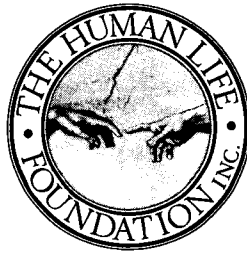


the HUMAN LIFE REVIEW



SPRING 1998

Featured in this issue:

Ellen Wilson Fielding on The Tyranny of Tolerance

Maria McFadden on Just Stay Home!

Exclusive Interview: William Murchison with Gary Bauer

From Abroad: Lynette Burrows on Britain's *Fox Populi* •
Denis Murphy on Ireland's "Raw Deal" • Melinda Tankard
Reist on Australia's "Baby in the Fridge" Horror-story •

James Hitchcock on *Bah Humbug* to Babies

"An Anonymous Son" on Did They Murder My Dad?

Andrew Ferguson on . . . How Steven Pinker's Mind Works

Also in this issue:

Paul Johnson • John Leo • Brian A. Brown • Paul Greenberg
Debra J. Saunders • *plus* selected illustrations from *The Spectator*

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE . . .

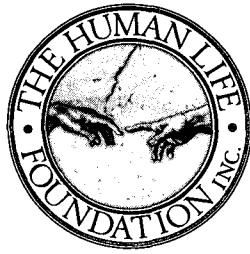
. . . we hope you will find it a surprisingly good issue—actually it surprised *us*. We began our “planning” knowing only that we would have our exclusive interview with Mr. Gary Bauer—in our *Fall*, 1997 issue we had an “ad hoc” interview with Mr. Steve Forbes, and our mail was strongly in favor of our doing *more* of that kind of thing. Obviously, it was Mr. Forbes’ anti-abortion stand that made us think our readers would want to know more about his views; with Mr. Bauer, there has never been any question about his “pro-life” position—what makes him “interesting” now is the strong possibility that he may well join Forbes in the quest for the Republican presidential nomination in the 2000 race. We hope to have more such interviews in coming issues.

So: while we were asking ourselves “OK, What else?,” things began to happen. The London *Spectator* (our source for the funniest cartoons we see—far better than what the once-hallowed *New Yorker* now runs?) ran a piece by Paul Johnson on Steven Pinker, who was the subject of our special section in the previous (*Winter* ’98) issue: Shouldn’t we do *more* on the outrageous pro-infanticide Professor Pinker? Then—also from England—came the Countryside March, our readers should know about *that*? Next we got a FAX from Dublin, there was a “new” abortion furor in Ireland. Next, in Australia, a dramatic “Baby in the Fridge” story made headlines—suddenly we had more stories than we had imagined, and just then “our own Jane Austen” Ellen Wilson Fielding sent us an essay so good that we said it *had* to be our lead—we were off and running into all the good stuff you will find in this issue—we ran out of pages or you would have even more (wait until *next* issue).

We’re glad we saved enough space to reprint Mr. Andrew Ferguson’s excellent analysis of Professor Pinker’s extreme credulousness (it’s amazing what “Leaps of Faith” Darwinism inspires?); it first appeared in *The Weekly Standard*, which readers may want to investigate (address 1150 17th Street N.W., Suite 505, Washington D.C. 20036).

Finally, warm thanks go to our faithful contributing editor, William Murchison, for flying to Washington to interview Gary Bauer, and many thanks as well to Mr. Bauer himself. Bauer’s Family Research Council can be contacted at 801 G St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001 (phone 202 393-2100; web site www.frc.org).

MARIA MCFADDEN
EXECUTIVE EDITOR



the HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

THE EVER-QUOTABLE G.K. CHESTERTON ONCE WROTE that “Modern toleration is really a tyranny”—it made people fear to say what they *thought*—as he put it, “I may not say that Buddhism is false” even though “that is all I want to say about Buddhism.” Hence the title of our lead article, in which Ellen Wilson Fielding does . . . well, what she does so well: Ellen has the knack of getting *inside* an argument, to put things in a way that makes you wonder why you never thought of putting it that way yourself. For instance:

The vast majority of those who won freedom for us under Washington, and gained for us a new birth of freedom under Lincoln, and defended those freedoms abroad in World War II, did not have on their minds the right to put to death the unborn, or hasten the death of the old, or sanction marriages of homosexual couples.

Without question what she says is *timely*: we now “tolerate” things unthinkable just months ago? Yes, there were sex scandals in the White House back when they never made front-page news: an old joke was that, when Woodrow Wilson proposed to Edith Galt (who as First Lady ran the nation after Wilson’s stroke), she was so thrilled “she fell out of bed”—only Insiders heard that kind of thing, and of course it *was* funny, there *are* “clean” dirty jokes. But now, with the incumbent president’s “alleged” sins *the* staple of night-time TV, who’s laughing? Perhaps the Funny-Men themselves: freed from all restraints, they can now make us tolerate prime-time porno-speak.

As Mrs. Fielding makes plain, bad ideas have consequences: we “tolerate” what we don’t believe at the cost of destroying belief; *re* homosexual “marriage” she says “How can we be husband and wife and family if these words have expanded so far that they have burst the boundaries of their definitions? What does it then *mean* to be husband and wife and family?” Quite right again. You will note that she also quotes Mr. Gary Bauer, about whom much more follows, and concludes with another Chesterton gem that neatly sums up her case.

Next Maria McFadden takes up a different kind of toleration that directly affects families: the “Day Care” craze. Time was when most people thought that *parents* knew best how to raise their own children—or *ought* to—it was their job (in America, it was traditionally considered a God-given responsibility?). But we now live in The Age of the Expert, who Knows Better. Actually, anti-parentism is a stock feature of utopian ideologies: Lenin baptized the “give me the child and I’ll give you the man” nostrums once used to damn Jesuits! Ironically, the current popularizer is the mother of only-child Chelsea: Hillary Clinton’s *It Takes a Village* may be her way of explaining why somebody *else* should stay home and bake the cookies for *your* kids!

Seriously, Maria tackles a serious national problem: both economic and cultural pressures have put young mothers into the workplace; whereas government *could* alleviate those pressures (current tax policies discriminate *against* intact families!), Big Brother prefers to spend on “child-care” bribes intended—as the prescient Mr. George Gilder wrote a quarter-century ago—to “usurp the last bastion of human privacy and individuality: the home.” The mother of two pre-schoolers herself, Maria has no doubt that Mother Knows Best what the state *cannot* know, much less buy.

Can anyone *stop* Big Brother? Whenever the government makes “free money” available, it seduces support, even from some “conservative” politicians pledged to oppose statist encroachments onto “family” affairs. But Mr. Gary Bauer, head of (among other things) the aptly-named Campaign for Working Families, stands adamantly opposed to federal *Nannyism*, so much so that he is now considering a run for the Republican presidential nomination in the year 2000. Bauer’s agenda also includes opposition to abortion, which of course interests *us*, so we asked Mr. William Murchison, our intrepid contributing editor, to interview Mr. Bauer.

Murchison begins with the obvious question: “Gary Who?” Bauer’s is not yet a household name, nor does he immediately conjure up a “presidential” image in person—indeed, he projects a very *thoughtful* persona—in many ways Bauer is the perfect opposite to the “Tall, Dark and Vacant” image of the likely Democratic leader, Mr. Al Gore. In short, Bauer will contend in the marketplace of *ideas*, and you get an insider’s view into his thinking here.

The next obvious question is: Can *any* “outsider” make it? Except for Wendell Willkie—really a desperation Moon-shot at an unbeatable Franklin Delano Roosevelt—modern major parties have restricted their choices to candidates with an established *political* base, however useless (as Senator Bob Dole’s proved to be). But in 1992 Pat Buchanan seriously challenged that received wisdom: running as an established *image*—personifying hard-core conservative *ideas*—he scrambled the whole political scene, fatally wounding (it certainly seems in retrospect?) the incumbent President George Bush. The beneficiary was Bill Clinton who, ironically, had the weakest political base since Kansas Gov. Alf Landon was sacrificed to FDR in 1936.

Four years later, Mr. Steve Forbes launched another idea-driven challenge to orthodoxy; his mistake was a *one*-idea (“Flat Tax”) agenda, but it was enough to scuttle Buchanan’s surprisingly-successful second effort. Forbes, unmistakably planning a second try himself, has wisely expanded his agenda deep into the “social issues,” most notably abortion, which is why we interviewed him (see our *Fall*, 1997 issue). But Gary Bauer was already *there*: his impeccable anti-abortion credentials go back to his days as Ronald Reagan’s bright young policy expert; nor has Bauer ever wavered in the tempered-but-tenacious advocacy of his “social issues” agenda. So what you get here is a strong dose of the Right Stuff, from a battle-hardened professional—a politician “without portfolio” as

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the British might put it—who *means* what he says. As it happens, just the other night (and a fortnight *after* we got Murchison's interview copy—these pesky quarterlies take time to get out!) we happened to switch on C-SPAN and there, at a forum in Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, was Gary Bauer, just as sharp in TV's "virtual reality" as he is on our pages here—a preview of national debates to come.

We then switch abruptly "overseas," first to England and Ireland, then *far* over the waters (plus the Great Victoria Desert) to Western Australia. We begin with our faithful English correspondent, Lynette Burrows, who herself begins:

Maybe you have even read about it in your newspapers. The Countryside March in London on 1st March, 1998, was the biggest march ever staged in Britain. Never mind that some of the media immediately said that it was "almost as big" as the anti-nuclear marches of the early 1980s. That was just typical liberal-left bunkum. As a helpful police spokesman informed the *Daily Telegraph*, they used to claim half a million supporters every time they had a demonstration but, in reality, there were never more than 90-odd thousand people involved . . .

Actually, the big march did get considerable attention from our media, but the TV films that night "covered" just the grand *spectacle*, not the reasons why, as Mrs. Burrows puts it, "whole villages" descended on London, "leaving just the Church Warden and the retired policeman to act as Home Guards whilst they were away." Now-Senior Citizens may recognize "Home Guards"—after Dunkirk, England's defense was largely in the hands (or merely the *minds*?) of "ordinary Britons" who dug out old trench helmets, shouldered a grouse-shooter, and swore to defend their sceptered isle to the death. That was the spirit that mobilized a *counted* 280,000 Yeopersons to parade proudly through the capital with honor (neither the streets nor parks were befouled, not even a flower trod down!).

If we wax "corny" it's because it really *is* a grand story, told by a journalistic *artisanette*—it's certainly unlike anything we'd get "over here"? Imagine such an extravaganza to defend The Hunt: surely only a tiny fraction of the throng (translated to U.S. numbers, it would be close to 1.5 *million*) has ever hunted down a fox—but the symbolism was perfect, Tony Blair's New Labour *regime* would ban hunting precisely to dramatize its neo-Marxist contempt for Old England—the Labour-*chic* slogan is Cool Britannia now. To put it in Ad-Speak, these are the same folks who brought you abortion, euthanasia, condomania, Gay Lib, the lot. Sin is what you do to animals, unless of course you *smoke*—some transgressions remain unforgivable! The same kind of unregenerate Left-utopians are now ascendant in Ireland as well; those with fond memories of "Catholic Ireland" would be amazed to read the venomous Church-bashing featured endlessly in Ireland's "national" newspapers. Need we add that "abortion reform" is the stick of choice to beat the dogmas with?

Just as it happened over here in the '60s, the drive to legalize abortion is being fueled by Hard Cases. The first was the 1992 "X Case" of a 14-year-old

girl who claimed rape (by a “Friend of the family”) and swore she would kill herself rather than have the baby. She was “granted” a London abortion. Now another case involving a 13-year-old—but that’s the story you get here from Denis Murphy, a young Dublin writer, who is very much involved in it all; in addition to giving you the facts, he provides a first-hand account—*also* as it happens over here—of the internecine warfare among Irish “pro-life” groups. So it’s rather a sad story—the never-born baby who caused it all is lost in the political battles, his “child-woman” mother was likewise exploited, and now reportedly “heavily medicated” in a psychiatric hospital—for Irishpersons who lust to join the Modern World, this case is a Great Leap Forward.

Next we take a great geographic leap, all the way to Western Australia, where by a macabre twist the never-born baby *was* the focus of the story—his would-have-been mother tried to keep him in the family fridge until she could arrange a proper burial!—again, you get the story from another of our far-flung correspondents, Melinda Reist, who flew out to Perth, beyond Western Australia’s great deserts (well over 2,000 miles from Melbourne) to do the on-the-spot reporting. As you will see, Australia’s “choice” spokespeople can exceed even our own in brutal indifference to human life in the womb. We suspect that most Americans know little about what goes on “Down Under”—we think you will learn a great deal from Mrs. Reist, we’re delighted to have her aboard (and amused: but for the FAX machine, her piece would have been in the *next* issue!).

Of course nobody needs to be told that indifference to the unborn is rampant back *here*—there’s so much of it that we cannot possibly “cover” the story. But once in a while a particular pundit is exceptionally crass, for example Richard Cohen, a featured columnist in the *Washington Post*, that pillar of “choice” (provided you don’t *smoke*). Full disclosure compels us to admit we live in mortal terror that Cohen will someday write something we *agree* with—in which case we’d have to re-examine our entire intellectual *rationale*—up to now we’ve been spared the trauma. So we were hardly surprised that, in his Christmas Day column, Cohen sneered at the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception to make his point that every woman has “control over her life”—she *could* have had an abortion, etc. Imagine how pleased we were when our old friend Professor James Hitchcock picked up on *that* column for one of his own (he is syndicated in Catholic diocesan papers). So we did the obvious thing, and asked Hitchcock if he would expand on his Cohen come-uppance for us, which he has graciously done, in his usual style (which is, roughly, to beat the tar out of his opponent). Years ago there was a subway poster-ad here in Gotham for a brand of rye bread that featured a feathered Native American saying “You don’t have to be Jewish to enjoy Levy’s.” You don’t have to be RC to enjoy this one.

You *do* have to have a strong stomach to get through our next article—in fact it isn’t an article at all, nor can we vouch for its accuracy. What happened was, a colleague directed it to us: it had been sent to *him* because he’s publicly

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associated with opposition to euthanasia; he thought we should consider it. We did, and contacted the “author”—his original draft hid nothing, if it isn’t a true story about real people, he has invented calumnies beyond belief. But we had a narrative that—given current realities—could *well* be true and, to an editor, is one *helluva* story. So, with names and places changed, we give you the chance to read it yourself, and make of it what you will.

We conclude with a major piece on the “popular” Professor Steven Pinker, by Mr. Andrew Ferguson, an editor of *The Weekly Standard* (in which this article first appeared). Regular readers will remember our special section “*Infanticide Chic: Professor Pinker’s Peculiar Proposition*” in our last issue (*Winter ’98*), in which we detailed how he used (or was used by?) the *New York Times* to in effect argue for infanticide in “hard cases”—much as abortion was promoted in the ’60s; in our judgment, the more Pinker’s Darwinist nostrums are exposed, the better, so we are glad to reprint Mr. Ferguson’s solid reporting job here.

* * * * *

We haven’t left ourselves much room for appendices, but we do have some very good ones. Fittingly, the first (*Appendix A*) is an Expert Opinion on the selfsame Professor Pinker by *the* expert, England’s Paul Johnson, whose latest blockbuster (1,088 pages) is *A History of the American People*. In Johnson’s opinion Pinker is . . . well, to quote from Chesterton again, “Pre-historic” means exactly that, we don’t *know*—Johnson rightly questions how Pinker & Co. “draw such confident conclusions” from the unknown.

Next Columnist John Leo takes on the recent failure of the Grand Old Party to take a, well, grand stand on the matter of “partial birth” abortions (*Appendix B*). Then we detour into the “Cloning” debate (*Appendix C*), with a feisty piece by Mr. Brian Brown, who asks a good question: “Where’s the Outrage?” Cloning indeed outrages humanity but, as Brown says, inhumanities like abortion have paved the way for such “scientific” transgressions. With *Appendix D*, we come back to the themes of this issue: Columnist Paul Greenberg opinionates on the “first state-approved, physician-assisted suicide” under an Oregon law that, Greenberg says, could make death Big Business.

Finally (*whew*—this is quite an issue!) we give you a grotesque description of a new “Suicide Kit” available for just \$30 (*Appendix E*)—order now and you won’t need Dr. Kevorkian—we spotted it in the San Francisco Sunday *Examiner & Chronicle* (March 1) because we always look for anything by Columnist Debra Saunders who, despite her uncongenial pro-abortion stance, is otherwise acerbically accurate, as you will see. We also hope you will see another issue as good as this one next time—it won’t be easy, but we’ll do our best.

J. P. McFADDEN
EDITOR

The Tyranny of Tolerance

Ellen Wilson Fielding

Tolerance Power of enduring; act of enduring

from Samuel Johnson's Dictionary of the English Language, 1755

Tolerance 1. a fair, objective, and permissive attitude toward those whose opinions, practices, race, religion, nationality, etc., differ from one's own, freedom from bigotry. 2. a fair, objective, and permissive attitude toward opinions and practices that differ from one's own. 3. interest in and concern for ideas, opinions, practices, etc., foreign to one's own; a liberal, undogmatic viewpoint. 4. the act or capacity of enduring.

from the Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 2nd edition, 1993

The definition of tolerance provided by Samuel Johnson's 18th century dictionary would have struck anyone up to this century as perfectly adequate and certainly it would have ranked higher than fourth on anyone's list of definitions through most of this century. Even 25 years ago, when *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* was published, Johnson's meaning appeared first, while "sympathy or indulgence for beliefs or practices differing from or conflicting with one's own" ranked third.

Take a look at the Random House definition, and mark a mighty capitulation to political correctness. The *first three* definitions are the modern applications whereby tolerance becomes a benign and indiscriminating flowing with the tide, a *que sera, sera*, what will-be, will-be attitude. Only with the fourth one do we hark back to the original use of tolerance—with its recognition that tolerating something requires you to bear with something unpleasant, offensive or at least unsatisfactory (as in tolerating bad language, rudeness, excessive decibel levels and the like).

The evolution of this definition tracks a change in the reaction of society toward people or behaviors offending against once-cherished norms of belief or behavior or moral or religious codes. Yes, we put up with much more than we used to: we "tolerate" a lesbian heroine of a situation comedy; the sacrilegious and often obscene photographs of Robert Mapplethorpe; almost ubiquitous use of foul language in arenas once forbidden and before audiences once protected; graphic sex scenes in mainstream movies;

Ellen Wilson Fielding, our erstwhile contributing editor and author of *An Even Dozen* (Human Life Press), writes from Maryland, where she now lives (and "home-teaches" her four children); she also contributes to *National Review*, *Crisis*, and other American periodicals.

satires against the religious beliefs of millions of Americans; and of course, laws which enlarge human “freedom” to accommodate abortionists and Jack Kevorkian.

But do we “tolerate” all these things (and much more—consider no-fault divorce, condoms in schools, homosexual adoptions and the like) because “we,” the tolerators, the bulk of the citizenry called upon to bear with the alternative lifestyles of multiplying minorities, are so secure in our own beliefs, so self-disciplined in the practice of our faiths, so reliable in the fulfillment of our duties toward those we have exchanged vows with or accepted responsibility for? Are we braver, more loyal, more *truthful* and reverent than our forebears, who feared the dissipating effects of excessive toleration of kinds of behavior and expressions deemed abnormal and illicit?

Liberal opinion would argue that our increasing tolerance shows we have progressed where it matters most, but that is because liberal opinion is so very intolerant of the “non-liberal” aspects of traditional belief and behavioral *taboos*. The counter-cultural values of the '60s survived in people who eventually began dressing better, trimming their hair more conservatively and graduating from schools of business, law and journalism.

The virtues of openness and honesty required people to speak bluntly and watch movies with characters that did the same. They required spouses no longer in love to discard social fictions maintained for the sake of children, society or the keeping of vows. They made a virtue out of sadistically “outing” people ashamed of perversions some were still struggling with. The '60s deification of self-fulfillment reinforced the move towards easier divorce, and the transformation of parenthood into merely an option for married adults. Freedom of choice and the normalization of day care for the middle class are fall-out from the exaltation of self-fulfillment over fulfillment of responsibilities.

The first Americans were scarred by memories of the devastation wrought by the European wars of religion resulting from the Protestant Reformation. Deism has its own intellectual history, but emotionally and psychologically we can see the appeal it would have made to many of our founding fathers and many of the other great thinkers of the time. A distant God who sets the universe in motion and then becomes largely preoccupied with other things is less likely to set off fighting words among his worshippers. He is less likely to provoke pungent comments about other people's conduct or creeds.

America, as we know, was rather daringly established as a nation without an official creed (though it recognized the “laws of nature and of nature's

God"). And barring Bostonian excesses in blue laws and the occasional violence against Catholics, Mormons, Jews or saloonkeepers, Americans have mostly avoided the sectarian passions feared by our forefathers.

The exception that leaps to mind is the Civil War, which is the nearest we have ever got to a religious war. Certainly it was a war about ideas. G.K. Chesterton, who wrote much of his journalism in the early years of this century, amid European colonial scuffles and rivalries primarily motivated, it seemed to him, by concern for power, prestige and profit, appreciated the comparative purity of a war of ideas. Money and land or power were, he thought, shameful, un-Christian things to ask a man to die for. Only a great idea or a great person rightly lay claim to a man's life. The Civil War, whether interpreted as a theological dispute over the definition of a human soul or as a struggle between man's earthly loyalties toward nation and homeland, fulfills that definition.

But the Civil War has had a kind of delayed impact on the American psyche somewhat similar to that of the European wars of religion on the European psyche. People flinch today from the comparison between abortion and slavery not only because they wish to deny that our nation has sunk so deeply into corruption, but also because the American solution to slavery came at such a horrendous price of blood and alienated loyalties.

It is an interesting mental exercise to consider what it would take, today, to provoke among Americans such an extreme and determined and prolonged reaction to an idea or loyalty or code of belief. When we read about ethnic wars in Bosnia or Serbia or the Middle East, tribal wars in Africa and the like, we feel grateful that we do not face anything similar, but we also feel superior, "above" such incontinent attachments to blood and ancient history. Abraham Lincoln's attachment to the Union and all it had meant and was intended to mean in human history—"government of the people, by the people, and for the people"—was so strong that he led us into the bloodiest war in our history to prevent its dissolution. Can we imagine anything nearly as significant occurring if, say, Texas or California or Florida seceded today? Would we not be inclined to allow the people of Texas or California or Florida their freedom of choice? Would we not be likely to compare nationhood with marriage, and secession with divorce, a remedy regrettable but not forbidden?

If not, why not? Where is the difference? What if the Supreme Court threw out *Roe v. Wade* and once again allowed Congress to decide the question of abortion democratically, and opinion differed along regional lines as to the best arrangement? Would the majority of Americans retain

so strong a devotion, not just to America, but to an inviolate, ever-united United States of America? Would secession along those or any other lines be so abhorrent that they would fight and die for the Union?

If not, then what—aside from self-defense, the defense of home and family, and the many individual acts of heroism celebrated in newspapers and on T.V.—would we, as a nation, be willing to die for or see our husbands, brothers and sons die for?

This is not a question of our national courage or heroism, but of our commitment to our beliefs. Levels of moral and religious commitment and belief have been declining throughout the West, and our Western agnosticism about right and wrong behavior has also spread through those parts of the non-West receptive to us.

And this is where we return to the topic of tolerance and how, in its contemporary meaning, it is a barometer of the change in the level of our commitment to ideas of right and wrong and what they demand of us. It is not that we should be disemboweling heretics at Tyburn, putting them to the rack at the Tower of London, or laying siege to Huguenots at La Rochelle. But it should be possible, as it was to earlier generations of Americans, to be certain about public standards of right and wrong and have a clear conscience about discouraging the more epidemic forms of wrong.

But do we still maintain the wrongness of wrong—still hope it may be converted by argument and reason and example to right—or have we muddled the distinction between the permission to go wrong and the approval of the thing done?

It should be obvious that we are guilty of the latter. A recent book by Alan Wolfe documents the chasm between the rather demanding private moralities of middle-class Americans, and their disinclination to attempt winning over anyone opposed to them. Wolfe's subjects are disinclined to impose their "personal" morality on others, even by argument, because what's right for me is not necessarily right for you.

Perhaps the tension between believing in what's right and tolerating what's wrong is just too great to be successfully maintained over time. We see many around us proclaiming their right and intention to go wrong, leaving us to deal with the fallout in maimed lives. We have been corralled into keeping quiet by etiquette (remember Lady Astor and her impolitic question to Stalin: "Why are you killing all those people?"), moral cowardice and the desire not to appear dictatorial or unreasonable. Next, in order to feel comfortable with ourselves, with this silence, we have attempted to

silence the inner voice that now appears so anachronistic, so backward, so unfashionably abrupt and unappealingly censorial.

And so the tolerators are conquered by the tolerated.

Freedom is a blessed good, and millions of people have found it worth dreaming about, struggling for, even dying for. But most of those deprived people who dream and struggle imagine themselves doing normal, everyday, sunlit sorts of things with that freedom: moving where they please and marrying and pursuing jobs of their choice: expressing themselves freely about how their country's affairs should be ordered; bringing up their children to become good and strong and happy members of society, following conscience without being led by it into a tyrant's noose.

The vast majority of those who won freedom for us under Washington, and gained for us a new birth of freedom under Lincoln, and defended those freedoms abroad in World War II, did not have on their minds the right to put to death the unborn, or hasten the death of the old, or sanction the marriages of homosexual couples. Yes, they had a vision of a vast area of liberty within which to live and work and prosper, but it was the vision of living and working and prospering that gave the free life its glow. Liberty to perform vile acts or cast off their families can inspire few to heroism and risk of life, even if some may succumb to the temptation to perform vile acts or cast off their families once they are enjoying their liberty.

Freedom is not the end that justifies all acts. Even post-Christian liberals balk at murder and rape and sexual harassment, though they permit S&M bars and the sexual exploitation of children in books marketed by Barnes & Noble. But once we acknowledge that freedom to do something depends on some good other than itself, that it must be judged by the good or bad that it makes possible, then "tolerance" takes on a different meaning. It takes on purpose and limits. Tolerance exists for the sake of the good. The good cannot flourish without a sizeable amount of tolerance.

There are several reasons for this. One, which was much on the minds of our Founding Fathers when they declined to select an official state religion (and named freedom of religion in the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights) was that good and well-meaning people could and *did* differ on important details of what constituted truth. But they also agreed on much. Even though the overwhelming majority of Americans were Christian, the founders understood that there was a large area of consensus on what it means to live a good life, and what it means to do good and avoid evil. Our founders, like Justice Clarence Thomas today, believed in a natural law written on men's hearts, to be deciphered more or less clearly by men

of good will willing to think through the matter.

Therefore, earlier generations of Americans had no hesitation in drawing lines to circumscribe human freedom, even though they might in some cases curtail human freedom. Unlike our own generation, which cannot even outlaw partial-birth abortion, our forebears drew the line at human sacrifice. They also had no trouble drawing the line at same-sex marriage, or the legalization of homosexual activity in general. And a famous Supreme Court case, *Reynolds v. U.S.* (1879) restricted Mormons (and anyone else who chose to do so) from practicing that part of their religion they called polygamy. This decision is anomalous and unjustifiable to most moderns, who perceive no constitutional justification for this restriction on religious liberty, and are embarrassed by its seeming dependence on notions of our status as a Christian nation. Since we have sold the pass on cohabitation and on serial polygamy anyway, our modern refusal to see things from 19th century eyes is understandable.

What were those 19th century people thinking of, as they considered the question of admitting polygamist Utah to the Union? They were looking at an America grounded on largely stable monogamous families, more or less successfully (given the limitations of original sin) bringing up each generation to know right from wrong. If they needed to look further to ram home the lesson, they could consider the social effects of polygamist societies. In his book *Sexual Suicide*, George Gilder discussed something many social scientists have noted: the fundamental frustration and instability of polygamist societies. The wealthier, more powerful males are able to support and attract multiple wives, leaving a shortage for those near the bottom of the pyramid. These are an unstable element in society, lacking the civilizing effect of being breadwinners for families whose children must be bequeathed a future. Frustration levels are naturally higher among the least successful males, and a higher proportion of the male population turns to homosexuality.

This is what happens when you allow freedom to expand society's list of sexual choices beyond that successfully permitted to Judeo-Christian societies. It is the result of viewing a free society as an end and not a means. Properly viewed, a free society is a means to a happy and productive society.

When we accustom ourselves to asking the question, "What is our free society *for*, what is its purpose, its justification and also the surest guarantee of its preservation?" we are focussing on an issue that danced around the peripheries of constitutional thought throughout much of our nation's history. America was to be the city on the hill, the last, best hope on earth,

the exemplar of the possibilities of the human spirit. But it could only be all these things if its citizens were “virtuous”—not saintly, but more or less conforming in their private lives, their social configurations, their work habits and attachment to duty, to commonly accepted ideas of virtue.

Our Founding Fathers and sharp-eyed early observers like Toqueville did not consider a democratic government inevitably conducive to virtue. It was *compatible* with a good life, and tended to encourage certain virtuous habits—self-reliance, for example, and a belief in the equality of man before God—as earlier legitimate forms of government tended to encourage other virtuous habits. But on its own, a government of popular elections and rights reserved to the people could not self-perpetuate the degree of virtue necessary for its preservation. All pre-modern and many modern commentators have understood this.

Hence we have repeated speeches and exhortations on the need for Americans to jealously guard and encourage their national virtue. We have appeals by important public figures like Washington to religion, even relegated to its semi-private sphere, to do its part in safeguarding the Republic. The need for a virtuous citizenry is a motive behind public prayers, congressional chaplains, national days of prayer and fasting, school prayers and the like, measures which quickly insinuated their way into the early life of an independent America and in many cases continue (albeit harried by the ACLU) to the present day.

There is an implicit confession of ultimate helplessness in the appeal of great men like George Washington to the requirements of religion: though democratic government acknowledges the right of the common people to take public matters into their own hands, it not only offers no assurance that they will do the right thing with that power, but admits the people’s tenuous hold on their franchise if they lose the moral purchase from which they must wield their power. So far did they recognize that democracy is not an end in itself that 18th century Americans studied the history of the Roman Republic, seeking to avoid its betrayal of Republican virtue and descent into degeneracy. They understood that a society that sank below a certain point was unlikely to raise itself back into virtue; in such a state, it was simply incapable of the self-control and habits of virtue required by self-government.

This is the background we need to entertain the counter-cultural argument for encouraging the pursuit of the normal and the good, and discouraging the evil and the perverse. An all-embracing “tolerance” of alternative lifestyles and the sometimes fatal choices of other people is often couched

almost in terms of *noblesse oblige*. The impregnable majority, secure in its power, can and should sacrifice a little of its monopoly in public life by according full tolerance to the downtrodden, marginalized minorities.

But this is not the way “tolerance” has really worked, either psychologically or socially. Granting the unreserved social acceptance that now passes for tolerance of homosexuals, for example, means ceding the millennia-old, universally recognized meaning of the word “marriage.” If you do that, you also leach powerful meaning from words like mother, father, son and daughter. If you recognize the equal right of homosexual couples to adopt or “have” children, you nonchalantly jettison the proven formula of family by which mankind has incubated human young as far back as we can trace human footsteps.

It is true that most “marriages” would still be heterosexual and most “families” would be spawned in the traditional way, but those traditional families would have lost their original deeds of incorporation, their sure sense of purpose and identity—their, so to speak, genetic code for replicating family. How can we be husband and wife and family if these words have expanded so far that they have burst the boundaries of their definitions? What does it then *mean* to be husband and wife and family?

This is one of the concerns that lay behind a recent interview with Gary Bauer (as reported in the *Washington Times*). Bauer explained that the Christian right was roused painfully and reluctantly from its political uninvolvedness only as it was provoked by the courts and the wider culture. The Christian right, he said, would have preferred living in peace in a moat-like separation from uncongenial aspects of modern life, but modernity would not let them be.

In part, it would not let them be by restricting their ability to bring up their children in their faith. The Christian right found it first difficult and then impossible to avoid attacks on matters Christians hold dear and found themselves and their children facing gross temptations against the good. Issues like prayer in the schools, values clarification, sex education, the large-scale marketing of pornography, and abortion—the atom bomb of moral issues—assaulted these bunker Christians until they admitted there was no place to hide and no alternative to confronting public evils in a public way.

But the challenge to Christian practice and belief operates on a more subtle level as well. The opposition to accommodating differing sex roles, the cajoling insistence that being “personally opposed” to abortion or pornography or sacrilegious art or entertainment must not prevent us from being “tolerant” of what after all were other people’s equally dear personal

opinions—this quicksand land of modern toleration is mortally dangerous to those who worship a God whose goodness is not merely relative, and see in nature the immutable laws of nature and of nature's God.

There are now whole congregations of believers whose members shrink from imposing legal or even social restraints on actions anathema to their creeds. But more significantly, they shrink from claiming that what is wrong to them is wrong in general, in an objective, external, applicable-to-every-one sense. How could one therefore die for such a belief? How could one suffer persecution for it? How could one live up to it, through a lifetime of daily striving? How could one hand it on to another generation as anything more than a cultural artifact, a family heirloom, a quaint custom or unusual perspective on life?

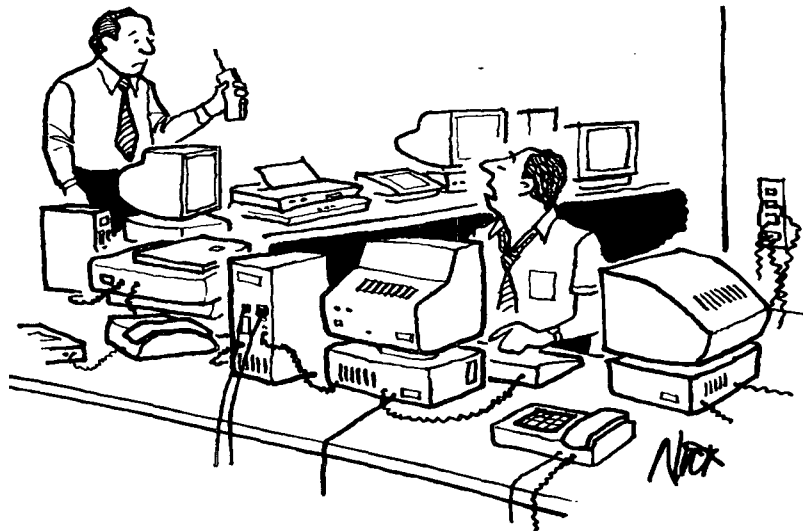
How can knowledge of the good be written on the human heart and yet be fragile enough to be threatened by the agitated minorities of NOW, NARAL, ACT-UP, The Hemlock Society and their like? Most cultures tell the story of an initial sundering of creation from the good, whether they believe, like much of the Far East, that matter itself is the problem, or they hold, like Jews, Christians and Moslems, to a fall of man from virtue. But the concept of something large, primordial, seemingly dominant and yet fragile should not be impossible for modern secularists to understand, since many of them have come to see the Earth itself that way, and warn us of ecological disaster if we do not safeguard its health.

During eras which mark a revolution in ideas or the decay of old animating ideals, "normalcy" is not a stable monolith but a great weight balanced precariously upon a small point. Too great a shove in one direction or the other is likely to cause the whole to topple, no matter how large and seemingly secure it appears. To say that certain activities and social configurations are normal is not to say they are easy to maintain or always appealing. Our fallen nature knows that it is all too "natural" to be led away from what is good for us, as someone who possesses a healthy body can crave what is injurious to it. So the health of a society is not something that can be relied upon to maintain itself, whatever the activities of its members.

The modern world has been seduced into an increasingly undifferentiating toleration of harmful behavior on the part of larger or smaller minorities. We have been told that a pluralistic democracy must accommodate the right to kill the unborn and the handicapped, to abandon one's family, and to assault the beliefs and sensibilities of other people. We have been told that intimations of good and evil are so personal that we cannot decide

for another what behaviors are good or evil for him. Yet it is clear, at least in broad outline, what kind of behaviors threaten to unravel society's complicated arrangements for safeguarding each generation's passage to adulthood.

All members of the human family are flawed, but this is not an argument for withholding judgment. It is precisely because we can fall below what is good for us that relatively healthy human societies cannot uncritically tolerate whatever appeals to mankind's inclination to resist responsibility, self-restraint, and the acceptance of others' claims upon us. Because human beings are capable of tolerating selfishness and evil impulses within themselves, we must take care how much we can safely tolerate outside ourselves. It is a sign of strength to be aware of our weakness. Only by such care can we resist succumbing to weakness. As Chesterton noted near the opening of this disastrously experimental century: "It is always simple to fall; there are an infinity of angles at which one falls, only one at which one stands."



'Just tell him I'm incommunicado.'

THE SPECTATOR 4 January 1997

Just Stay Home!

Maria McFadden

In the sexual suicide society, the only winner is the state. Increasingly in control of childbirth and "child development," that state will usurp the last bastion of human privacy and individuality: the home.

George Gilder, *Sexual Suicide*, 1973

In a recent cover story in *National Review*, "Day Careless," Maggie Gallagher writes that "a growing number of child-development experts have joined the ranks of parents who worry that extensive day care is not good for young children." The research she cites includes studies which assert that day care is definitely not good for babies' biological health: they are much more likely to acquire respiratory infections at earlier ages, not to mention chronic ear infections, which can lead to hearing loss and learning problems.

She reports on a large number of studies that link early, full-time day care with psychological, social and behavioral problems: children become less attached to their parents, more resistant to authority, more aggressive with peers, and, in cases of low-quality care, can become cognitively delayed. A 1995 national study by the University of Colorado found 40 percent of day care for infants and toddlers to be of harmful quality (only eight percent was considered "quality"). Gallagher found especially disturbing one study of mother-child relationships, which detected "A small, but measurable deterioration" in babies' and toddlers' attitudes toward their mothers *and* mothers' sensitivity toward their children as time in day care was accrued.

The occasion for Gallagher's article was the Clinton Administration's newly-unveiled initiative to respond to the child care "crisis" with a huge increase in subsidies for day care. (In January, President Clinton proposed a \$21.7 billion dollar program.) As Gallagher and many others have pointed out, this attempt to respond to a crisis is at best misguided: the majority of American parents do not want institutional day care arrangements for their children—they want to keep care-giving at home, with family members, nannies or *au-pairs*. Nor do most parents see child-care as an area for governmental intervention. The Clinton (read Hillary?) scenario on day

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care has been played much like the health-care fiasco. Last fall, the White House convened a “conference” on child care stacked with “experts” on only one side of the issue, that of increased government involvement and regulation of day care. The resulting plan is to give tax breaks for day care, and “improve it,” while doing nothing—in fact, even making it harder—for parents who want to stay home, work part-time, or have private child-care arrangements.

Why, with all the negative data coming in about day care, *is* the Clinton Administration pushing it? Gallagher offers one “obvious” answer: “The day care industry [is] a multi-billion dollar concern which, like so many businesses, looks to use the power of government to increase its profits.” And day-care workers are seen as a potential loyal voting bloc, like the teachers’ unions. But there is also a social agenda, which is very much in accord with both the Clintons’ politics and policies and radical feminism: put pressure on Americans to accept the *social* rearing of children. You know, *It Takes A Village*. While most Americans would probably still agree that, as Columnist Michael Kelly writes, “It primarily takes not a village but parents—2 of them” to raise a child, the idea that our children ought to be nurtured by government programs and paid experts is influencing parents perhaps more than they realize. The pervasive message of the day-care advocates is that women *ought* to be in the work force, and not “just” stay home.

A prime example of this message is a book glowingly reviewed in January in the *New York Times Book Review* and no doubt displayed prominently in the “Parenting” section of your local Barnes & Noble or Borders Books. In *When Mothers Work: Loving Our Children Without Sacrificing Ourselves*, Joan K. Peters argues that, in fact, it should not be the *mother’s* relationship and caretaking of the child that is most important, so worrying about mother-child bonding isn’t the issue. Feminists who have supported the choice of stay-at-home moms, as a matter of fact, have only done so out of pressure to be “politically correct.” Actually, she says, all mothers *should* work outside the home, and if they don’t, they are harming their children, because the children won’t learn to have independent *and* family lives. “Children flourish with multiple attachments,” and will be happy and secure if they are cared for by a variety of caring adults. (In other words, “the village.”) “We now presume that the common cause of all children’s woes is their mothers’ work, which prevents full-time nurturing. Meanwhile, we ignore the more complicated root cause: our failure to modernize motherhood, to restructure family and change society along with the changing character of women’s lives.”

To Peters, obviously, feminism has not gone far enough. Even worrying about whether or not children get sufficient *mothering* is a throwback to what should be an outdated era of gender differences. Some of what she writes in her book is simple common sense, e.g., that mothers who give themselves and their interests up entirely for their kids can become resentful and hurt family harmony, and that it's a good idea for fathers to take time off to nurture their children. But the book is riddled with statements that are quite radical and radically against the notion of mothering being a unique enterprise.

For example, more than encouraging fathers to be involved in parenting, she thinks all women should *demand* that fathers do take time off to share equally in childrearing with their wives (plus a caregiver of course), because "when women are willing to do the mothering, men do not have to cultivate their nurturing side." Fathers should "spend the time, sacrificing some of their goals to make room for child care"—but "no woman should have to choose between an independent life and a baby." This is because mothering has kept women from really competing with men outside the home. Women who want to stay home, Peters says, "often want to for the wrong reasons": they are still "deeply ambivalent about independence and success in the 'harsh' world of business."

Peters writes that women are culturally conditioned to want to manage their households and their children, but they must fight against this, because if motherhood is perceived as a vocation it will be *harmful* to mother and child. Mothers should spend less time doing "motherwork," because "the most fundamental maternal tenderness often exists in inverse proportion to the amount of motherwork a mother must do." And good news for working mothers: it's most important to be with babies and children at night, and when they wake up, so if parents "frame a child's night, they need not feel so anxious about missing his days." She quotes psychoanalyst Jessica Benjamin saying that "By the time a child reaches twenty-one months . . . three or four hours a day with her is really enough." (One *has* to wonder how Benjamin arrived at this conclusion?)

Throughout her book Peters takes every opportunity to sneer at British child-care expert Penelope Leach (who, by the way, is by no means a conservative), especially Leach's assertion that mothers should be "ever-present, always responsive" to their babies. She may resent Leach's popularity, or be frustrated because Leach, who has written several well-regarded books and has spent a professional lifetime studying (and experiencing) children, has revised her work to reassert the *importance* of mothering. And, as a

respected expert, she can make working Moms feel guilty. Peters herself is not any sort of child-care expert, but a novelist and journalist, the mother of one daughter she had later in life. For her book, she interviewed 12 “families” (some non-traditional), several of whom are in the professional class. The one truly miserable person is the one stay-at-home Mom, though it seemed to me she was mostly miserable because she was a city person whose husband insisted on moving to the suburbs when they had their baby. Only one family used (an extremely expensive and exclusive) day care; Peters supports the subsidization of day care, but she and her husband hired a full-time nanny for their own daughter.

Despite Peters’ lack of “child development” credentials, the review in the *New York Times* was enough for at least one woman to write a letter praising the book, without having read it. Wrote Karen DeCrow: “Elizabeth Crow’s review of *When Mothers Work* . . . was excellent and should inspire us all to read this important book.” She goes on to quote from Betty Friedan and *The Feminine Mystique* and ends “Indeed, it was Friedan’s brilliant realization that feminism was best not only for women, but for children and men, that made the National Organization for Women the success it has been.” Peters is continuing the “brilliancy” of Friedan in her vision of, as Elizabeth Crow wrote, a “unified field theory of successful parenting,” in which “men have to do half the child care, and schools should be better, work more humane, and child care subsidized.”

Of course, Peters and her book alone wouldn’t be worth this much consideration if she didn’t represent many others like her, including Hillary Clinton in *It Takes A Village*, who claim to be seeking some utopian feminist vision of women’s fulfillment *à la* Friedan. Hillary pays a lot of lip service to traditional ideas in her book, like admitting that a stable, 2-parent family is the best start for a child, and that it is *quantity* time, not quality that matters. But she is also saying that we can’t possibly go back to a society in which these things are do-able, we can only go forward to some imagined wonderful era of collective responsibility for our children. What she and Peters will *not* say is that maybe it would benefit *all* of us if women concentrated more of their energies on their own children.

Motherhood is the road block in the progress of radical feminism, which seeks to free women from their biology. Thus, the raising of children *must* be a social endeavor. It has not been enough to give women the choice whether or not to *be* mothers, and the choice in how much time they spend with their children (for those who *have* economic choice)—the whole significance of the mother-child bond, and even the existence of the motherly instinct—must be attacked and laid to rest as ideas of women with

the, as Peters says, “guilty impulse to placate the gods of patriarchy.”

The social rearing of children and the downplaying of the central role of the mother is a tidy answer from feminists who are still fighting the battles of the '60s and '70s, for women to be “equal” career-wise and financially with men, without being sidetracked by children, but it is inadequate to deal with a very untidy situation. The reality is that modern women are exhausted, conflicted and confused about how to manage work and childbearing.

An awful lot of women still believe that they ought to take care of their own children, and a lot of women work, not for the mirage of personal fulfillment in a nine-to-five world, but because otherwise they can't afford the things their family needs, or their husbands do not want to take on the extra burdens a one-income family might bring (or they are *single* moms). Worse, because of the economic situation created by two working-parent incomes, and the divorce and single-motherhood rates, poor women are often left with no choice but to put their kids in grossly-inadequate day care.

Women who work full-time often feel guilty or constantly worried about the quality of their child care; women who mother full-time often feel underappreciated and denigrated by others, and maybe even in conflict with their husbands. Mothers who do feel that they ought to be the primary caretaker of their children are often made to feel backward or unambitious by peers and the culture of the elite.

For instance, stay-at-home mothers, who often feel that they are taking on the hardest job of their lives, have “experts” like Peters write that they have fled from the harsh world of business into the “kinder, gentler” world of mothering. Unless you are a wealthy woman who has a full-time nanny, spending your days at social lunches and reading novels, this is downright insulting.

As Sidney Callahan wrote in a recent *Commonweal* article, “. . . as a lazy feminine bookworm with little money, having many children was like an Outward Bound Survival Challenge.” (On the other hand, surviving the challenge is something that gives many women the most enriching experiences of their lives, and goes on to benefit the next generation!)

While the women's liberation movement has undoubtedly brought greater freedom and opportunities for women, and few can realistically want to go back to “the fifties,” with Friedan's unhappy housewives (though it must be wondered, were happy housewives and mothers in the '50s really so rare?), the more extreme elements of feminism, instead of aiming for more

balance, tried and are still trying to redefine sexual roles entirely, by arguing against the idea of “biology as destiny.” Just because women can bear children, doesn’t mean they should have to, or that they should be primarily responsible for their children if they do.

George Gilder wrote in his famous *Sexual Suicide* (published in 1973) that it would be precisely “sexual suicide” to deny that men and women are essentially different sexual beings, because it is the very huge differences between men and women that hold society together. To oversimplify a brilliant book, what keeps a man faithful to a woman and their children is not sex—that he can have satisfactorily with a number of partners—but love, and the pressures of civilized society. A woman, by her biological nature, is kept close to her child through the whole process of sex, childbirth, nursing and nurturing. And the mother-child bond is “the most primary and inviolable of human ties. . . . Most of the characteristics we define as humane and individual originate in the mother’s love for her children.” In what seems now to be all too prophetic, Gilder stressed that trying to invent the wheel, so to speak, about sexuality would lead to more promiscuity, less satisfactory sexual lives, more divorce, fewer men taking responsibility for their families, and a more socialized view of children.

Gilder also wrote of the danger of the feminist demand for universal day care—it would benefit the middle and upper class women seeking “meaningful” careers, but would force poor women, who might want to stay home, into the work force. And it could harm children: “At a time when there is an acute need for qualitative child-rearing—with an active father—the government seems to encourage the bearing of children without full responsibility by either parent.”

Gilder predicted that if the mother-child bond was, in extraordinary circumstances, broken, then the identity of the group would also break down. *Sexual Suicide* was published in 1973, the year of *Roe v. Wade*. With the legalization of abortion, the mother-child bond *was* broken in a profound way. Pregnancy no longer meant you were tied to another, like it or not; it was something you could “reverse.”

Abortion was deemed necessary for true feminism, so that men and women could really compete equally for jobs and financial rewards. Biology would *not* be destiny: now, women had a choice, *beyond* birth control, about whether and when to be mothers. A quarter century later, what repercussions has that choice had for women who *are* mothers? If, as Joan Peters writes, “no woman should have to choose between an independent life and a baby,” then, not only can she choose not to have the baby in the

first place, but also choose to control the demands the “wanted” child can then put on her.

But what if, as Gilder would argue, biology is indeed at least part of our destiny? Then she might look to the life in the womb as an allegory of the life outside and, really, a preview. In pregnancy, the woman and her child share an intimate relationship that is unique, irreplaceable, and constant. Once born, the relationship is of necessity physically less close and constant, but ideally birth is the beginning of a new stage of powerful love and intimate connection between mother and child. Mothers who nurture their young children have little people dependent on them for physical, educational and emotional needs. As a child grows up and becomes less dependent, there remains a unique bond. I should add here that mothers who adopt children are not prevented from having the same bonding with their children, as adopting in the true sense is taking in a child as if they were your own flesh and blood, so much so that the fact they are not should become irrelevant.

Pregnancy, which is often difficult and exhausting, which requires a woman to make life changes for her child, and requires her to deal with emotional upheavals, should be a preparation and practice for both parents of what is to come. The biology in this case *teaches*: from now on, there is another being in your equation, there is a bond, get ready for a major life change. The child is *yours* to care for.

Obviously, questioning the importance of mothering and the biological reality results in de-emphasizing the parents’ role in the children’s upbringing. Even the biology has changed: fathers can be anonymous sperm donors, women can have a surrogate womb nurture their child—as if wombs, like caretakers, are interchangeable. And women, who choose whether or not to parent, can choose how much to sacrifice to the child they let in to the world.

It would seem hypocritical for a liberal abortion culture to go hand in hand with a firm belief that mothers should be tied to their babies after birth. Certainly if some children would literally be better off dead than born, then others would be better off with a series of caregivers than with a mother who resents their demands.

It is true that, because of many factors in our society, many women do have to work, just as it is true that for centuries there have been working women whose children nonetheless knew that they were loved fiercely and uniquely. I know many working mothers who do a terrific job of being as ever-present as possible to their children. But what is “modern” and

dangerous now is that the desirability of a woman staying home if she *can* is being questioned and, consequently, the women who do choose to stay home are not supported—indeed, as with Ms. Peters, they are often attacked.

In a society with more and more paid “experts” on child care, mothers’ and parents’ instincts are not trusted. Parents are told that their children are better off in daycare centers or early school programs than at home, because they will be “socialized early,” even though most people instinctively feel that whole days spent away from home can be a real strain on little children, and that secure nurturing fosters individuality. We are told that it is “quality time,” not quantity time, that matters. But how many *marriages* break up because the husband and wife were too often physically separated? And children are naturally even more selfish than lovers: they want to be near those they love, and they don’t understand “quality time.” As a mother of two toddlers, I see that what gives them security is precisely routines, familiar surroundings, rituals, and endless repetitions of certain games, books or activities, endless attempts to climb stairs, for example. Knowing I am around most of the time gives them the freedom to do things at their own pace. If I tried to squeeze quality time into two hours a day I think we’d all be cranky and exhausted, which is what happens in a lot of families when parents come home tired but the kids are all hyped up to finally see them.

Realistically, there are many parents who *don’t* have a choice—they have to work. But there are also those who put their children in day care because they don’t want to take a break from their career, or they have to work to keep up an expensive lifestyle full of cars, clothes and vacations, those modern “necessities.” It’s not that it doesn’t often *feel* good to work outside the home—some work, dare I say it, is easier and less isolating than being home with small children. But what if, nonetheless, our children need us to be there? As Diane Fisher, a psychologist and mother of three wrote in *Ex Femina*, the Independent Women’s Forum newsletter:

I will admit my personal bias in this matter. I love the freedom, escape and adult gratification of my professional work. But I have also come to hate empty neighborhoods at midday, parks full of blank-eyed nannies and listless children, preschoolers tied together or in big wagons for outings, young children putting in ten-hour days at day care centers, fast food and TV replacing family dinners in exhausted households.

Sacrificing for our children, as Peters’ subtitle makes clear, has achieved a bad connotation. But just about any dedicated career person makes great

sacrifices for his career. And what about women who actually do find their highest self-fulfillment in childrearing (not an option in Peters' book)? Even at a Catholic conference on feminism, which a colleague and I attended not long ago, there was a lot of discussion of juggling working and motherhood. At the end of one long session, a woman stood up to say she was hurt and disappointed that not one person brought up women who think it's important and necessary to stay home. I think many of us felt ashamed.

Time was when supporting mothering was mere common sense. Sometimes I think we live in an anti-wisdom society. The only Ideas that are Exciting challenge long-held beliefs. Evolutionists and journalists like Peters frequently point to remote tribes to prove their points (Peters praises the Tahitians, who have no "gender differentiation" and are "thus" peaceful), throwing out 2,000 years of western civilization and its Judaeo-Christian emphasis on committed relationships and family. Pretty soon we will be questioning whether people even *need* significant others—why not a series of "mutually enhancing" relationships (it takes a village . . .)? Can you imagine anyone asserting that romantic love, with its desire to be with the beloved, is a "myth"? Yet that is what some are saying about the even more intense and emotional desire of a child to be with his mother.

Last summer, two women died and the world mourned. Princess Diana has a cult-following hard to believe; she was not really admired for her taste in men, or her lifestyle, but whatever her strengths and weaknesses were, she was universally acknowledged to be a good mother (as was Jackie Onassis, another woman with cult-like status). Mother Teresa was a biological mother to no one but a real mother to millions, a mother who physically cared for the dying off the street, and for unwanted newborns. She "mothered" leaders of nations with words of wisdom and peace. She also spoke most eloquently on mothers and children, saying that abortion, when a mother killed her own child, was the greatest destroyer of peace in the world.

We mourned these women so because we respected their "motherly love," for their own and for the strangers they nurtured. We do instinctively know that the relationship between mother and child is unique and essential. This doesn't mean that all women will feel it or act on it the same way, and it would be wrong to criticize women who have a hard time with mothering and need alternatives to keep their balance. But to belittle women who *want* to mother, and for our society to consistently lack encouragement for women who are conflicted—to make it harder and harder for

MARIA MCFADDEN

them to be “primary caregivers”—is dangerous for us and for our children.

Fortunately, all the books and studies in the world aren’t strong enough to affect the reality and the joy of mothering. The mothers I know who “just” stay home are using all their education, patience, humor, love and insight to mother their children, and they are not too bothered by ideas like Peters’ because they know they are ridiculous. Sure, they’d like more respect, sure they’d probably like to afford more help with kids and housework or get more help from their husbands, but at the end of the day they feel good that they don’t have to ask someone else how their child’s day went. They understand what’s going on in their children’s lives and know that all too soon the little ones will go to school and be away from them most of the time (unless they are so fed up with the experts that they homeschool!). They know they can never get the early years back.

There is really no “just” in staying at home: it’s a challenge, and it’s more worthwhile than a thousand other jobs I could think of. To end, as we began, with George Gilder: “Only a specific woman can bear a specific child, and her tie to it is personal and infrangible. When she raises the child she imparts in privacy her own individual values. She can create children who transcend consensus and prefigure the future: children of private singularity rather than ‘child development policy.’” *Amen.*



‘Now, dear, sexual confusion is normal at Billy’s age.’

THE SPECTATOR 4 April 1998

26/SPRING 1998

A Conversation with Gary Bauer

Gary Who? *The smart-aleck queries will multiply if—and when—Gary Bauer announces his determination to seek the Republican Party's presidential nomination for the year 2000.*

In fact, Mr. Bauer, the president of the Family Research Council and the Campaign for Working Families, has gilt-edged Washington credentials. He was a domestic policy counselor to President Ronald Reagan, and for the past decade has functioned as a leading voice of Christian conservatives. Because of his insistence on thrusting moral matters front and center in Republican deliberations, Bauer makes many "establishmentarian" Republicans nervous. This suits him well enough that he has been lately exploring a presidential run as a means of forcing the party—and the country—to talk seriously about his issues—especially abortion. Human Life Review interviewed Bauer in his downtown Washington office on March 25 last, addressing this and other questions.

A point or two of clarification. The non-profit Family Research Council produces policy studies of family questions, while the Campaign for Working Families—a separate enterprise—involves itself in politics, notably in the recent California congressional election that made national headlines due to CWF's support of pro-life Republican Tom Bordonaro over a pro-abortion opponent. Dr. James Dobson heads Focus on the Family and is known to millions for his radio commentaries. Paul Weyrich is well-known in Washington as a conservative political strategist. Finally, the recent weekend meeting alluded to during the interview refers to the Harris County, Texas, Republican Party-sponsored "Forum on the Republican Future," which attracted several potential Republican presidential candidates, including Steve Forbes, Sen. John Ashcroft and Gary Bauer.

—William Murchison

HLR: Mr. Bauer, I don't want to overwork the famous declaration of Peter Finch in the movie *Network*, but is it possible that conservatives, Christian conservatives today, are at the point where they are mad as *hell*, and they are not going to take it anymore?

Gary Bauer: Well, I suppose we would say mad as *heck*. [Laughter] No,

but I do think that it's very true that conservatives generally, and certainly religious conservatives, cultural conservatives, are frustrated and are feeling alienated from the leadership of the Republican Party. You know, we'd have to go back to 1980 when we began to have this massive movement of evangelicals and Catholics out of their normal party, the Democratic Party, into the Republican Party. And that was 18 years ago. And if you look at the reasons those individuals made that shift, on almost every front things are worse, not better. Not one abortion has been stopped in those years. The Gay Rights movement is more powerful than it was in 1980, the family is being redefined, there are more threats against our religious liberty, the culture is more coarse than it was then. And I think it is just natural after 18 years for people to say to themselves, "Now wait a minute. We've been working out in the fields for a good long time here. When do we get invited to the dinner table with the rest of the coalition in order to see some progress on the things that we care about?"

HLR: To the extent that they are mad as heck, what is it that they are maddest about?

Bauer: I think it varies. I think part of it is a vague sense some people have that they've been played for suckers, you know, that their voting power has been used to help other parts of the coalition get a majority so it can act on its issues. But that nothing was ever planned or intended for the social conservatives or on the values issues. I think there's something else, too, and I think it's the anger that comes from being in a big fight and the guy that's on your side, it suddenly hits you, isn't trying very hard, and you're getting pummeled and this ally is, you know, taking a break for a drink or whatever. You know, we've gone through two presidential elections now when it wasn't that Americans rejected our message; they never heard it. Bob Dole and Jack Kemp missed one opportunity after another—big fat slow balls over the middle of the plate—to make the case for our values and they didn't do it. And so I think those two things have made people very upset and angry.

HLR: Is it fair to say that Christian conservatives feel they have been used by the Republican party?

Bauer: I do think there is an element of that. You know, we're going to have to wait and see here now, in the months ahead as we increase the pressure, whether or not we can get the attention of the party elders. But that sense of being used, I think very definitely is out there.

HLR: You're not the only conservative, obviously, Christian conservative,

who feels this way about it. Dr. [James] Dobson has very, very publicly announced his strong irritation, if it's not more than irritation, and Paul Weyrich has had a meeting publicized on the front page of the *New York Times*, which I am sure you attended, at which the matter was raised. Is there a consensus among social and Christian conservatives about this level of indignation and concern?

Bauer: There is a consensus that the current approach can't continue. There is not a consensus yet on what is the best road or the best way to redress these things. And by the way, I would say in response to your question that it's not just the people you mentioned. In a different way, I've had Catholic bishops express these thoughts to me, of a sense that they thought in some of their support for Bob Dole, indirect support and so forth, that they were going to hear a serious debate on abortion in that presidential campaign and the disappointment some of those church leaders felt when that didn't happen. So I think everybody is looking for a way to put these things back at the front of the debate.

HLR: It sounds to me as though something very big is going on here.

Bauer: Well, I think it may be. You know, I don't like discord, and I certainly don't like being in arguments with "friends." But this is a serious matter, you know, and I think it's a matter that Americans care about who don't share my faith. I don't want to wax too philosophical, but the Founding Fathers were trying to tell us something when they said that only a virtuous people could remain free, and yet it is almost impossible to find a politician who will seriously discuss what they meant and whether or not, as we get ready to go into this next century, we may be attempting to prove them wrong. There is a virtue deficit that just widens every day, and that's what I want the debate in America to be about, and I believe there are millions of Americans hungry for that debate.

HLR: I'd be remiss if, representing the editors of the *Human Life Review*, I didn't ask you very early on about the Republican Party's attitude toward abortion and the prohibition thereof.

Bauer: Well, I think of this party as the party of Lincoln and Reagan and it seems to me that such a party ought to be willing without shame or embarrassment to make a case for the sanctity of human life. I found myself out at the San Diego Republican convention in the week before the convention began, fighting this issue in the platform committee, and putting in 20-hour days and being threatened with all sorts of things that would happen to me in Washington if I didn't back off. And I found myself, Bill, at

one point asking myself, Why should it be this hard to keep a pro-life, unambiguous pro-life plank, in the platform of the party of Lincoln and Reagan? And there was a time when I actually thought about saying to Bob Dole's operatives, "You know something, guys? Life's just too short. I'm going to go home and be with my family now. You write this platform the way you want it and then let's talk after the election." Because I am convinced the way they would have written it, it would have been a political disaster for the Republican Party. So there is a problem here, and it's got to be straightened out soon.

HLR: Does the abortion issue embarrass the Republican Party?

Bauer: What a great verb, because I think that is exactly what is motivating some of the reactions we're seeing. I believe the public is increasingly on our side, the pro-life side, but America's elites are not. And American politicians, whether they like it or not, are part of the American elite. And the cocktail parties they go to, the schools they send their children to, the cultural events they go to—it is still an inappropriate thing to be talking about unborn children and their humanity and what protections they deserve under the Constitution and Declaration of Independence. And I think politicians will do almost anything to avoid looking unsophisticated, and so I think many of them *are* embarrassed by the pro-life cause.

HLR: Let's talk a little bit about the resolution that was before the Republican—what is the full title?

Bauer: National Committee.

HLR: —which would have denied party funds to candidates who wouldn't support a ban on partial birth abortion. Were you instrumental in getting that proposal before the committee?

Bauer: Well, you know, I've been blamed for it already and I quite frankly wish I could take credit for it. Actually it did spring up from the grassroots, the gentleman in Texas introduced it. He did not ask me first. Once I heard about it, I was immediately in favor of it. The fact that it came from the grassroots to me was indicative of—or was proof that it's not just me that feels this discomfort right now. I really do think that it's a sign of the discontent out there. I only had one disagreement with the resolution. I would have amended it to say that the Republican Party will not give one dollar to any candidate who happens to get their nomination who is either a bigot, an anti-Semite, or supports infanticide. And that would have been a great vote for the party of Lincoln and Reagan to have. Let's cut off

David Duke, *and* let's cut off Christine Todd Whitman. [Laughter]

HLR: What did you make of the opposition that Henry Hyde, who is obviously a friend of the pro-life cause in Congress, raised to this particular strategy?

Bauer: You know, we all have different hats that we have to wear. I would consider it a great honor to have on my tombstone, "He did as much for the pro-life cause as Henry Hyde." Henry Hyde is a wonderful man, but he has a different hat on, and that hat is how to find the votes they need in the House and Senate to pass the ban over the president's veto. And Rick Santorum and Henry Hyde both believed that this resolution would have made it harder to get those votes, not easier. I disagree with them, but take their position as being an honorable one, unlike some of the other opposition which was not in my view honorable.

HLR: What would we encourage pro-life people to believe can be done about abortion now?

Bauer: Well, I believe we have it within our reach to end abortion on demand. I know immediately people will think that I've gone off my rocker. But you know, Ronald Reagan said we would transcend the Soviet Union, we wouldn't beat them on the battlefield, we would just transcend them. Even I thought at the time, "What in the world is the man thinking?" But Reagan knew that the Soviet empire was built on a lie, and that if you spoke the truth about it, it would unravel much quicker—quicker than anybody thought. I believe the abortion culture is built on a lie. And quite frankly, it only takes a few good Supreme Court nominees and a president with moral persuasion as one of his attributes to turn this thing around. And the next president will have that opportunity. But that's why it's so important that we not accept backroom winks, but rather have a national debate and an election that revolves around this.

HLR: The strategy of banning partial birth abortion at the state level seems to be advancing, doesn't it?

Bauer: It does indeed. There have been some court reversals, but in other states they have been upheld. We're working right now on a proposal as soon as partial birth is over, to introduce a bill that would ban all abortions in the second and third trimester, making it absolutely clear that our goal was to extend to all of our unborn children the protections of the Constitution and Declaration of Independence. But I would love to see a vote on that, and I believe there would be a decent chance of passing it in both

houses of Congress. Another approach somebody came up with is, just introduce a bill to ban all abortions in the ninth month, and let that go to the president's desk; wait a couple of weeks and introduce one to ban them all in the eighth month, and just keep on going down and I think we would get to the fourth month before you would get into close votes. But the important thing is that we need to always look for how to move the ball down the field, and the party that most of us are in needs to get up in the morning willing to devote intellectual energy to *this* as much as they do to the question of whether marginal tax rates ought to be 39 percent or 37 percent. And that's what's been missing so far.

HLR: Theoretically, the pro-life cause in Congress should be stronger, should it not, because of the growth in the number of congressmen who are not only committed to it, you know, and the increase in action compared with 20 years ago.

Bauer: No, no, it's been very disappointing, and part of that is because of this ill-conceived strategy that took root in recent years that number one, if you were pro-life, you shouldn't talk about it in your campaign, and if it does come up, answer it quickly and get away from it as fast as you can. Well, if you elect people and that's been their approach, why in the world would we think once they came to Washington that they would want to go through a protracted battle that would remind all their constituents of who they are and how pro-life they are. That's why we really do need to look for people—not to run one-issue campaigns, I'm not suggesting that—but people who are willing to say, "This is important; this matters, and it's part of the package of who I am. And if you send me to Washington, I am going to lower your taxes, I am going to make government smaller, but I'm also going to work on this extremely important issue that defines who we are as Americans and what the purpose of our liberty is."

HLR: At the same time, I imagine that you would suggest to them that this is not, shall we say, self-immolation—

Bauer: No.

HLR:—that this is in fact a position that a Republican candidate could take with a certain assurance of its being received by the voting public.

Bauer: Boy, Bill, this is—Your question is so important, because the conventional wisdom is that the way to win is the way that I just described to you of avoiding the issue. That's the way to lose. In fact, you can see it in the presidential races. Ronald Reagan was unambiguous about his

pro-life stance. He won landslides. George Bush and Bob Dole tried to, you know, trim a little here, move a little there. They both got clobbered. The party that the public will respond to is a party that appeals to their hearts. And you know, a party that can't turn saving babies into a winning issue probably ought to go into another line of work. [Laughter]

HLR: Let's get down to some cases then. The Campaign for Working Families, which you set up and which got a lot of national attention, continues to receive attention for advertisements that it made in congressional and senatorial campaigns in California and Illinois respectively. Now let's talk about California first, where you spent \$100,000 to advertise and to help Tom Bordonaro.

Bauer: Right.

HLR: Tell us a little bit about how you got involved, and how it worked out.

Bauer: Sure. Well, first of all, we've been in a bunch of races, and this was our first major loss. Nobody wanted to write very much about our victories, but I guess that was inevitable. The race in California for me was a clear case of something we had to be in, because for reasons I can't figure out, the party establishment here in Washington had tapped Mr. [Brooks] Firestone out in California to be the Republican nominee. And Mr. Firestone is pro-abortion and pro-gay rights, indistinguishable from Bill Clinton on those issues. And I just could not sit by and allow that to happen in my party. So we found Mr. Bordonaro, we threw our lot in with him, we shocked everybody by defeating the Republican establishment and winning the primary as far as coming in first between those two Republicans. And then we brought Mr. Bordonaro up from about 24 percent of the vote, which is what he had in the primary—24-25 percent, I believe—up to 45 percent on election day, but still not enough to win. I'm sorry we didn't win. I think there's a lot of reasons why we didn't win, not the least of which is that the day after the primary, Gerald Ford, in a big article in the *New York Times*, called Mr. Bordonaro an extremist. And Lois Capps, the Democrat, ran ads merely quoting Gerald Ford in the last week of the campaign. So if parts of the Republican establishment are going to savage conservative pro-life candidates, the outcome will be very difficult. I found myself asking: What position was it of Mr. Bordonaro that made him an extremist. His position across the board was in line with the last four Republican platforms.

HLR: Including—he was very close to the position that Ford himself took—

Bauer: Exactly right. Exactly right.

HLR: Any regrets now about the way the campaign was run?

Bauer: No. I would have preferred to have won, obviously. But I think we did the right thing. I've taken a lot of hits from the press, but I'm also getting inundated with requests from candidates all over the country begging me to come in on their behalf. So apparently a lot of candidates have become emboldened, no matter what the press may be doing. You know, it would have been better to coordinate with Mr. Bordonaro. The law doesn't allow that. Once you make an independent expenditure, you can't talk to the candidate at all. So, you know, if there were times I stepped on his toes, that might have happened. But I think we did the right thing.

HLR: I suppose that was the basis for what he told the *New York Times* about the ads, which he said created a lot of confusion.

Bauer: Right. Yes, you know, no good deed goes unpunished. [Laughter] I don't believe Mr. Bordonaro would have even been in the running if we hadn't been in there in the primary, though. Look, I know how Washington works. Bad things are orphans and good things have many parents. I'm willing to be the parent of this orphan and say that if I had to do it over again, I would do the same thing we did.

HLR: Well, let's talk about Illinois and Peter Fitzgerald.

Bauer: Right. And you know, this is really an extraordinary story that hasn't really been told yet. Jim Dobson, for really the first time that I am aware of, was willing to sign with me a letter personally endorsing Mr. Fitzgerald, and we messengered that to him, and he got it out around the state. And we think it made a big difference in what ended up being a very close race. So we felt very good about that outcome. Now again, he is being attacked by members of his own party, and if that continues, this coalition will not be able to stay together.

HLR: What do you think the prospects are for his overcoming that particular—

Bauer: I think Fitzgerald has got a number of advantages. First of all, he's got his own personal wealth, so he will be able to buy his message on the air. That's very important. Second of all, it's going to be hard for Carol Moseley-Braun to call him an extremist when the Democrats nominated for governor a pro-life candidate. The big story out of Illinois is that after 22 years of pro-abortion Republican governors, no matter who wins the gubernatorial race, it's going to be a pro-lifer this time.

HLR: So they've nominated another Bob Casey?

Bauer: They have, yes. I don't think he is very good on some other issues, but he is very solid on this, and he didn't run from it at all. He emphasized it in his campaign.

HLR: So would you rate Peter Fitzgerald's chances of getting elected in November as good?

Bauer: I think they are very good. I think both there and Wisconsin—where it's likely to be Congressman Neumann against Senator Feingold. We've got a chance in a number of Senate races to make not only party switches, which may or may not mean very much, but to make real net gains for pro-life, pro-family, lower tax, small government conservatives.

HLR: Gary, contrast this with two years ago. Is the abortion issue figuring more prominently in campaigns than it was at that time? It seems more visible to me.

Bauer: Yes—

HLR: I see more—

Bauer: Well, I hope it's figuring more prominently. I mean, that's what I was trying to do.

HLR: Yes.

Bauer: And I think it *is* making a difference at this point. It came up in the Virginia races here in November of '97 a few months back, and we went in very aggressively on behalf of the most pro-life candidates on the slate of candidates. And the candidates we supported, like the attorney-general in Virginia, not only won, they outran the top of the ticket, who was a little bit more squishy on the matter. So we think that any time the debate is joined, this is a winning issue.

HLR: How many—I don't suppose you know at this point, but do you have any sense at all of how many campaigns you might be participating in this year?

Bauer: You know, it totally depends on what our fundraising does. We've already given the maximum donation to about 40 incumbent members of Congress, and we will look for other ways to help them. I hope to bring in as much as four to five million dollars this year, and we would hopefully at the end of the year have virtually nothing left in the bank, because we want to spend every dollar we can.

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HLR: Right. I would imagine this involves you, a significant amount of your time, in fundraising.

Bauer: It's made life a lot more complicated. The Family Research Council is a nonprofit group, and I must keep it meticulously out of politics.

HLR: Yes.

Bauer: But on weekends and in the evenings I am on my free time, and I can raise money for the political action committee, and we've been doing that. We've been renting mailing lists and trying to get people to step up to the plate. One of the things I want to accomplish here is just to get pro-life people and conservatives to shake off that sort of hangdog attitude, you know, that we can't ever win, it's all stacked against us, we have no place to go. That becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy, and I just think that we've got to regain our confidence, be confident, conservative pro-life, pro-family people, and if we do that, we are going to capture the hearts of the American people.

HLR: I think it's natural to proceed from there to talk about Gary Bauer, potential candidate for president and shaker and remolder of public opinion. Is this for real?

Bauer: Well, thank you for asking, number one. It's a strange feeling to see speculation about this, and in honesty, all honesty with you, I have encouraged the speculation. I ran out of shoes to throw at the television set the last two elections. [Laughter] And it's not that the American people heard our world view and weighed it and rejected it. They never heard it. And I've said publicly, if I don't see someone boldly, effectively, without shame or embarrassment, making the case for our values, I'm going to make a judgment at the end of 1999—sorry, the end of 1998, this year—whether or not to take a leave of absence from the Family Research Council and set up an exploratory committee. And we are praying about it, I'm talking to my wife and children about it. But I am tired of trying to put words into the mouths of people who at the end of the day I don't think really believe them. And there is a vacuum there, and I am tempted to try to fill it.

HLR: What is your timeline for making a decision?

Bauer: Well, I would make an announcement in November or December of this year, and then I would have to use—1999 [noise from equipment] . . . I would have to use 1999 to set up an exploratory committee and see whether anybody—see if anybody saluted that flag when it went up the

flagpole. And certainly one big measurement would be the ability to raise money and the other measurement would be whatever reaction I got as I traveled around the country. I'm not on a fool's errand. I believe in the marketplace. The marketplace does determine a lot of things. If people don't see me as credible . . . You know, I have no burning ambition. But I am deeply disturbed by what I see as an unwillingness of party establishment—both parties' establishments—to deal with what I think are the most important issues facing our republic.

HLR: You would be taking to a great degree the same message to the people that Alan Keyes and Pat Buchanan did two years ago. Would you do it differently?

Bauer: Well, they are both very good men and I would not critique them in any way. Alan, I think, has a disadvantage in that for any number of reasons, he is not able to get real visibility and be seen by the American people between the elections. I for whatever reason—perhaps because of my eight years in government—do get that chance to go on *Meet the Press*, the *Today* show and the other shows. And so I think there is more of a chance of people hearing me. Pat hasn't made up his mind yet, and so we'll have to wait and see what he does. But I do think that I'm able—at the risk of this sounding—I don't want to, I'm not trying to flatter myself, but I think the eight years with Ronald Reagan taught me how to talk about very hard subjects in a way that is easy on the ears of the American people. And I think that's essential, because our message is things that people in many cases don't want to think about, and I think they've got to be said with good humor and good intent and in a way that will draw people in, not shove them away.

HLR: Of course, the process of campaigning for president is highly unpleasant, except maybe for Pat Buchanan, who seems to love it . . .

Bauer: That's very true. [Laughter] . . .

HLR: But this is something I take it that you have wrestled with in your musings on it and you feel that it would . . .

Bauer: Yes. Well, it's one of those things that I am probably just going to have to test. I am doing some of that now on weekends, speaking to state Republican Parties, and it is a hard road.

HLR: Are you going to Houston—

Bauer: I am—

HLR:—this weekend?

Bauer: Yes, right.

HLR: I'll be down there.

Bauer: Oh, good.

HLR: Yes, I'll be on a panel . . . the Republican Party, as a matter of fact.

Bauer: Good deal. And you know, I have actually toyed with the thought that if I did this, that I would do it differently from other people, that I might actually say, "Look, I am going to run, but I am not going to be a hypocrite. I am not going to abandon my own family, you know, for theoretical things, so while I will speak and debate and talk, if you think I'm going to be out 20 hours a day, seven days a week, that would violate both my faith and my family commitment," and see if people found that marked me as somebody *different* from the rest.

HLR: Do you think the Republican Party is ready to nominate a candidate who speaks up for the unborn and the Chinese Christians and doesn't think that homosexuality is just another lifestyle?

Bauer: Well, that is the \$64,000 question, isn't it? I think that if the grassroots of the party gets a fair shot at this, I think they are ready to nominate somebody like that. I think that's what Ronald Reagan thought about most issues, and he did very well. But I am under no illusions about how much of a threat certain elements of the party would see me posing, and I'm assuming that it will get very nasty before it's over, and of course nobody relishes that.

HLR: In fact the Republican race would at this point seem wide open. I don't see any obvious leader, do you?

Bauer: No, it is wide open, and I think anything is possible. You know, there are probably 25 names out there that have been mentioned at one time or another. I wouldn't be surprised if in the early primaries you wouldn't have 12 or 15 people. And I think there will be a winnowing-out process, and that we'll end up with probably an establishment candidate, broadly speaking, a pro-family, pro-life candidate and probably somebody trying to be a little bit of both. And it would be an interesting debate to have.

HLR: Does it encourage you at all that there are at least several prominently mentioned Republicans who are talking about these issues? John Ashcroft is one, and even Steve Forbes has moved from—

Bauer: Yes.

HLR: —economics to social and moral questions.

Bauer: Yes, I am always encouraged when I see my rhetoric being embraced by others. I don't want to be unfair to Steve, but I think it *is* fair to say he is relatively new to the party, and I want to see more proof. It's hard for me to imagine that a Steve Forbes presidency would essentially devote itself to these social and cultural issues. I just don't think that's where the man comes from and what makes his heart beat fast. On the other candidates, you know, maybe I'm raising the bar too high, but I want somebody who not only will say these things to a convention of the Christian Coalition or the Family Research Council, but will say them on *Meet the Press* and before the Detroit Economic Club, who will talk to America generally about them, and so far I don't see that in the people that are out there.

HLR: Did Dan Quayle ask you not to run?

Bauer: That was a private meeting, and I was a little concerned when I saw one of the press articles try to characterize it. Dan and I did meet in New York, and I think it's fair to say that he lacks enthusiasm about it. [Laughter] That was an interesting meeting.

HLR: Well, whether you run or not, how much of a difference are Christians likely to make in the 1998 and especially the year 2000 campaigns?

Bauer: Well, they can make a tremendous difference. You know, the country was built by people who went to church on Sunday, to work on Monday and then the voting booth on Tuesday. These days that's considered controversial, but if the body of faith in America became more engaged in these issues, everything from abortion to racial reconciliation, all these things—which at the end of the day are moral issues—it is the one thing I can imagine that could transform America, and I hope and dream and pray that that will happen.

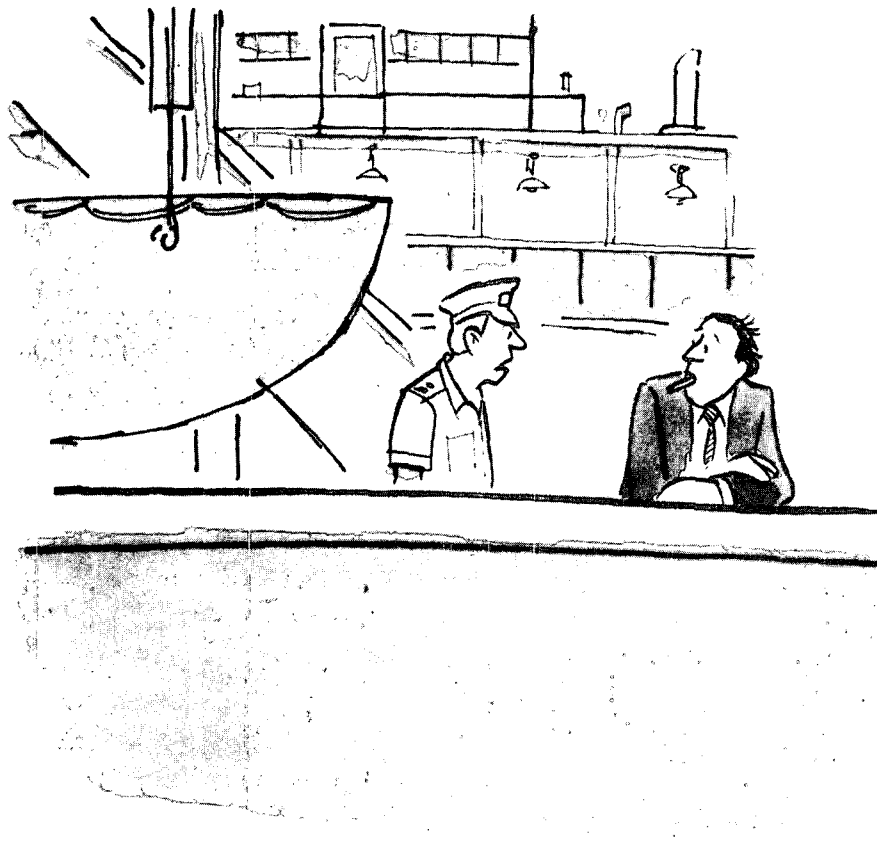
HLR: You, being familiar with the Scripture, know the old injunction of the Psalmist, "Put not your trust in Princes or in any child of man" [Psalm 146]. How much difference does politics make in the life of the country, especially now when politics isn't exactly our chief source of moral inspiration?

Bauer: Right. Well, I think that politics makes a great deal of difference. I look at people like Wilberforce, for example. I think we need to pray

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about things that are not going well. But at the end of the day, Wilberforce had to be in Parliament. And while it was helpful and good for the churches of his day to be preaching against slavery, it still took a Wilberforce to move government in the right direction. I think we are called to be good Christian citizens or, you know, good citizens of faith, and while it cannot be our point of final reliance, certainly as free men and women, if we don't occupy the public square, others will, and their vision of America is quite different from ours.

HLR: Thank you, sir.



'Sorry, sir — this is a non-smoking ocean.'

THE SPECTATOR 24 January 1998

40/SPRING 1998

From “Old England”:

Britain's *Fox Populi*

Lynette Burrows

Maybe you have even read about it in your newspapers. The Countryside March in London on 1st March, 1998, was the biggest march ever staged in Britain. Never mind that some of the media immediately said that it was “almost as big” as the anti-nuclear marches of the early 1980s. That was just typical liberal-left bunkum. As a helpful police spokesman informed the *Daily Telegraph*, they used to *claim* half a million supporters every time they had a demonstration but, in reality, there were never more than 90-odd thousand people involved. So that's all right then.

This time they really were properly counted at a dozen points in the march and there were 280,000 people from every corner of England. Not a sign of Rent-a-Mob Inc.; no delegation from the Student's Union of Strathclyde, enjoying a day in London at the Union's expense; no “collective” of this, or “community” of that—these were whole villages that descended on the capital, leaving just the Church Warden and the retired policeman to act as Home Guards whilst they were away.

And no, they were not all “toffs,” red-faced aristos or landed gentry taking time off from grinding the faces of the workers. They were the ordinary people of Great Britain from every class, background and financial bracket. Many had their dogs, even more had their children and, as on all the other occasions when the people of England get together—such as the Royal weddings and other serious State occasions—there wasn't so much as a flower trampled in the immaculate beds of the different parks they travelled by or through. As we passed down the Strand, crossed Trafalgar Square and walked up Pall Mall, all the posh clubs of St. James' had members on their balconies toasting us; the ordinary Pubs, filled to capacity with Londoners and overflowing onto the pavements, raised a cheer and shouted “Good Hunting brothers!”

Good Heavens! In that one phrase, which I heard many times, was packed a very *précis* of an anti-politically-correct cannon. Hunting—commended; brothers hailed with no separate category for our disaffected sisters; the implicit assertion of a blood relation between the people on the march. Tradition, sexism and racism all in one phrase! It was enough to make all those who have laboured for a generation to make us disdain and renounce all such sentiments *despair*.

Lynette Burrows, our Country Correspondent, writes from deepest Cambridge, England.

First of all, therefore, what was the march for? And secondly—what does it mean in terms of the sort of thing which might interest *Human Life Review* readers? The first answer here is fairly straightforward and factual. Our present New Labour government gives the impression of two boys fighting under a blanket. That is to say, it is not socialist and has done many things so “right-wing” that Mrs. Thatcher would not have dared to try them; like introducing University fees, for example and sending home illegal immigrants. On the other hand, elements of the “Old Guard,” class warriors of the old Labour Party, are still heaving about under the umbrageous tegument of the blanket coverage which accompanies everything they do. It was no doubt as a harmless sop to these mediocrities that the government decided to allow one of them to test public opinion on the matter of fox hunting. They found that, when asked, most people said they did not like it.

Fair enough; no doubt they would have found the same majority against arranged marriages; an even larger number who disapproved of circumcision, and an overwhelming majority who were absolutely outraged that Muslims are permitted to slaughter animals for their Hala meal *without* stunning them first. Furthermore most people, when asked, say that they disapprove of homosexual behaviour. So what?

It has long been our tradition that minorities are not coerced into doing what the majority happens to favour, unless they are doing something criminal, which hunting animals is not. However, for the purpose of throwing this titbit of class envy to the dogs of egalitarianism, members of the government all went into “democratic” mode and pretended that what the people wanted, they must get. That is *democracy*, they said.

Unfortunately for them, it did not wash. It was just too, too easy to shoot them down and on every talk show or phone-in, we heard even plainly uneducated people pointing out that the government didn’t take any notice whatsoever of the enormous majority in favour of capital punishment, or any of the well-tried punitive measures which the people who suffer most from crime would like to see applied, virtually cost-free, to the criminal.

Actually, I was on such a radio programme, London Talk Radio, with a lawyer who was a fervent advocate of the hunting ban, when precisely this point was put to him. Like many people, I had always wondered how people like him managed their balancing act of invoking democracy when it suited them, only to deny its sovereign power if it did not. The caller asked if he supported asking people what they thought of immigration and capital punishment, and then legislating accordingly.

The lawyer's face changed to a look of studied stupefaction. "It is my absolute conviction," he said, "that most people welcome immigration as much as they deplore capital punishment." "You must live on the moon then" the caller said, "What about opinion polls that say differently?"

"If opinion polls say differently, then they lie," the sage replied with magnificent confidence, "and must be ignored."

So that is how it's done. You just say that something is so, in a very sincere voice, and it *becomes* so. It reminds one that this was what Thomas Huxley described as a "theology without God." He recognised that public morals must have something underpinning them in an agnostic society and urged "top people" to shoulder the responsibility of giving what were, in truth, simply their opinions, in a very confident manner. Of course, he lived in a more deferential society anyway but, even so, this was, and is, most unlikely to impress the ordinary person. A contemporary of his, Charles Dickens, portrayed far more accurately the common man's response to this line of argument when he had Mr. Bumble lugubriously commenting upon the law's precept that a man was held to be master in his own house: "If the law supposes that, then the law is an ass."

This was the ploy upon which the whole wretched business of the proposed legislation to ban hunting was based. A tin-pot government not one year old felt that it had the right to prohibit an activity and a way of life that has enlivened the countryside since time immemorial. Maybe they wanted to test their powers of coercion in view of the coming Economic and Monetary Union experiment in Europe and the conflicts this is bound to cause. Or perhaps they simply wanted to set their stamp on the coming age; maudlin and prescriptive, this was the perfect Bill with which to do it. Unfortunately for the government, it didn't work—as one hopes and prays it never will. On this occasion, to the central issue of the freedom to hunt were added a dozen other large and small grievances which, happening separately, might have been resented bitterly but would not have suddenly sounded the alarm through the countryside.

It is part of the magic and mystery of language that words represent, as Genesis tells us, the essence of meaning. The word for "country," meaning countryside, and the word for the mother-country are the same. The countryside *is* the country in most European nations and I would guess it is in America also. Therefore, when the countryside is up in arms, that goes for the whole country. The thousands of beacons which were lit within sight of one another from one end of the country to the other, were tended and visited by hundreds of thousands of people who have never hunted and

perhaps never would. There was a sudden, acute sense that unless they reminded the people who lead them that they were a force to be reckoned with, absolutely nothing of our way of life would be safe; or even be left to us. It was the suddenly-perceived threat to our liberty that made them turn out in such numbers in London. And it worked.

This much at least even the meanest newspaper hack seemed able to glean from the hordes who passed in front of him. Though many tried to argue that hunting was not the central issue of the march because so many other things were being protested about; this was wilfully to miss the point. It was that issue, more than any other single one, which symbolised the contempt shown by the present governing class for the British way of life. The concerted roar of rage which greeted this attempt to impose orders from above, and the complacent expectation that they would be obeyed, "*because Parliament has said so*," was just the last straw.

If it does nothing else for the moment, it will have done the job of reminding squiffy little government functionaries, "dressed in a little brief authority," of the limits of government. It also gives a foretaste, more vivid than any punditry, of what to expect if and when the demands of "European Union" become similarly dictatorial and onerous.

The message was well taken. The government backed away from further confrontation and the Bill to outlaw has been quietly dropped. The attitude of those who went on the march is, naturally, one of satisfaction but not necessarily of relief. That crucial point has been passed with a lot of people, which I always think of as the "embarrassment factor." It is absolutely natural to us over here, not to show our emotions. However, once a line has been crossed and the truth is revealed, there is no point in going back.

For the last thirty years or so, the wishes of "the people" have been comprehensively ignored on almost every important subject. This has only been possible with the willing co-operation of the media, who have done everything to portray anybody who did not want mass immigration into the country as "racist," anybody who believed in severe punishment for serious crime as "fascist," and anyone who did not welcome special homosexual privileges as "repressed" and "sexually inadequate."

The media, of course, have more power than government ever does to influence attitudes—at least on the public level—because they can select and edit the protagonists in any debate. There are one or two people on every subject who are well-known to sink any cause they espouse, and these are the people who are always chosen to put the case for a politically-incorrect opinion. Of course people know this very well and it is

gratifying that, in all the major subjects, surveys show that people still base their opinions on their experience rather than what they are told is correct. On corporal punishment, for instance, about which the intelligentsia show a united front—against it, naturally—a Mori poll last year found 68% of parents wanted it returned to schools and so did 67% of *children*. True to form, last week the government made corporal punishment, even in *private* schools, illegal.

In this case, it doesn't much matter since so few people are involved and most private schools do not have it anyway. It was relatively unimportant except for the fact that the children's rights activists who sponsored the law were establishing the principle that it is the State, and not parents, which decides how a child should be treated in disciplinary matters, just as they have established it over the question of whether underage girls should be given contraceptives. It's another brick in the wall that separates parents from the effective care and control of their own children.

This then is the cultural background, or at least a part of it, against which the Countryside March took off. They expressed complaints specific to those who live in the countryside, but the context of their complaint was a fierce discontent with the increasing power and *reach* of government. In their case, it has been the power to virtually close down whole areas of traditional economic activity. Much of it closed, or adversely affected by European legislation. To the disinterested observer, it really beggars belief that any government can look with equanimity—or even think it possible—to engineer further integration with a European bureaucracy that is certain to enforce more of the same.

The fishermen were there in force; so were the farmers, particularly but not exclusively the beef farmers; and a myriad other small rural industries that have been impeded, priced out of existence or refused licences by asinine European regulations that all our trading partners ignore.

Large-scale deployment of posters hostile to further encroachments upon greenfield sites for building were also much in evidence. This was not simply a "green" protest as was piously claimed by many observers. We know the government is expecting a further million immigrants by the early twenty-first century, with large-scale new towns being created to accommodate them. This was the first protest against that fact and must make the government uneasy. This is not a topic upon which the elected oligarchy which governs us has ever permitted a vote. There is a widespread belief which never surfaces in public discussion, that somewhere in the corridors of power, it has been decided that England shall become a

vast industrial estate with foreign workers imported from every part of the globe to service it.

It is, I believe, the recognition of this as an unacknowledged fact that has influenced the beginnings of a change in the public mood. It is the long-delayed recognition of the nature of the problem facing us that precedes the lengthy process of solving it.

It is almost impossible to judge another country's mood changes because, as in personal conversation, one needs to know the cues, the body language, the inflections of the voice and hints rather than statements, which are thrown out to test response. All we can know is that what is always called "The Rise of the Right" is going full-steam ahead in many parts of Europe with so-called neo-nazis making gains everywhere amongst the young. In fact, what this usually comes down to is not a National Socialist attitude to economic planning or, indeed, to anything else. Wherever it manifests itself, in the newly freed countries of Eastern Europe, in Greece, Spain, France, Italy and Austria, these groups are almost always simply protesting against immigration.

It prompts the question: Why are governments allowing such large-scale immigration all across Europe when it is so unpopular? One truly wishes that it could be said it is purely for economic reasons, and some do indeed argue that this is the case. However, it causes such discontent and fragmentation amongst both the indigenous community and the arriving immigrants that again, one wonders how any government can think it *good*, and can so painstakingly put together the ingredients for inevitable future civil strife.

But the signs are definitely there that we have decided, belatedly, we must face up to what is being done to us. For the first time, figures were recently issued—without there being a liberal outcry—which indicate that immigrants are in a majority in the schools in many metropolitan areas, including London. One report concluded: "We must face the fact that in 20 years time, our capital city may be European only in name."

The delicate tone of this alarming statement speaks volumes. It was not called "a prediction" since it was a demographic *fait accompli*. On the other hand, the word "may" indicates eager anticipation of a miracle to save us from the implications of what this might mean for us. The writer does not share with us his own speculations as to what form this miracle might take; in the circumstances, it is probably just as well.

According to a government report published in September, 1996, the Asian population grew at a rate 40 times faster than the white majority in the 10 years to 1991, and they are becoming *more* segregated from Native

Britons. The report also stated: "High levels of unemployment combined with a decline in the overall quality of the built environment have produced and still produce deep-seated resentment which has the potential to spill over into violence."

We know that a very large proportion of the immigrants are Muslims and that they are strong family people. They protect their women and children from outside interference and there has not been even one case of social workers bursting into an Asian home with policemen in tow, because of an anonymous accusation that the children are being roughly handled there. There would be riots if it was even attempted. They have a very high birth-rate and, because of our liberal divorce laws, have no difficulty in keeping more than one wife as is permitted in their religion. So their presence is increasing exponentially and, furthermore, at least some of them have plans for us!

In August 1994 the Khalifa International Conference was held in no less a place than Wembley Stadium, with delegates from every mosque in the country as well as a capacity crowd. Almost nothing was written about it in the British press apart from reporting that it had taken place and that both adulterers—even Royal ones—and homosexuals would face execution in the process of making Great Britain an Islamic State. In fact, the only people who seemed to have reacted to anything that went on that day were a small group of foolhardy homosexuals who had to be rescued by the police.

Barbara Amiel, the distinguished journalist and wife of the proprietor of the *Daily Telegraph*, wrote about that day in that newspaper nearly two years later and quoted one speaker from the platform who said, using English for the benefit of those born here, "This notion that there is a moderate and an extremist and fundamentalist Islam is a war on us by the media. We have one agenda: Islam will not coexist with tolerance. Islam is a political system that will prevail over all other religions, and in order to have our system, you have to have all other systems out." This was greeted with "thunderous applause" from the audience.

So no one can say that they were not warned. It is of little avail either to claim that there are many tolerant and democratic Muslims in Europe. No doubt they exist in places like Saudi Arabia. It's just that they don't stand a chance against the militant variety who obviously outnumber them. When there is both a pacifistic and an aggressive wing of any movement, one does not need to be very bright to see which will dominate; and that any power struggle is likely to be short-lived. It is summed up in Hilaire Belloc's rhyme,

LYNETTE BURROWS

*Pale Ebenezer thought it wrong to fight
But roaring Bill, who killed him,
Thought it right.*

The question is why Europe has embarked upon the perilous enterprise of allowing millions of people who have promised, on many occasions, that they will one day rise against us, to settle in our midst? It really is a poser for which there can be only two possible explanations. The first is that government thinks it will be able to control any bid for power made by Muslims. But even so, what then? We cannot even solve our tribal dispute between the Irish and the Scots descendants in Northern Ireland. The gypsies are a non-militant headache throughout much of Europe. The Spanish cannot cope with "their" Basques, and the Belgians, who hope to govern us all, have French speakers and Flemish speakers who hate each others' guts and don't even want to share a country as nondescript as theirs!

Can governments, therefore, seriously believe that they will be able to cope with a determined attempt to create an Islamic State out of Europe? It is literally unbelievable. The only thing that can be said in support of this argument is that the sort of people who seek to govern others are often "one sandwich short of a picnic" when it comes to common-sense.

The evils of many atrocious regimes, including fascism in all its forms, passed the intelligentsia by for many years, and it was only brute reality which brought them to their senses. Indeed, this has happened so often in European history that one wonders whether the second possible explanation is not more plausible. That there comes a time in the natural life-cycles of societies when the need is felt to shake out the genetic stock of the core nation. We march blithely into a minefield, knowing that only the strongest in mind and body will come out of it alive.

It is a grisly sort of scenario, but yet the thought makes me quite cheerful. Perhaps we do need to re-learn the ground-rules of life every so often. It is a melancholy fact that, without the realism that accompanies conflict, we often go terribly astray. It would be pleasant to be able to think that the Germans—without the defeat of the Second World War—would have, in time, abandoned their terrible eugenic practices; but we have little reason to believe it.

Now that our generation has discovered the practical advantages of getting rid of unwanted people—and trying to breed better ones in a laboratory—who can honestly see us thinking our way to a more moral way of living? In peacetime, the rich and powerful become corrupt and, at the same time, are able to ring-fence their position so that, within a civil society, no one

can assail them. The contraceptive and abortion industries, with their satellites in education, the medical profession and the social services, are all now so well-entrenched that they are like an alien army themselves.

Likewise the criminal-dependence lobby, which stretches all the way down from learned and respectable judges to lawyers, prison staff, probation officers and councillors, all have such a financial interest in the continuation of high levels of crime that only an uprising amongst the victimised majority will ever wrest their power and their policies from them.

The path from peace to domination by power blocks is a well-worn one. The self-interested, unrepresentative pressure groups looking for territory to colonise make their own clamour for bureaucrats to carry out the reforms they want. The bureaucrats commend the demands of the pressure groups because they give them jobs. Governments listen to these power blocks because, like the media, it is easier to apply to them than to risk asking “the people” what they really want—lest they ask for something which throws a spanner [in U.S. English a “monkey wrench”] in their ideology, or their plans. In the end, the mass of the people become almost completely unrepresented and have to accept paying for the upkeep of the barons of the bureaucracies, and the financial interests they represent, regardless of whether they like or want them. Only conflict, with its sudden promotion of a different type of person to positions of power, can change this scenario.

And yet, as we see clearly in our own day, this is the inevitable endgame. The powers that govern our lives have not seen the dangers presented by their marauding on the moral sense of the people they are parasitic upon. They think we can live without it; but without it *they* will be the first to go.

Nor do they seem to have realised that, unless the people are reasonably content, they will not consent to be governed at all. At what point in Europe’s history the people will decide that the pleasure of fighting for what they have lost is better than enduring the present or anticipating the future, no one can say. But it will undoubtedly be somewhere near that time of numerical parity which the Islamic world has told us will signal the start of their onslaught on democracy, tolerance and “other religions.”

The only comfort for those who fruitlessly labour now to make morality the basis for our lives is one fairly safe prediction. You can be darn sure that the abortion clinics will close; and that when they are reopened, they will have guides and maps and memorials to the innocent dead, to remind our heirs of the depths to which we sank under the old dispensation.

From “Modern” Ireland:

The Rawest of Raw Deals

Denis Murphy

Miss “C” was a thirteen-year-old traveller who lived with her parents and eleven siblings in small caravans in south-west Dublin. The man involved was twenty-four, and a member of a notorious “mafia” traveller clan. When “C” went to look after his children last August 27, her mother later recalled, “She got out of the van and ran. She lost one of her shoes down the lane . . . he drove right out in front of her and dragged her into the motor again . . . When I came home the little girl was lying down crying, upset and in shock. So I asked her what happened and she said nothing happened . . . ‘Did he touch you?’ ‘No,’ she said. She was afraid to tell me for a while and then I got it out of her. She told me. Her ears were all blackened. She had two black eyes and the print of his hand on her throat. She was upset, she was shivering and in very bad shock.”

She was brought to hospital and given the “morning after” pill. Within the week, the Irish State, through its local agency the Eastern Health Board, had taken her into care. Her parents were relieved that she was now in safe hands; they feared the rapist’s family might seek to ensure she did not give evidence. The Health Board placed her with foster parents.

Six weeks later, a social worker told her parents that the “morning after” pill had not worked: the thirteen-year-old was pregnant. The social workers assumed that abortion was one of the “medical treatments” which might be used to deal with the situation. Her parents agreed, fearing for her physical and emotional safety if she continued the pregnancy.

Abortion is not available in Ireland, but in certain circumstances it is legal. That was decided by the Supreme Court in 1992 in the “X case,” when a 14-year-old rape victim said she would kill herself rather than carry her baby to term. The Court decided she had the right to an abortion. Since the Irish Medical Council (the regulatory body for the medical profession) continues to characterise abortion as unethical, her parents brought her to England (although in the event, she miscarried).

The case of the raped 13-year-old was uncannily similar, but with a legal complication: the State was involved, because the child was in its care. In this case, it would not be the parents making the decision, but the State. And the State would not take such a step without asking for direction from the courts. So the Courts would be asked to rule on another

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abortion case. The stakes would be high—whether abortion is considered by Irish law to be a “medical treatment” (a proposition which the medical profession refuses to accept) and whether an abortion in this case would be arranged and financed out of State funds.

There were further possible dangers for the unborn child. The left-dominated governments which held office from 1992 to 1997 appointed a raft of liberal judges to the Supreme Court. If the case went that far, anything might happen. The Court might order that the abortion be carried out in Ireland. Or it might outline a broad “best interests” test for the provision of abortion, thus widening the grounds even further than the X decision.

The story became public knowledge last November after the girl’s father sold it to a Sunday tabloid newspaper. “Raped child to have abortion” read the banner white-on-dark headline: “State believes 13-year-old should travel to Britain for a termination.”

Although the family remained anonymous—Irish law is strict on anonymity in rape cases—the affair was an instant *cause célèbre*. Liberals bewailed the fact that five years after the X case, there was still no abortion facility in Ireland. Conservatives condemned those who saw abortion as a “compassionate” solution for the young girl.

The preliminary reports said that her parents wanted her to have an abortion, and the Health Board was anxious that they express that wish to the courts so that the social workers could bring her to England. However, it was also apparent from the first news story that the parents were far from certain about this course of action.

What the parents were actually quoted as saying was, “We are very mixed up . . . it is an awful situation, but we have told [the Health Board] that we give our consent to an abortion.”

We should note that the “Travellers”—often called Ireland’s “Gypsies”—are not in fact a separate ethnic group but rather people who follow a kind of nomadic cultural tradition. They are generally religious, and certainly do not favor abortion. As the father also said, “We don’t want to go against the Catholic Church, but at the same time we need to do what is best for our little girl . . . We don’t want to have her life destroyed . . . This baby was made through violence and God only knows the damage having it would do to her. We don’t believe our child should have this baby, she is too young, she is only a baby herself”—he said he feared she might *die* in childbirth, because “At such a young age this is possible.”

It was obvious that the parents had genuine concerns which needed to be answered. But if they could be assured that there was no more physical risk involved than if the girl had been an adult—and that the psychological

difficulties could well be increased rather than diminished by a traumatic abortion—the parents might take a different view. And if they decided to oppose an abortion, it would then be difficult for the Health Board to oppose them. Thus not only would her baby be saved, but also the Supreme Court, as one activist put it, “Will have to wait for another day to find its textbook test case to change the law.”

How does a pro-life group proceed in such circumstances? With delicacy and caution, was the consensus. It was not a time for lobby groups to seek to dominate the headlines, but rather for a personal approach to the parents, from people they trusted, people they knew, people who had helped them in the past. The obvious candidates were the Catholic priests attached to the Travelling People’s Parish.

Dr. Desmond Connell, Archbishop of Dublin, lost no time in conveying the message to his priests that in their contacts with the family they were to remember that he would do whatever was necessary to give them the support they needed. The Pro-Life Campaign decided that this private initiative had the best chance of success, and responded to media queries with the general comment that it hoped a way forward could be found to do the best thing for the girl, her family *and* her unborn baby. During the week, its spokespersons used the airwaves to reiterate this position and focus attention on the right to life of the unborn baby at the center of the case, and the fact that abortion was not a suitable treatment.

Events moved quickly. The story broke on Sunday, November 16th. The case was due before a special sitting of the Children’s Court on Wednesday, the 19th. Amid the controversy, the Health Board settled on a legal strategy to avoid the charge that they were sponsoring an abortion. The Board intended to go into the children’s court that Wednesday and formally release the child back into the care of her parents, on the understanding that the parents would leave the child with the foster parents, who would bring her to England for an abortion. The Board would then have the option of taking the girl back into care, having shifted responsibility for the abortion onto the parents. A neat solution, if it had worked. If, on the other hand, the parents had regained legal custody of their daughter and then announced that they were against an abortion . . .

The parents gave a radio interview on Tuesday, the 18th: “What we really want to do is to get our daughter to England, to have an abortion for her own safety,” her father explained. Then he continued, “But if it’s the case that she can have the child without any trouble, if we can get some support for her and the child, then we are quite willing to look after it.”

Those wishing to help the girl wondered about these comments. Although it was not yet reported in the press—at this stage, the father wanted an abortion and seemed immune from media criticism—insiders knew that he did not have a good reputation in the travelling community. He drank. He was in debt to the family of the man who had raped his daughter. His family lived in squalor. Was he looking for genuine support, or was he hoping to make money out of his daughter's plight? Was he a fit man to take custody of his daughter—and if not him, who could? The normal authorities had nothing better to offer her than a trip to England for an abortion and the foster family seemed to have no problem with this.

It was an awkward situation, but not one destined to bother the Dublin Archdiocese's priests for long. They took advantage of the Pro-Life Campaign's offer to line up the necessary legal and medical experts to be ready for an immediate visit to the parents, if requested. The parents spent most of Tuesday away from their caravans. They were home on Tuesday night, but when the Archbishop's representatives arrived, they found members of a small "pro-life" group, Youth Defence, sitting in the family's caravan. The activists promised practical and emotional support for the parents if they opposed the abortion; the parents accepted the offer.

On one level, it was an achievement to have convinced the parents. On another it turned the issue into the State versus Youth Defence, and Youth Defence are widely disliked. *They* argue that this is because of their "effective" opposition to abortion—but other pro-life groups think differently.

Many were furious that the Dublin Archdiocese's efforts to help the girl's family had been "overtaken" by the Youth Defence—but nobody was surprised. In fact, many (although *not* all) Youth Defence leaders are followers of the late Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, whose "St. Pius X" order is in formal schism from Rome, so undercutting the Archdiocese was "normal" behavior. In any case, they claimed that with less than 24 hours to go before the crucial court hearing, their "direct action" was needed because everybody else had shilly-shallied—and that it had *worked*.

It undoubtedly did that. The next day, the Health Board were appalled to be told that the parents were now opposed to an abortion and wanted their daughter back home. The Board members asked for an adjournment of the case, to think anew; it was granted until that Friday.

By then, the family had a new legal team, led by a lawyer experienced in constitutional issues. The family was accompanied to Court by members of Youth Defence *and* an associated organisation, Family & Life. This group was established by a former executive director of Human Life International, Ireland which had originally been the "Irish branch" of

the parent Human Life International, a U.S.-based network founded (and still dominated) by a Catholic priest, Father Paul Marx. The original relationship between Youth Defence and HLI had ended “in tears” and out-of-court settlements, with Father Marx warning his HLI supporters not to support Family & Life (which had evidently used Marx’ “database” to raise funds). During the court hearings the Youth Defence activists—banished by officials from the Court precincts—prowled the area in a painted-green Jeep with blackened windows, woolen caps pulled down over their eyes, using mobile telephones to “co-ordinate” their patrols.

Meanwhile a marathon battle was underway inside the Court. The Health Board had arranged for the 13-year-old to have separate legal representation, so that the Board itself would be distanced from the arguments in favour of an abortion. The girl’s team appeared to have no difficulty in regarding abortion as a legitimate treatment, as long as they were satisfied that she wanted an abortion and that it was in her best interests. They produced a psychiatrist’s opinion to the effect that it would be in her “best interests” to have an abortion. They did not ask for a second psychiatric opinion—a surprising omission, given that the opinion received was so out of line with mainstream medical practice.

According to the acknowledged Irish expert on the subject, Professor Patricia Casey of University College, Dublin, the risk of suicide in pregnancy is to be treated the same way as the risk of suicide outside pregnancy—with appropriate counselling and medication. Indeed, persistent suicidal ideation, particularly in early pregnancy, is most likely to be due to the occurrence of depressive illness, for which previous abortion is one of the risk factors. Professor Casey also challenges those who speak of the “real and substantial risk to the life of the mother” (the present legal test for abortion in Ireland) in the case of a risk of suicide. According to the best international studies, the ability of psychiatrists to predict suicide, even in high risk groups, is less than three in every hundred. The psychiatrists are wrong 97% of the time.

In court, the parents continued to oppose the abortion. Their new legal team, which had been appointed only that day, asked that the case be adjourned for an independent psychiatric assessment of the girl. This was refused. They then asked for a short adjournment, for a briefing by a psychiatrist, to enable them to cross-examine the Health Board on its psychiatric evidence. This was also refused.

At about seven in the evening, the long day ended with the judge granting the application for the girl to be brought for an abortion. She refused

a stay on the decision pending an appeal. The parents emerged from Court, shocked and distressed, and were whisked away by their supporters. Journalists and pro-life activists spent the evening wondering if the Health Board intended to spirit the girl out of the country immediately, before an injunction could be obtained to overturn the judge's refusal to stay the decision pending appeal. In the event, the parents' legal team got an emergency late-night sitting of the High Court (second only to the Supreme Court), which enjoined the Health Board against removing the child until the appeal was heard.

The High Court hearing was scheduled for the following Tuesday. The weekend's newspapers were full of feature articles about the case. The overwhelming interest was in the intervention of Youth Defence and Family & Life, and pages of newsprint detailed the organisations and personalities involved, and the ill-fated link with Father Marx. Much space was also given to the father of the girl. He was no longer the darling of the media, the unfortunate man in an awful quandary. Now, his having decided that an abortion would be the killing of his grandchild, his record of anti-social activities was rehearsed and reported.

The Pro-Life Campaign was—to put it mildly—unhappy with the way things had turned out. On one level, it had to admire the commitment and generosity of the fringe pro-life groups—the leaders literally took the travelling family into their own home for a few days, something that few “settled” people in Ireland would do—furthermore, nobody can deny that until Youth Defence called at the door, the parents had not yet opposed the abortion. However that very public intervention ended the possibility that quiet work by the Catholic Church might have prevented the abortion going ahead. Once it became a public confrontation between Youth Defence and the Eastern Health Board, the dice were loaded against the unborn baby's chance of survival.

The Campaign has always taken the view that pro-life groups exist to promote the right to life of the unborn. Tactics and behaviour which are themselves newsworthy and distract from the core message are regarded as counterproductive. There is nothing more frustrating for a pro-life group than to be putting out a top medical or legal expert to argue the case against abortion, only to find the interview dominated by questions about paramilitary Jeep patrols or the ethics of picketing the private homes of politicians (yes, they did that too).

The High Court appeal did begin on Tuesday (Nov. 25), but no transcript of the proceedings is available because of privacy orders. However, it is known that there were now five high-powered legal teams in action.

One represented the Eastern Health Board, one the parents, and another the girl herself. A further two were appointed by the Attorney General on behalf of the public interest: the first to defend the constitutionality of the legislation governing childcare, the second—remarkably—to represent the interests of the unborn child. Thus one set of lawyers was arguing for a course of action that would involve killing their fellow-lawyers' client. Put like that, it is difficult to see how a court in a European democracy could fail to protect the human life. But it did.

The presiding judge held that the law of the land was the "X-case" judgement, and this case came within that fateful decision, so an abortion could be had. Disappointingly, he ruled that abortion could be considered a medical treatment in these circumstances, despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary *and* the opinion of the Irish medical profession.

As far as the best interests of the girl were concerned, the judgement was a disaster, even if she did not recognise it as such at the time. For her baby, it was a death sentence. For her parents, the loss of their grandchild and the further abuse of their young daughter. For the judge, an unenviable blot on his record and his conscience. For Ireland, the first time taxpayers' money had been used for an abortion.

The only positive—or, perhaps, less negative—aspect of the judgement was that in the wider context of abortion law, it broke no new ground. The judge made no effort to broaden the X-case decision, and indeed held to a relatively narrow interpretation. Furthermore, he refused to accept that a constitutional right to travel meant that there was a right to have an abortion abroad—a right which, if established, might possibly have corollary rights, such as the right to public health funding for such an abortion.

The Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Desmond Connell, expressed his dismay with the judgement in an article published the next day. He articulated the concerns of those shocked that an Irish court had sanctioned an abortion. It is perhaps worth placing his opening on the record.

Last evening's decision by the High Court on the case of the 13 year old girl has saddened me greatly. I had hoped that a decision would be reached which was truly life-affirming, which would cherish the welfare of each of the children involved, one 13 years old, the other 13 weeks in the womb.

I have many concerns about the decision. Obviously, of first concern to all of us must be the impact of abortion. For the baby, it is fatal; for the mother, it can cause long-term psychiatric and emotional problems; for the family in this case, deep grief must ensue. For our society, a deadening of our moral sense and our sense of justice to each other cannot but follow when we sanction the death of the innocent.

I have deep reservations about the re-affirmation by the courts of the notion that there are circumstances where abortion is medically justifiable. The testimony, in the X-case, relating to suicidal tendencies was already controversial. Last evening's judgement, sanctioning the refusal by the lower court to admit an alternative psychiatric assessment is incomprehensible to me, given the fact that somebody's life was at stake.

The fact that many well-meaning people differ about pregnancies in such tragic circumstances, cannot prevent us from looking at the medical realities. Four points are critically important here, it seems to me:

- The Medical Council has not accepted the necessity for abortion.
- Our standard of medical care to pregnant mothers ranks with the best in the world, and is superior to that in abortion jurisdictions near to us.
- The vast majority of Irish doctors are opposed to abortion.
- Most importantly, at a psychiatric level, abortion would appear to cause more problems than it solves, even were we to judge the issue on its medical implications alone.

On this last point, it is clear from the significant risk of psychological problems following abortion, particularly among those who have abortions in their teens or who are ambivalent and/or unsupported, that this unhappy child would be better served if she received the highest degree of medical and psychological support along with the continuation of her pregnancy. Proper support and help—emotional and material—are what this situation really cries out for. I want to thank all those who have reached out to this family, who have offered help in various ways, ways ranging from prayer to offers of material help.

Even now I am praying that the Eastern Health Board can resolve this situation in a better way than that proposed. I renew my pledge to do whatever I can to help, and I know I will not be alone in offering that help. I still hope that the happiest solution, which is that which reconciles this child to her family's wish, and which protects her unborn child, will find an accommodation in the hearts of her carers.

Many Dublin churches heeded the Archbishop's call, and prayers were offered at Sunday Masses for the girl and her unborn baby. Meanwhile, hard legal decisions also had to be made.

Both sides had asked the Supreme Court to clear the decks for an immediate appeal, which was set for Monday morning, December 1. However on studying the High Court judgement, the parents' lawyers saw little hope in an appeal. The High Court's decision was based purely on existing case law, and there was zero chance that the Supreme Court would overrule—to do so, it would be overruling its own previous decisions. The consensus on Friday evening was that the case should go no further.

Over the weekend, the girl's father appears to have changed his mind, and called upon the Archbishop to fund an appeal. But it was not a question of funds. The best legal advice was that an appeal would fail. There was also the real concern that the Supreme Court would use the case to

widen the grounds for abortion. It is a far more liberal Court than in 1992, when “X” was decided, and the “C” case provided the ideal opportunity for a liberally-inclined Court to expand legal abortion.

After a weekend of uncertainty and rumour, the Supreme Court judges insisted that the legal teams appear before it and formally state their intentions. They all told the Court that there would be no appeal.

There was division in pro-life circles about this course of action. Some believed that there was a moral obligation to appeal to the highest court in the land, even if there was no practical chance of success. If the case involved a man on death row, they argued, then the lawyers would have gone all the way. As it was, the decision not to appeal came dangerously close to pulling out before the end of the immediate case as a political tactic in the wider battle.

Others felt that there is no moral obligation to fight hopeless cases, and that it was legitimate to consider the possible damage a no-hope appeal might cause.

Proponents of the “all the way” strategy did not have time to find a way to the Supreme Court. The girl was on the plane to England before briefs could be prepared.

What was the overall impact of the case? As Chou En Lai remarked about the impact of the French Revolution, it is too soon to tell. That said, the preliminary signals are that the case did not end the Pro-Life Campaign’s hopes for a referendum to overturn the “X” ruling—at the time when “X” was in court, there was an international hysteria about the affair, and being pro-life in Ireland was “to have the wrong views in the wrong place at the wrong time,” as one activist puts it.

This time, although public-opinion polls show a majority in favour of the 13-year-old having the option for abortion, the pro-choice lobby failed to generate further momentum towards abortion facilities in Ireland. Perhaps this is simply because a second case always lacks the impact of a first. Or it could be that five years of pro-life arguments against abortion in the case of rape have permeated the public consciousness, at least to the point where opposition to abortion in such circumstances is understood, if not universally accepted. Or it may reflect a darker distinction: Miss X was a middle-class schoolgirl from south Dublin, whereas Miss C was a Traveller-child living on the side of the road. The former could have been anybody’s daughter, but not the latter—and the Travellers have few friends outside their own community.

So the abortion debate in Ireland goes on. The Eastern Health Board

continues to deny responsibility, and the Pro-Life Campaign continues to work to focus attention on what it *did*.

All groups are busy organising submissions to a cabinet sub-committee which has the task of drawing up a list of options on how to proceed on the abortion issue; the Taoiseach (prime minister) has pledged that the public will have the final say, sometime next year, but is reluctant to be drawn on whether he intends to give them the opportunity to overturn “X.”

Meanwhile, the fringe groups claim credit for taking “direct action” when everybody else stood idly by, and bitterly criticise the Pro-Life Campaign for not supporting their efforts. No doubt the media—heavily pro-abortion in Ireland—will be happy to give coverage to their future conflicts.

Sad to say, the father of the rape victim has lurched from one disaster to another, while his wife is doing her best to look after the other *eleven* children.

The 24-year-old man from the “mafia” family went on the run, and was rumoured to be lying low in the neighbouring legal jurisdiction of Northern Ireland. It seemed unlikely that he would be brought to justice. In the event he voluntarily gave himself up, appearing in a police station in Dublin and strongly denying the allegations. He was charged with the crime and is awaiting trial.

The constitutional lawyers who fought the good fight for the unborn have turned to other cases, but will no doubt appear again in the ongoing narrative of the Irish abortion debate.

But what of the still-little girl at the heart of it all? She didn’t choose to be born into the often-reviled Travellers, or to grow up (if *thirteen* is that!) in poverty by the roadside, only to be violated by a grown man of her own tight-knit community—and then again by a Health Board that supposedly exists to *protect* her—what’s become of her?

The first news-reports after her abortion claimed that she was happy and relieved. But then she reportedly “fell out” with her foster parents, and when next she was featured in the tabloid headlines, it was about rumors that she was in deep depression, and even self-inflicted harm. The Health Board denies it all, but the best available evidence is that Miss “C” is now in a psychiatric hospital, heavily medicated. It’s the saddest of stories, of a child-woman who has had the rawest of raw deals. If only those whose duty it was to care had offered her more than a trip to an English abortion clinic. They possibly thought that it was the first step in her healing process. Perhaps they will learn from this experience that killing is never part of healing.

From Farthest “Out Back”:

The Baby in the Fridge

Melinda Tankard Reist

There was a baby in the fridge.

When police arrived at a suburban home in Perth, Western Australia, they found a foetus in a jar in the refrigerator. A Maori woman, a mother of three, had requested the remains of the baby from the doctor following a “termination.” In Maori culture, a baby’s umbilical cord and other material associated with birth should be buried in sacred land. Of course, there *was* no birth, but the mother wanted to take the remains back to her homeland in New Zealand, to be buried according to this tradition.

Her plan went awry when one of her children announced to classmates that there was a “baby in the fridge” at home. The child’s teacher contacted local police who, after finding the baby’s remains, reported it to the State’s Director of Public Prosecutions, John McKechnie, Q.C.

After an investigation of more than a year, McKechnie decided to press charges against the doctor, Victor Chan, and the anaesthetist Hoh Lee Peng, for procuring an abortion at the Nanyara abortion clinic in Cleaver Street. They became the first doctors in more than 20 years to be charged over an abortion in that state. Under WA law, abortion is illegal unless a woman’s life is at risk. There are about 10,000 abortions a year in WA—99 percent of them illegal, on the frank admission of prominent local gynaecologist/abortionist Harry Cohen.

In an interview when the charges were laid, McKechnie told ABC radio that according to the letter of West Australian law, only abortions performed in life-threatening situations were legal. In a letter to a group of women MPs who tried to press him to drop the charges, McKechnie replied: “Police officers and prosecutors do not have the luxury of choosing which laws they will enforce.” (He has since stated that because the case is now before the courts, he is unable to comment further—thus we are prevented from finding out more about the mother at the centre of the controversy!)

In other circumstances, the discovery of a dead baby in a refrigerator would have led to calls for capital punishment of child slayers, or at least stiff prison sentences. The macabre find would have led to breast-beating

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about the abuse of children in our society: the mistreatment of those most vulnerable and most in need of protection.

But the discovery of the remains of this child has led to the legal sanction of further child death and top-level protection for those who carry out the deed. The Western Australian Parliament has just voted in the most liberal abortion law in Australia—a law which is, according to England's John Finnis, a well-known law professor at Oxford, second only to Communist China's in its contempt for the life of the unborn child.

There was a baby in the fridge. But that baby has been forgotten, trampled in the rush to enshrine unfettered access to abortion.

In Australia, abortion law is a state responsibility. Unlike the U.S., Australia does not have one national court ruling legalising abortion. As a result, abortion laws vary from state to state. In all Australian states, abortion remains on the criminal statute books. South Australia and the Northern Territory have so far been the only jurisdictions to legislate to define the circumstances in which abortion can be performed lawfully. However, under common law derived from court decisions, grounds for legal abortion is interpreted liberally.

Two major court decisions are cited in defence of abortion practice. The first is the 1969 Menhennitt ruling in Victoria which decided that the danger presented by a woman's pregnancy "should not be confined to danger of life but should apply equally to danger to physical or mental health." Two years later the New South Wales District Court (a lower court) expanded this definition, ruling that the court should take into account "any economic, social or medical ground or reason which . . . could result [in] a serious danger to her physical or mental health." In Queensland in 1986, a judge said the "preservation of the mother's life" included the "preservation of health in one form or another."

In a very recent case, Appeal Court Justice Michael Kirby (now of the High Court), went even further, stating that doctors should also take into account the effect a continuing pregnancy would have on the woman's *future* mental health. This case involved a woman attempting to sue Superclinics in NSW for failing to diagnose her pregnancy until it was too late for her to abort. She was suing for all costs incurred in raising her nine-year-old daughter—right down to the nappy rash cream (a so-called "wrongful birth" action, the first of its kind in Australia).

The woman had lost at first instance in the Supreme Court in 1994, when the judge ruled against her, saying that an abortion would not have been necessary because her life and health were not in danger. She then

won in a majority ruling in the NSW Court of Appeal in 1995. Superclinics took an appeal to the High Court. The appeal hearing went for two days in September 1996 and was then adjourned for a further hearing in November. However the case was settled out of court in October.

It is believed the pro-abortion side recognised the potential for the High Court to decide abortion was illegal. Crucial questions of law concerning the legality of abortion had not been raised in any of the previous hearings and had only come to light on the intervention of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and the Australian Catholic Health Care Association who were allowed to submit "friends of the court" briefs.

Regardless of the current state of case law, it took a mere week for Western Australia's elected representatives to ram through abortion on demand. Normal parliamentary procedures were not observed—the bills were not referred to a Committee for proper examination, as happens with bills of far less importance.

The largest (in area) state in Australia, with a population of 1.7 million, WA is dependent on mining, wheat, wool and livestock. Its capital city Perth, (founded 1829, population 1.2 million) is a former convict settlement. Located between a desert and the coast, Perth is one of the most isolated cities of its size in the world. Sometimes compared to the American mid-West, its small population often feels alienated from the Eastern States. But its self-esteem was greatly boosted when it won the America's Cup yacht race in 1983—it had been in U.S. hands since the inception of the race in the 1800's.

Western Australia does not have a reputation for being enlightened or progressive. It was the last state to abolish capital punishment (in 1984) and as late as 1994 enforced a strict skirts-and-dresses-only policy that banned female transcript typists from wearing trousers in the parliamentary chambers. The policy changed only when strike action was threatened. Now, words such as "enlightened," "progressive" and "history-making" are raining down on the state from the nation's media who are trumpeting WA as the spearhead for national abortion law reform.

However, while the pro-abortion forces celebrated at the end of the all-night sitting which secured abortion on demand, a number of pro-life Members of Parliament openly wept in the chamber, as did their black-arm-band-wearing supporters in the public gallery.

The Liberal Government—which ran for election on a pro-family-values line—is being condemned by pro-life forces for facilitating the passage of the bills; it could have prevented the irresponsible hastiness with which they were dealt. The Government's own Attorney General, Peter Foss, with

Cabinet and Party Room approval, prepared the Government Bill for the Legislative Assembly (the lower house). This bill allowed abortion on a broad range of grounds. Prof. Finnis describes the Foss Bill as “casually indifferent to [the unborn’s] rights, interests and reality as persons entitled to some genuine protection by their community’s law.”

Foss also assisted with the drafting of another, even more radical bill, introduced as a Private Member’s Bill by Labor’s Cheryl Davenport into the Legislative Council (the upper house). This bill removed abortion from the Criminal Code altogether and amounted to abortion on demand. In the end, Foss defected from the government-backed legislation to vote for Davenport’s repeal bill, which showed where his heart really lay. (The Foss legislation has since been withdrawn after the Legislative Council president ruled that it breached standing orders which preclude debate on two bills dealing with the same issue in the same sitting of parliament. The Davenport Bill will be finalised at the end of April.)

There is much suspicion that this was a deliberate move to ensure the Davenport Bill became the winner. It has since been revealed that Foss and Davenport knew of the impending charges months in advance and were well prepared with their respective bills when the charges were finally laid. The pro-life MPs, on the other hand, were caught completely unaware and had little time to prepare amendments.

The attempts by a small cross-party coalition of pro-life MPs to minimise the harm of the bills failed. Their colleagues would not accept mandatory counselling, or even a cooling-off period. An amendment requiring a certified second medical opinion before an abortion was rejected, as was another requiring the abortionist to issue a certificate listing reasons for a “termination.” The only concession granted was to allow conscientious objection provisions to protect those in the medical profession from being forced to take part in abortions.

Many MPs claimed they supported abortion on “social” and “family” grounds (but sex-selection abortions could easily qualify?). These were not defined. Abortion would be allowed without a woman’s consent if it was “impracticable for her” to give that consent. “Impracticable” was also not defined, leaving the door wide open for non-voluntary abortion for women with intellectual disabilities, women from non-English speaking backgrounds, women affected by medications or simply unconscious.

Many MPs balked at any gestational time limit, but they eventually accepted a compromise of 20 weeks—exceptions on “medical grounds” would be allowed after that time. So extreme was the level of sectarianism in the

debate that an amendment for counselling independent of the service provider failed when moved by MPs identified as part of the pro-life/Christian camp, but was passed the following day when moved by someone else. The parental notification requirement also succeeded when moved by a member supporting liberalised laws. However, pro-abortion MPs in the Lower House are pledging to fight both requirements when the Davenport Bill is returned for finalisation.

Amazingly, contempt for the disabled was barely disguised by those wanting the laws expanded to allow for their in-utero elimination. Attorney General Foss originally intended a clause relating to abortion for genetic defects. However, it was dropped at the last minute following criticism by pro-life activists who accused the Government of disguising its intention to “weed out Down’s syndrome and undesirable children.” But Dr. Scott Blackwell, state president of the Australian Medical Association, was not so delicate. He said: “To potentially not have access [to abortion] and have an abnormal baby, with Down’s syndrome or severe spina bifida is absolutely appalling.”

Seven senior doctors sent a letter to MPs warning of the “social implications” [read *costs*] of curbing access to abortion services. They said about 100 abortions a year in WA involved serious malformations of the foetus. “Whilst some of these children would die at or soon after birth, some would survive the disabilities and need services that are already stretched to the limit.”

On the other side, Dr. Sarah Oh, a member of Doctors Against Abortion, went public to say that she had refused to abort her unborn son who has Edward’s syndrome and may only live a few months if he survives the birth. “We will love him as much as we can during his short time on earth,” she said. Dr. Oh met with a tirade of abuse for continuing the pregnancy. “Bringing this child into the world could be termed a criminal offence,” declared one M. Lockwood of Golden Bay, WA, in a letter to *The West Australian*. Commenting on a large photograph of a heavily pregnant Dr. Oh, one Dr. Kenneth Jones said the paper should publish a “big picture of her grossly abnormal child on the front page of the newspaper. Your readers may then witness what some of the extreme anti-abortion lobbyists are producing and are demanding that others produce.”

In the midst of this pro-abortion press spectacular, a Brisbane doctor lost an appeal against a three-month suspension handed down after a 25-year-old Asian woman on whom he performed an abortion suffered

permanent brain damage. The Queensland Medical Assessment Tribunal found Peter Bayliss guilty of professional misconduct for bungling the abortion at his Greenslopes clinic in 1994. The Tribunal head, Justice George Fryberg, said Dr. Bayliss's negligence "was gross, perhaps even criminal." The woman suffered oxygen starvation which had left her in "a neurologically vegetative state." She has been on life support in a nursing home ever since. However, the maximum fine of \$3,000, which the tribunal could have imposed, was an "absurd penalty in this case," Fryberg stated, suspending Bayliss instead. (A three month suspension for leaving a woman permanently brain damaged!) A 17-year-old Aboriginal woman who died part way through an abortion at the same clinic did not rate a mention.

Bayliss was found guilty of malpractice in the same week as the media were railing that abortion was no concern of the criminal law and that the law should reflect what the majority wants. An editorial in *The West Australian* proclaimed: "They [MPs] would be well advised to remember that they owe their places in the Parliament to democratic principles and that they should respect the rule of the majority, regardless of the intensity of their personal beliefs." But what if the majority should want a return to capital punishment? Or to tar-and-feathering, put forward as the solution to street prostitution on a popular Perth radio talk back program! As Episcopal Vicar for Health Care in Melbourne, Dr. Anthony Fisher, wrote in a letter to *The Age*, "The purpose of law is not only to reflect what the community expects but also to protect the vulnerable from majority whims."

Another Queensland abortionist, Dr. David Grundmann, best known for his partial-birth abortion specialty (he's also excited about several other methods he wants to bring in from the U.S., such as ripping out the placenta and injecting potassium chloride into the fetal heart) declared he would apply to practice in WA as a show of support for the charged doctors. "I've applied to show solidarity between the eastern and western States because these doctors must be feeling quite isolated," he said. "And to make them realise that if anything happens to them, we're quite ready to fly over and lend a hand."

Not that they need Grundmann to step into the breach just yet—the charged doctors are still practicing, though complaining that business has "slumped" because people think they're no longer open for business. ("Abortion trade shrinks" was the newspaper headline.) The media dealt in stereotypes and polarities: the good and kind pro-choicers defending the rights of women pitted against the evil woman-hating "anti-choice" men.

Television current-affairs programs featured two pro-abortion women pitted against one pro-life man.

More than 2,000 pro-life people gathered on the steps of Parliament House (they rarely have numbers that big). The press next day reported quotes from the "Roman Catholic" Archbishop Barry Hickey, but ignored the other speakers who didn't fit the stereotype. A blind woman with seven children told the crowd how she was ordered to abort her last child because the pregnancy would end her life. She refused and brought the child to the podium where they hugged and kissed. She then went on to tell how she herself was one of a twin who survived after an abortion. Her twin died and she still grieved.

Surely, by any stretch of the imagination this would be a story worth reporting? But it got no mention anywhere. Far better to go for a member of the "celibate male hierarchy"—or to dredge up some pro-abortion female ones such as Marion Millen, who will be an ordained Uniting Church minister by the time you read this. She commented on the rain falling at a pro-choice rally, saying it was "a sign from God" and "yes, She is indeed weeping on this issue." (Her She-god wasn't weeping for the *babies*, of course.)

Also paraded for the media was Hazel Hawke, the ex-wife of the former Labor Prime Minister Bob Hawke. She became the darling of the pro-choice campaign, talking about her backyard abortion in 1952 aged 18 when pregnant by her then fiancé, the future prime minister. But marriage had to be delayed and the baby sacrificed for his Rhodes scholarship at Oxford (Hawke took off with his much-younger biographer a couple of years ago).

The group Women Hurt By Abortion was all but ignored when it attempted to bring such issues as post-abortion grief, links between abortion and breast cancer, and abortion and suicide to the Parliament's attention. The risks of abortion were played down or ignored completely. The politics of the "right-to-choose" once again took precedence over a woman's actual lived experience of abortion.

A storm of protest erupted in the media when one pro-life group, the Coalition for the Defence of Human Life, released medical records regarding 24 abortions carried out at one of Perth's two clinics on March 25. The names of the women were altered, however their ages, the ages of the babies and names of referring doctors remained unchanged. At a memorial service for the unborn children, bloodied surgical gloves and abortion instruments used at the clinic were displayed. The pro-life group was

pilloried for “stealing” confidential records and breaking into the clinic. But the police have said there was no break-in at the clinic, nor did anyone at the clinic leak the list of names.

The media failed to ask an obvious question: Why did the clinic tell police it does not want to press charges? Doesn't it suggest that perhaps the clinic disposes of client information in the same cavalier way it disposes of the babies it aborts? Who should be blamed for not caring about the privacy of women?

Our national newspaper, *The Australian*, in an editorial “Abortion tactics mar our community ethic,” condemned the pro-life lobby for their “strategies that employ illegal, invasive and divisive means [that] are unacceptable.” But in fact the pro-life group did not act illegally, nor did it invade the clinic, while the doctors *had* been acting illegally. Are they berated for actions which are not only illegal, but invasive of the bodies of women and babies and certainly “divisive” for the baby?

No one wanted to be confronted with cold hard realities—the realities of death and blood-stained surgical gloves. Liberal Rob Johnson said lobbying has taken “a turn for the worse” when a postcard showing an aborted foetus was sent to his electorate office: “It was most graphic and frankly I found it very distasteful,” he said. “I don't think that sort of thing is necessary.” The Hon. Tom Helm, Labor, told the parliament: “I join many people, particularly on this side of the House, who have a proud record of supporting oppressed people who do not get a good shake out of life . . . I was mortally offended yesterday when the so-called pro-life brigade outside the Parliament described an abortion in detail.” How dare they describe the torture of this oppressed group!

MP Sheila McHale, Labor (who called herself pro-life *and* pro-choice), urged members to get out of their heads the silly idea that abortion involved a baby at all: “Let us dismiss the notion that the unborn baby is being aborted. That conjures up an image which [is] not borne out by the facts.” The writer of a letter to the editor of *The Age* in Melbourne described abortion as “the medical specialty of menstruation management”—a euphemism which would have made Dr. Goebbels proud.

Some refused to face a basic lesson in biology. Pro-life groups distributed to all 91 politicians boxes containing an educational set of foetal models. “The West Australian Parliament has never had a parcel delivery like this one, dozens of large boxes containing plastic models of fetuses in the womb and individually addressed to state MPs,” reported *The Bulletin*. “As the boxes were stacked up in the entrance hall late last week,

Labor MLC Cheryl Davenport rolled her eyes heavenward. The 'right-to-lifers' were stepping up pressure on MPs . . . She and the pro-choice lobby would have to hit the phones . . ." Labor MLA Judy Edwards told *The West Australian* she took strong exception to the package of model foetuses. "I think it was in very poor taste and I question the scientific accuracy of what they did," she said.

Meanwhile, back in the parliament, abortion was put forward as the solution to "overpopulation," unwanted children and the lack of foster care. This from the Hon. Ljiljanna Rivilich (Labor): "We must accept the reality of unwanted children and we can avoid a situation of having unwanted children. This sort of feel good stuff [a couple had written to *The West Australian* offering to care for children whose mothers were considering aborting] just gets in the way of intelligent debate." And this from the Hon. John Halden: "If we ascribe to the foetus certain rights and say it has life from the moment of conception, because that is the argument that I have heard, and if we legislate on that basis, where will we end up?" (Oh my goodness, human rights for all humans—God forbid!)

A number of MPs on the "choice" side quoted liberally from the report *Services for the Termination of Pregnancy in Australia* which had been commissioned by the Federal Government body, the National Health & Medical Research Council. They were blissfully unaware that the Government had been forced to completely destroy the report back in February because it was so laden with errors.

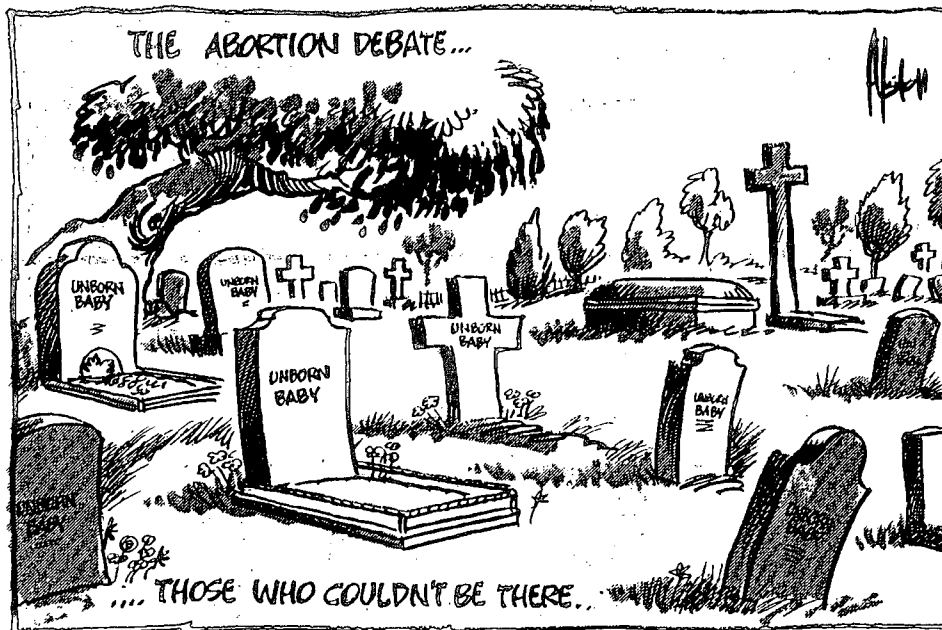
Christine Sharp (Greens, WA) waxed eloquent about abortion as "a process of affirming life . . ." She continued: "I know that a foetus is life . . . Sometimes, with integrity, women would choose to terminate that life. I see this courage which women must adopt from time to time as life affirming. I see women taking the awesome responsibility of motherhood very seriously." (She is borrowing here from the writing of Australian bioethicist Leslie Cannold who, in a new book *The Abortion Myth*, writes of abortion as an act of love—"killing from care" she calls it.)

But these warm, fuzzy sentiments didn't last long. Sharp then said: "It has been suggested that as Greens we should be especially respectful with life, nurturing and biodiversity. I am pleased to hear such respect for our high moral ground . . . However, our philosophies are usually concerned with the long term survival of ours and all species. We are approaching six billion people on this planet, and our long term survival perhaps rests with our ability to give birth to fewer babies . . . Of course, it is not necessary to advocate that abortion is the best way to secure the survival

of our species, but it is part of the traditional way that our species has survived. It will need to continue to survive. In a way, Greens are not very sentimental."

To nobody's surprise, the "pro-choice" forces ignored the baby in the fridge. One wonders if they spared any concern for the baby's mother. How did she feel, every time she opened the fridge door to get food for her other children, to see the remnants of her child? Others may deny the reality of what was in the fridge, but its mother knew what it was. That's why she didn't want it thrown in with the other "medical waste." That's why she wanted a proper burial.

The West Australian (in a moment of weakness?) managed to publish one profound thing in the midst of it all: a cartoon titled *The Abortion Debate*. Beneath a cemetery full of headstones marked "Unborn Baby" were the words: "Those who couldn't be there." The baby in the fridge, still unburied, won't be there for the debate either.



This is the editorial cartoon that appeared in THE WEST AUSTRALIAN (March 11, 1998) during the abortion debate described above by Mrs. Reist.

Bah Humbug to Babies

James Hitchcock

Not many years ago during the Christmas season, one could revel in the general good will celebrated in the media, then steel oneself for a return to normal hostilities shortly thereafter, not least because of the infamous date January 22, the anniversary of the day on which abortion was suddenly found to be a constitutional right. But in recent years the media seem no longer to bother calling a truce on abortion during the holidays, and if anything use the opportunity to escalate hostilities.

This past year the *Washington Post* published, on Christmas Day, a column by one of its regular writers, Richard Cohen, decrying a jury decision in Los Angeles in which an actress named Hunter Tylo was awarded five million dollars for having been fired from a role in the television series "Melrose Place."

Cohen made one legitimate point: Ms. Tylo was hired to play a "steamy vixen" and could scarcely have thought that being pregnant was compatible with that image. He got in a few licks at the sordid world of television drama and, had he stopped there, he would have struck a glancing blow at media hypocrisy.

But Cohen would *not* stop there. Was the verdict a victory for feminism? Certainly one might think so, since for years feminists have been insisting that a woman's physical condition, including pregnancy, should not be a barrier to any kind of opportunity, and that hiring policies which take pregnancy into account are inherently "sexist."

Do not be deceived, Cohen warned. The verdict is really a victory for those wicked pro-life people, who have "turned pregnancy and childbirth into some sort of miracle, a virtual religious phenomenon."

Ms. Tylo's case called forth feminist sneers, including male feminists, because in the hierarchy of contemporary liberal causes, the sexual revolution trumps just about every other card. Although a few feminists have dared to wonder publicly if women have not in reality become the victims of that revolution, they are quickly silenced by more "orthodox" believers, who view emancipation from the Judaeo-Christian sexual ethic as even more liberating than whatever benefits feminism itself has brought them. (Thus a leftist newspaper, the *New York Observer*, published a round-

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table discussion among certified feminists who vied with one another in confessing how much they would like to have an affair with President Clinton, indicating that, far from constituting sexual harassment, his actions present young women with wonderful opportunities.)

Admittedly, the Hunter Tylo case presents murky issues from a feminist standpoint. Perhaps the orthodox line should be that, pregnant or not, she was entitled to play a “steamy vixen,” whatever propriety might say about such a performance. Although steamy vixens were not long ago denounced as “sex objects”—as women who allowed themselves to be defined solely by male lust—feminism eventually discovered that for a woman to flaunt her sexuality in public, in ways which used to be socially disapproved, is a yet higher stage of liberation.

Thus negative reactions to Ms. Tylo’s suit are somewhat irrational even from an approved feminist standpoint, and can probably best be understood as instinctive disapproval of a woman who, in the traditional manner, “uses” her pregnancy to make claims of victimhood. Pregnancy does victimize women, feminists insist, but women have the power to eliminate that oppression and those who advertise their pregnancies are suspected of ideological backsliding. Put another way, feminists are uneasy with the claim that willingly-pregnant women suffer certain social disabilities, since feminism has spent most of its energies establishing the victimhood of women who do not want to be pregnant.

But if pregnancy is not a kind of miracle, what is it? Cohen’s sneers make sense only on the assumption that it is an unfortunate medical condition which every right-thinking woman will terminate without scruple as soon as it inconveniences her career. Feminists insist that no woman ever has an abortion for frivolous reasons. Cohen implies that among the “serious” reasons which justify abortion is the need to continue qualifying in the public eye as a “steamy vixen.”

Along the way, in this Christmas offering to the readers of his newspaper, Cohen got in the obligatory sneer at “immaculate conception.” Writers who offend particular groups in this manner are ordinarily accused of being “insensitive,” meaning that they do not realize what they are doing. That is certainly not true of Cohen—he *meant* to offend, his editors meant for him to offend, and Christmas Day was chosen precisely for that purpose.

Although the process may not be entirely conscious, Christmas now calls forth in the liberal mind a collage of disturbing thoughts—the frustrating and bewildering persistence of religious belief in a world which by rights should long ago have laid such beliefs permanently to rest, atavistic

notions of the dignity of motherhood and the sacredness of unborn life, pregnancy not as a catastrophe but as an event of infinite promise, motherhood as a divinely bestowed privilege.

Years ago feminists started crusading against the celebration of Mother's Day because it "privileged" women's traditional role. The drive virtually to eradicate Christmas in favor of "the Winter holiday" is not only motivated by the demands of religious neutrality but also because of the symbolism of the feast itself. The pro-abortion mind will never be entirely at ease so long as that symbolism remains prominent in American life.

Like other "pro-choice" commentators, Cohen also struck a few blows at the McCaughey family of Iowa, who produced septuplets last fall. Those births, he sneered, were "glossed over with a patina of religion and sanctimony." Once again it seems extraordinary that the birth of children into a family which wants them should be the occasion for negative public comment, but there has indeed occurred what Friedrich Nietzsche called "the transvaluation of values"—seemingly innocent and joyful human events are now condemned as politically deviant.

Cohen made the feminist case by lamenting that both the Tylo and McCaughey pregnancies constitute a "sad example of a woman pretending she has no control over her life," a statement which at first glance seems as though the powerful little word "no" was inserted by mistake. After all, the two women precisely exercised "control" by choosing to have children.

Pro-abortionists have gotten maximum mileage from their slogan about "choice," insisting that they only want to give each woman the right to decide whether or not to bear a child. But it has long been obvious that this is a sham. In the end feminists believe that only one choice is the proper one, and those who choose motherhood deserve no sympathy.

Thus the correct response by Hunter Tylo to her pregnancy should have been to terminate it, because her career ought to take precedence, a claim reinforced by the sexually-provocative nature of her acting. Her decision to continue her pregnancy at the possible expense of her career thus manifests both stupidity and the lingering influence of reactionary values. Her law suit deserved no support from feminists because she took the wrong path in resolving her dilemma.

The McCaugheys were, predictably, criticized for willingly placing on themselves a burden they would be unable to bear and for contributing to the over-population of the world.

Presumably, however, the right to "choose," once again, includes the

right to have a large family? But “choice” in such matters has always been of one kind. While the right to choose to terminate a pregnancy is now considered sacred, not to be restricted for any reason, the right to have children remains under a cloud, to be justified in each individual case.

Surely it ought to be solely the McCaugheys’ concern whether they can raise seven children all of the same age. For outsiders to decide otherwise is the height of arrogant interference with the personal liberties which liberalism holds so dear.

But immediately upon the birth of the septuplets commentators began pointing out triumphantly that the family was receiving outside help—donations of baby food and diapers, offers to assist with taking care of the babies while the family was adjusting, on and on. America’s First Lady had won liberal applause for her claim that “it takes a village to raise a child,” but suddenly liberals were invoking a version of the survival of the fittest—in accepting outside help the McCaugheys were cheating and should be censured for it.

Liberals bristle at the claim of conservatives to be “pro-family,” but in some ways liberal ideology now does treat the stable family as an obstacle to social progress. Thus some liberals bitterly complained that gifts made to the McCaugheys were resources taken from the poor, reinforcing the suspicion that in the critics’ minds the welfare of the underclass and the welfare of the middle class are indeed at war with one another, so that society must always be nudged in the direction of the former. That the McCaughey family might prosper was an offense to liberals who think of themselves as endlessly compassionate.

The fact that the McCaugheys are professedly Christian and thank God for their blessing of children also counts heavily against them in enlightened circles, where religious belief has been defined as dangerous fanaticism, to be excluded from serious discussion. Had the parents of the septuplets babbled something about reincarnation they would have been treated with more understanding and respect. (Several years ago one of Cohen’s colleagues at the *Washington Post* had to apologize when he described evangelical Christians as “poor, uneducated, and easily led.” Cohen, however, insisted that his colleague was correct in his judgment.)

Part of this is the unrecognized phenomenon of moral *ressentiment* (Max Scheler’s illuminating term), which is one product of the sexual revolution. Those who have made that revolution cannot endure the fact that others still look upon them with disapproval. The revolutionaries have lingering guilt feelings bothersome enough to require them to discredit those

who disapprove. The sexual revolution will not be complete until all vestiges of moral scruples about sex have been erased.

Thus pro-abortionists are unwilling to condemn the practice even in the most heinous cases because to do so would be to admit that it is a morally-questionable act. They will finally feel safe, psychologically, only when abortion is seen as wholly benign, to the point where people who choose not to have an abortion in difficult circumstances are themselves viewed as morally deficient.

The obligation of political correctness imposes the determination that certain beliefs or practices, while legally permissible, must be deprived of all social respectability. Just so, principled commitment to motherhood cannot be allowed to go unchallenged when it appears to conflict with what feminists consider the “correct” choice for women. Feminists insist that mothers receive special consideration from their employers, but not in situations where every “responsible” woman would choose an abortion.

It is tempting to think that Cohen, in letting this particular cat out of the bag, has done his cause harm. But in reality, just as his offensive sneers at religion were calculated, so also was his casual rejection of freedom of choice. He is ratcheting up the debate to the next level, which is that of legal coercion.

Contemporary liberalism harbors two seemingly contradictory impulses—veneration of personal freedom and a strong bent towards government action of the kind variously called “social engineering” and “the nanny state.” For a long time these liberal tendencies were in tension with each other, but now they have been resolved.

Thus, for example, liberals first asserted that people have a right to practice birth control, and they offered numerous reasons why doing so is both personally and socially beneficial. Indeed, they found these reasons so compelling that it soon became a puzzle why everyone did not choose to do so when given the opportunity. Some variation of the theory of “false consciousness” was then invoked, whereby people would choose to do certain things if they had not been effectively propagandized by irrational forces, the chief of which is of course religion.

Thus social engineering is required to make people into the kind of “free” individuals liberals determine they ought to be. The only people who do not choose to limit the size of their families are those who, in the words of Cohen’s colleague, are uneducated and easily led. Hence their freedom of choice need not be respected.

The kind of social engineering required to “liberate” such people is quite

far-reaching, amounting to nothing less than a revolution in the entire educational system, the full participation of the mass media as conscious organs of propaganda, and the systematic marginalization of all forms of religion which are unwilling to serve this social-engineering purpose.

Severe doubts have now been cast on the threat of overpopulation, by no means all of them cast by religious believers. (See "World Population Implosion?" by Nicholas Eberstadt in the Winter '98 issue of this journal.) But, if the social engineers in the beginning really believed that it was necessary to limit the size of families to prevent over-population, that rationale is no longer required. Large families in themselves have been defined as undesirable, an insupportable burden to the parents, and harmful to the children as well. Voluntary childlessness has been elevated to the status of nobility.

While people with large families are accustomed to being accused of contributing to over-population, many have also had the experience of being disdained merely for having done something deemed crude and unseemly. A letter in a St. Louis newspaper accused the McCaugheys of being selfish in desiring children, predicted that the children would be "mentally and developmentally delayed," and said the parents were "unfair to give the children this kind of life." Even if they were physically normal, the writer predicted, they would be the objects of stares and comments at school. Apparently in the writer's mind such annoyances are sufficient grounds for depriving the septuplets of their lives.

Altogether, the alleged threat of over-population provides the most compelling justification yet for a fully-developed program of social engineering, extending not only to people's behavior but to their inmost beliefs as well. Conspicuously, liberals have failed to condemn Chinese policies of population control and have sometimes endorsed them. Commentators like Cohen give warning that the day is coming when enlightened opinion will question whether people like the McCaugheys have even the legal right to do what they have chosen to do.

Further evidence of the primacy of the sexual revolution is the fact that, despite the alleged threat of over-population, no enlightened commentators condemn, for example, lesbians who want to be impregnated, nor do they condemn the idea of human cloning. Bringing more people into the world is not objectionable so long as it is done in ways which further the assault on traditional moral beliefs.

Similarly, people who are passionate about population control are not strong advocates of adoption, because feminists have defined women who

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give up their babies for adoption as “breeding machines.” Encouragement given to adoption can only make abortion seem less defensible, which feminists cannot permit to happen, since giving birth to a baby and giving it up for adoption implies that the mother has moral scruples about abortion.

Christmas of 1997 may in retrospect be seen as a significant moment in American cultural history, not for the usual reasons but because it was chosen as the day to accelerate the cultural war against precisely those things the feast has always celebrated.



'Since I had the procedure, I haven't so much as thought of smoking a cigarette.'

THE SPECTATOR 10 January 1998

76/SPRING 1998

Did They Murder My Dad?

"An Anonymous Son"

I watched my father die on Christmas morning. He had been unconscious through the night, his breathing growing more shallow with each passing hour. When the end came, it was not as I had expected—no peaceful final sigh. His arms and legs jerked violently. Unseeing eyes (or were they?) wide open, he bit off part of his tongue. Blood and white foam came from his mouth. After what seemed an eternity, but what was more likely a minute or so, he died. I was overcome with grief, horror, anger—but not with any sense of relief that he was finally at peace. You see, my father did not die a natural death. He was killed. Purposefully. By those who professed to love him the most.

Not that my father was in the prime of his life, or in good health. Quite to the contrary, he was a cancer patient and his days were certainly numbered. In the early 1980's he had been diagnosed with squamous cell cancer after an infection in an old scar on top of his head was examined. A small lump the size of a pea was also found behind his left ear. Surgery and radiation treatment put my father in remission for more than a decade. But then another lump appeared, in the same place behind the left ear. My father refused to see a doctor. He was frightened by doctors and hospitals.

Only when the lump became large did it frighten him more than the medical profession, and he sought treatment from an oncologist. After chemotherapy treatment failed to reduce the tumor, he had it partially removed surgically, and had more radiation. However, the cancer had metastasized to his left lung. Ironical that, after years of cigarette smoking, he ended up with a type of cancer not normally associated with smoking.

The oncologist tried to persuade my father to undergo additional chemotherapy treatment with a newer, experimental drug, but he refused. One key reason was that he didn't want to lose his hair. The least vain person I had ever known was willing to suffer with cancer rather than lose his hair! Surprisingly though, the tumors didn't grow. The oncologist expressed amazement that this type of cancer, which is normally very treatable and which rarely spreads quickly, seemed to spread so easily in my father's body. Yet when it does spread, it usually grows very rapidly.

The "Anonymous Son" is a businessman (not a journalist) who lives in an eastern state. While we obviously cannot vouch for the accuracy of his story, the editors think it is quite plausible and, indeed, has a "ring of truth" to it, so we decided to let our readers decide for themselves.

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My father's tumors hardly grew at all. Eventually, a small tumor developed in his brain. It was operable, but the knowledge that more tumors could appear just as suddenly convinced my dad not to undergo surgery. Steroids used to reduce swelling around the brain tumor ultimately shielded a serious intestinal infection, resulting in a colostomy and an 18-day hospital stay. The stay would have been shorter had it not been for an adverse reaction to morphine he was given for post-operative pain. The reaction caused temporary drug-induced delusions, which faded as the effects of the reaction wore off. As he neared discharge from the hospital, my older sister made arrangements for my father to be treated at home by a home health-care nurse. This sister, who is self-employed as a medical transcriptionist, typed all of this nurse's patient records and had become close with her. Little did I know that this was the first action in the plan to kill my father.

* * * * *

Euthanasia. A cold word. Clinical and "medical" sounding. There are many individuals and organizations that try to make this kind of killing sound a little warmer, a little less antiseptic, by using non-threatening terms and phrases. Even terms such as "mercy killing"—once espoused by many of the euthanasia-promoting organizations—have been abandoned for "friendlier" sounding euphemisms, such as "deliverance" and "graceful departure." But put simply, euthanasia means intentionally making someone die, rather than allowing that person to die naturally. Put bluntly, euthanasia means killing in the name of compassion.

The perception of euthanasia is rapidly being changed from an unthinkable act to a kind and gentle way to end the severe suffering of a loved one. The most visible and vocal support for euthanasia comes from organizations such as Concern for Dying and the Society for the Right to Die (formerly the Euthanasia Society of America). These groups promote euthanasia "education" and legislation. The more radical Hemlock Society (whose co-founder, Derek Humphry, assisted his cancer-stricken wife to commit suicide) distributes a "how-to" suicide manual and has proposed legislation in California, Arizona, Florida, and Washington that would allow physicians to kill terminally-ill patients by lethal injection.

While such groups claim to support "voluntary" euthanasia, it has become apparent that their major thrust is making sure that many people with a supposed poor "quality of life"—whether it be from congenital disabilities or those caused by illness or injury—are "allowed" to die against their will. They support such issues as Living Will laws by claiming

that all opposition is really an attempt to thwart the free choice of patients to decide for themselves. Having succeeded in using slogans such as "individual rights" and "deference to families" to overcome the prevailing ethic of respect for all human life that still existed 25 years ago, these groups turned their efforts toward changing the culture to one which allows the killing of "poor quality of life" victims. Frighteningly, many physicians and nurses support this attitude and argue that patients and their families have no right to obtain lifesaving treatment whenever doctors believe the life it will preserve lacks adequate "quality."

All of this has certainly helped create the kind of atmosphere in which a member of the medical community and a home-care nurse felt empowered to counsel some family members to kill a loved one, and then to break the law by providing those family members with the means to kill.

* * * * *

While my dad was recovering in the hospital, I got the distinct feeling that my mother did not want him to be discharged . . . ever. The closer he got to coming home, the more distraught she got. I think she feared the effort that home care would take.

When Dad was finally discharged, he was clear-headed and alert. From occasional comments he made, he did have some clouded memories of his delirium. For the next month and a half he did quite well at home. My mother did not. He handled all care of his colostomy bag, becoming obsessive with cleanliness. My mother grew more and more frustrated and upset. She said he didn't speak to her much, and when he did, he wasn't pleasant. During this period, the home health-care nurse began visiting the house regularly to care for my father. He seemed to like her, and with strong recommendations from my older sister, he soon came to trust her.

On a Saturday in November, my dad's breathing became very labored. He was taken to the emergency room at a local hospital where it was determined that he had pneumonia in his left lung. He was very upset about having to stay at the hospital and became very snappy with my mother whenever she told him he had to stay. At one point, she became so angry she left the room (actually a curtained area in the ER). While standing outside, my mother overheard my father complain severely about her to my older sister. My mother became incensed, left the hospital and was driven home by my younger sister. My mother didn't visit my father for most of the hospital stay, still angered by the things he had said about her. He kept trying to call her at home, but with the help of her Caller ID box, she refused to answer the phone whenever he called. When I visited

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Dad in the hospital, he would cry and say he couldn't go home because my mother didn't want him there, and didn't love him anymore.

On the Saturday before Thanksgiving, Dad was discharged from the hospital. My mother had relented and welcomed him home. However, I still had the strong feeling that she was not pleased.

While our father was in the hospital, my sisters grew very upset with his oncologist. He rarely returned calls, and the home health-care nurse disliked him greatly. She told my older sister that she blamed the oncologist for my dad's colostomy. She felt he delayed treatment too long on the day of his surgery, and that the result was that Dad had to live out what time he had left with the discomfort of a colostomy bag. She said that this caused the quality of his life to diminish to the point of being . . . not worth living.

After Dad was back home, my older sister told me that she and the nurse had decided to remove him from the oncologist's care and have him see another doctor, a general practitioner specializing in geriatric care whom the nurse frequently worked with. My younger sister had called the oncologist and asked him to release Dad from his care. But he said he would only release him to his hospital's hospice-care program, not to a general practitioner and a nurse. My older sister said that she, my younger sister, and my mother were in favor of changing doctors. She also said the nurse had told her that she had worked with the other doctor so much that decisions on Dad's medical care would be effectively made by her (the nurse), since this doctor would “approve anything” she recommended. My older sister said that she knew I felt “differently” from the rest of the family, but that the decision had already been made and she just wanted to let me know what was going on.

* * * * *

Is there a difference between euthanasia and assisted suicide? In euthanasia, one person does something that directly kills another. For example, a doctor gives a lethal injection to a patient, or a family member administers a lethal dose of a painkiller. In assisted suicide, a person knowingly and intentionally provides the means or acts in some way to help a suicidal person kill himself. You could say that assisted suicide is, in a manner of speaking, a form of voluntary euthanasia. There is virtually no difference between a seriously ill person committing suicide on their own, or asking someone to provide them with the means or method to kill themselves. But involuntary euthanasia is when the person killed is not a party in his own death. Involuntary euthanasia occurs when a person kills an ill patient or

family member without the consent, and sometimes without the knowledge, of the person killed. People and organizations striving to change laws so as to allow assisted suicide and euthanasia often mention the rights of the infirm—of their right to a “peaceful death.” These changes would not give rights to the person who is killed, but to the person who does the killing. In other words, euthanasia is not about the right to die. It’s about the right to kill. And “kill” is not too strong a word to use here. The word “kill” means “to cause the death of.”

Are only terminally-ill people targeted by the euthanasia proponents? Not when the definition of “terminal” is different depending on who is using it. For example, when he spoke to the National Press Club in 1992, Jack Kevorkian said that a terminal illness was “any disease that curtails life even for a day.” The co-founder of the Hemlock Society often refers to “terminal old age.” So then what exactly is a terminal patient? Some laws define “terminal” condition as one from which death will occur in a “relatively short time.” Some state that “terminal” means that death is expected within six months or less. However, even when a specific life expectancy is referred to, medical experts acknowledge that it is virtually impossible to predict the life expectancy of a particular patient. Some people diagnosed as terminally ill don’t die for years, if at all, from the diagnosed condition. Yet pro-euthanasia activists still push on, dropping references to terminal illness, replacing them with phrases such as “hopelessly ill,” “desperately ill,” “incurably ill,” and “meaningless life.”

To understand just how far some people are willing to go, consider the following: In a May 1996 speech to the American Psychiatric Association, George Delury, who assisted in the 1995 death of his wife (she had multiple sclerosis), suggested that “hopelessly ill people or people past age sixty just apply for a license to die” and that such a license should be granted without examination by doctors.

Psychiatrist and author Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, in 1969, outlined the five stages of the dying process: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. During this last stage, acceptance, the dying person decides to take care of unfinished business. Saying the things he or she always wanted to say; settling disputes; mending relationships; considering the ultimate meaning of their life, recognizing or appreciating all the good things that have been a part of it, and so on. But when the patient enters the depression stage, that’s precisely when the attitudes of family members and loved ones are perceived in the darkest way. The patient fears becoming a burden on his family. And sometimes family members exert emotional and psychological pressures that can become overpowering for depressed,

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dependent people. Financial considerations, added to the concern of "being a burden," can be powerful forces to cause guilt and lead the patient to choose or allow euthanasia. If the family performs euthanasia (kills), they deny that all important "unfinished business" step. Actually, the family members, while presuming to be acting out of love, are projecting their own unfinished business. They are, in fact, stealing the last precious moments of life.

* * * * *

Shortly after my dad's release from the hospital, my mother asked me to meet the rest of the family at her house because Dad had an appointment with the new doctor—the geriatric/family physician—and they needed me to help get him there with his portable oxygen equipment. The doctor first examined my father, spoke with him, and then met with my mother, sisters, and me. She told us that Dad had said he didn't wish to receive any more aggressive cancer treatment, but wanted to live out what life he had left, with faith that God would take him when God saw fit. (I should mention here that my father often prayed for God to heal him; we prayed together on occasion.)

While my sisters and mother had intimated to several people that my dad wouldn't live past Christmas, the doctor contradicted this and said he would definitely be around for that Christmas, but she wouldn't guarantee that he'd be around for the following one. I was relieved; my older sister and my mother seemed dismayed; my younger sister appeared scared and confused. They protested that he seemed too ill to live that long. But the doctor said he would most likely live six months or longer and that we had to prepare to deal with his care. She said that at some point he would begin to struggle to live so as not to "let the family down," and that we all needed to recognize that point and let him know that we were all right and that it was okay for him to let go.

The doctor said that time would probably come six to eight months down the road. I left the doctor's office that night confused and with mixed feelings. I was pleased that the doctor seemed to offer some degree of confidence that my dad would be with us for several months, possibly close to a year. Yet my older sister and mother seemed disappointed. They had been certain that he would not last until Christmas.

On Thanksgiving, we all made part of the dinner and brought it to our parents' house. Traditionally we ate Thanksgiving dinner at my older sister's house, but it was agreed that it would be easier on Dad to bring the dinner there. For a time everything seemed so right: the family dining and

celebrating together; Dad happy to be home from the hospital. But there remained an air of unease. It was clear that a line had been drawn, and in the eyes of my mother and sisters, I was on the “wrong” side of the line.

In early December we had a family gathering for my eldest daughter’s birthday. Toward the end of the party, my older sister spoke of the home nurse supplying a morphine pump so Dad could be “put to sleep peacefully” when the time came. She indicated that this could happen in as soon as two to three weeks. Unease now began to turn to dread. Why all the talk about Dad not lasting until Christmas? My wife called my older sister the next day to ask if such talk was based on some medical information we weren’t privy to? My sister said no, it was her “gut feel” that Dad would be suffering enough to need to have it ended by then.

I still have not figured out the relationship between my father’s death and Christmas. My mother and older sister often commented that Dad wouldn’t be around after Christmas. My mother’s sister called me, crying and in hysterics, saying she hadn’t known how close Dad was to death. When I asked her what she was talking about, she said that my mother had just told her that my dad would be gone by Christmas. I told her that it wasn’t true, and I repeated what the new doctor had said about him living for at least six months, in her opinion.

My aunt sounded better after that, but I grew increasingly worried. They weren’t planning a specific day for his death, were they? And certainly not Christmas. My head kept telling me this couldn’t be. But my heart was sounding warning bells. Then I discovered that my mother had spoken with the owner of the medical equipment firm that supplied oxygen. He said my mother told him that she wouldn’t be needing the oxygen equipment for more than another week or two—that my dad wouldn’t be around longer than that. I could see what was happening. But I just tucked it away down deep and refused to admit what was becoming frighteningly apparent: My father was going to be killed sometime on or before Christmas.

On Monday, December 23, my eldest daughter arrived at Dad’s house at 10:00 a.m. She spoke on the phone with my wife at 10:20 and told her that a portable x-ray unit was on its way to the house to check for fluid in Dad’s lung, but had not yet arrived. (This had been done before—my dad was having fluid drained approximately every ten days. The doctor had ordered this x-ray so that the lung could be drained before the holiday if needed, thus eliminating the trouble of finding someone to do it over Christmas.) The x-ray unit arrived shortly after: the technician had difficulty positioning my dad and took about 15 minutes to perform the x-ray and pack up; he left approximately 10:40. My daughter helped the tech

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load the equipment back into his vehicle. Immediately after she came back into the house, my mother called my older sister to tell her the x-ray was done. My mother got visibly upset and told my daughter that my sister already had gotten the results from the nurse and that there was no fluid at all restricting the right lung. My sister said the nurse told her that this meant that his breathing difficulties were due to the cancer, not fluid build-up, and that the end was near. I can't help wondering how she knew all this when the x-ray technician had only just left the house. My mother proceeded to call me and my younger sister to tell us we had to go there right away; something had gone wrong with Dad. As I wasn't home at the time, my younger daughter had to relay this to me after paging me. When I arrived about an hour later, my father seemed okay. While my younger sister and I were in the bedroom, my father said that he didn't want to die, that he was going to do his best to "beat this thing." My younger sister left the bedroom in tears, repeating what my dad said to my wife as she was leaving. Yet the nurse arrived within an hour with a morphine pump. After explaining to me that the morphine was just to help his breathing, she installed the IV pump and programmed it. She then showed me and my sisters how it worked. She said it was set to pump three milligrams into him every hour, and that two bolus shots of one milligram each could also be given each hour by pressing a button. She said that the pump would know when the two additional shots were used in any given hour and would not allow any other bolus shots until the next hour. I was concerned about the morphine at first because of his previous reaction to it in the hospital. I became furious when my dad began to slip into the same delusions after the hour and a half on the morphine. During that time, my older sister kept pushing the button, saying that only two were real, and the rest weren't really working, even though we could hear the pump working every time she pushed it. When I checked the readout of how much had been pumped, it read 16 mg total, in less than two hours. When I saw that, and Dad started having delusions, I took the pump, removed the batteries, and removed the IV from his arm.

While my younger sister and I moved Dad downstairs to the living room, my older sister tried desperately to reach the nurse. Having no success, she began punching the walls, shouting "She promised she would help me do this! Where is she? Why can't she help me when she's done it for so many others!"

Downstairs, we had to restrain my dad. He was very suspicious of us, and kept shouting, occasionally in a foreign language (his previous delusions had involved experiences in the army, with enemies trying to kill

him). While shouting, he said “Why don’t you just kill me!” I understand now that my older sister takes this as justification that he wanted to be killed. I saw it as part of his delusion.

Still unable to reach the nurse, my older sister called the doctor’s office and asked if my father’s dosage of Duragesic, a very powerful narcotic skin patch, could be increased beyond the prescribed one every 72 hours. Someone called back from the doctor’s office and said it could be increased to two patches if he was in great pain, but not more than two. So my older sister applied a second patch to Dad. She tried to obtain more patches at several pharmacies, but none would comply, as this narcotic is very tightly controlled and it was on record that he had enough patches to last another 72 hours at least. Knowing this, and having checked the house for more patches, I felt reasonably comfortable that he was safe—at least for the night.

My sisters and I agreed that the two of them would stay over that night with Dad, and that I would spend the next night, Christmas Eve, and Christmas day with Dad, since they had small children and mine were older. I arrived at the house the next afternoon, Christmas Eve, and relieved my sisters. The nurse was there and insisted on instructing me on how to administer an anti-anxiety agent, Ativan, to my father intravenously. She said he had to receive it every six hours. The syringes were already prepared by her when I arrived. My sisters acted very distant, almost embarrassed, it seemed. They even asked me to do something out of the room while they were “saying goodnight” to Dad. I strongly suspected that the injections I was supposed to give my father were potentially lethal. I was furious because I felt that they were trying to make me the unwitting instrument of my father’s death.

When they left, I emptied the syringes and felt somewhat satisfied that I had seen through their plan. Little did I know that I was wrong. Deadly wrong. As the evening wore on, I decided to spend the entire night at my father’s side. (He was now in a hospital bed in the dining room.) Although he had pajamas on, I noticed a couple of the narcotic patches on his chest. I remembered that the patches were on his back the previous day. I unbuttoned his pajamas and my heart dropped. I counted eight patches on him. I thought I could see parts of two more, but couldn’t be sure without stripping him completely. Having researched the patches the day before, when my older sister was trying so desperately to buy more at the pharmacy, I knew that once applied, they immediately give a dose through the skin that continues to transfer into him for 17 hours after removal. After the morphine reaction the day before, and the two patches right after that,

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I knew my father was a dead man. He just hadn't stopped breathing yet.

This was an overdose of massive proportion. I agonized over whether to remove the patches. I feared that if I removed them, such an overdose of narcotic, so soon after the morphine pump, would leave him in a vegetative state. But what if I was wrong? I became completely frozen by indecision. To this very day I wonder if I should have removed the patches immediately and called 911. Of course that would have exposed my mother and sisters to possible charges of homicide. I'm still having problems with how I reacted that night. I'll never know if I could have saved him.

My sadness soon turned to anger. How could they set up his demise like this and then leave me there to watch his death? Were the Ativan injections meant to make me feel that I had contributed to his death? And where did all those patches come from? I searched the house and found the answer: in a kitchen cabinet was a box of Duragesic patches which had been prescribed to *another* patient of both the new doctor and the "loving and caring" home nurse—another patient who was already dead. Had she too suffered the same fate?

I sat with Dad for the rest of the night. On Christmas morning, at 8:15, he died. Were my sisters beaming as their little ones opened their gifts? Or were they anxiously waiting my call? The forecasts of my dad's death on Christmas had come true. They had made sure of it.

It was left to me to make all arrangements for my father's services. Everyone else was "too distraught."

My older sister and I have not spoken since. My younger sister and I have spoken a few times. The subject of our father's death has never come up. My mother claims she can't remember much of what transpired that Christmas, and she says she can't understand why we all can't get along just like before. I still miss my dad. Chances are he wouldn't be alive now anyway. But that should have been his choice. No one should have had the right to make it for him.

How Steven Pinker's Mind Works

Andrew Ferguson

The year 1997 was a big one for Steven Pinker, a professor of psychology at MIT and a celebrated popularizer of science. His most ambitious book so far, *How the Mind Works*, was published to enthusiastic reviews, which is good news for him. And he was accused of advocating infanticide, which is not.

Pinker's pickle, as we may call his current predicament, occurs at the confluence of several recent trends in the life of the American mind, particularly the book-buying public's lusty appetite for popular science and the snazzy allure of "evolutionary psychology," the latest in a long string of disciplines by which scientists have hoped to explain human behavior to humans. *How the Mind Works* is Pinker's attempt to make evolutionary psychology accessible, and palatable.

It is also, as most reviewers have noted, a model of science writing in the popular vein. It is scholarly, as Pinker brings together (what I assume to be) the latest findings in linguistics, cognitive psychology, paleontology, microbiology, anthropology, and other -ologies too numerous to mention. It is widely allusive; Pinker favors references to Woody Allen movies, *Saturday Night Live*, and rock lyrics, but he can pull out Shakespeare and John Donne when he has to. And it offers enough passages of lively prose to keep you reading through the inevitable rough-sledding of technical detail.

With the success of *How the Mind Works*—TV appearances, personality profiles in the slick magazines, and the rest—Pinker inherits the crown of the late king of pop-science writers, Carl Sagan. Pinker is a linguist and Sagan was an astronomer, but the popular work of both has the effect of getting the rest of us to, as it were, cut the crap—get a grip, face the facts, wake up and smell the coffee. Everyone, after all, has the experience of himself as an autonomous self—a soul, even—and most of us have the sense that human beings, as a group, occupy an exalted place in the world. A very large majority of people believe in a supernatural supreme being of one sort or another, and only slightly fewer, according to polls, believe that the materialistic processes of evolution were divinely inspired.

To Sagan these were mere conceits and delusions, and he dispatched

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them with a relish verging on the unseemly. His final bestseller was called *Pale Blue Dot*—the title itself a reminder that the Earth, rightly understood, is merely a “dim and tiny planet in an undistinguished sector of an obscure spiral arm” of the equally fourth-rate Milky Way. Sagan told his readers that the advance of science was a “series of Great Demotions, downlifting experiences, demonstrations of our apparent insignificance. . . .” Notions to the contrary—such as Kant’s commonsensical belief that “without man . . . the whole of creation would be a mere wilderness, a thing in vain, and have not a final end”—were “self-indulgent folly.” “A Principle of Mediocrity,” Sagan wrote, “seems to apply to all our circumstances.” (Stop the Pale Blue Dot, I want to get off.)

Pinker seems a friendlier fellow than Sagan, less austere, less inclined to scold, less given to intellectual browbeating; he offers materialism with a smile and loads of charm. He too assumes the inevitable scientific picture of the human being as a “hunk of matter,” a very lucky Meat Puppet with a weakness for self-delusion. But Pinker is just as likely to extol the splendor of the scientific view, the magnificence and stunning complexity of the natural world, and to remind us how glorious it is to live in an aimless, random, amoral universe. Sagan was moved to similar rhapsodies on occasion. All science writers have been so disposed since the time of Darwin. The grand old man, having buried forever any respectable belief in a Designer of the universe, closed *The Origin of Species* with one of the great whistling-past-the-graveyard perorations in English literature: “There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers,” etc. In other words: Buck up, boys. I can take it, and so can you.

Pinker is similar to Sagan in another respect: As Sagan did beginning in the early '80s, with dire warnings about the arms race and rising defense budgets, Pinker is carefully insinuating himself into cultural matters, armed, as Sagan was, with the clerical status we confer on scientists nowadays. (The real clerics, of course, have given up clerical status.) In fact, the entire field of evolutionary psychology has begun to be embraced by an unlikely ally: political conservatives, now as ever on the prowl for some sanction for their beliefs about how the world works.

This is where Pinker’s treatment of infanticide comes in. But we should back up first, and explore this new science of evolutionary psychology and the professor’s effort to bring it to the masses.

“Evolutionary psychology,” Pinker writes, “is the attempt to understand our mental faculties in light of the evolutionary processes that shaped them.” This is a relatively recent job for evolutionists. For years Darwinians, while wildly ambitious elsewhere, steered clear of explaining matters of the

spirit—love, sacrifice, art, altruism, religious yearning. In this they followed the master. In 1859 Darwin wrote, “I have nothing to do with the origin of the primary mental powers, anymore than with life itself.” When it came to the human species, orthodox Darwinians contented themselves with explaining how natural selection accounts for the design of the eye, or the volutes of the ear. Evolution—or at least evolutionary explanations—stopped at the cranium.

Evolutionary psychologists disdain this sort of humility. The brain, they reason, is an organ showing complex design. Complex design is a result of natural selection. Therefore the brain must have evolved according to the same evolutionary process as did the eye or the ear. (It is one of the many curiosities of Darwinism that the more the world shows signs of design, the more it disproves a Designer of the world.) And so, notwithstanding Darwin’s own reticence, the “primary mental powers” are likewise deemed material artifacts, explainable by evolutionary theory. Unhappy skeptics see evolutionary psychology as the final triumph of Darwinian imperialism, overrunning the last redoubts of the spiritual life. With it, materialism can in theory explain life “all the way up and all the way down,” in the words of one proponent, from the behavior of cells to a mother’s love.

How the Mind Works is only the most recent attempt to popularize evolutionary psychology. It first leaked into the newsmagazines in the mid-1970s, when E.O. Wilson, who studied bugs, introduced the discipline of “sociobiology.” (Evolutionary psychology is an adaptation, so to speak, of sociobiology.) In 1994, the journalist Robert Wright brought the field up to date with *Moral Animal*, which became a bestseller. Wright’s book was overly glib, as journalistic accounts of science tend to be (ahem). Some critics of evolutionary psychology, notably the paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould, have dismissed *Moral Animal* as “egregiously simplistic” and in parts “absurd.” But Wright conveyed the gist of the enterprise, particularly its immodesty. For evolutionary psychology—like Skinnerian behaviorism before it, like Freudianism before that—is a unified-field theory of human behavior.

“If the theory of natural selection is correct,” Wright wrote, “then essentially everything about the human mind should be intelligible in these [Darwinian] terms. The basic ways we feel about each other, the basic kinds of things we think about each other and say to each other, are with us today by virtue of their past contribution to genetic fitness.”

“Slowly but unmistakably, a new world view is emerging,” Wright went on. “Once truly grasped . . . it can entirely alter one’s perception of social

reality." Wright's statement is even truer today. Evolutionary psychology is the hippest field in science. It has lately entered the popular press, in tarted-up form, through stories about the "gay gene," the "fat gene," "the happiness gene," and so on. The field could have no better pamphleteer than Pinker, a 43-year-old "evolutionary pop star," as *Time* called him, who favors European-cut suits and long curly hair; imagine Peter Frampton as an investment banker. Of course his pamphlet is huge—that is what makes it a science book—and its tone is unremittingly cheerful—this is what makes it a popular science book. But for all its lightheartedness, there is a distinct and inevitable element of party-poopery in his view of how the mind works.

Freud was a creature of the 19th century, and so he took for his model of the mind a highly pressurized pneumatic pump, channeling energy efficiently this way and that but ready to blow at any minute. B.F. Skinner, a mid-century man, saw it as a slightly more sophisticated machine, emitting outputs in direct relation to inputs. Pinker is of the '90s. He sees the mind as a computer—or more precisely, a series of advanced computing modules, designed to perform certain tasks. Computers today are of course much more subtle and complicated machines than any that Skinner or Freud knew of; Pinker's view of the mind is thus much more complicated than theirs as well.

The mind is a "package of information processing and goal pursuing mechanisms." The package evolved (in what Pinker calls, unromantically, the "primate assembly process") to solve particular problems faced by our hunter-gatherer ancestors as they roamed the savanna millions of years ago. Depth perception allowed us to gauge accurately the threat posed by a nearby predator; sexual jealousy arose as a way of keeping mates and thus ensuring the protection of the young; our sense of disgust armed us against eating unsanitary food. Thanks to natural selection, these survival strategies are now genetically programmed—that is, we are "hard-wired," to use the current cliché, by our genes to behave in certain ways.

Does this sound deterministic? Well, it is. But evolutionary psychologists are not simple determinists; they are complicated determinists. "For 99 percent of human existence, people lived as foragers in small nomadic bands," Pinker writes. "Our brains are adapted to that long-vanished way of life, not to brand-new agricultural and industrial civilizations." Confronted with the new enticements of our new environment, human beings will make choices not explainable by direct reference to survival strategies. The modules may compete with each other, compute the relative merits

of various opportunities and desires, and—ping!—turn out someone who chooses to be celibate (which, in evolutionary terms, is about as idiotic a choice as you can make).

This slight complication in the evolutionary scheme should not be interpreted as free will. Evolutionary psychology isn't as crudely reductive as, say, behaviorism was, or early versions of sociobiology. But it's still plenty reductive. Pinker's point is that the mind is not an "emanation" of the brain, as some theorists have it, much less a "self" or a "ghost in the machine," as most people seem to think. The mind is simply a function of the brain; it is what the brain does. And how the brain functions is determined by the genes. "The genes created us, body and mind," Pinker says, quoting the biologist Richard Dawkins. It is axiomatic among Darwinians—you could call it an article of faith—that natural selection has no goal, no end toward which it works. But, writes Pinker, "the ultimate goal the mind was designed to attain is maximizing the number of copies of the genes that created it."

Dawkins coined the term "the selfish gene," and the unsophisticated have taken it to mean that human beings are unremittingly selfish. This is a misapprehension. Pinker amplifies the point nicely. "People don't selfishly spread their genes; genes selfishly spread themselves. They do it by the way they build our brains . . . by making us enjoy life, health, sex, friends, and children." Sometimes building an unselfish Meat Puppet is the best way for the selfish gene to pass itself along. Genes are the new "ghost in the machine."

And so, one by one, the remorseless logic of evolutionary psychology puts paid to our cherished delusions. I bet you thought you liked your kids. "We now understand why many animals, including humans, love their children, parents, grandparents," Pinker writes. These individuals share the same genes, and the genes are manipulating the Meat Puppets to protect the genes. "People helping relatives equals genes helping themselves." When a mother, watching her son enter surgery, wishes she could take his place, "it is not the species or the group or her body that wants her to have that most unselfish emotion," Pinker writes. Much less is it she herself, or the love that consumes her. "It is her selfish genes."

Pinker says this is a "more hopeful way" of envisioning human motivation. But it's hard to see how. The conscience, for example, is for many people the most important faculty of the mind, suggesting an objective and universal moral order to which human beings are somehow tied. In his 660-page book, Pinker dispatches it in a single paragraph.

"H.L. Mencken defined conscience as 'the inner voice which warns us that someone might be looking.' . . . People feel guilty about private transgressions because they may become public; confessing a sin before it is discovered is evidence of sincerity and gives the victim better grounds to maintain the relationship. Shame . . . evokes a public display of contrition, no doubt for the same reason."

Note the "no doubt." It is the purest Pinker. How about the mystery of romantic love? Surely here is something insusceptible to rational explication. After all, the woman you fall in love with, if you're a man, is almost certainly not the prettiest Meat Puppet on the planet, or the richest, or the healthiest—not, in other words, the optimal genetic choice. (That would be Michelle Pfeiffer.) But according to Pinker, the irrationality of your choice is precisely why it is so, um, rational, as an evolutionary matter.

If your choice were purely rational, he explains, "then the object of your desire could predict that, by the law of averages, someone better would come around sooner or later, and that you would dump them like a hot potato. But if it's clear that your choice is partly involuntary, partly directed to that unique individual, as opposed to that individual's list of qualities, that gives your partner some assurance that you are committed."

No doubt!

And so on, and so on. How to explain grief, in evolutionary terms? It is "useful only as a deterrent": Take care of your gene-containing kids, because if something happens to them and, God forbid, their genes (which are yours, too), then you'll feel awful. Music? Bach thought he was writing the B Minor Mass to the glory of God. "I suspect music is auditory cheesecake," Pinker says, "an exquisite confection crafted to tickle the sensitive spots of at least six of our mental faculties," including habitat selection and auditory scene analysis. Bach was an ass.

As you read *How the Mind Works*, the reductionism washes over you until . . . suddenly . . . unexpectedly . . . you notice something. We are getting further and further away from the stuff of science—which is to say, from observable fact and testable theory. Different readers will notice this at different points in the book. For me, it came in Pinker's explanation of our sense of natural beauty. Why do we human beings find particular landscapes pleasing?

Since most of human evolution took place in the African savanna, it is to be expected, from an evolutionary-psychological perspective, that human beings prefer savannas to other environments. And sure enough, says Pinker, they do. A savanna, as you recall from your National Geographic TV specials, is a sweeping grassland relieved here and there by an oasis

of trees and shade. We like it because it offers views to the horizon, which allowed our ancestors to spy predators and sources of food, and because it has few impediments to movement and retreat, which allowed Grandma and Grandpa to get the hell out when danger arose.

"In experiments on human habitat preference . . . children prefer savannas, even though they have never been to one." In doing so, suggests Pinker, "they are revealing our species' default habitat preference."

Why of course. Very reasonable. Until, reading along, you realize . . . but . . . this isn't true. Pinker offers no citation for these habitat experiments, so we can't double-check the results. But most kids I know prefer the beach, and the adults I know seem about evenly divided among the beach, the mountains, and woodland retreats. Forgive the anecdotal observation: I don't know anybody who wants a two-week vacation in the savanna, except for a few oddballs seduced by their Banana Republic catalogues.

But Pinker throttles onward. Two other researchers, whose work he does cite, "found another key to natural beauty, which they call mystery. Paths bending around hills, meandering streams . . . and partially blocked views grab our interest by hinting that the land may have important features that could be discovered by further exploration."

So here we are: If you prefer savannas, and everyone does, it's because our ancestors wanted wide open spaces to view approaching predators. If you like rolling hillsides, it's because they offered our ancestors the tantalizing possibility of greater rewards, even though, presumably, rolling hillsides would work to the advantage of predators. Easy to please, these ancestors of ours. But really this evolutionary-psychological explanation explains nothing.

What is it with evolutionary psychologists and the savanna, anyway? The environment of our ancestors, and our understanding of it, is absolutely crucial to the worldview of the evolutionary psychologist. Conventional Darwinians, seeking to explain the physical evolution of organisms, can resort to the fossil record, spotty as it is. But there can be no fossil record for the evolution of mental faculties; life on the savanna is invoked as a substitute for it. In a devastating critique in the *New York Review of Books*, Stephen Jay Gould summarized the scientific weaknesses of this approach:

How can we possibly know in detail what small bands of hunter gatherers did in Africa two million years ago? . . . How can we possibly obtain the key information that would be required to show the validity of adaptive tales about [the stone

age environment]: relations of kinship, social structures and sizes of groups, different activities of males and females, the roles of religion, symbolizing, storytelling, and a hundred other central aspects of human life that cannot be traced in fossils? . . . The chief strategy proposed by evolutionary psychologists for identifying adaptation is untestable, and therefore unscientific.

This hole at the center of evolutionary psychology has led to the charge that many of its farther-flung explanations, like those cited above, are mere “cocktail party speculation.” Gould’s critique provoked a furious backlash. In an unintentionally hilarious exchange in the *NYRB*, Daniel Dennett, a philosopher and a vigorous evangelist for evolutionary psychology, repeated the insinuation that Gould resists the truth because he is—brace yourself—a closet theist. As Dennett has pointed out, in his many writings Gould even sometimes quotes the Bible! Gould responded in high dudgeon. He quotes the Bible only as great literature, Gould asserted, and, furthermore, he thinks the universe is just as aimless and pointless as Dennett does.

A more plausible argument could be made that much of the resistance to evolutionary psychology is political. This was certainly the case with sociobiology, when E.O. Wilson introduced the subject in the politically hyperactive 1970s. Left-wing scientists saw it as a recrudescence of 19th-century Social Darwinism, and a band of radical feminists expressed their reservations by crashing a conference and dumping a pitcher of ice water on Wilson’s head. Gould himself, as Dennett points out, is a self-described Marxist, and has been known to criticize other scientists in explicitly political terms.

The left-wingers may have a point, to judge by their political opposites. Political conservatives have lately been drawn to evolutionary psychology, as evidenced by favorable reviews of the field, and its offshoots, in *Commentary* (by Francis Fukuyama), *Forbes ASAP* (by Tom Wolfe), and *National Review* (by John O. McGinnis). It may seem odd that conservatives, best known for terrorizing right-thinking persons by their alliance with Jerry Falwell, the Christian Coalition, and other religious types, should embrace a philosophy so remorselessly materialistic and anti-theological. But the tent gets bigger by the day.

Evolutionary psychology holds a surface attraction for conservatives because it affirms something resembling a universal and intractable human nature. This is anathema to leftists, since it would thwart any political attempt to remake society along utopian lines. And the human nature thus revealed seems compatible with conservative beliefs and prejudices. Women are hard-wired for child-rearing, men for aggression and status-seeking. The family—the old-fashioned family, that is, with Mom and Dad and

Buddy and Sis, not Heather and her two mommies—is the fundamental social unit, designed by evolution as the most efficient means for the selfish gene to protect itself; so evolution favors family-friendly tax credits. Because individuals are indelibly self-interested, the market is the most rational allocator of resources. Humans are inclined to deceive others and themselves, so concentrations of governmental power should be avoided.

Of course this prompts a larger question: If natural selection is a Republican process, why did it create so many Democrats? All the more reason, say the evolutionary conservatives, to hurry up and embrace the new, expansive Darwinian worldview.

“Because evolutionary biology provides an informative picture of man and because citizens are rapidly assimilating that image,” McGinnis wrote in *NR*, “any political movement that hopes to be successful must come to terms with the second rise of Darwinism.”

For the most part Pinker himself avoids political questions in *How the Mind Works*. He does make a point of rejecting the naturalistic fallacy—the argument that whatever happens in nature is good. “Science and morality,” he writes “are separate spheres of reasoning. Only by recognizing them as separate can we have them both.”

Pinker’s method of keeping them separate is instructive. He quotes with apparent approval Dennett’s argument that sentience—our experience of ourselves as autonomous selves—is a “cognitive illusion.” We are hunks of matter after all, animated by a very smart, genetically programmed computer. This is both the premise and conclusion of evolutionary psychology.

But moral reasoning may proceed, Pinker argues, by pretending otherwise.

“Ethical theory,” he writes, “requires idealizations like free, sentient, rational equivalent agents whose behavior is uncaused, and its conclusions can be sound and useful even though the world, as seen by science, does not really have uncaused events. . . . A human being is simultaneously a machine and a sentient free agent, depending on the purpose of the discussion . . .”

Morality, in other words, is based on a pretense—on believing, provisionally, something science tells us is untrue; namely, that human beings are persons not Meat Puppets. This will strike many people as a rather rickety platform from which to launch the pursuit of right and wrong.

But how rickety? We return at last to Pinker’s pickle—specifically his thoughts on the touchy subject of infanticide, as expressed in the *New York Times Magazine*, and the controversy, such as it was, that ensued.

Pinker's article appeared on November 2, and a week later Michael Kelly called attention to it in a column for the *Washington Post*. "The article by Steven Pinker," Kelly wrote, "did not go quite so far as to openly recommend the murder of infants. . . . But close enough, close enough."

Pinker responded in a letter to the editor of the *Post*, calling Kelly's article "grossly irresponsible," and repeating the disclaimers Pinker had inserted in his original piece. "Killing a baby is an immoral act," Pinker had written. "We can try to understand what would lead a mother to kill her newborn, remembering that to understand is not necessarily to forgive."

We should dwell on Pinker's *Times* piece in detail and at some length, for two reasons. First, it is a salutary example of how evolutionary psychology is "done," and how the knowledge it claims to uncover might be applied to the practical world. And second, Pinker's protest notwithstanding, Kelly is right. The nation's preeminent evolutionary psychologist was not openly advocating the murder of infants. But close enough.

Pinker begins his *Times* article with two recent, highly publicized cases of neonaticide: the "prom mom" who gave birth to her baby and left him dead in the bathroom during a high school dance, and the two 18-year-olds who killed their newborn and dropped him in a dumpster outside their Delaware motel. "How could they do it?" Pinker asks. "Even a biologist's cold calculations tell us that nurturing an offspring that carries our genes is the whole point of our existence."

Like most excursions in evolutionary psychology, Pinker's piece is a kind of intellectual ragout—a pinch of ethnographic evidence, a tablespoon of generalizations from the contemporary scene, many assumptions about our savanna-loving ancestors, and large chunks of psychological surmise—served up with the certitude of the scientist. But let the diner beware: When you pick apart the ingredients, you discover they are not what Pinker says they are.

Neonaticide, Pinker writes, "has been practiced and accepted in most cultures throughout history." Practiced, of course; but accepted? To support this startling premise he relies heavily on the work of two evolutionary psychologists, Martin Daly and Margo Wilson. They devoted a large part of their 1988 book *Homicide* to the murder of infants, in hopes of proving their thesis: "Infanticide can be the desperate decision of a rational strategist allocating scarce resources"—in other words, infanticide is not, as commonly understood, an act of depravity, but, under certain circumstances, a rational survival strategy.

They “proved” this thesis with a tenuous string of implausibilities. Conjecture solidifies into fact; the fact then becomes a premise for further conjecture, which in turn evolves into another factual premise, and so on. “If we wish to understand human characteristics,” Daly and Wilson wrote, “we should study the hunting and gathering life-style in which and for which those characteristics have been shaped by natural selection.”

As Gould points out, this in itself is a dubious assertion, but Daly and Wilson stretched it to the point of absurdity. They began with the !Kung San, a tribe of foragers in Africa’s Kalahari Desert. One study from the 1980s showed that !Kung San women have babies several years apart, nurse them for as many as four years, and average five births over their reproductive life. The study further reported, for the period of observation, six infanticides in 500 live births, an incidence of 1.2 percent.

What may we extrapolate from this? Almost nothing, you might think. But you are not an evolutionary psychologist. From this one study of one small tribe living in the desert (not even the savanna!) in the 1980s—a study that uncovered all of six infanticides—Daly and Wilson believe they know how our maternal ancestors lived a million years ago and the conditions under which they might have killed their babies.

“The general features of a !Kung San woman’s reproductive career, . . .” they assert, “are indeed representative of hunter-gatherers and of the life history that characterized *Homo* for thousands of millennia.” This is nothing more than a guess, and not even a very scientific one. But conjecture becomes premise, and is then reported as fact by Pinker in the *New York Times*. “Until very recently in human evolutionary history,” Pinker tells his readers, following Daly and Wilson, “mothers nursed their children for two to four years. . . .”

This sort of overreaching continues throughout Daly and Wilson’s work, and so in Pinker’s article as well. Given the features of motherhood among the !Kung San—which, as we’ve seen, are now taken to be the “life history” of the entire species—they postulate that mothers will kill their infants for three reasons. First, if the paternity of the child is in question; second, if the child is of “poor quality” and “hence a poor prospect to contribute to parental fitness”; and third, “extrinsic circumstances,” like food scarcities or an “overburdening from the demands of older offspring.”

How to test this hypothesis? The psychologists knew they couldn’t rely on the !Kung San alone. They thus took a “random sample” of ethnographic studies of 60 foraging societies. Only 39 of the studies, it turned out, mentioned infanticide. And only 35 of those described the

circumstances that led to the killing; and many of these, further, are "poorly documented."

But Daly and Wilson are undeterred. They found 112 cases of infanticide in their sample of the ethnographic literature. And, remarkably enough, most of these cases fell under one or another of the three circumstances they foresaw. This, they say, confirms their premise: that women, thanks to evolution, have a genetically programmed capacity to kill their babies if it seems like the reasonable thing to do. "Whatever our moral sympathies in the matter," they write, "we should recognize that the rejection of a newborn could be an adaptive (fitness-promoting) parental response."

But alas: Daly and Wilson don't say how many babies were born under such circumstances and yet weren't killed. The point would seem crucial; otherwise we won't know whether infanticide is taken as a rational "survival strategy" within those societies or is deemed an aberration. The ethnographic literature is evidently silent, for Wilson and Daly pass over it. But without an answer, they have proved nothing about the evolutionary history of infanticide.

The implausibilities continue to pile up. In the two American infanticides that Pinker is seeking to explain, none of the three circumstances in the Daly-Wilson hypothesis obtained. For both the "prom mom" and the Delaware couple, there were no questions about paternity. The babies were healthy. There were no older offspring to consider. And there are no food shortages in Delaware.

But the American girls, according to Pinker, were in the grip of "emotions [that], fashioned by the slow hand of natural selection, respond to the signals of the long-vanished tribal environment in which we spent 99 percent of our evolutionary history." Being young and single, they faced futures as mothers that were likely to be rough. The circumstances stirred those old genetic urges, and so they killed the kids. The circularity can get you dizzy.

Pinker understands, however, that to make his argument—that infanticide "has been practiced and accepted in most cultures" because it is ingrained by natural selection—he cannot simply appeal to pre-civilized societies. Here again he invokes Wilson and Daly. "They have shown that the statistics on neonaticide in contemporary North America parallel those in the anthropological literature. The women who sacrifice their offspring tend to be young, poor, unmarried, and socially isolated."

Again the data are weak, the interpretation a mishmash of guesswork and question-begging. What Pinker calls "North America" turns out to be Canada (he himself is Canadian, but even Canadians seldom make this

mistake). Daly and Wilson studied Canadian homicide statistics from the 1970s and 1980s, to prove, among other things, that “infanticides in a modern western nation . . . match the pattern” predicted by evolutionary psychology.

The Canadian data revealed little about the circumstances under which infanticide took place—nothing about questionable paternity, or low income levels, or lack of maternal support. Even so Daly and Wilson could report that “infanticidal mothers in Canada are indeed more often unmarried than one would expect by chance.”

Here are the numbers: Two million babies were born in Canada between 1977 and 1983. Twelve percent, or 240,000, of these were to single women. There were 64 maternal homicides. Thirty-two of these were committed by unmarried mothers. By an amazing leap, Daly and Wilson take this as support for their belief that difficult life circumstances may trigger a hard-wired capacity for infanticide.

But surely the numbers show the reverse, and they do so quite emphatically. Of the 240,000 single mothers, more than 239,950 did not kill their babies. And the 32 mothers who did were convicted and imprisoned.

But of course! Anyone but an evolutionary psychologist would have predicted as much: Civilized societies do not “accept” infanticide, and it is in fact exceedingly rare. They deem it a moral horror, classify it as a crime, and punish it when it can be proved.

Such common understandings interfere with the gnostic enterprise of evolutionary psychology. Pinker merely sweeps them aside. Having assumed the truth of what Daly-Wilson failed to prove, he surveys contemporary practices, presenting the unlikely as fact. “The emotional response called bonding is far more complex than the popular view,” he writes. “A new mother will first coolly assess the infant and her current situation and only in the next few days begin to see it as a unique and wonderful individual.”

Can this be? It must be. The scheme of evolutionary psychology demands it. The mother must contain this rational calculator, programmed by her genes to calibrate her survival strategy in light of the arrival of the new burden. The problem, of course, is that it isn’t true, as a quick trip to the maternity ward will show. Steve: Ask your mom. But as with new mothers, so with civilized cultures in general. By tradition, Pinker says, our own societies coolly assess the newborn, too. “Full personhood,” he writes, “is often not automatically granted at birth, as we see in our rituals of christening and the Jewish bris.” This isn’t true either. Steve: Talk to a priest. Talk to a rabbi.

Critics of evolutionary psychology call these Just-So stories: They are true because the evolutionary psychologist asserts them to be true, even though every ordinary person knows them to be false. Just-So stories, dressed up as science, can be harmless enough, and even amusing, as when dopey Bob Arnot struggles on the *Today Show* to explain the existence of, say, the fat gene. But Pinker's exercise in explaining infanticide shows just how sinister Just-So stories can be.

Having explained the evolutionary rationale for infanticide, Pinker moves on to moral philosophy. "So how do you provide grounds for outlawing neonaticide?" he asks. "The facts don't make it easy." Indeed, they force us "to think the unthinkable." As Kelly pointed out, one key to Pinker's project is his reference to the work of Michael Tooley, a philosopher at the University of Colorado. Pinker paraphrases Tooley's views (before pointing out that many people reject them). The reference is to Tooley's 1983 work *Abortion and Infanticide*, which may very well be the creepiest book published since Gutenberg.

This is where you go to find the Pinkerian argument in hard-core-form. *Abortion and Infanticide* is a 400-page, dispassionate, philosophically sophisticated, tightly reasoned brief for killing babies.

"There is some reason, then," wrote Tooley in the book's conclusion,

for thinking that the emergence of at least a limited capacity for thought-episodes [i.e., thinking] may take place at about the age of three months. Therefore . . . there will also be some reason for thinking that humans become quasi-persons at about three months.

The general picture that emerges is as follows. New-born humans are neither persons nor even quasi-persons, and their destruction is in no way intrinsically wrong. At about the age of three months, however, they probably acquire properties that are morally significant, and that makes it to some extent intrinsically wrong to destroy them.

In his *Times* article, Pinker did not claim to be making an argument; a forthright case for neonaticide might have raised eyebrows even at the *Times Magazine*. He comes to us as a scientist, lending his expertise to illuminate a confused question of social policy. But his reasoning closely follows Tooley's brief. Both the philosopher and the scientist appeal to the ethnographic record, evolutionary theory, current cultural practices, and a highly technical definition of personhood. And both of them lead us to the same place.

If newborns are to have a right to life, Pinker says, they must possess "morally significant traits that we humans happen to possess." Among these are "a unique sequence of experiences that defines us as individuals"; "an

ability to reflect on ourselves”; “to form and savor plans for the future,” and so on. Thought-episodes, in Tooley’s jargon.

“And here’s the rub,” Pinker continues, “our immature neonates don’t possess these traits any more than mice do.” Unlike Tooley, Pinker doesn’t have the nerve to complete this syllogism, at least not in a family magazine. Persons have certain traits. Neonates don’t possess these traits. Therefore, neonates are not persons. And therefore . . .

Here is Pinker’s pickle: Even he seems reluctant in public to follow the logic of evolutionary psychology to its ordained conclusion. Recall Robert Wright’s words about the new science: “Once truly grasped . . . it can entirely alter one’s perception of social reality.” And so it does. For the moment Pinker wants merely to normalize neonaticide—to make us see it not as a moral horror but as a genetically encoded evolutionary adaptation, as unavoidable as depth perception or opposable thumbs.

Needless to say, his view ignores a large swath of human experience. Or is it needless to say, these days? The best short treatment of infanticide was written by the Harvard historian William L. Langer, who got to the heart of the matter. “The willful destruction of newborn babes,” he wrote in “Infanticide: A Historical Survey,” “has been viewed with abhorrence by Christians from the beginning of their era.” And the Christians, Langer noted, were following the Jews, whose Rabbinical Law saw infanticide as straightforward murder. Their logic was quite different from that of the evolutionary psychologist, of course, but just as inexorable. Human beings were persons from the start, endowed with a soul, created by God, and infinitely precious. And this is the common understanding that Steven Pinker—and indeed the new science that he represents with such skill and good cheer—means to undo.

APPENDIX A

[The following column first appeared in *The Spectator of London* (January 31, 1998), for which Mr. Johnson writes regularly, as he does for other British publications (e.g., *The Daily Mail*). But he is best known in America for his many (and large) best-selling books, the latest being *A History of the American People*, published here by Harper-Collins (1,088 pages, \$35). His column is reprinted here with permission, Copyright 1998, *The Spectator* (1828) Ltd. (London).]

An entertaining evening finding out how Professor Pinker's mind works

Paul Johnson

The acclaim accorded to *How the Mind Works* by Steven Pinker made me sit up. "A revolution under way" was the headline in *The Spectator*: the book is "a celebration of the marriage of the two most important ideas in the entire history of the life sciences," evolution by natural selection, and information processing as a model of the brain. "To have read it," continued the enthusiastic reviewer, "is to have consulted a first draft of the structural plan of the human psyche." Wow! Tina Brown's *New Yorker* added its own smarty-boots squeak of awe: "The book marks out the territory on which the coming century's debate about human nature will be held."

The rising power and popularity of the Darwinian fundamentalists is one of the most striking quasi-religious phenomena of our time. The enthusiasm which its hot gossellers like Pinker and Richard Dawkins arouse disturbs me, rather as atheists are horrified by the way in which the prairie-fire preaching of Bible-belt evangelicals inflames America's moral majority. How can any scientist be so sure of anything as these magi seem to be? And how can so many educated people accept their claims on the basis of such meagre evidence? So last Thursday I went to the London School of Economics to see Pinker in action at one of his revivalist meetings.

It was jam-packed, many of the faithful having trudged long distances, to judge by their rucksacks. Pinker is still young but smothered in academic laurels. He begins his book on a note of humility: "We don't understand how the mind works," but this disclaimer is soon abandoned. Pinker is sure he *does* know how the mind works. "Our organs of computation are a product of natural selection," he writes. They are the work of what he calls "the Blind programmer." "Our mental programmes . . . were shaped by selection to allow our ancestors to master rocks, tools, plants, animals, and each other, ultimately in the service of survival and reproduction." He and the researchers whose work he epitomises are doing for the mind what Darwin did for the body: for the explanation of the mind, he goes back to the birth of humanity just as Freud went back to infancy and childhood for the explanation of the adult. He thinks no other hypothesis is possible, and that the data is flooding in to substantiate it. Anyone who disagrees

with his approach is a “creationist,” the dismissive term American East Coast intellectuals apply to those who believe in God as the architect of the universe.

Two things struck me about Pinker. The first was his hair. It is beautifully bushy and curly, and its “sweet disorder” is evidently the product of much trouble and art, and dollars. That tells me a lot about how *his* mind works anyway. The second thing was his extraordinary ineptitude in managing his visual aids. They were quite unnecessary anyway, adding nothing to his discourse. With one marginal exception, they merely repeated what he was saying in tiny, typewritten characters illegible to most of his audience. But in order to put them on the screen he had constantly to dart backwards and forwards, an intensely irritating and distracting performance and of no help to the continuity of his unscripted talk. Unlike his hunter-gatherer ancestors, he is no great shakes at solving perfectly simple physical difficulties—or realising that he does not need to solve them at all, that they do not in fact exist—and I suppose that too tells us a lot about how his mind works.

As Pinker proceeded, and to do justice to him he was often interesting and funny, I wished that old Kingsley Amis had been at my side to share my relish of the Pinker Experience, which struck me as a classic instance of Kingsley’s definition of most academic research, “producing pseudo-solutions to non-problems.” Much of what Pinker told us about how minds function was convincing, but then it was also obvious, and we had already worked it out for ourselves. And much of what he claimed as explanations of mental processes seemed to me highly implausible. In short, what he said which was true was not new, and what he said which was new was not true. He seemed particularly shaky when he came to deal with strong human emotions, which are of critical importance in directing our minds. At the end, a woman asked him how to explain the functional importance in mental evolution of religious belief which had occupied so much of our ancestors’ time and energies. He did not seem to be able to cope with this question, though it was a predictable one which must have been put to him before.

I have the same difficulty with Pinker that I have with Dawkins. As an historian, I am worried about the confidence with which both speak of these ancestors, these celebrated hunter-gatherers, who existed hundreds of thousands of years ago, and who are constantly paraded, like a Greek chorus, to justify any conclusion the Darwinian fundamentalists reach from conjecture. Like the late Isaiah Berlin, I am sceptical of all-embracing theories which explain everything. Karl Popper taught me that Einstein’s approach was the right one: formulate your hypothesis narrowly, in a way which makes it easily falsifiable and which the empirical evidence can confirm or refute. Popper condemned Marx and Freud as non-scientists precisely because their giant, all-embracing explanations are pushed further than Darwin would have wished, and especially when their fundamentalist exponents rely on conjectural proof from distant periods where physical evidence is virtually non-existent.

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At present I am working on Imhotep, the great vizier of Pharaoh Djoser at the beginning of the Egyptian Old Kingdom, nearly five millennia ago. It is hard to say anything specific about this fellow, although some of his works survive and there are early references to him in ancient texts. But 5,000 years is nothing compared with the huge epochs about which Pinker and Dawkins draw such confident conclusions. It is as though they had access to a collective prosopography of these prognathous characters who lived a quarter of a million years ago. The truth is, we know almost nothing about them, and when we occasionally get a tiny glimpse into their lives, as for instance in the caves of Altamira, we are filled not with certitudes but wonder.

Wonder is my response to the arcane mysteries about which the Pinkers are so sure. I agree with J.B.S. Haldane, a scientist too great to be a fundamentalist, who said that his chief impression, at the end of a lifetime of research, was of "the inexhaustible oddity of nature." To me God will always be the Great Eccentric.



'Excluding hunting there's not much I can offer.'

THE SPECTATOR 28 March 1998

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[The following article first appeared as a regular On Society column in U.S. News & World Report (Jan. 26, 1998), and is reprinted here with the author's permission. Mr. Leo is a contributing editor to U.S. News and a nationally-syndicated newspaper columnist.]

Litmus tests, slippery slopes

*Republicans would be right to withhold funds
from defenders of "partial-birth" abortion.*

John Leo

The *New York Times* is concerned about the future of the Republican Party again, so I guess we should all pay close attention. A *Times* editorial proclaims that the idea of withholding campaign money from defenders of "partial-birth" abortion is just awful. It would "essentially banish pro-choice Republicans and destroy any semblance of a 'big tent' approach." Why the *Times* thinks pro-choice Republicans can't vote to ban the grisly partial-birth operation is obscure. Why the newspaper worries about the size of the Republican tent is even more obscure, since the paper hardly ever endorses the candidacy of anyone in it.

Still, the *Times* has much to tell us. For instance that "anti-abortion groups have grabbed this issue because it is easier to fight a single procedure than to attack constitutionally protected abortion rights in general." In editorials and news reports, the *Times* tirelessly uses words like "grabbed," "seized upon" and so forth to indicate that partial-birth abortion (code words: "certain late-term abortions") is not an issue in itself but merely a skirmish in a war against *Roe v. Wade*.

To arrive at this position, it is necessary for *Times* employees to avoid reading their own newspaper. Polls show that between 54 percent and 71 percent of Americans say they oppose partial-birth abortion. The *Times's* own poll, released last Friday, shows that a great many people are surprisingly hazy about the partial-birth issue—a majority didn't understand it or hadn't heard about it (45 percent didn't understand *Roe* either). But another number in the *Times* poll is even more surprising: Only 15 percent of Americans support any form of abortion at all for any reason during the second trimester (13 to 26 weeks). Partial-birth abortions are done in the second and third trimesters.

"Whittle away." The *Times* found that since 1989 support for generally available legal abortion has dropped from 40 percent to 32 percent. In general, as the *Times* headline indicates, the PUBLIC STILL BACKS ABORTION, BUT WANTS LIMITS, POLL SAYS. The poll must come as a revelation at a newspaper where a five-day wait for a handgun is a "regulation" but a one-day wait for an abortion is a "restriction," one of the "barriers" and "obstacles" that "whittle away at the edges of *Roe v. Wade*."

This language is borrowed from Kate Michelman and other abortion

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fundamentalists who will fight to the end against the sort of reasonable regulations that the American public wants to see. To its credit, the *Times* has published a poll showing how far from the mainstream the fundamentalists are.

They see a ban on partial-birth abortions as a direct attack on *Roe*. But *Roe* says nothing about anyone's right to dispatch a fetus/baby during the birth process. In fact, as Mary Ann Glendon of Harvard Law School points out, the ban was once envisioned as a reasonable act that could begin to heal the wounds of the abortion wars by bringing pro-life and pro-choice people together on common ground.

It's sobering to learn that so many Americans are not up to speed on the partial-birth issue. But a majority of those who follow the discussion have long since decided where they stand. They oppose it as a barbaric act. The *Times* poll introduced the "M" word: Half of Americans think all abortion is murder. Some of us who oppose abortion are not willing to go that far. But partial-birth abortions are outstanding candidates for "M"-word status. If you kill a fetus/baby that is halfway out of the birth canal, visible and moving, about 3 inches away from being declared a constitutionally protected human being, you are not really conducting an abortion. You are involved in a birth followed by a homicide.

A broader issue lies behind the partial-birth dispute. It isn't the fate of *Roe v. Wade*; it's the future of infanticide. Some straws in the wind: Peter Singer, the animal liberationist, published an article, KILLING BABIES ISN'T ALWAYS WRONG, citing babies with severe handicaps. Michael Tooley, a philosophy professor at the the University of Colorado, thinks parents should have "some period of time, such as a week after birth" during which infanticide is permitted. A number of pro-choice theorists believe that newborns are not yet persons and should not have the rights of fully formed human beings.

Joseph Farah of the Western Journalism Center wrote an Internet article warning readers to "Pay attention. . . . The seeds of a movement are being planted." One seed burst into flower in the *Times* November 2 Sunday Magazine. An article by MIT professor Steven Pinker titled WHY THEY KILL THEIR NEWBORNS argued that infanticide is immoral but normal in many societies; and perhaps biologically based. People think of birth as the boundary that defines personhood and rights, he wrote, but "to a biologist, birth is as arbitrary a milestone as any other."

This does indeed look like the rise of a movement committed to the moral and legal defense of killing after birth. By blurring the line between abortion and infanticide, partial-birth abortions obviously play into the hands of these people. So a ban on the gruesome procedure is all the more urgent.

APPENDIX C

[The following column first appeared on the editorial page of The Wall Street Journal (Feb. 19, 1998). Mr. Brown is deputy editorial page editor of The Wall Street Journal Europe. Reprinted with permission of The Wall Street Journal (© 1998, Dow Jones, Inc. All rights reserved).]

Cloning: Where's the Outrage?

Brian A. Brown

It now turns out that Dolly the clone may not have been the product of an adult sheep after all, rendering more remote the plans of those like Chicago physicist Richard Seed who want to clone humans. Let us hope so. For the prospect of human cloning has left our opinion makers in a moral muddle: While many condemned the idea, few were able to posit even simple ethical arguments against it. The reason is no mystery. Some of the strongest moral arguments rely on Western values many of our elites have spent their careers deriding.

The standard objection to Mr. Seed's plans, for example, is a pragmatic one. The mad doctor should be stopped, the reasoning goes, because the process is not yet perfected. A New York Times editorial is typical, pointing out that Dolly was the 277th try by Scottish scientists and that any attempts on humans would likely create deformed beings.

A related argument—which also focuses on consequences and not on whether the act itself is virtuous or not—marches a parade of horrors past the reader. Armies of clones invading America and farms harvesting organs from headless humans are supposed to convince us that something so horrific must be wrong.

These arguments are meant to stop human cloning, but they come with an expiration date. One day the process will presumably be perfected and the horrors will fade or be outlawed. Scientists will continue to refine the practice: regulators, ethicists and lawyers are already crafting laws to help ensure we don't live in an Aldous Huxley-esque "Brave New World." Mr. Seed himself crystallized these thoughts in what we might call Seed's axiom: "New things of any kind, mechanical, biological, intellectual, always tend to create fear," he said. But over time they become tolerated or ignored, and finally endorsed.

This endorsement process can be slowed if there is a sense that the "new thing" somehow violates moral norms. Morality enforces standards of behavior and expectations that, when not immutable, can take generations to change. In other words, moral arguments, though susceptible to change as well, are more enduringly resonant than pragmatic ones.

But to outline a moral case against cloning, many commentators would have had to swing the blade too close to their sacred cows. For example, cloning represents another assault on the traditional family. But many commentators, especially those on the left, have staked out a position that a single-parent or homosexual household is just as good. Taking their logic a few steps further: It's

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not important whether a clone has a traditional set of parents as long as the clone is “loved.” If a lab technician declares his love for his clones and provides a stable living environment—even if the decor is a bit heavy on glass and steel—what’s to stop a judge from granting custody?

Likewise, commentators objecting to human cloning because it violates the natural process of reproduction would contradict pro-abortion arguments. “Wherever you stand on abortion, there is something reprehensible about trying to create copies of human beings and then throwing out the ones that are flawed,” wrote E.J. Dionne in the *Washington Post*. But why? If it’s acceptable to suck the brain out of a fetus, crush its skull and toss it away—the “partial-birth” abortion procedure—why is it not acceptable to throw out cloned fetuses?

The problem is that life, and the means by which it comes into being, cannot be so easily denigrated. Even secular moralists generally accept the Kantian principle that a human being should be treated not as a means but as an end—a line that could have been elaborated by anyone interested in crafting a moral defense. Likewise, the pope’s reasoning, that a person belongs to the realm of being, not the realm of having, can appeal to the nonreligious.

Of course, abortion supporters would counter that the fetus is not a person. But if they are going to argue that all manner of experiments can be conducted on fetuses up to *x* months old, they are going to have to provide a better definition of when life begins than they have to date. Even the American concept that some rights can attach to the fetus when it becomes viable outside the mother’s womb is vague at best.

Most of these issues have been side-stepped because there is an aversion, especially among educated Westerners, to making moral assertions. Indeed, to defend traditional values—to imply that there is something called Western civilization and that it is worth preserving—is a notion guaranteed to induce nausea in your standard leftish intellectual.

And here is the crux of the issue. The elite that dominates Western societies has worked since the Enlightenment to fulfill Seed’s axiom. They have pushed to normalize a whole range of acts that were once considered outrageous. And without shock or shame there is little left to trigger moral outrage. No one expedited this corrosion more than the shock troops of the 1960s who normalized shameful acts like promiscuous sex and drug use by ostentatiously promoting them. Now these very baby boomers decry the resulting social ills—from high levels of illegitimacy to drug-driven crime—without acknowledging their contribution to them.

As a result, we have less and less moral grounding as the ethical quandaries grow more and more complex. Greater support is needed for the ethical norms that make our social contract viable. If it does not materialize, we’ll find that we have fewer standards to protect. And we’ll see it’s a future far more brutal than even Huxley could have imagined.

APPENDIX D

[The following column ran in the New York Post (April 13, 1998); Mr. Greenberg is editorial page editor of the Little Rock (Arkansas) Democrat-Gazette and a nationally-syndicated columnist. (© 1998, Los Angeles Times Syndicate, reprinted by permission.)]

Arranged Your Death Yet?

Paul Greenberg

It began the night of Tuesday, March 24, 1998, A.D. somewhere in the vicinity of Portland, Ore., U.S.A. According to a dispatch from The Associated Press, that's when the first state-approved, physician-assisted suicide was carried out in the United States of America.

The subject was in her mid-80s, a cancer patient whose doctor said she had less than two months to live. Because her own physician refused to assist in the suicide, another was found by a group called Compassion in Dying. It issued a tape of the woman's voice saying she looked forward to it. She would become the country's first government-approved suicide.

It was all perfectly legal under that state's Death With Dignity Act. Suicide is one of the procedures available to the 270,000 low-income residents of Oregon covered by that state's health-insurance plan. Oregon has always been a very progressive place.

We do not know her name; it wasn't released. But on hearing of her death, at least one person in faraway Arkansas prayed for the unidentified woman and her family. And for his country. For something told him the woman in Oregon would be only the first. And that in the future, more and more would be killed—or rather, euthanized—with their consent. Or without it. For there will always be others willing to sign the forms. They will do it out of compassion. Or perhaps for other reasons. And later, others will do it for them, and to them. We're already aborting more than a million a year; it was only a matter of time before we began the same process at the other end of life's spectrum.

How do you say kaddish, the prayer for the dead, for an idea—the idea that life is sacred? For suicide, too, will soon become legalized, institutionalized, ritualized. You'll be able to find consumer guides and an appropriate Hallmark card for the occasion. Death will soon be referred to as Choice, and politicians will solemnly dedicate themselves to making it “safe, legal, and rare.” The death sciences will demonstrate dramatic growth. Copies of the Hippocratic Oath will still be found in antique stores, valued mainly for their frames.

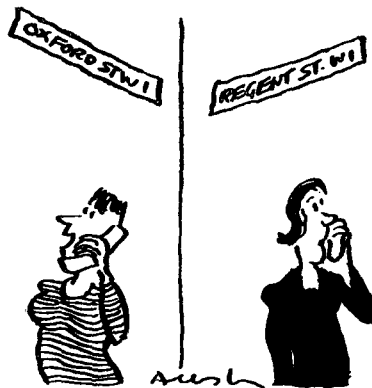
The United States is much less advanced in this sphere than a country like the Netherlands. Its government reports that more than a thousand patients are put to death each year without their consent, with a doctor in attendance. Why not hospices and sedatives for the dying? They take longer, they cost more, and, who knows, the patient might live.

The same economical process now has begun in this country. And we know

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just when and where the first step down this slippery slope was taken: March 24, 1998, in the state of Oregon. This unidentified woman will surely be but the first. Just as abortion became an industry, so will euthanasia.

There's a big market for death out there. The first advertisements already have appeared: "*Is someone in your family terminally ill? Does he or she wish to die—and with dignity? Call physician consultant.*" (From an early classified ad placed by Dr. Jack Kevorkian.)



'That's strange, I'm on the corner of Oxford Street and Regent Street too.'

THE SPECTATOR 21 March 1998

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[The following column first appeared in the San Francisco Sunday Examiner & Chronicle (March 1, 1998), and is reprinted here with permission (Copyright 1998, Creators Syndicate). In "real life" Ms. Saunders is the wife of Mr. Wesley J. Smith, who has contributed a number of articles to this journal.—Ed.]

The Body Bag

Debra J. Saunders

A commercial suicide bag has many features for your "safety and comfort," according to its marketing literature. Send \$30 to a certain pro-suicide group, and it'll send you a bag designed to hasten "self-deliverance" when used with a drug overdose.

Features include "clear, industrial-strength" plastic, which means the hyper-cautious suicide won't have to use two bags. An "optional" neck band provides for a "turtleneck" fit. Its "extra large size" spares users from "overheating and breathing difficulties" that can occur when small bags implode; instead users die from a depletion of oxygen in a bag which still includes carbon dioxide and nitrogen—"thus avoiding a terrible sensation of suffocating."

The death bag manufacturers say their product provides the most comfortable sure-fire suicide. I will not help them by publicizing their name.

You cannot fault bag makers for not paying attention to detail. They've got cushy features with state-of-the-art results. Why, bag makers are so sensitive that they've even worked hard to ensure that disabled people can kill themselves with ease. (Don't want any sick people lingering, after all, do we?)

Marketing literature tells the tale of the 41-year-old man with multiple sclerosis who found that "he could put it over his head and he managed to use the Velcro seal, but he could not, on his own, without assistance, use ordinary plastic bags and elastic bands."

As a hand-out boasts, the customized death bag "takes the guesswork out of the use of plastic bags."

Instructions also suggest what users might do during their final moments: "A person preparing to die might care to reflect upon their life, one last time, by going through a much-cherished photo album . . . while listening to some of their favorite music." There's a photo of a happy customer looking at pictures. Instructions also suggest "a light snack and anti-nausea medication" an hour before ingesting one's final drugs.

Yes, its makers have thought of everything. Except what's best for most people.

What is not best is the suggestion made by death-advocates that there is "dignity" in suicide, as if there is a lack of dignity when people hold onto life. What is not best is when seemingly sensitive people put so much effort into making it easy and painless to die, instead of channeling that effort into making it easier and less painful to live despite an illness.

APPENDIX E

The bag makers laud the success story of bag-user “Eleanor B.” At 61, after radiation therapy, her breast cancer metastasized. She took morphine and Tylenol #3, and said her pain was “fairly well controlled.” But, “she wanted to ‘take charge’ and make her own decisions—rather than be a passive victim of a prolonged terminal illness.”

It says something about this society that Eleanor’s decision frequently is hailed as noble. As if there is something uplifting in a person undervaluing the treasure of life. As if there is something base about sick people who actually prefer to live, even if they can’t do everything they used to do.

That people have a right to kill themselves is undeniable. That they care to, however, should be considered a sign of depression, poor care (which the bag makers maintained was not an issue for Eleanor B.) or ingrained cluelessness.

The notion the suicide lets the sick “take charge” is a cruel joke. Eleanor B. didn’t take charge, she gave up. She surrendered her humanity. In death, she became a “passive victim.”

Read the sales pitch and you understand that the suicide-bag-peddling folks tried to be sensitive and caring. They thought of everything—everything but the need to let sick people feel loved, valued, and welcome to stay as long as possible.



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