in the opinion of one well-known observer of social-protest movements, has now “come close to the mainstream of Western consciousness.”²

What’s happening here? How can two movements that preach so passionately against cruelty have met with such disparate success? One understands why Professor Singer’s cause has prospered. Any non-psychopath with Jewish or Christian roots must feel tender towards wounded animals. Once, when Winston Churchill’s chauffeur ran over a badger, Britain’s wartime prime minister was reduced to tears. And it was watching a cab driver beat his horse that finally drove Friedrich Nietzsche, the inventor of the Superman, into a mental asylum. No wonder the horror pictures used as propaganda by animal-liberationists work so well. In 1984, they managed to steal videotapes of baboons writhing in agony as their brains are being operated on in a University of Pennsylvania laboratory; the film persuaded the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to withdraw funding from the National Institutes of Health for that particular research project.

It was also photography that enabled Brian Davies’ animal rights group, the International Fund for Animal Welfare, to score an even bigger victory, this time against Canada’s annual seal-pup hunt. From about 1970 on Davies included in his propaganda the carefully-posed picture of a young seal hunter brandishing a blood-stained baseball bat above a whitecoat pup. That did it. Who could fail to be moved by such a wee, sleekit, cow’rin, tim’rous beastie? In 1982 alone, material sent out by Davies prompted three-and-a-half *million* animal lovers to send postcards to the European Economic Community’s headquarters in Brussels, demanding a ban on all seal imports—one year later the ban duly went into effect, followed by an

John Muggeridge, our contributing editor, writes from Welland, Ontario. (He suggests we note that there are *several* authors named Peter Singer; the author of *Animal Liberation* is an Australian who is currently the director of the Centre for Human Bioethics at Monash University in Australia.)

international embargo on Canadian fish products more rigorously observed than the arms embargo against Bosnia. Thus perished east-coast sealing, an enterprise which for 300 years had been providing fishermen with winter employment.³

Why, then, don't anti-abortion pictures get comparable results? Their quality is every bit as good as that of Davies' stuff, and their credibility far better. And it isn't as if their message hasn't got out. Twenty years of running off newsletters, handing out flyers, and flicking through slide presentations have certainly borne some fruit. The famous movie *The Silent Scream* (an ultrasound view of an actual abortion) was shown to President Ronald Reagan in the White House, and was even featured in the "Doonesbury" comic strip. But a still-clearer sign of how far understanding of the case against abortion has penetrated is the fact that David Frum's much-praised history of contemporary U.S. conservatism, *Dead Right*, which treats with total seriousness the concerns of anti-abortion Republicans, was published by the left-leaning *The New Republic*.⁴

But it's no good. Most Americans have by now encountered the truth about abortion, yet those who belong to the "thoughtful part of the nation"⁵ continue to combine concern for the sufferings of animals with *unconcern* for those of unborn children. This isn't callousness. No one but a monster could go on advocating abortion in the knowledge that fetal pain was a reality. That is why "pro-choicers" only discuss this nasty issue metaphysically. Religious people may hold that prenatals can suffer, but certainly not rational moderns: "Is a 12-week fetus a child?" wonders a feminist writer in the Toronto *Globe and Mail*, adding "Theologically, for some people the answer is yes, and they're entitled to their belief. On all other measures of personhood the answer is no."

Yet the nation's "thoughtful people" have no such metaphysical doubts about the reality of pain inflicted on animals. Consider what happened at Toronto's Exhibition Stadium on August 5, 1983. It was the middle of the sixth inning in a game between the Toronto Blue Jays and the New York Yankees. Toronto being up to bat, the Yankee fielders were warming up. A seagull alighted in midfield. Dave Winfield, then playing for New York, threw an eighty-foot hopper which struck the bird on the neck and killed it. After the game an off-duty policeman, who happened to have watched the incident from the stands, arrested Winfield and had him taken to a nearby police station, to be charged with "causing unnecessary suffering to an animal." The penalty for that crime under Canadian law is a five hundred dollar fine or six months in jail. Pat Gillick, the General Manager of the Blue Jays, made bail for Winfield, and an hour and a half later he was allowed to rejoin his team.

The next day the charge was dropped. However, the policeman who had made the arrest received no public reprimand. Moreover, Toronto opinion was decidedly on the side of the seagull. One newspaper reader accused Winfield of having deliberately hit the bird, since no batboy had positioned himself to take the throw; a second expressed agreement "with the police and the other horrified witnesses," and a third approved of what had happened because "the message that will go out is that Toronto is a place where people care about animals . . ." But not, however, a place where people care about unborn babies: on the same day Winfield was charged, doctors committed some two dozen abortions in the city's hospitals and clinics.

It is when our good-thinkers are discussing the use of violence to promote justice that they demonstrate most clearly their preference for liberators of animals over rescuers of babies. Last November in Vancouver, a sniper shot an abortionist in the leg (two bullets from an assault rifle came through the window as he was having breakfast). The Toronto *Globe and Mail* responded by devoting four six-inch columns (on the page it reserves for national news) to an interview with Doctor Dallas Blanchard, professor of sociology and author of *Religious Violence and Abortion* and *The Anti-Abortion Movement and Lies of the Religious Right*. "Sniping," Blanchard told the *Globe*, "reflects a new stage in the cycle of abortion-related violence in North America." On the incident in Vancouver, his comment was: "I'm kind of amazed it has not happened before." Yet no evidence has come to light linking the still-unidentified sniper with any anti-abortion group in Canada. Nor did the *Globe* bother mentioning that before this indefensible but isolated attack, the *only* abortion-related violence reported to have taken place on Canada's west coast was carried out by pro-abortionists.⁶ Meanwhile, there came news of yet another holocaust being prepared against a segment of Canadian society.

The same edition of the *Globe* which carried Blanchard's remarks about the rise of anti-abortion urban terrorism across North America featured a diatribe by Canada's most famous animalist, Farley Mowat, warning his readers to beware of "a new pogrom against the seals." According to Mowat, the International Fund for Animal Welfare hasn't stepped in yet because it hopes Canada will do the right thing without coercion. "But if we have to," an IAWF spokesman told Mowat, "we'll set the world on fire over this one." And Mowat doubts that this threat is an idle one.

Perhaps global firebombing won't be necessary after all. In "Out of the Cage: the Movement in Transition," animal journalist Merritt Clifton claims that the shooting war is over. It's time to get into advertising and school-

textbook publishing. Above all, it's election time. The movement's leadership, according to one authority quoted by Clifton, needs feminizing: "Nurturing democratic leaders" must gently persuade the old autocratic ones "that the purr can now be more effective than hissing with a rake of the claws." And I must say it really does look as if this strategy has been put into effect. You are more likely to find animal activists sitting in board rooms than on sidewalks. In fact "Animal Lib" has become big business. The Toronto Humane Society, which was taken over in the early eighties by radicals, last year ran a budget of 7.4 million dollars, over five million of which it received in the form of donations and bequests. Its only public funding was a few hundred thousand dollars for the city's pound contract. Nodding over the final frames of Robert Redford's interminable fly-fishing idyll, *A River Runs Through It*, I woke up with a start to read the following disclaimer:

No fish were killed or injured in the making of *A River Runs Through It*. The producer would like to point out that, though the McLeans kept their fish, as was common earlier in the century, enlightened fishermen today endorse a "catch and release" policy to ensure that this priceless resource swims free to fight another day. Good fishing.⁷

Yes, the era of animal-lib *chic* has arrived. But why?

In the first place, animalism takes the heat off pro-abortionists. Having to see abortion in the same context as AIDS, apartheid, arms control, capital punishment, child abuse, pollution, poverty, racism, sexism, white slavery and world hunger certainly helped to diffuse the efforts of anti-abortionists in the seventies and eighties. But the seamless tarpaulin Peter Singer has woven covers not just humanity but the whole of the animal kingdom. An appendix to the latest edition of *Animal Liberation* lists forty-five animal advocacy groups across the world including Chicken's Lib, Farm Animal Reform Movement, and Compassion in World Farming. In this ever-widening circle of concern the very phrase "sanctity of human life" sounds sectarian. A spokesman for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals claims that "a human being has no special rights. A rat is a dog is a boy. They're all mammals." With millions of animals killed in U.S. laboratories each year, why get so hot under the collar about a mere million-and-a-half preborn humans? "More animals," points out the animalist political scientist, Robert Garner, "suffer and die at the hands of humans than do human foetuses (assuming they *can* suffer) and it is, at the very least, open to debate that a healthy adult animal is a more worthy candidate for moral concern."

The two key phrases here are "assuming they *can* suffer" and "a more

worthy candidate for moral concern.” Peter Singer is a utilitarian. He believes that the goodness or badness of an act depends exclusively on how much pleasure or pain it imparts. Which means that a being incapable of feeling pain is also incapable of having good or bad done to it. “Sentience,” says Singer, “is the only defensible boundary of concern for others.” And he takes this business of not inflicting pain on sentient beings with the utmost seriousness: “With creatures like oysters, doubts about a capacity for pain are considerable,” he writes in the 1990 edition of *Animal Liberation*, “and in the first edition of this book I suggested that somewhere between a shrimp and an oyster seems as good a place as any to draw the line.” So occasionally he would allow himself a meal of oysters, scallops and mussels. But then, doubts began to arise in his mind. What if he turned out to have been wrong, and such crustaceans really could suffer? In that case, depending on one’s appetite, “a meal of oysters or mussels would inflict considerable pain on a considerable number of creatures.” And so, just to be on the safe side, at some point between 1975 and 1990 Singer gave up all shellfish.

What if a utilitarian has to decide which of two sentient creatures to inflict pain upon? That is where worthiness for moral concern comes in. The fact that pain is evil, according to Singer, is not affected by “the other characteristics of the being who feels pain,” but the value of that being’s life *is*. For example, says Singer, when you kill a being “who has been hoping, planning, and working for some future goal,” you deprive it “of the fulfillment of all those efforts”; if on the other hand, your victim has a mental capacity below the level needed to appreciate that he has a future and can make plans for it, then the *only* thing that being killed deprives him of is painlessness.

In most cases this means that if Singer has to choose between killing a human and an animal, the human is safe. But, warns Singer, “when we consider members of our own species who lack the characteristics of normal humans we can no longer say that their lives are always to be preferred to those of other animals.” He discusses, for example, the case of a newborn baby, reduced by massive and irreparable brain damage to the status of what he calls a “human vegetable” [at least he has the grace to use quotation marks]. Under a legal system which embodies the principle that all human life is sacred, the parents of such a child (or so claims Singer) are prohibited from having it painlessly put to death, even though “adult chimpanzees, dogs, pigs, and members of many other species far surpass the brain-damaged infant in their ability to relate to others, act independently, be

self-aware, and any other capacity that could reasonably be said to give value to life.” And he clinches his “unanswerable” case by saying: “With the most intensive care possible, some severely retarded infants can never achieve the intelligence level of a dog.” One thing about pain, of course, is that it can be prevented by anaesthesia. Thus, in a society governed by animalist principles, however brain-damaged a child might be, his life would be secure as long as it could not be taken without hurting him. Once desensitize him, however, and he has to compete for the privilege of staying alive with every adult primate in the neighborhood. Don’t forget, Singer *ate* the mussels when he thought it wouldn’t hurt them. Here, surely, is animalism’s biggest drawing card for pro-abortionists.

Having once accepted Singer’s teaching on pain, if one could anaesthetize the unborn child, there would no longer be an argument about when sentience begins. Thanks to novocaine, there *is* no sentience. With nothing but an unfeeling being in her womb, the pregnant woman’s control over her body does indeed become incontestable. Moreover, since the bigger her baby grows, the easier a target it will be for an anaesthetist, we may live to see *Roe v. Wade* turned on its head and the last trimester of a pregnancy made the *least* subject to state regulation.

Except that, as Singer would have it, the first half of the first trimester doesn’t count. He claims that a preborn baby needs six weeks to develop a brain and nervous system. Before that, in his eyes, it is “simply a thing,” to be cloned, sex-selected, genetically manipulated or experimented on at will. This is where Singer’s brand of trans-species utilitarianism comes to the aid not only of abortionists but also of the new fertility engineers. Last Fall, Georgetown University’s Patricia King, who belongs to the Women’s Legal Defense Fund and supports Planned Parenthood, announced on behalf of the National Institutes of Health that, since human embryos—i.e., unborn children less than six weeks old—“do not have the same moral status as infants and children” they are fit subjects for publicly funded research.

This is the same NIH, remember, which in 1982, after a sit-in outside its Washington offices by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, *withdrew* public funding from the experiment on baboons at the University of Pennsylvania. These two NIH policy decisions may seem contradictory, but for followers of Singer they are perfectly consistent. Baboons hurt; newly-conceived humans don’t.

Utilitarianism is the philosophy of revolution. It puts the principle of utility above custom, tradition, legal precedent and religion. Jeremy Bentham, the father of modern utilitarianism, who lived around the turn of the nineteenth century, saw no logical reason for punishing sex offenders.

You imprison thieves, he argued, to cut down on stealing; you hang murderers to discourage homicide, but what pain-inflicting activity are you helping to prevent when you stigmatize adulterers? (Bentham would surely have favoured no-fault divorce and gay liberation?) In fact, we have a Benthamite in our Canadian Parliament who wants to lower the age of consent for same-sex to fourteen. But Bentham does more than prefigure the sexual revolution; he envisages the liberation of animals. Singer quotes a passage in which his eighteenth-century mentor looks forward to a time when “the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which never could have been withholden from them but by the hand of tyranny.” In the same paragraph Bentham goes on to argue that “a full-grown horse or dog is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversable animal, than an infant of a day or week or even a month old,” and concludes by asserting that “The question is not, Can they *reason*? nor Can they *talk*? but, Can they *suffer*?”

That is why today’s respectable libertines are likely to sympathize with animal liberation. It makes a virtue of rejecting the claims of Judaism and Christianity. Nowadays, claims Singer, only a religious fanatic would maintain “that man is the special darling of the universe or that other animals were created to provide us with food, or that we have divine authority over them, and divine permission to kill them.” But according to *Genesis* 1:26-30, this is precisely the status God did assign to man. In other words, we must either dismiss the biblical account of man’s relationship to the rest of creation, or stand condemned by Singer as outdated extremists. It’s not that the Bible is wrong, so much as that it needs updating.

One has to remember that, unlike Singer, its Author did not have access to Bentham’s *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*. Small wonder, then, that *Genesis* blames the fall of man on a woman and an animal, thus compounding the sin of speciesism with that of sexism, or that the same book says of God Himself that He “smelled a sweet savour” when Noah sacrificed animals to Him. Even so, admits the fair-minded Singer, “scattered passages in the Old Testament encourage some degree of kindness towards animals, so that it is possible to argue that . . . ‘dominion’ really is more like ‘stewardship.’” Possible to argue, yes, but alas, not possible to prove. Regretfully, Singer has to admit to finding in Scripture “no serious challenge to the overall view . . . that the human species is the pinnacle of creation and has God’s permission to kill and eat other animals.”

Nor did things get any better with the rise of Christianity. Such early

animal-welfarists as St. Anselm, who once rescued a hare from huntsmen, and the Hermit of Eskdale, who was killed by huntsmen while protecting a wild boar, “failed,” in Singer’s words, “to divert mainstream Christian thinking from its exclusively speciesist preoccupation.” Even St. Francis could make no dent in the prevailing anthropomorphism: Singer complains that for all the Saint’s love of birds and oxen, he went on eating them.

And let us not forget St. Thomas Aquinas. St. Thomas is the animalists’ *homme noir*. What they particularly dislike is his view that the *only* justification for kindness to animals is that it prompts men to be kind to each other. This sort of speciesism with a human face is as repugnant to animalists as chivalry is to feminists. And, according to Singer, its influence has lasted. He claims, for example, that it was Aquinas who inspired Pope Pius IX to ban a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals in Rome for fear it would imply that men have duties towards animals. In fact, for Singer the only light at the end of the burrow is a statement made by the present Pontiff in 1988 which declares that “The dominion granted to man by the creator is not an absolute power.”⁸

But the fact that animalists disparage Christianity and Judaism by no means implies that they are anti-religious. For them, putting aside speciesism is indeed a form of spiritual awakening. Their theology teaches that sin came into the world when man enslaved his fellow animals and used religion to justify the unequal relationships thus established between them—end this bondage, and both parties to it will experience liberation. As will our whole planet. Once freed from what animal theologians call “the moral orthodoxy” (i.e., the Ten Commandments), man will be able to rise above all selfish notions about saving his soul, and concentrate instead on saving the environment.

Here Greens and animal liberationists find themselves kneeling to the same gods. Both believe that in making the world safe for biodiversity, they are helping good to triumph over evil. Man having finally learnt that he is part of nature, not the lord of it, will, as the animalist charismatic, Michael Fox (the British author of *Returning to Eden: Animal Rights and Human Responsibility*) promises, have purchased his return ticket to Eden.

In the meantime, though, having disposed of the moral orthodoxy, we’ll need a new code of ethics. What could be more natural in a hedonistic society, asks the animalist historian, Richard D. Ryer (in his *Animal Revolution: Changing Attitudes Towards Speciesism*), than to fill the moral vacuum created by retreating Christianity with “an explicit morality that all can understand and accept: that to cause pain is wrong, and to give

pleasure is right . . .”? And what could be more *unnatural* in such a society than to insist on reinstating the Christian precept that, because all human life is sacred, abortion and euthanasia should be illegal?

In Canada, easy access to state-funded abortion having been secured, the push is on for euthanasia.⁹ Robert Latimer, a farmer from Saskatchewan, has been found guilty of second-degree murder in the death of his twelve-year-old daughter Tracy, who had cerebral palsy. The judge sentenced him to ten years in prison, and suddenly *another* Peter Singer—by sheer chance, a namesake, who is the associate director of the Centre for Bioethics at the University of Toronto—is also spouting Benthamism in the *Toronto Star* to the effect that “Canada’s criminal law hasn’t taken into account the complexities of mercy killing,” and that Latimer “should receive mercy and have his sentence thrown out by the federal justice minister.” “Mercy” is hardly the *mot juste* here: what Singer means is that, since Tracy was unable to hope, plan, or work for the future, her father did no wrong in killing her to secure his own happiness. And to resist that sort of thinking is to fight a revolution which has already taken place.

What, then, lies ahead? More and more doubts cast on the Jewish and Christian teaching that God created man in His own image. Animal liberationists insist, with Michael Fox, that “there are no clear distinctions between us and animals.” Most school textbooks and newspaper science columns make the same point. A recent newspaper report, for example, unhesitatingly defines Bonobo chimpanzees as “hominoids,” or members of the “human and ape family,” as if that zoological order were as clearly established as *lepidoptera*. The very idea that “the human soul is different because we are immortal,” in Fox’s words, “becomes completely absurd.”

Teaching creationist anthropology in public schools was long ago ruled unconstitutional, but now the American Civil Liberties Union has set its sights against a school biology text which talks about “intelligent design.” Never have the first three chapters of *Genesis* come under such heavy bombardment.

But that makes sense. They contain, as Pope John Paul II points out, all the information needed to understand the modern world. Accept them, and you see suffering not as a currency to be exchanged, at whatever the going rate, for bills of happiness, but as a mystery with implications that lead beyond this life. Reject the *Genesis* account of creation, and all you have to look forward to is a world in which vegetarianism will become compulsory, and Doctor Kevorkian’s “mercitron” will get as thorough a work-out as guillotines in the French Revolution.

JOHN MUGGERIDGE

NOTES

1. Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation: A New Ethics for Our Treatment of Animals* (New York: Random House, by arrangement with the New York Review of Books, 1975).
2. Social Movement Empowerment Project analyst Bill Moyers, quoted in Jeanne Williams, *Animal Rights and Welfare* (New York: the H. W. Wilson Company, 1991), p. 148. Moyers bases this judgment on "nearly 30 years' observation of the civil rights, antinuclear, and antiwar movements."
3. Ten years later they have lost their summer livelihood as well. Cod stocks have sunk so low that the inshore fishery has had to close. Ironically, seals may have helped cause this tragedy. Unculled, they are increasing in numbers by 500,000 a year, and their favourite form of nourishment is—cod.
4. Frum writes: "To pro-life conservatives, the ghastliest proof of the unabated decay of American morality in the Reagan 1980s was the administration's diffidence in the face of what seemed to pro-lifers a crime so horrible that they had to wonder when and how divine retribution would crash down upon the land: the killing by abortion of nearly 2 million children a year."
5. Robert A. Destro quotes this phrase from David Garrow's *Liberty and Sexuality: The Rights of Privacy and the Making of Roe v. Wade* (see the *Human Life Review*, Summer 1994). It is the thoughtful part of the nation which views the recent vote in Oregon in favour of euthanasia as a victory for the people, and the one in California rejecting single-payer health insurance as a victory for big business.
6. Paul Nielsen, a columnist from British Columbia for the *Interim* (a pro-life monthly), had his house smoke-bombed.
7. i.e., morally-correct fishing.
8. The truth is, of course, that no Catholic theologian ever said that it was. See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2416-2418.
9. Sabina McLuhan of Campaign Life Coalition estimates that since 1988, at approximately \$300.00 per abortion, the government has spent \$132 million of taxpayers' money to kill off its own people. See the *Interim* (October, 1994).



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The Lovely Girls:

“They Don’t Come Any Betta”⁹⁹

Faith Abbott

The voice at the other end of the phone was neither warm nor inviting. It was heavy and coarse, and each syllable was like a muted hammer blow.

I was calling to inquire about a furnished-room ad in the *New York Times*. The voice asked many questions and I had to repeat the answers more than once, each time louder: What was my name, where was I working, where had I been living? Finally the voice instructed me to wait on a certain corner at a certain time that very evening after work, whereupon the voice would meet me and take me to see its “apartment foah young business girls.”

I assumed the voice to be that of a woman, and I waited for her at the appointed time, on the corner of Lexington Avenue and 34th Street, wondering what sort of woman belonged to the voice. And then she appeared. She did not introduce herself; she didn’t say anything at all, but somehow I knew she was the voice.

In silence, I followed her across 34th Street and into a large building and through the lobby (which smelled of cats) and into the elevator.

There were two young-business-girl types already in the elevator, and I supposed them to be inmates of the apartment—which, as it turned out, they were. There was no communication between them and the woman. I smiled pleasantly, expecting an introduction. There was none.

The woman definitely belonged to the voice on the phone. She was probably in her forties; she was rather short—compactly but generously built and, somehow, symmetrical. If an abstract or an impressionist artist had captured her on board or canvas, I thought, the work might have been called “Square on Solid” or “Solid on Square with Moveable Parts” or, simply, “A Study in Symmetry.”

Her face seemed especially square, framed as it was by straight,

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short shiny black hair with a fringe of bangs strung evenly across the top. A rather long (and also shiny) nose extended from palish eyes to a small mouth. All her features had a downward trend, except for the eyebrows which were like straight lines heading slightly upward until they almost met in the middle, thus giving the face a curious mixture of surprise, skepticism, and wariness: a ready-for-anything expression.

There was total silence during the slow ascent to the fifth floor. The woman unlocked the door to the apartment. The two girls disappeared behind their doors, and I followed the woman down to almost the end of a long, dark, narrow hall. The woman rattled a great many keys, selected one, opened the door and showed me the available room.

It was clean and large enough for my immediate needs, and my needs *were* immediate; so I paid the deposit and said that I would move in on the following Saturday, if that would be all right. And then, to be polite and friendly, I began to ask questions about the apartment, such as how many girls live here, how long have they been here, and where do they work? Quite normal, affable, questions, I thought. The woman responded by asking me, in a manner not merely *unfriendly* but almost menacing, why I wanted to know these things. Which was, I thought, rather like greeting someone with the standard "Hi, how are you?" and being answered not by "Fine, and you?" but by: "None of your damn business and why the hell do you want to probe?" Here, she stated militantly, was the room. I could take it or leave it. If I didn't find it satisfactory, I could move.

Obviously, I had somehow put her on the defensive and this had made her belligerent. And with what I then considered to be profound insight, I deduced that she was either trying to impress me by her indifference or to convince *herself* that she didn't give a damn one way or the other; and that her facial expression was "superiority superimposed on insecurity." I was not going to be put on the defensive, though, so I gave her a nice reassuring (I hoped) smile and said that I was very pleased with the room.

I was indeed pleased about the rent: only \$10.50 a week plus Kitchen Privileges. These had been mentioned in the ad, and I hoped this woman would not take offense if I asked her what they were. Kitchen privileges, she explained (calmer, now) meant that she provided breakfast Mondays through Fridays, that each girl could keep, in the refrigerator, a bag (with your name on it) of snacks or food you wanted to cook

for supper or for meals on weekends; we could eat in the kitchen, nights and weekends, as long as we didn't make a mess.

(What she did *not* mention was that the refrigerator was unreliable; it was very old and one's groceries—as I would find out later—alternated daily between soggy and limp, or frozen stiff.)

On the following Saturday I moved into my room. *My room*: that had a nice sound to it. I was, I thought, at last “on my own.”

There were, in this apartment, six or seven rooms strung along one side of the hall: whether they were singles or doubles (or closets) I couldn't know, since all the doors were closed. Later on I learned that the first room was a large bedroom with a bay window on the 34th Street side: five girls shared that room, or so I was told—I never saw the inside, nor did I know which girls lived there. That was obviously the corner room, so maybe it had a window on the Lexington Avenue side, too.

Then, before the other bedrooms began, there was a kind of utility room or “pantry” which had two deep laundry tubs and clotheslines strung across the top. Next to that there was a sliver of storage and closet space (which I don't remember ever using) and then came the kitchen, and then—set back a bit—a bathroom; and then there were the remaining bedrooms. Mine was next to last. I'd thought, at first, that my room was at the very end of the hall, but there was another door sort of angled against mine, and this door opened into the final room, a double. This room would prove to be very important.

On the opposite side of the long dark narrow hall there was, mostly, just *wall*, but on this wall there was a telephone (*the* telephone) and near the phone there was a door, which was the door to the Lavatory. In this lavatory there was a toilet situated atop a raised platform, and the toilet had a chain for flushing. There was another chain dangling from the ceiling, and that was to pull the light on and off. I don't remember any basin or sink: I think there wasn't any. The real *bathroom* had one of those old-fashioned bathtubs on legs, and a floor which tried to look like tile but which was actually warped linoleum, probably vintage-depression.

The presence of, or the *fact* of, the lavatory and bathroom, kitchen and pantry, established this place as an “apartment” rather than merely “rooms.”

I didn't know my landlady's name, since she had not introduced herself; and she never did. There were, however, notes Scotch-taped

here and there, such as the one in the bathroom warning one not to wash one's hair in the sink, and these were signed: "G. Woods." She signed the rent receipts that way, too. Therefore we all thought of her as G. Woods or, simply, "Woods."

We were expected to keep our rooms neat and to do our personal laundry, but we did have a luxury of sorts: G. Woods employed a mousey cleaning lady, a Mrs. Peterson, and a laundry man. Mrs. Peterson would appear, in fear and trembling, once or twice a week; the laundry man was large and gruff and seemed to have a permanent scowl, as he collected the dirty sheets and towels and delivered the clean ones. G. Woods always hollered and bellowed at them both (this would begin before most of us had left for our jobs) and the laundry man would usually bellow back. They seemed to be perpetually engaged in some battle, and there was never any truce. Whatever threats and insults and recriminations passed between this odd trio were mostly unintelligible to us, as we'd listen, snickering, with our ears pressed to our doors.

Since I had moved in on a Saturday, my first communal breakfast was on Monday. It was—as I wrote in my diary—an Experience. (Later I would watch with some compassion but more amusement the bewildered newcomers at *their* First Breakfasts.) It was dingy and musty in that old-fashioned (even for those days) kitchen. Odd pots and pans hung on nails or hooks; there were some plates and glasses on a shelf above the porcelain sink, and there was a fascinating jumble of knives, forks and spoons in an enormous cardboard carton which had its own special place on the floor. There was a table with four chairs. Rows of empty bottles stood dustily on a high-up shelf. On a rack near the sink there hung a damp towel and a dish-cloth which was full of coffee grounds.

As I entered the kitchen, I had to pass by G. Woods, who was standing—as if at attention—by the door, a tall glass of coffee in her hand. Several girls were already sitting at the table, and they glanced up at me, dully. Again, there were no introductions. The only sounds were the chewing of toast, the stirring of coffee, and the heavy, deliberate movements of G. Woods as she left her post at the door and, with an air of martyrdom, set about fixing my breakfast. The House Breakfast was a glass of juice (canned); anemic toast and weak coffee with grounds floating around in the chipped cup. Paper napkins doubled as place mats.

I began to take a knife out of the pile of rusty utensils which

were on the drainboard; for some reason they had escaped the cardboard carton (into which I had visions of falling head-first) and G. Woods said: "Pohdon me Sweethaht but do me a favuh—rinse that off unda hot wautah. You don't wanta get soahs on youah lip." She had, I thought, the kind of accent one would hear, in those days, on the radio, when people would be trying to imitate New Yorkers.

I did as I was told, and we ate in silence—a silence broken only by an occasional long sigh of "Oh, hell," which seemed to emanate from the very depths of G. Woods. The kitchen had a large window with ample sill, upon which she would sit once she had completed her kitchen duty. The window looked down on the Bickford Cafeteria on the southeast corner of Lexington Avenue and 34th Street. She would glance down at Bickfords as she sipped her coffee (she *always* had her coffee in a glass) and then she would glance at us: nothing escaped her vigilance. She seemed to take in everything and everyone, like a cat ready to pounce on its prey. How eagerly she waited for the chance to remind us to wipe off the table and to rinse our dishes unda hot wautah.

I noticed with not a little surprise and with much pleasure that there was real butter for our toast; here, I thought, was perhaps a new opportunity to begin a friendly conversation, so I expressed my delight about the butter.

This was clearly a mistake: how could I have been so naive? G. Woods' eyebrows rose, her eyes widened, and she said: "What do you usually have, that Marjorol-or-whatever you cohl it?" For days she harped on this. "Anyone who uses that Marjorol-or-whatever it is don't know what good food is." She had the same contempt for instant coffee—ours being the real thing, of course, grounds and all.

Thereafter, I avoided the topic of food, for any reference to food would launch her into a lengthy speech about the importance of Good Food to Healthy (by which I think she meant Moral) Life. It was one of her favorite tirades. . . . And every morning I stared at my cold, real-butter-saturated, limp toast.

From the very beginning, an aura of mystery seemed to enshroud G. Woods. No one seemed to know where she went, when she left to "go to business." No one seemed to know her full name, whether she was Miss or Mrs., what sort of past had brought her to this present. Whenever she *did* happen to mention anything that might

have given us clues, these would be merely fragmentary bits and pieces of allusions to things vague and depressing, which would inevitably lead her to the Preamble of her Creed: You can't trust nobody; the only way to stay outta trouble is to mind your own business. She'd been brought up to believe that Honesty was the Best Policy and it wasn't (but *she* was honest, even if it didn't pay), and so on. Eventually I learned (or *heard*, for I never "learned" anything first-hand) that G. Woods had been married when she was quite young and that it hadn't worked out; that she had worked during the days and had gone to college at night; and that she was an accountant.

As the weeks passed, my first impression of G. Woods as a tyrannical, domineering virago began to change: I perceived hints of warmth and benevolence under her tough and brittle veneer, or so I thought. Although she frequently and dogmatically extolled the virtues of Keeping yourself to yourself, at times she fantasized that we were "family" and that her place was real nice and homey. One evening, for example, she came in with ice cream for whoever happened to be "home" and we congregated around the kitchen table, laughing and chatting almost normally, while *she* of course sat on her beloved windowsill, keeping her distance. When she was at her most gregarious, she'd come into the kitchen while some of us were trying to deal with our refrigerated brown bags, and she'd have a beer or two; and then she'd begin telling jokes and teasing us (about what, I can't remember) and her laugh would become loud and raucous and would go on and on, expanding in volume, and we would force ourselves to laugh along with her, till our faces froze. But even when she was at the peak of this unpredictable effervescence, she would never let down her guard. Her eyes never lost that wary, suspicious look; she could change in a flash and become vitriolic.

Now and then she would "go out of her way" for us (always making sure we *knew* that's what she was doing). She would make a special trip out to mail a letter or buy a bottle of aspirin; she'd take a pocketbook to be mended—and whether these selfless gestures were attempts to fan the smouldering embers of her own picture of herself as a generous, responsible and nice landlady or whether they were cold, calculating acts to make us indebted to her, so that when the time came she could accuse us of Ingratitude, possibly even *she* didn't know. Nevertheless it was inevitable that we *would*

all turn out to be Ungrateful: the script had been written and there could be no changes, except in the cast of characters.

G. Wood kept lots of keys to all sorts of mysterious closets, and she would rattle them importantly—rather like a prison guard, I thought. She had a sort of uniform, too—a dark skirt, a sporty, long, mannish jacket, and flat shoes. In the mornings, as she fixed our breakfasts, she wore an oldish blue bathrobe; when she went out at night she'd wear high heels and bright red lipstick. She must have been going out to dinner most of those nights, in fact, for I never saw her cooking for herself in the kitchen. She was always secretive, about everything, and therefore to prepare food for herself openly would constitute an invasion of her privacy. (I never saw her using the laundry tub or ironing her clothes, either). We knew she *had* dinner, because she would often inform us that she allowed herself two luxuries in life: good food and taxis.

No matter what she did or where she went in the evenings, she always returned just before eleven. I would hear her coming down the long hall, her keys clanking in rhythm with her footsteps. Her key would turn in her lock; the door would squeak open and close quickly. Then there would be the rustle of newspaper pages turning, and the grating sound of her rasping, choking cough, and then Kenneth Banghardt and The Eleventh Hour News would blare forth: we didn't need our own radios to keep up with world events. Although her actions were slow, deliberate, and plodding, her ears were as alert as were her eyes. She would pounce on any carelessly-dropped word or phrase, or she would detect a sinister meaning underlying some innocent sentence, and detect an Issue: then she would begin a debate, which of course wasn't a debate at all since there was only one side—hers. In her opinionated crescendo of conviction, about whatever it happened to be at the moment, she always had the last word—if only because she had the greater endurance. It was rarely possible to have a normal conversation with her, for to begin a conversation was like turning on the radio and getting a stream of propaganda which would go on and on, beamed to whoever might be within earshot. There was no way to turn the dial so as to change the station: the only thing to do was to get far away quickly and as unobtrusively as possible.

No: there was nothing remotely timid or taciturn about G. Woods. She did however have a profound (and ostentatious) respect for

Privacy. Our rooms were off limits, to her. When it was in her line of duty to knock on one's door—perhaps one had had a phonecall, or something—she would carefully—monkishly—avert her eyes, when the door was opened. She would not look at the person, nor beyond the person into the room. When we paid our rents, she would make out the receipts and hand them to us through a crack in the door. Apparently a wide open door was somehow obscene, so we all got into the habit of opening our doors just a wee crack.

Indeed, privacy was sacred to G. Woods: she was as protective about our privacy as she was diligent about her own “duties.” Whatever her own unspoken rules may have been, she was as fanatically conscientious about her part as she was dictatorial about ours. So conscientious about her obligations was she that one Thursday morning, when she had overslept and had therefore not fixed our breakfasts, she was so filled with remorse that she insisted on giving us extra bread “for the weekend”—*that night*. Breakfast was as usual on Friday morning. By Saturday of course our weekend bread had turned to stone.

There was one frequent source of entertainment for us young-business-women in the G. Woods' ménage: we would listen, behind our closed doors, when G. Woods answered the phone, because these phonecalls were almost always from girls who had seen her ad in the paper. Snickering, within the security of our rooms, we would hear the following:

“Hellew?” (Her voice always became refined, when she answered the phone.) There would be a short silence, and then: “Well, heah's something . . . May I ask how old you are? Oh . . . well, these are mostly *young* girls. You wouldn't want to share a room or an apahtment with a young girl at *your* age, would you?” Another silence. Then: “Well, heah's something . . . uh, let me ask you, what kind of place did you have befoah? Oh . . . well, I mean, wouldn't you find this difficult, aftah that?”

And then the usual—about the rent, and breakfast five days a week, and kitchen privileges. If the hopeful on the other end of the line had survived all this, the final sentences would be: “Well, now look: theah's a drugstoah right across the street, it's a *Rexohl* Drugstoah, R, E, X, A, L, L, *Rexohl*. You cohl me from theah and I'll come and meet you and show you the place.”

Then she would repeat the name of the drugstore, and would tell

the caller not to get *that* drugstore mixed up with the one on the *next* corner.

At first, G. Woods' attitude toward her tenants seemed paradoxical, but each new inmate would eventually come to understand that this landlady had a Good List and a Bad List. If you were on the Good List, you were a Lovely-Girl-They-Don't-Come-Any-Better. How long one stayed on the Good List before being transferred to the Bad List seemed to depend entirely on G. Woods' own peculiar whim. We had no insight into her rationale or her methodology: there were no clues about the inner workings of her mysterious clock, or whatever it was.

For a while I was one of her stars: one of the lovely-girls-I-wish-they-were-oh-like-you. Apparently I had passed the first test, whatever *that* was; now that my tenancy had been firmly established, I was taken into her confidence. These confidences were always preceded by a ritual: "Listen, Sweethaht, come heah." She would go into the kitchen: I would follow. She would then exit kitchen, peer down the hall, re-enter kitchen and shut the door. And then her eyes would gleam as she would launch into defamatory revelations about this or that girl (who probably didn't live there anymore, although one could never be quite sure since it was difficult to put names with faces). I would listen and would respond with the sort of expressions and noises she seemed to expect. It wasn't exactly *gossip* that G. Woods was indulging in, because there was never anything very specific. Or perhaps she *was* more specific than I can remember: possibly her hushed tone of voice and the drama she created around herself were sufficiently awesome so as to airbrush all details from the mind of the listener.

I do remember that whatever specific theme may have begun each of these revelations, these True Life Stories, they were all more or less the same; G. Woods' mouth would spew forth examples of virtues and vices in a series of unrelated stories which always had the same moral: *trust no one*. A form-letter type of Shocking Revelation would go like this: "Ninety puhcent of the girls heah are Problem Cases. Their parents won't have them. So I take them in, they have lots of freedom, low rent; but are they grateful? No. They're oh alike. They don't appreciate what they got heah. . . . Now, if they was all like you and Vivian—lovely girls, they don't come any betta."

There was one specific example given, nameless and faceless and

so therefore probably representative of the many; and this was The Case of The Girl Who Got Sick. “I cohled the doctah, I gave her food and took care of her. And what did I get but a kick in the pants. I nevah should have taken this place. If I had known what I was getting in foah, I nevah woulda taken it. It’s moah trouble than it’s worth.”

There was, in fact, another girl who always seemed to be sick—or so I was told, some years later. This girl could not hold down a job and was apparently in the protective custody of G. Woods, who always let her rent slide and never yelled at her. I seem to remember seeing her shadow now and then. She lived on the other side of G. Woods’ room, I think; but I have a vague memory that she was *in* G. Woods’ room, most of the time. Of course G. Woods never mentioned *her* . . .

And there was a girl named Jean: she had been a lovely-girl-they-don’t-come-any-better. Jean was from a Lovely Family: “It was a pleashuh to have a girl like her.” (Alas, the girls on the Good List could fall from grace and find themselves on the Bad List almost overnight, it seemed). It seemed that Jean began to “spread malicious gossip.” That was one of G. Woods’ favorite phrases: she loved the sound of *malicious gossip*. “Listen, Sweethaht, don’t get me stahted about her . . .” For Jean was, she said, an Agitator; and agitators are Communists so therefore it followed that Jean was a Communist. And G. Woods hated Communists.

Quite possibly G. Woods had good reason to distrust some of the inmates of apartment 5A: there *were* some rather odd characters who would eye me curiously at the breakfast table and whom I would eye even more curiously when their backs were turned: girls who would appear and then would disappear—the only proof of their brief tenancy being a trail of empty beer cans.

When G. Woods first began to confide in me, I thought it would be easy to avoid the pitfalls of Those Who Had Erred. I was a good listener and had, I thought, a “knack” for “bringing out the best in people.” Perhaps I could help G. Woods to be more “positive” about these girls: perhaps I could help G. Woods, herself. But as time went on, reality began to sink in. I realized that I hadn’t actually *known* how these various girls had erred. And so, becoming wiser in the ways of the world, I figured the obvious sane thing to do was to keep listening, to continue being generally sympathetic and to have nothing to do with malicious gossip. Not that I had anything

malicious to gossip about, and I wouldn't, if I *did*, but clearly the safe thing would be to make it absolutely clear that I was above this sort of thing.

It is true that the girls in the next-door room and I would sometimes joke a bit about malicious gossip, because we heard the phrase so often. But we were very careful never to be overheard for we knew it was in our best interests to please and appease our landlady. We were never quite sure exactly *how* to do this, though, because one night G. Woods might be complaining vociferously about the last group of girls—they had been loud and obnoxious, they'd had phone calls at 5:30 in the morning, and she didn't like that, no Sir, and the next night she would be saying that she didn't want a bunch of old maids who just sat around every night. Why, she'd had the *niciest* girls last year: they used to have parties and take each other out when one had a birthday and oh-yes, they all had a lovely time together.

Although I had been, I thought, securely established on the Good List, I began to have an eerie feeling that there were insidious forces at work: forces about which I could do nothing. A force, or forces, plotting my imminent and inevitable fall from grace.

And the rest of this story is about my decline.

There were several incidents which led to my excommunication. One had to do with an ironing board.

I had been doing my ironing on my two ancient suitcases, pushed together with newspaper and tissue paper spread over the tops. The other girls may have done the same, or maybe they ironed their clothes on their beds. By this time I had become quite friendly with the two girls who lived next door, Vivian and Beula. Our rooms had a connecting door, which we were more or less aware of but for all practical purposes it was just a part of the wall, and we had furniture against it, for we had little enough wall space as it was. One morning we got talking about the ironing problem, and decided that a real ironing board would be a great convenience; so one night after work we met and went to Macy's basement and bought a respectable, full-sized ironing board, the kind with wooden legs, and we brought it back with us on the subway. We were very pleased, and did not mind sharing it with the other girls in the apartment.

But very early, one rainy, gloomy Saturday, I awoke to shouts and threats coming from the hall. G. Woods was actually *maligning* Vivian, whom she accused of having lent the ironing board to someone

who had not helped pay for it and who had left a (minor) scorch on top. G. Woods was *ordering* Vivian to make “all the girls” who *had* helped pay for the ironing board give the money back; and she warned Vivian not to lend out the ironing board, *ever*: “I don’t want anyone borrowing anything from anybody! This isn’t no Girls’ Residence Club!” Vivian, she roared, was to keep the ironing board locked in her room.

We knew that G. Woods was being totally irrational; we also knew that the thorn in her flesh was much sharper and deeper and broader than a mere ironing board, so there was no point in making an issue of it. And Vivian and Beula and I went on sharing the ironing board; only now we passed it through our “secret door” so as not to expose it in the hall.

By now it was obvious that Vivian and Beula and I, the three Lovely-Girls-They-Don’t-Come-Any-Better, had become good friends: and this was the beginning of the end. G. Woods was convinced that we had formed an alliance. The ironing board was merely symbolic, and was not mentioned again: the alliance, however, was a fact. Almost overnight G. Woods turned against us. She accused us of having formed a “clique” so that we could gossip about her and turn everyone else in the apartment against her, and she would not leave us alone. When we three would congregate in my room or in their room, she would be listening. We didn’t try to *prove* this, but since she had always closed and locked her door immediately upon entry each evening, and *now* she was keeping her door open a wee crack (through our keyholes we could see a sliver of light in the dark hall) there was little doubt about what she was up to.

For whatever reason, G. Woods had turned especially on Vivian, the quiet, rather shy young woman from Colorado, who had come to New York to study voice and was hoping for an operatic career. It was not enough that Vivian keep the ironing board in her room: now she demanded that Vivian keep her door closed *at all times*. Vivian, stated G. Woods, had been keeping her door open so that she could eavesdrop on all conversations. Vivian had “degraded” all the girls who had roomed with her before, in that double room. She had filled them with Malicious Gossip. And she, G. Woods, didn’t want no moah of that, no sir: if there was anything she couldn’t stand, it was Malicious Tongues.

Ridiculously enough, we three began to feel guilty whenever we were seen together in the apartment, so we began meeting on the

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sly. It was rather fun, this cloak-and-dagger business. One at a time we would sneak, undetected, down the long hall, into the elevator, to have breakfast out. Sometimes we would meet at night at something called Tyme Letter Shop—a direct mail operation, where anyone who could type reasonably well could pound away on ancient typewriters with faded ribbons and get paid according to how many envelopes you had addressed or how many inside-addresses you had typed. I think one hundred envelopes netted one dollar, at a penny apiece; inside addresses and “Dear So-and-So:” paid more. The people in charge at Tyme knew the exact weight of envelopes and sheets of paper, so we were paid according to scale—*literally*: Tyme Letter Shop’s own metal scale. In those days, every penny counted.

That cliché “every penny counts” had become a reality for me one day when I left the office, at Madison Avenue and 52nd Street, and discovered that I had exactly nine cents. Bus fare was ten cents. So I walked to my building at Lexington and 34th, faintly amused by the irony of the situation: here I was secretary to the Managing Editor of Harper’s Bazaar magazine, and I literally didn’t have a dime. It seemed that all the secretaries at Harper’s Bazaar were paid notoriously low salaries: presumably this was because ours were considered “glamour jobs,” which meant that you were so grateful for the privilege of working for that prestigious, exciting, slick fashion magazine, that money didn’t matter. I suspect that my fellow-secretaries were subsidized by their parents, and lived at home—in Queens or somewhere. I was determined to be self-supporting, which was not exactly a matter of choice, anyway. So G. Woods’ low rent, and Tyme Letter Shop, and another occasional night job—typing up bills and reports for two dentists, a husband and wife, in their posh apartment/office—made it just barely possible to afford my Glamour Job, and to go to a movie now and then.

By this time, it had become clear to Vivian, Beula and me that G. Woods was more than a “character”: we decided she was either psychotic or paranoid, or both. And if at times I thought I was over-dramatizing the situation in apartment 5A, my *mother* didn’t, and she urged me to take precautions. So every night I locked my door and piled my suitcases against it, just in case G. Woods might have one of her rages and turn into a Lady Macbeth sort of creature, with a knife.

As winter approached, a cold and sinister atmosphere pervaded

the apartment. All conversation between inmates was hushed: telephone conversations ceased abruptly when *her* footsteps echoed in the hall. There was much shouting about Malicious Gossip—directed to us at large, and somehow including the hapless cleaning lady and the laundryman. And no one new came to see the apartment.

Nevertheless, despite all this, or perhaps *because* of it, G. Woods decided to give a going-away “pahty” for two of the girls who would be leaving to get married. Beula was one. This event was announced one morning to all who were within hearing distance: not as a novel idea, don’t-you-think-so?, nor as a “duty” but purely as a matter of fact, or of routine. There would be, she said, a few cans of beer, some coffee and ice-cream: she, G. Woods, would buy a wedding cake, and would we all be willing to donate a dollah? Yes, we said: *of course* we would.

As the day for the party approached, G. Woods seemed indeed to have had a change of heart. She became almost cheerful and at times bordered on the euphoric. She bought a china Bride and Groom for the top of the wedding cake, and she showed this decoration to all of us: she was rather like a small child with a new toy.

And then came the night I shall never forget. About an hour before the party was to begin, I was in the kitchen, frying a solitary hamburger. Suddenly the front door slammed and G. Woods strode into the kitchen and wordlessly handed me a crumpled dollar bill. I didn’t take it: all I could do was stare at her. Then she said: “Heah, I owe you a dollah.” “No you don’t,” I said, having recovered my voice: “What for?” And she replied: “The pahty’s off.”

Her voice had actually been shaky and there was a moistness around her eyes. I clutched the dollar and she stalked down the hall to her room and slammed her door with a reverberating bang.

By the time Vivian got home the tension had become palpable; and before I could say a word to Vivian, G. Woods stormed out of her room, gave Vivian back *her* dollar, and stormed back into her room, Vivian was equally dumbfounded. There were a few moments of ominous silence and then suddenly G. Woods appeared again; and now she was acting like a raging maniac (this was, as I later wrote in my diary, “no laughing matter”). She began screaming insults at Vivian, accusing her of vague but presumably dreadful things, and screaming things about Beula, too. It seemed that Beula and a girl named Barbara had been together the night before and had been indulging in Malicious Gossip; but somehow this was all

Vivian's fault because, she screeched at Vivian, "Beula was all right till she moved in with *you* and I'm not gonna let anyone move in with you aftah Beula leaves! You'll hafta move in with someone down the hall so you can't poison any *new* girl!" As she continued hurling abuses and insults and threats at Vivian, her volume arose alarmingly, and as her decibels increased, so did my adrenaline: something new and alarming was happening to *me*. Part of me was thinking: G. Woods is to be pitied—she's a mental case. But suddenly my well-balanced control of pity-over-anger went haywire. I couldn't stand it any more: I literally saw red. I hated G. Woods. I wanted to destroy her. In one split-second she symbolized all the stupid prejudice and injustice in the whole world. Then, without premeditation but in a surge of blazing anger, I did something terrible: I slammed my door. I slammed it, *loud*.

There was a moment of stunned silence. My radio was on and instinctively I turned up the volume, whereupon G. Woods increased *hers* again: "Anyone," she shrieked, "Anyone who slams the door in my face, I'll slam their head in!" And she thundered out of the apartment.

I waited for a few minutes, to make sure the coast was really clear, and then crept into Vivian's room—this time through the regular door, not the secret one. We stared at each other in disbelief and shock, but I suspect we both felt rather victorious. We agreed that it was most unwise to hang around *there*, so we headed out to a movie. And as we might have expected, when we went out through the lobby, there *she* was, coming in. But without a word or a glance, we continued in our opposite directions. And this time her suspicions were justified: we certainly *were* going to have a delicious time indulging in Malicious Gossip.

It was with some trepidation, though, that Vivian and I returned to the apartment after the movie. We had visions of murderous threats smeared on our doors, in red paint or maybe even blood. Or would G. Woods be waiting for me, behind my door, knife in hand? (I can't remember what movie we had seen: perhaps it was a horror film.) But all was dark and deathly quiet in the apartment. We proceeded as quietly as possible to our rooms, put the keys in our locks, and I slowly pushed my door open, with one foot, till I heard it connect with the wall: no, she was not there.

The next morning, there were no sounds from G. Woods' room; there was no smell of coffee from the kitchen. As I crept stealthily past her room and down the hall to the front door and the liberating

elevator, I could not sense her presence anywhere. No one else seemed to be around, either.

But during that day I began to wonder and even to worry a bit. I had visions of G. Woods lying, dead, across her bed, clutching an empty pill bottle or maybe there would be an open container of rat poison near her lifeless body. I even contemplated finding a ladder and climbing it so as to peer into her room through the transom, should there turn out to be any grounds for suspecting that she'd done herself in. But we found out from the superintendent (possibly this was the first time we knew of *his* existence) that G. Woods had gone out very early that morning. Obviously there had been no breakfast for anyone.

About the door-slamming: I didn't regret the incident, even though my conscience told me that I had stooped to G. Woods' own methods. Anyway, it wasn't true that I had slammed the door in her face, since her face hadn't been anywhere near the door. The door-slamming, though, was symbolic: it had been a *statement*. I had been pleased with, and proud of, what I thought was my new "independence." I had got, on my own, a job and a place to live. What I hadn't yet got, though, was my own *self*. All along I'd had an *idea* of myself: in the G. Woods' context I was a Peacemaker and/or innocent martyr, and basically I'd always been a Nice Person who, in trying situations (of which there had never been any remotely like this) felt compassion and tried reasoning, rather than feeling anger and using violence. I was above childish outbursts. I was, somehow, superior, but possessed of that true Christian "humility" which always lets the adversary know that you have The Answer to his or her Problem.

And so that idea of myself got slammed away when I slammed the door. And I felt, for the first time, truly independent.

. . . I realize now, and wonder why I wasn't more aware of it then, that G. Woods' outburst had taken place on Holy Thursday, so Good Friday was the day she hadn't appeared. Harper's Bazaar let us off at noon that day, and I went away for the weekend.

The Easter weekend had been restorative to some extent, but on the train back to the city my new self-confidence began to dissolve. At Grand Central Station my knees were rather gelatinous, as I de-trained; I wondered if I was near panic, but decided I wasn't, since along with mounting apprehension there was this curious detachment, or a detached and very real *curiosity*. It was as though I were a character in some gothic novel, wondering what would

happen to me in the next chapter. I could not imagine how the chapter would end; nor had I any idea of how, if I were the author, I'd *want* the whole story to end.

There had been times when the outbursts of G. Woods had rebounded in a way which turned her, for a while, into the opposite sort of person—servile and placating. Would this scenario be repeated, I wondered?

No, not this time. The proverbial die had been cast; the pendulum had swung and stuck. I was now most definitely on the Black List. There were hushed reports, from Beula and the other girls who had survived the weekend in 5A, that G. Woods had been impossible: had shouted and cursed and blasphemed for three days, and one of the girls had left for her honeymoon under a shower not of rice but of insults and rebukes.

Beula would soon be leaving too, for Florida and her fiancé; Vivian, as it turned out, would be leaving even sooner. She had been so disgusted about the ironing board incident (“This is no Girls’ Residence Club!”) that she’d got herself on the waiting list at a Girls’ Residence Club—The Evangeline, on 14th Street, owned and run by The Salvation Army. She was at the end of a very long list, but after that last G. Woods’ explosion she gave the admitting lady such a sad and desperate tale of woe that the Salvation Army apparently decided she was a needy case and moved her up to the Urgent List; within a few days she got accepted. Beula and I helped her move. And so, shortly after that, of the three notorious malicious-tongued trouble-makers, I alone remained.

My courage had returned, and with a vengeance. But my mother was worried. She had phoned once or twice when G. Woods had been riding her broomstick; by now she was seriously concerned for my safety. She thought my days were numbered, and urged me to give immediate notice, in which case God would most certainly provide a new place to live. I knew that my days in that apartment were numbered, but I was determined to take the days one at a time. I had no doubt about God providing, but I knew that that would demand something on my part, too, and I wasn’t up to it. I was nearly penniless, was once again in the throes of job-hunting, and had a lingering virus, so I was determined to stay on, for the time being. I refused to be intimidated. I could cope.

But I dared not speak to anyone else in the apartment. I had heard

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that various girls were spreading lies about various other girls, and I didn't know which tongues were malicious and which were just inexperienced, or who was spreading what about whom, so I kept myself to myself, just as G. Woods had said—very long ago, it seemed—that that was what one should always do.

By tacit agreement I took breakfast alone in my room: toast and coffee were shoved in to me through a crack in my door. If I happened to be walking down the hall and G. Woods was coming up the hall, she would disappear into a closet or flatten herself against the wall, to let me pass. She never looked at me; she never spoke to me. It was an uneasy truce, I thought. And now she always left her door open, just a crack.

One night when we passed each other, I risked a “hello.” She didn't acknowledge my greeting but said, as she went into her room, that she wanted me to give her a week's notice before I moved out. I tried to look surprised and nonplussed (maybe I *was* surprised: she hadn't actually *mentioned* my moving, before) and told her that I wasn't planning to leave. She said nothing more, then, but next morning, next evening, and so on for several days the scenario would be repeated.

If G. Woods had, unwittingly, made me truly independent, she had—by way of this latest turn of events—made me very stubborn, too. The more obvious she made it that she wanted me out, the more determined I was to stay—not so much out of necessity as of spite. Her constant nagging about my giving her a week's notice, synchronized now with the ever-present dripping of water from somewhere in the apartment, began to take on a plaintive, pleading tone: “Listen,” she'd begin—and I would remember how in the early days it had been “Listen, Sweethaht . . .”—“Listen, you *gotta* give me a week's notice.”

I began giving *her* the silent treatment. It was rather perversely fun, my being impervious to the new note I detected in her voice. It was obvious that she was most eager to get the rotten apple out before it could infect the bunch: there were some girls waiting to get into the double room next door, she said, and there was in fact “Someone interested in youah room” who was all ready to move in as soon as I moved out.

When she realized that I was not taking immediate action for removal, she regrouped her demons and used another strategy: every day, twice a day and even three times a day, she would warn me

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about Malicious Gossip: “Now listen heah, I don’t want no moah of this malicious gossip. I can’t stand these malicious tongues.” I’m not sure what this “strategy” would be *called*, but eventually it began to work on me, or anyway it began to wear me down, and I decided to let her think that she had won this cold war. (Besides, my mother was making noises about removing me bodily and putting all my belongings in a locker in Grand Central Station.)

My mother hadn’t given up on God’s Providence, however, and she didn’t seem very surprised when, within the week, I had found refuge in the girls’ residence directly across from The Evangeline (whose waiting list I was on) and this was called Katherine House. This happened so fast that I was unable to give G. Woods’ her famous Week’s Notice: therefore I had to pay her an extra week’s rent. I did not complain; nor did I complain when she refused, in angry tones, to give me a refund for the extra key I had bought.

When I was all packed and ready to leave, she spoke nicely to me for the first time in many weeks. How did I like my new job, she asked, and how was my family, how was I feeling, and could she help me load my things onto the elevatuh?

Perhaps she was just relieved to be rid of me at last, but she seemed *so* different that I wondered if she might be one of those multiple personalities: was this a new face emerging? I needn’t have wondered long, though, because there was one final episode which seemed to portray the whole enigma of G. Woods, whoever/whatever she was. Again, it had to do with the ironing board.

The other partners of the by now famous, or infamous, ironing board had moved out, leaving me its sole heir. After much debating with myself I had decided that the thing to do was to ask G. Woods if she knew of anyone who might like it, since I wouldn’t be needing it. Her reaction was surprising. I expected something like: “Listen, that’s youah problem and I don’t give a damn what you do with it.” But what she said was that she would try to sell it “to one of the girls heah” and then she became earnest: “You won’t believe me, but if I can sell it I’ll send the check to you in the mail. You don’t think I’ll send it, but I will—you’ll see. I’m honest—*too* honest. It’s terrible to have an obsession like that.”

I thought: It sure is awful to have obsessions, and you sure have a lot, but if honesty is one of them I’d hate to know about the others. . . . Not that I doubted her sincerity. She’d send me the check,

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I was convinced, as a lasting reprimand: a final proof of her misunderstood nature . . .

She never sent a check. Perhaps she couldn't find any buyers for the ironing board.

I went back to Apartment 5A just once, after I had moved, to pick up some mail. By this time I was indeed well into a much happier chapter; my sense of balance and well-being had been restored, I had no lingering resentment about G. Woods and in fact felt a small pang of sympathy for her. So it was not a strain to greet her in a friendly fashion.

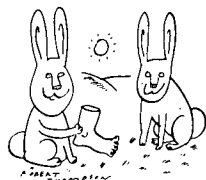
The place was just as dismal, just as gloomy. The same notes were on the walls: the same month was on the calendar. G. Woods was in her same old blue bathrobe, rattling the same bunch of keys. She did not meet my gaze, but said: "Look heah, I wanta show you something."

Down the long dark hall she marched and I followed her obediently. She opened the door to what had been Vivian and Beula's room and showed me the dingy room trying to hide behind a coat of fresh paint.

"See! The new girls heah decided they wanted to paint the room and make it real nice. See, isn't this nice? I just wanted to show you how *lovely* it is to have two girls who appreciate what they got heah."

And then she added: "I don't want no moah like that Vivian and all the rest of them . . ."

And across the platform of my mind marched white lines of Lovely Girls—pale ghostly girls turning darker and darker. Forever there would be new girls: inevitably there would be Black Lists.



'Here, this should bring you good luck.'

THE SPECTATOR 8 October 1994

APPENDIX A

[The following column first appeared in the *New York Post* on November 28, 1994, and is reprinted here with permission. All rights reserved.]

Election results show U.S. turning against abortion

Ray Kerrison

Lost in the right-wing euphoria flooding out of the November elections is a signal of the most profound social change spreading throughout the nation.

Believe it or not, the United States is rapidly, astonishingly and mercifully revolting against abortion. The election result is only one sign of the new climate taking hold, but its impact is blockbuster.

It is part of the biggest news story today: America is yearning to go back to basics.

A study of the election returns is stunning. Not one single pro-life incumbent senator, member of the House or governor of either party was defeated by a pro-abortion challenger. But pro-life challengers defeated nearly 30 hard-core pro-abortion incumbents.

If these results had been reversed, they would have been Page One news across the country.

Instead, the incredible pro-life victories have been muted by a liberal media that refuses to accept them.

Perhaps the biggest single surprise of the electoral season was First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton's flat, unequivocal condemnation of abortion. In an interview with *Newsweek* magazine, she said abortion was "wrong."

Radical feminists have not recovered from the shock. Hillary was the high priestess of the movement and her desertion on the eve of the election has left them speechless. We're still waiting for Hillary's gushiest media disciple, Anna Quindlen, to explain to *New York Times* readers Hillary's defection.

Hillary has joined Kate Michelman, head of the National Abortion Rights Action League, who, in a rare moment of candor, told a Philadelphia *Inquirer* reporter last December, "We think abortion is a bad thing."

Kate's slip of conscience triggered such a furor in the ranks that she was forced to deny having said it. Unfortunately for Kate, the reporter taped the conversation.

Resistance to abortion is rising everywhere. The shortage of doctors prepared to perform them is becoming an industry crisis. Research papers in numerous prestigious medical journals pointing to a link between breast cancer and abortion have alarmed many women.

One of the most potent factors in the defeat of the Clinton health-care bill was its abortion provisions. The huge influx of pro-life senators and representatives into the new Congress will now make it harder than ever for the Clintons.

As Doug Johnson, legislative director of the National Right to Life Committee, put it, "No matter what kind of health-care bill President Clinton proposes, it will not pass

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if it does not explicitly exclude abortion.”

At the UN Conference on Population and Development in Cairo last month, the Clinton administration’s primary goal to enshrine abortion as a universal family-planning tool was repudiated.

Events of the past month do not portend the elimination of abortion. Far from it. But they strongly reject the social values promoted by President Clinton, Gov. Cuomo, Edward Kennedy, the National Organization for Women, ACT UP and the *New York Times*.

Americans have weighed the harvest of 30 years of permissive social behavior—skyrocketing divorce, single parents, epidemics of AIDS and herpes, soaring illegitimacy, bloody school violence, rampant drug addiction, hideous crime, condoms for kids—and found it wanting.

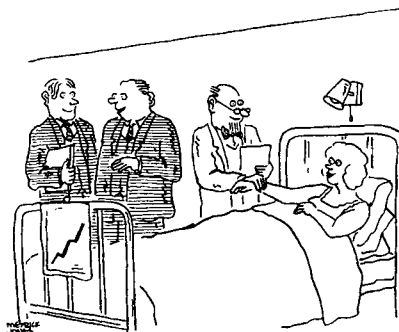
Reaction against the destruction of 1.5 million babies in the womb every year is an integral ingredient in the social rebellion now sweeping society.

The amazing thing is that one of the first shots in the revolt was fired right here in New York City. We just didn’t recognize it at the time.

It occurred when angry parents stormed the streets in protest against the “Rainbow” curriculum and the kiddie condom craze launched by then-Schools Chancellor Joseph Fernandez and then-Mayor Dinkins. They blew Fernandez out of town and Dinkins out of office.

That was the forerunner of what happened across the whole nation three weeks ago, when tens of millions of Americans went to the polls and voted for the restoration of traditional values.

The media may ignore its massive pro-life content, but the message is clear: The abortion tide is turning. The nation, like Hillary Clinton, thinks it is wrong.



‘It’s the placebo effect. We get excellent results by employing out-of-work actors who look like doctors.’

THE SPECTATOR 29 October 1994

APPENDIX B

[The following column and cartoon ran together in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* on November 22, 1994. Mr. Deering is the editorial-page cartoonist for the *Democrat-Gazette*, and Mr. Greenberg is the editorial-page editor. Both the column and the cartoon are reprinted with the permission of the authors.]

The power of a cartoon

Paul Greenberg

Friday this newspaper published one of the great American editorial cartoons. That first impression was confirmed by the volume of phone calls to John Deering, our editorial cartoonist, and the impressive collection of message slips waiting for me when I got to the office. I look forward to the letters to the editor.

In the event Gentle Reader missed it, the cartoon, which is reprinted below, showed a car with a Pro-Choice bumper sticker being hauled from a lake. The allusion to the Susan Smith case in South Carolina was clear, the cartoon's message unmistakable, the reaction immediate.

Before the day was out, good ol' Leslie Peacock of the *Arkansas Times* was calling with an obtuse question or two:

"Was it fair?" Gosh, was Flannery O'Connor fair to Southerners and freaks in her short stories, or was the whole point of her grotesque descriptions to remind us of what wholeness was?

"What if the bumper sticker (on the car in the cartoon) had said Gingrich?" Huh? It wouldn't have made much sense in that case. Or if it did, it would have been just a partisan snipe. It wouldn't have much to do with abortion, or society's attitude toward it. It wouldn't have gone to that second, deeper level under the surface of the news that the best editorial cartoons—and editorials—reach.

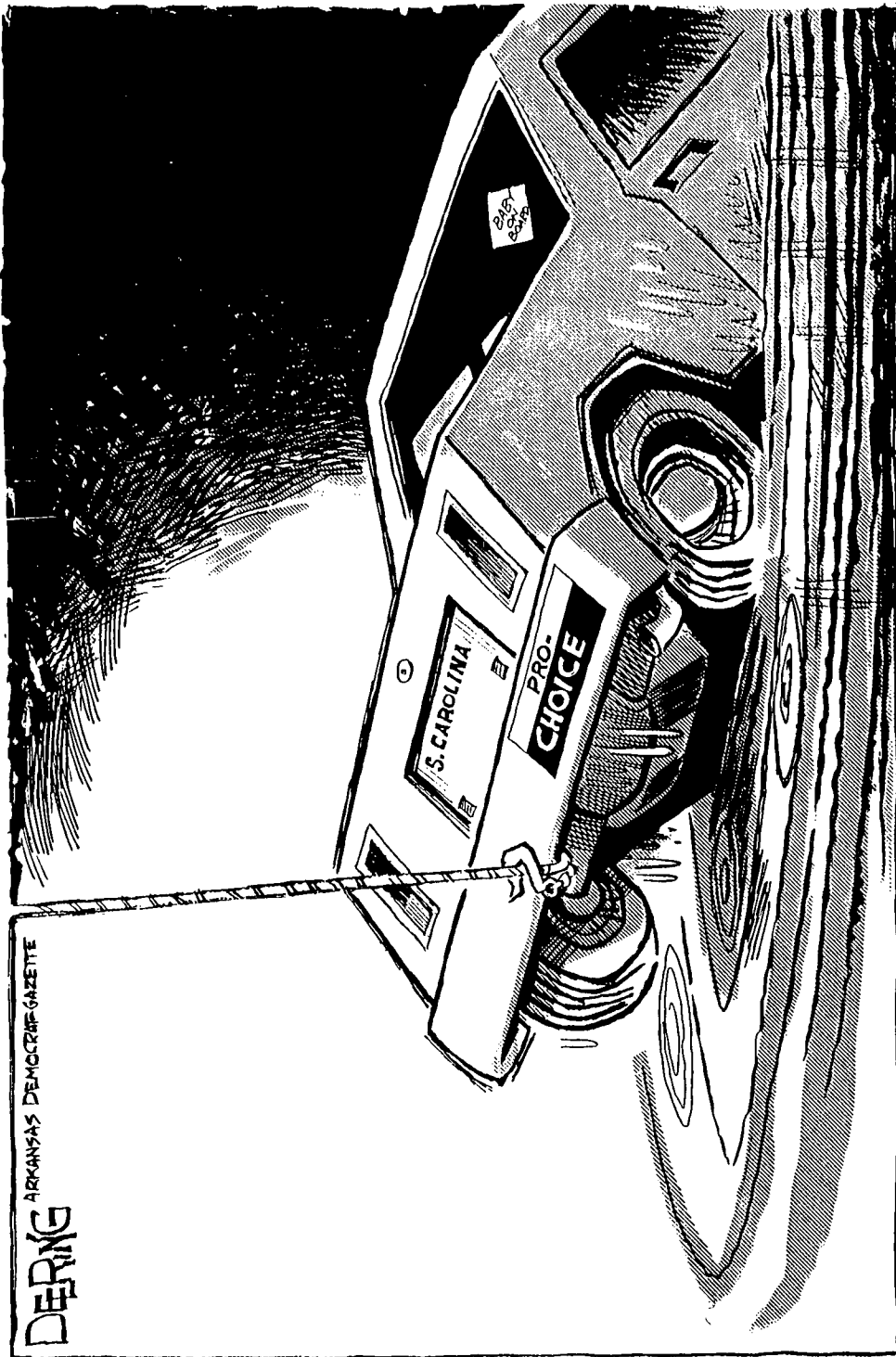
Strangely enough, some of the callers protested that the cartoon was meaningless, and wanted it explained. But if it meant nothing to them, why were they calling? And why were they so angry? The first sign of a troubled soul may be denial, the second anger.

Could it be that the cartoon had pricked some consciences? For isn't a natural response to anything that questions our moral assumptions anger, denial, defensiveness? "That doesn't apply to me," we protest too much. Could the cartoon's message have been entirely too clear?

Friday's cartoon struck a nerve, and perhaps even the minds and hearts of those who protested. Else they wouldn't have protested. Because what the artist had done with a few deft strokes was to rip away the distinction between taking human life before and after birth—a largely artificial distinction that has required a great deal of smooth legal, linguistic, political, and psychological effort to maintain over the years.

Listen to the American Civil Liberties Union, which can occasionally be caught making sense about this issue. Perhaps more sense than it realizes. In a Florida case a couple of years ago, the ACLU said the unsayable: "There is absolutely no morally significant change in the fetus between the moments immediately preceding and

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following birth.”

Naturally the ACLU was not suggesting that permission to kill within the womb be denied, but that it be *extended*. In the Baby Theresa case, the ACLU sided with those who sought to “harvest” the organs of an anencephalic baby—one born with almost no brain but intact otherwise, and therefore unable to survive more than a few days in any case. So why not cut out the heart—or lungs, or liver or anything else—of such a doomed, deformed child and transplant those organs in babies who need them to live? Why not slide down that slippery slope a little further?

The ACLU’s brief pointed out, quite rightly, “the inconsistency of permitting the termination of pregnancies up to the moment of birth” while “prohibiting the donation of organs just after birth.” So its lawyers proposed, quite wrongly, to take the lives of newborns, too. Which is how a society, once accustomed to taking innocent life, will take more. Note the increasing popularity of eugenics, euthanasia, embryonic experimentation, and Kevorkianism in general.

For a moment John Deering’s cartoon had ripped away the flimsy verbal curtain between taking life in the womb and out. And he didn’t need any verbal gymnastics to do it; the cartoon didn’t even require a caption.

As the paper’s editorial page editor, I’ve had other occasions to bask in the reflected glory of our prize-winning cartoonist, but never have I been so proud to be associated with his work. No, this cartoon won’t win any prestigious national awards. It is much too powerful and direct and provocative for that. It’s not just politically incorrect; it’s politically unrecognizable in the context of our euphemized and anesthetized times. (“What does it *mean*?” asked more than one mystified caller.)

As always, verbal engineering has preceded social engineering. The least of these must be aborted in words before it becomes permissible to abort them in deed. Those whom we want out of the way must first be dehumanized, or something within might hold us back.

After all, there are some things about our throw-away society that Americans might not want to look at too closely. Like what we have done, and what we are doing, at the rate of 1,700,000 abortions a year. Nothing reflected the power of John Deering’s cartoon more Friday than the shock and outrage of those who objected to the troubling questions it raised. Our thanks to all our readers who called. Something was clearly on their mind and needed expressing.

Perhaps it is not too much to hope that those of us who are so horrified—by a culture that chooses death so routinely and so massively—can still hope for a powerful ally in the conscience of our adversaries. Thanks to an artist like John Deering, it seemed to stir Friday.

APPENDIX C

[The following comes from our European editor, Mary Kenny, who devoted her regular column in the London Sunday Telegraph (November 13, 1994) to the radio lectures of Dr. Clifford Yorke; we asked her to expand upon it for our readers, which she has kindly done.—Ed.]

On Dr. Clifford Yorke

Mary Kenny

Dr. Clifford Yorke is a Freudian analyst: a very distinguished and experienced shrink who is one of Anna Freud's last living colleagues. Until recently he was psychiatrist-in-charge at the Anna Freud Centre in Hampstead, north London, in the street where Sigmund Freud spent his last years with his devoted daughter.

You might expect a Freudian psychoanalyst to be against "repression" in all its forms, but Dr. Yorke is a lot more subtle and intelligent than that. Indeed, a series of lectures that he gave on the BBC recently—broadcast on the "culture channel," Radio Three—took many listeners in Britain by surprise. For in the gentlest possible way he *damned* the permissive society, *damned* the motives of some of the sex educators, *damned* the destruction of the family and *damned* the feminist-gay alliance which he sees as ushering in so many confusions and perversities for children today. (He did not damn, but he questioned, whether day-care for young children was pursued in the interest of the child, rather than for the convenience of its advocates. He is not against some day-care—Anna Freud herself started a nursery in 1940s London which is still in existence—but the criterion for it should be whether the child is ready to leave the mother, and for how long.)

It was, Dr. Yorke said, the combination of the Sixties idea of "do your own thing," along with commercial pressure to buy, buy, buy and *never* be frustrated in your gratification that brought about changes which are now, he believes, leading to the perverse. "Access takes the waiting out of wanting," he quoted the credit card selling-point. "No slogan could better exalt the pleasure principle . . . in appealing regressively to the infant within the adult, it prompted the wish to take precedence over reality. What is natural in one phase of childhood may be inappropriate in another, and, if unmodified in the adult, may be perverse, sexually or otherwise. What is in a sense polymorphously perverse is the belief that anything goes."

Our culture, instead of developing progressively, is regressing towards the "instant gratification" of the infantile, said Dr. Yorke. The values of self-control, of seeing the interplay between duty and happiness, of rational links between actions and consequences had been replaced by the babyish pleasure principle at all costs.

One of the manifestations of this "infantile regression" was in the prevalence of denial of reality. The child indulges in fantasy and denial as a way of protecting

itself against the distressing facts of life—pretending an abandoning parent will return, having imaginary playmates when lonely: but this “denial of reality” was now affecting social policy makers at the very top of our society. “Over the past 20 years or so widely disseminated doctrines have sought to justify and encourage widespread social and family changes. The growing replacement of the traditional family by cohabitation without commitment, the rapid spread of divorce with its many outcomes, elective single parenting . . . and many other styles of life have been seen and presented as equal and separate forms of social and personal organisation that reflect the free choice of the emancipated adult: [and all] depend to a significant extent on fantasy, on denial of reality.” The notion that homosexuals can “marry” and have children is based on a total denial of reality; the idea that men and women are the same is reality denial (or that pregnant women can serve as soldiers, a current example of denial being practised in Britain).

Some sex education, said Clifford Yorke, is based on denial. “Adolescent pregnancy may sometimes result from conscious ignorance but any child therapist knows how often it represents the triumph of an unconscious wish.” Some sex educators were suspect, he mused: they were drawn by paedophilic urges to “talk dirty” with children. It excited the sex educators themselves to be explicit about sexuality with very young people.

“The growth of militant feminism has brought an increase in the number of *elective* one-parent family,” he noted in his final, hard-hitting talk. “Women have a ‘right’ to children and they’re under no obligation to marry or co-habit with the father. There need be no role for the man except to supply the sperm . . . This kind of radical feminism is based on an envious hostility to men with deeply unconscious roots. But in denying the man any rights in relation to the woman or to the child, a serious complication is introduced into the family structure. . . . So the child does double duty: he not only serves as child; he has to stand in for the adult relationship that’s missing from the mother’s life.

“There may be another very serious problem. If hatred of men impels the radical feminist who disposes of the need for a partner, what happens if she gives birth to a male child? . . . The fateful issue of *sexual identity* is at the heart of the widespread and influential movements of radical feminism and its natural ally, proselytising homosexuality. The convictions of both pressure groups are deeply rooted in childhood anxieties, fantasies and wishes. Both, unconsciously, seek resolution in a changed social order.”

Dr. Yorke, who has published more than fifty books and papers on childhood disturbances, drug abuse, anxiety, and the development of shame, delivers his lectures in the manner of a friendly country doctor giving a fireside chat. His observations are often elliptical rather than confrontational and it is only after the sense of his meaning has sunk in that it becomes clear how deep his critique goes. The impact is all the stronger in that he has no political or moral agenda. He is simply very concerned about the bewildering situation that arises for children today in a world of “polymorphous perversity” where, despite so many protests

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to the contrary, the best interest of the children—in divorce, in family breakdown, in confusing sexual identities—are so often put last.

“Today, what is pejoratively called the ‘traditional family’ is under sustained attack and retreat,” he noted. “And the needs of children seem curiously disregarded in the social doctrines that encourage and seek to justify these changes Many parents stand by their ‘rights’ to have children but are only too happy to leave the whole miserable business of bringing them up to somebody else.” (That many careerist parents today regard the raising of a child as a “miserable business” is testified by the evidence that any half-literate illegal immigrant can quite easily get a job as a nanny with top people!)

Among Clifford Yorke’s incisive observations are the contradictions implied by the affirmation of adult rights over the child’s needs: and the paradox that in our world it seems that the adults, instead of giving guidance to the children, are themselves reverting to childishness. It is significant that the contemporary psychological fashion is “to seek the inner child” in ourselves, instead of considering the actual children we are responsible for. We force children into adult modes of thought, in overloading them with sex education too young, while we adults may be busy practising “childhood amnesia” ourselves—forgetting and denying the child’s yearning for his parents to stay together, forgetting and denying our childhood pleasure in coming home from school to find our mother waiting for us, baking sweet-smelling bread.



‘Perhaps it was a bit early to tell him about the birds and the bees.’

THE SPECTATOR 26 November 1994

APPENDIX D

[Mr. Arcidi is the president of the Pro-Life Alliance of Gays and Lesbians (PLAGAL). This statement is reprinted with permission.]

Roe v. Wade: Death Warrant for Homosexuals

Philip Arcidi

Washington, DC, October 3, 1994. Gays and lesbians who are “pro-choice” on the issue of abortion rest their case on the right to privacy. As they see it, the right of a woman to have an abortion and the right of same-sex couples to enjoy consensual relations both depend on the constitutional “right to privacy.” If a woman’s freedom to “control her own body” were in any way limited, the pro-choice lesbians and gays argue, the freedom of lesbians and gays would be correspondingly diminished. The pro-choicers warn darkly that if *Roe v. Wade* were overturned, government would once again be free to “invade our bedrooms.”

It is a neat argument, but it overlooks the inconvenient fact that where gays and lesbians are concerned, government has *never stopped* invading our bedrooms. As recently as 1986, the Supreme Court upheld the right of states to enforce sodomy laws against consenting adults. *Roe v. Wade* did not protect lesbians and gays on that occasion, nor will it do so in the future.

Let’s look at cold facts. The “right to privacy” is not spelled out anywhere in the Constitution. The notion that such a right exists comes from a 1965 Supreme Court decision in which the court concluded that a right of privacy could be discerned in the “penumbras” of the Bill of Rights. The “right to privacy” therefore is a judge-made right. And because it is a judge-made right, rather than a right enumerated in the Constitution, the judges can do whatever they want with it.

In 1973, the judges chose to extend the right to privacy to pregnant women in *Roe v. Wade*. In 1986, the judges chose to deny the right to privacy to gays and lesbians in *Bowers v. Hardwick*. That is where the law stands today. Thus, overruling *Roe v. Wade* would in no way curtail a right to privacy that the Supreme Court has specifically denied to lesbians and gays. Conversely, upholding *Roe v. Wade* would not in itself afford gays and lesbians a shred of constitutional protection. On the contrary, *Roe v. Wade* may one day serve as the death warrant for all gays and lesbians in America.

As scientists become more adept at deciphering the DNA codes, they will be able to predict with increasing accuracy whether an unborn child is predisposed to grow up lesbian and gay. As this knowledge becomes more readily available, prospective parents will have to ask themselves if they are willing to assume the challenge of raising a potential gay son or lesbian daughter, or whether they should abort and retry. Sadly, the most liberal minded couples—even those whose “best friends” may include a gay or lesbian or two—are likely to opt for the

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latter course.

An amusing question then arises: On what grounds could the pro-choice gays and lesbians possibly object to homo-cide? They believe that a woman has an absolute right to control her own body, don't they? They have spent years hooting down the claim that abortion is murder. Many of them, at some time or another, have probably endorsed the sentimental bromide that "every child has the right to be wanted." So what do they say when millions of parents decide—in the free exercise of their inviolable right to privacy—that they do not want to bear a lesbian or gay child?

Roe v. Wade could ensure the virtual elimination of homosexuals from American society in a generation or two. Perhaps some of the religious right might be tempted to stop picketing abortion clinics for just long enough to complete the holocaust.

When members of the homosexual community look at the issue in light of all the facts, it is no longer a question of "How can you be gay and be against abortion?" It is a question of "How can you be gay and *favor* abortion?" It is high time that lesbians and gays realized that we of all people have a vested interest in upholding the sanctity of all human life—beginning with the lives of the unborn. Otherwise, we can look forward to a brave new world in which queer bashing starts in the womb.



THE SPECTATOR 21 August 1993

APPENDIX E

[Senator Brian Harradine of Tasmania might be called the Henry Hyde of the Australian parliament; a prolific writer on social issues, he is well-known to the international anti-abortion movement. Before attending the Cairo conference, he wrote the following "Opinion" column for *The Australian* (August 18, 1994); it is reprinted here with the Senator's permission.]

Birth control bullies brush parents aside

*The Cairo draft document on population control
pays only lip service to human rights*

Sen. Brian Harradine

Australia's support of the draft proposals for the International Conference on Population and Development at Cairo will enlist our country in a worldwide social-engineering project designed by international population control bureaucracies, principally the United Nations Population Fund and the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

The Cairo draft document proposes rigorous anti-natalist campaigns and programs to limit population growth rates. It seeks to commit Australia and other donor nations to fund the meddling of population controllers and dictatorial governments in the most intimate decisions of parents who "have a basic human right to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children" (Tehran Human Rights Conference Declaration).

It pays lip-service to human rights but, realistically, only a *massive program of social pressure can ensure* compliance with its ambitious targets. History demonstrates that whenever demographic goals are set, people in developing countries—particularly women—become the victims of coercion, bullying tactics, physical and psychological pressure and punishments. In the absence of effective protection, the "choice" of parents which the UN professes to uphold will in practice mean the "choice" of population control planners to do as they please. Those who do not bow to the imperatives of government-determined demographic objectives will be regarded as pariahs.

The Cairo document is driven by unproven demographic imperatives, and sanctions population control goals as "integral parts of social, economic and cultural development." Its goal of stabilizing world population at 1.3 billion by the year 2015 has been set as an "urgent challenge." The sense of crisis and panic permeating the document will inevitably undermine its recommendations that programs ought to be free from coercion.

Field workers will be using any means possible to meet government-set population goals, especially when their livelihoods depend on it. Significantly, the document is silent on how victims of population control programs can obtain redress and compensation. For example, there is no international tribunal to bring the administrators of coercive programs to justice, nor is there money earmarked

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for women (and men) to take legal action against makers and distributors of birth control drugs and devices found to cause harm.

A novel element of the Cairo strategy is the involvement of private enterprise in population control. It seeks to recruit “the profit-oriented sector” in the worldwide promotion of birth control drugs, devices and procedures—including abortion as part of population control programs. Who can possibly give guarantees that profit-oriented planners will respect human rights?

Remarkably, for a document preoccupied with procreative issues, the Cairo draft fails to give any practical recognition to the importance of marriage. Marriage is a primal and universal institution which, inter alia, regularises sexuality and reproduction and forms the framework of the family. The diverse definition of family in the Cairo draft permits almost unlimited interpretation.

If, as was indicated at the preparatory conference in New York in April, the Australian Government supports the Cairo draft, we will be committed to a massive increase in population control funding to be spent on programs which lack adequate ethical and authentic development criteria. The massive increase in funds proposed for population control will be at the expense of genuine poverty alleviation, development assistance, health, education, emergency relief and international social justice programs. Indeed, development issues come a poor last in the Cairo document.

Australia’s support will also be given without making a thorough review of the current population programs it supports against human rights criteria, as promised by the Minister for Development Co-operation and Pacific Island Affairs, Gordon Bilney. It is also to be given without his promised assessment of “the relative costs and benefits of population activities in achieving improvements in development indicators vis-a-vis alternative policies.”

The latest research by the World Bank suggests that family planning programs have a minimal effect upon overall fertility. And both Professor R. C. Duncan, director of the National Centre for Development Studies at the Australian National University, whom Bilney appointed to review a report on population by Professor Dennis Ahlburg of the University of Minnesota, and Ahlburg’s report itself agree that “population growth is not the main variable on which policy in developing countries should focus in order to make major improvements in environmental conditions, food availability, education, housing, etc.” As regards economic development, Duncan says bluntly: “It is important to make the point that it is not possible to make a general argument that slowing population growth will increase economic growth.” This being the case, what can possibly justify the increased diversion of official development assistance (ODA) funds into population control?

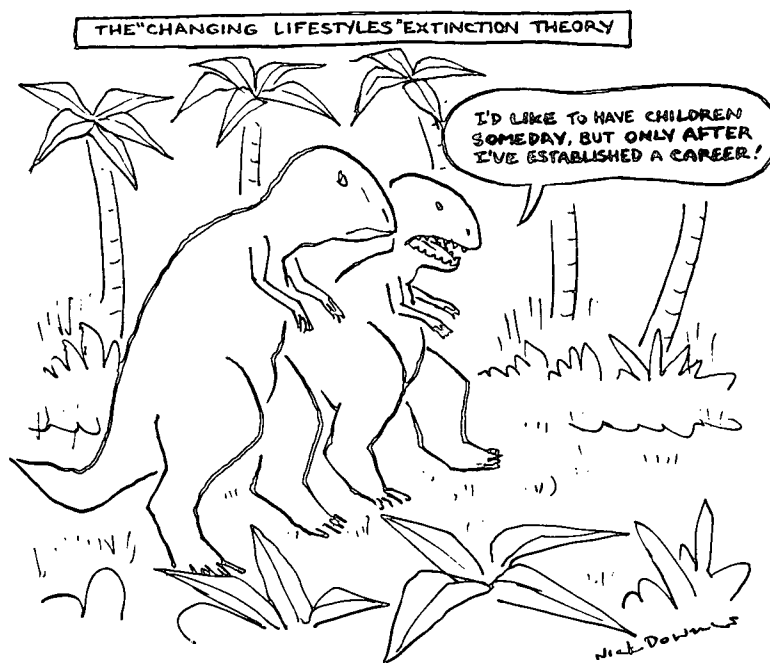
Notwithstanding the growing weight of such evidence, Bilney has been obdurate in his 1993 decision to treble funding for population activities in one year, with a fivefold increase in four years. He has a “strong personal commitment to sustaining population policies” and told a meeting of Australian International Development Assistance Bureau staff on August 24, 1993, that if he was accused

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of being a “Stalinist social programmer” then so be it. The money has been carried out of an already limited overseas aid budget. Now it appears that representatives of the government in Cairo will support a proposal that countries earmark 4 per cent of ODA for population control programs. In effect, this will mean that funding by Australian taxpayers is set to increase by 500 per cent over 1992-93 levels.

Our policy on ODA should be clearly directed at raising standards of living in developing countries rather than at social engineering. Even Ahlburg, who was chosen by Bilney to head the population inquiry, advised him: “If the government seeks to improve the economic position of the poor, the largest and quickest impact will come from . . . policies to increase access of the poor to land credit, public infrastructure and services, particularly education and health.”

The big winners out of Cairo will be the international population and family planning bureaucracies and their networks in each country. The promotion of a worldwide anti-natalist mentality will inevitably translate into domestic anti-child and anti-family policies. The alarm and panic caused by such population control propaganda has been reflected in submissions to the House of Representatives Standing Committee for Long Term Strategies inquiry into Australia’s population carrying capacity. Some of them attack families with more than one or two children and propose draconian financial and other penalties for families who have more than a government-determined number of children.



THE SPECTATOR 5 November 1994

WINTER 1995/105

APPENDIX F

[The following "Privilege Speech" was delivered on the floor of the Senate of the Philippines on August 9, 1994, by Senator Francisco S. Tatad, the assistant majority leader. It is reprinted here with the Senator's permission.]

Confronting the Cairo Conference

Sen. Francisco S. Tatad

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Senate:

A new and terrible conflict is now upon us. It is one we have not known before, but which, we fear, could stay with us for a very, very long time. It goes far beyond the usual questions that preoccupy our media, deep into the heart of who we are—what the human person is, what the family is, what society is all about.

Of course, we know who we are. And why we are here. Christianity taught us what we know—in Frank Sheed's words, "not by looking at man but by listening to God." Through philosophical inquiry and the authoritative and faithful teaching of Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium, we came to know and to believe what *Genesis* [1:27] says of man: that "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them." For this reason, man occupies a unique place in creation: in his own nature he unites the spiritual and material worlds; God established him in his friendship (*cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church*).

Now, powerful forces of the "New Age" are telling us to renounce that knowledge. We are being told to rebuke our Christian heritage and embrace a post-Christian civilization in which God has been completely shut out and a life of pleasure without pain, without sacrifices, without charity for one's own child, has become the greatest social good. We are being told to disavow our vocation as men, for whom Christ came and died, and lower ourselves to the status and company of objects or beasts.

In September, the International Conference on Population and Development will be held in Cairo under the auspices of the United Nations. This is the third such international conference on population to be held in 20 years. The first was held in Bucharest in 1974. The second in Mexico in 1984.

In Bucharest, the delegates noted the growing population of the developing countries, theorized on its implications to development, and laid the groundwork for massive government intervention with emphasis on artificial contraceptives.

In Mexico, they reviewed their work after Bucharest and agreed to adopt more effective means of birth control, including voluntary surgical sterilization. But they declared that abortion would not be recognized or accepted as a family planning method.

In this third conference, they will adopt a resolution that seeks to:

1. Give women "the right" to contract abortion on demand as part of their "reproductive rights";

2. redefine the family to accommodate a “plurality of forms” so that today two individuals of the same sex living together would be recognized as a family, and tomorrow a man and a dog or a woman and a cat could seek the same privilege; and
3. expose adolescents and children to all forms of sexual propaganda, in the name of “freedom” and “individual rights.”

All this invokes the name of “development.” But in reality, it is an agenda for destruction and death. It unleashes a heresy so unlike and more dangerous than any other heresy in the past. For whereas previous heresies proceeded from certain individual false prophets only, this one proceeds from the greatest power on earth and is being marketed to poor and weak countries on the basis of the awesome political, economic, cultural and military power of that government.

Under this agenda, \$13 billion is to be spent by the rich donor countries until the year 2000—\$17 billion until 2015—to destroy the unborn child, the most helpless form of life on the planet, which, ironically, has become the most serious threat to lifestyle in the West. And all this will be happening in Egypt, a great country with countless achievements, where, sad to note, the first systematic killing of infants, as recorded in *Exodus* [1:1-17], took place during the time of the Pharaohs. History has come full circle, indeed.

There the U.S. will be leading a multilateral coalition bigger than the one it had assembled for Desert Storm against Iraq. Not to deal with a Saddam Hussein this time, but to extinguish the right to life of the unborn, the weakest creature in the chain of life.

The U.S. is a great country that has constantly led world-historical change. Chesterton saw in it the soul of a church, and Tocqueville marvelled at how it could combine the spirit of religion with the spirit of liberty with such excellence. Around the world so many poor countries, ours included, have had nothing but awe when dealing with the U.S. What a model of generosity and goodness!

But today, at this precise moment, we must stand in fear of the U.S. For thanks to the Clinton agenda for the unborn children, women and families around the globe, the U.S. has become one of the most frightening countries in the world. For most part of its history, America stood as the symbol of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Today the Clinton administration seems determined to make the U.S. the spearhead of global decadence, destruction and death.

Yearly, 1.6 million babies are destroyed in the womb of American mothers who believe that a woman owns her body and that she has the absolute right to do with it as she pleases. In the last 20 years since *Roe v. Wade* gave American women “the right” to terminate pregnancy at any time in its course—a “right” which not even God in His Omnipotence gave any of His creatures—an estimated 30 million unborn children were killed in the U.S.

That is nearly 30 times the U.S. war dead from its first war with Britain to its last war with Iraq. About five times the number of Jews gassed by Hitler in his death camps.

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Through abortion, the death camp has been miniaturized into portable individual units originally called the mother's womb. The means employed are different, but the reason for executing the victims is the same—some arrogant human being, bent on playing God, has decided that they are unwanted, unwelcome and unfit.

The Nazis were condemned as criminals. But many of those who condemned them now imitate their crime, and they are ironically described as champions of "human rights." When did all this happen? When those who control the most awesome power decided that Christian America and Christian Europe had become entirely secular and that religion and morality were strictly private affairs that had no place in public space. This was when, to paraphrase Dante, "we came within a dark wood where the straight way was lost."

In the critically acclaimed *The Naked Public Square*, Richard John Neuhaus writes:

If law and polity are divorced from moral judgment, then the apocalypse proclaimed by Nietzsche and his imitators is upon us; the slide has begun and it is irreversible; all things are permitted and, given the fertility of our imaginations and technological powers, all things will be done. It is not apocalyptic but simply destructive to observe that when all things are permitted, when no wickedness is forbidden in order that excellence be exalted, then the end has come. When in our public life no legal prohibition can be articulated with the force of transcendent authority, then there are no rules rooted in ultimacies that can protect the poor, the powerless, and the marginal, as indeed there are now no rules protecting the unborn and only fragile inhibitions surrounding the aged and defective.

It is not easy to understand how in just a little over 200 years a great country founded under God, whose currency till now proclaims "In God We Trust," could become what it is today, a country where the most offensive, dirty and violent language qualifies as constitutionally protected speech, while praying in school or on campus invites arrest, court action, prison and penalties.

When the Soviet empire collapsed and the Cold War ended, we began to dream great dreams. But we very quickly realized that even in its hour of triumph democracy had its perils and pitfalls, and that a superpower deprived of its old ideological enemy could find a new enemy in the unborn child. The war of equals was over, the war of unequals had escalated. Women clamoring for equality with men proved their point by destroying the unborn to whom they denied any right. And old men in robes, quoting Holmes, blessed their infanticide.

In May 1991, Pope John Paul II warned in *Centissimus Annus* that "if there is no ultimate truth to guide and direct political activity, then ideas and convictions can easily be manipulated for reasons of power. As history demonstrates, a democracy without values easily turns into open or thinly disguised totalitarianism."

In August 1993, repeating those very same words in *Veritatis Splendor*, he spoke of "the risk of an alliance between democracy and ethical relativism, which would remove any sure moral reference point from political and social life, and on a deeper level make the acknowledgment of the impossible."

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Cairo will now confirm his worst fears. And ours. In a letter to all heads of state on March 19, 1994, the Pope said that if finally approved, the UN draft document "could cause a moral decline resulting in a serious setback for humanity, one in which man himself would be the first victim."

"It is very important not to weaken man, his sense of the sacredness of life, his capacity for love and self-sacrifice. Here we are speaking of sensitive issues, issues upon which our societies stand or fall," he said.

Since then concern has grown worldwide. On May 28, 1994, six Cardinal Archbishops and the President of the U.S. Bishops Conference made an urgent appeal to President Clinton "not to allow our country to participate in trampling the rights and religious values of people around the world."

"The United States is doing the world no favor by exporting a false ideology which claims that any type of union, permanent or temporary, is as good as the traditional family . . . we hasten to add that we will never develop and renew our world by encouraging substitutes for marriage and family life," they said.

A few weeks later, all American Catholic Bishops, in rare unanimity, expressed outrage that "our Government is leading the effort to foster global acceptance of abortion." On June 14, 1994, the College of Cardinals, meeting in Extraordinary Consistory in Rome, appealed to all nations to defend the family from the U.S. anti-life offensive.

"The failed social policies of many developed countries should not be foisted on the world's poor," the Cardinals said. "Neither the Cairo conference nor any forum should lend itself to cultural imperialism or to ideologies that isolate the human person in a self-enclosed universe, wherein abortion on demand, sexual promiscuity, and a distorted notion of the family are proclaimed as human rights or proposed as ideals for the young."

That the U.S. is promoting abortion, there is no doubt. White House spokeswoman Dee Dee Myers said on April 1, 1993 that abortion is "part of the overall approach to population control." This was emphasized by the State Department to all its missions abroad on March 16, 1994, prior to the final session of the preparatory conference for Cairo in New York on April 4-22, 1994.

"The priority issues for the U.S. include assuring . . . access to safe abortion," said a State Department cable. "The United States believes that access to safe, legal, and voluntary abortion is a fundamental right of all women . . . The U.S. delegation will . . . be working for stronger language on the importance of access to abortion services," it added.

In the last few days news reports have quoted U.S. officials as saying the U.S. government was not pushing for abortion worldwide. Let them prove that by deleting from the draft resolution every word that seeks to make abortion a woman's "natural right."

We appeal to President Clinton. Do not imitate the Pharaohs by promoting the murder of the unborn in the womb of Third World mothers. Nor seek international recognition for the evil that God had long punished at Sodom. Go back to the

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roots of America and what it used to stand for. Set the human family free, and lead in promoting a new solidarity and interdependence among families and among nations. Reaffirm the Mexico declaration that abortion shall not be adopted or recognized as a family planning method, and initiate international economic reforms so that the rich countries would waste less and the poor ones would gain more. Learn from the past, remember the future!

Here in our country we have been assured by President Ramos that "our Constitution and laws rule out abortion." He had earlier told the Pope that "abortion is a crime in our law books." He does not say abortion is an intrinsic evil, as most of us do; he merely refers to the law to show that a legal obstacle prevents him from supporting abortion.

We are also assured that "marriage between man and woman is and will remain an inviolable social institution in Philippine society as provided in our Constitution. Marriage shall be protected by the state and shall be the foundation of the family."

Nothing is said on indiscriminate sex propaganda directed at minors.

Last April, the Philippine delegation in New York made a similar statement on abortion. It did not refer to abortion as a great evil, but merely explained that our Constitution and our laws prevent us from formally supporting abortion. In the end, the delegation supported the general conclusions of the UN draft resolution.

If the President is truly opposed to the proposals contained in the said resolution, we invite him to formally ask President Clinton to listen to the anguished voices that have been raised against the resolution and abandon his program for global depopulation.

Let him inform Mr. Clinton that the Philippine government will not commit genocide or infanticide against its own people, and that it shall henceforth cease to be a primary agent and implementor of the U.S. population control program in the Philippines.

Let him inform Mr. Clinton that the Philippine government will continue to be grateful for whatever development assistance US AID (U.S. Agency for International Development) will extend to help the poor, provided it is not tied to population control.

With respect to our participation in Cairo, we invite the President to reconstitute the Philippine delegation and instruct the same to oppose and actively campaign against the resolution.

We invite the President to seize the opportunity and show the whole world that while the Philippines occupies but a small space in the margins of global politics and economic affairs, it dares to take its place in the company of those who would pay the price to defend and uphold the dignity of man and the rights of the family as the foundation of the nation.

This is a rare opportunity and a rare challenge. We pray that our Heavenly Father will grant our President the wisdom and the courage to take up the challenge, for the glory of God, the future of humanity, and the peace and happiness of our people.

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[The following column appeared in the London Sunday Telegraph (December 18, 1994) bylined "Martin Mears on the joy of Nativity and the horror of termination" and describing Mr. Mears as "a family law practitioner." It is reprinted here with the author's permission.]

Massacre of the innocents

*Britain now has the most "liberal"
abortion laws in Europe*

Martin Mears

Christmas comes round again and so does Handel's *Messiah* with its chorus: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given . . ." The words, from the Old Testament, prophetically refer to the coming of Christ. But in the sonorous 17th-century translation, they surely have resonance for every woman who has borne or might bear a child.

A recent news story has resonance of an entirely different kind. It recounted how a young Norfolk woman had gone into a hospital for a "termination." Two months later she found out she was still pregnant. She was then late into her term but the hospital offered her another abortion. This offer she declined and, in due course, the child was born. The mother then brought an action for damages for the "pain, stress and expense of having a baby." The case was settled with no admission of liability and the mother received £5,000.

It is now over 20 years since the American Supreme Court enshrined a woman's right to an abortion or, to put it another way, an unborn child's non-right to live. We in Britain, of course, had already reached our accommodation with the spirit of the age in David Steel's 1967 Abortion Act. In the United States, abortion has remained an important issue. Every politician running for serious office has to declare himself for or against. The pro and anti lobbies denounce each other with hysterical passion. The abortion debate has been given renewed urgency by the overwhelming victory of the Republicans in the recent Congressional elections.

In Britain it is all very different. The debate was pushed out of politics some years ago. This is because the political and official establishment are irrevocably opposed to all changes to the 1967 Abortion Act save those which would make abortions even easier to obtain.

The various parliamentary campaigns against the 1967 Act provide a sorry illustration of the powerlessness of MPs in the face of the entrenched opposition of those who really wield power in the land. Just as the Foreign Office has always worked according to its own peculiar rules and assumptions, so has the Department of Health. No matter whether the Minister is Conservative or Labour, the DoH speaks with the voice of the liberal orthodoxy. It despises "traditional" sexual morality. It promotes mendacious anti-AIDS campaigns, the twin objects of which are to accustom us to a condom culture and to make homosexual

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practices seem normal.

And so it is with abortion. There can have been few, if any, issues which over the years have attracted so many Private Members' Bills and which have accumulated so much support. But whatever the amount of parliamentary support, every movement for change has come to nothing. Why? The major reason is that in Britain (unlike the United States) abortion is not an issue which polarises the orthodox Right and the orthodox Left. It would be difficult to find any other subject which united Margaret Thatcher, Teresa Gorman, Tony Benn and Neil Kinnock. But on one thing, at least, they are all agreed: there should be no change to David Steel's Act.

The result of this consensus is that Britain now has the most "liberal" abortion laws in Europe, with abortion permissible up to the date of birth. Neither can the consensus be shaken by scandal, no matter of what magnitude. Some years ago, for instance, an aborted foetus was left gasping for breath in a Wanstead hospital. It finally died, having been baptised by the Roman Catholic chaplain. The indignation created by this incident was directed mainly at the chaplain and nurse who had the bad taste to make the incident public.

The opposing factions in the abortion "debate" do not confront each other's arguments; now, as 25 years ago, they mainly exchange abuse. But the issue is too serious for that. By what reasoning, for instance, is an unborn child of 28 weeks' gestation deprived of the right to live? Why should the mere act of emerging from its mother's womb be considered paramount in determining the right to life? And if an unborn child of 28 weeks' gestation has the right to live, at what previous point in its existence should it be deemed not to have that right? At 26 weeks, 14 weeks, 8 weeks? Why?

If an unborn child is, indeed, a human being (or even a quasi human being), why should the mother alone have the right to "choose" whether it should live or die? And if the mother should have such a right, why should the father not have some say as well?

These are the matters for debate, as they always were. In the United States, the debate continues. When will it resume here?



'Evil one? I prefer to say morally challenged.'

THE SPECTATOR 12 November 1994

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