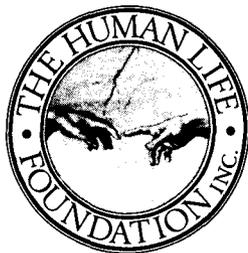


the HUMAN LIFE REVIEW



FALL 1999

Featured in this issue:

William Murchison on Abortion Gridlock

Clarke D. Forsythe on A New Strategy

Abortion: A Tool for Modern Times?

Ramesh Ponnuru and Francis Canavan, S.J., critique
Christopher Caldwell's *New Republic* essay, "Pro-Lifestyle"

Chilton Williamson Jr. on Aborting Maturity

Ellen Wilson Fielding on Who's In Charge?

Donald DeMarco on Not Making the Genetic Cut

Faith Abbott McFadden on Is Greer *Germane*?

Also in this issue:

Suzanne Fields • David van Gend • Melinda Tankard Reist •
Paul Greenberg • John Leo • Chris Weinkopf • Wesley J. Smith and
J. Bottum for the editors of *The Weekly Standard*

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE . . .

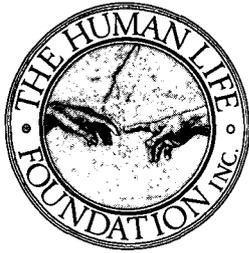
. . . while we worked this fall to finish *HLR*, Volume XXV, Number 4 (completing a quarter century of continuous publication!), we were also busy launching a challenging new venue: www.humanlifereview.com. Those of you who've logged onto our website have seen how "visitors" can browse through several pages of information about the Foundation, plus read and "download" two articles from the Summer issue (soon to be replaced by two new articles from this one). Since August, we've had an average of 275 "hits" a day (that is, visitors to our site); and several people have responded to our "Special Internet Offer" to receive a complimentary copy of the *Review*. Guess they liked the featured articles by Mary Meehan and William Murchison. One gentleman liked what he read so much he sent us a very handsome donation—what a happy cyber-surprise!

One of our aims in the new year will be to explore new and different ways to reach the ever-growing numbers of people who use the Internet. For starters, we would like to post Ronald Reagan's now-classic essay, "Abortion and the Conscience of the Nation," which we first published in our Spring 1983 issue (it was an "exclusive" our late editor, J.P. McFadden, was most honored to have snagged). We're also looking at the feasibility of posting articles specially-tailored for younger readers. Maybe we can even arrange for some of our regular contributors to take part in an interactive debate forum with our on-line readers—we'll keep you, er, posted.

Meanwhile, our thanks go to *The Weekly Standard* for permission to reprint pieces by that magazine's Books and Arts editor, J. Bottum (page 76), and by frequent *HLR* contributor, Wesley J. Smith (page 93). And to *The New Republic*, where Christopher Caldwell's essay, "Pro-Lifestyle," originally appeared. We'd also like to thank *National Review*, which recently published a modified version of Clarke Forsythe's article, "A New Strategy" (page 15).

But *no* thanks go to the press office of George W. Bush. We had hoped to bring you another in our series of interviews with presidential contenders but the Bush people declined our invitation for their boss to sit down and talk at length about those pesky life "issues." (*N.B.*: Reprints of Senior Editor William Murchison's interviews with Steve Forbes and Gary Bauer are still available.) Disappointed but not all that surprised, we'll now try to find out if the cat's got the *other* guy's tongue—and we'll keep you posted on *that*, too.

ANNE CONLON
MANAGING EDITOR



the HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

THIS ISSUE COMPLETES OUR FIRST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF PUBLICATION. As we take stock of where we are—here, at the tail-end of the millennium!—on our primary issue, abortion, we find Americans presenting a perplexing split-personality. On the one hand, over 45 percent of Americans, according to a recent poll, think abortion is not only wrong but “murder.” On the other, attempts to place *any* restrictions on the abortion license or industry usually fail, and often involve enough complications, power struggles (even among pro-life organizations), dis-information and plot twists to merit a Dickensian novel (or perhaps, as those would agree who tuned in to C-Span to watch the partial-birth abortion ban debates in the Senate, the literary parallel would be Kafka!).

It seems the majority of Americans are, after all, quite comfortable being uncomfortable with our unbridled “right” to abort our children. So, when politicians and pundits say that Americans need to change their “minds and hearts” about abortion before it will be possible to change the law, perhaps they are more on-target than even we’d like to admit: it’s fairly obvious that not all those who say that abortion is “murder” are willing to support legislation (or candidates) which would restrict its use.

Most of the pieces we’ve gathered in this issue discuss some aspect of this frustrating situation, which contributes to what Senior Editor William Murchison, in our lead article, calls “Abortion Gridlock.” Murchison focuses especially on the current political scene. Whereas, he notes, “Abortion rhetoric in past presidential campaigns rubbed against our sensibilities like sandpaper,” this time “The grating is gone.” Front-runner Republican candidate George W. Bush (like former candidate Elizabeth Dole) is not choosing to make abortion a major theme of his campaign, softening his pro-life stance by speaking mostly about changing hearts and minds and limiting the number of abortions. Some key pro-life leaders are softening their own tone and backing him, urging “pragmatism” to save us from another Clinton-like victory.

Of course, the question is: can Bush be trusted if he does become President? Murchison provides no answers—how could he?—but he does point out some dangers in the pragmatic approach, while reflecting at the same time on the nature and realities of politics, and who exactly has the responsibility to teach the truth that will change the minds and hearts in this, admittedly, “unintelligible” moment of our struggle.

We now move from the political to the legal—Clarke Forsythe, lawyer and the

President of Americans United for Life, offers his thoughts on what the new millennium's pro-life legal strategy should be. Forsythe would (reluctantly) agree with the presidential-hopeful soft-peddallers that Americans are not yet ready to pass the Human Life Amendment, the "political goal most frequently mentioned"; he says "no one has devised a coherent plan to achieve an HLA" and it cannot be achieved through education alone. He advocates the temporary goal of a federalism amendment, one that would overturn the national right to abortion and return the issue to the states.

Forsythe compares his approach to other strategies that have been promoted: whether or not you agree with his arguments (and the *Review* itself does not officially endorse legislation or candidates for that matter; rather, our purpose is to facilitate the debate and provide an historical record of our movement) it's clear, as Forsythe writes, that the federalism amendment itself would "require significant change in public attitudes."

Forsythe makes the powerful point (one which he has previously voiced in these pages) that the American public is stalled on abortion because it sees it as a "necessary evil"—but this view is based on "myths" (some might call them blatant lies) perpetrated by the abortion lobby. We can all agree that the first step toward changing minds and hearts would be increasing our efforts to dispell these myths, which Forsythe lists and says they can be summed up in the archetypal image of the coat hanger. Too many Americans believe that abortion restrictions will not decrease abortions and would put more women at risk, whereas of course the reverse is true.

We turn next to a mini-special section, which has its own brief introduction on page 28. It features a discussion of a piece we have reprinted from *The New Republic* by Christopher Caldwell, called "Pro-Lifestyle: Why Abortion is here to Stay," in which Caldwell alleges, in effect, that Americans don't want to change abortion law because abortion has become a "necessary" lifestyle choice. Whether or not one agrees, there is no question that, for some in our culture, "choice" is simply a modern convenience.

What this says about us is part of what is taken up in the following article, in which Chilton Williamson argues that the current state of average Americans is one of "managed infantilism." In "Aborting Maturity," Williamson lays out for his readers how American society functions to keep citizens dependent on government in public and obsessed with consumerism and instant gratification in private. In such a climate, metaphysical and religious questions become, tragically, obsolete: thus the illogical language of "choice" and "reproductive freedom" makes sense to people who have traded "a traditional spiritual orientation for the modern materialist one."

Williamson writes that we now have a nation of "oversized Mouseketeers" instead of adults. Tough words to swallow (though isn't Disneyland indeed a modern Mecca: a place where the only purpose is to have fun, where the "magic" has no metaphysical connotations, and where the modus operandi is instant gratification

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and pure consumerism?), but as you read his piece, you'll find his arguments likewise difficult to refute.

In her own insightful "take" on modern culture, Senior Editor Ellen Wilson Fielding continues the discussion of turn-of-the-millennium America. Her piece, written with her customary graceful prose, looks at society from the point of view of authority: whose authority are we under? The overriding answer seems to be that most people would say "I'm in charge"—yet this nearly universal claim "is not a proud boast so much as a rudimentary default system . . . we are simply occupying a vacuum left by the exodus of other acknowledged authorities." With no universally agreed-upon authorities, morals become a matter of taste, evil is relabeled "illness" and, again, questions of religious and metaphysical nature go unanswered. Those who hold on to traditional beliefs are likely to be tempted to disengage from the culture at large.

The practices of abortion and, increasingly, euthanasia in contemporary society reflect the drastic change we've witnessed in the meaning of personhood and of life itself. This has, thanks to modern medical technology, involved the treatment of humans in the embryonic stage. In "Not Making the Gentic Cut," Professor Donald DeMarco focuses on the practices of genetic engineering used during the *in vitro* fertilization process, in which "attacking genetic diseases" actually means killing off imperfect embryos.

In the brave new world of cloning and *in vitro*, human beings are determined "undesireable" or "unusable." Consistent with the theme of our previous articles, DeMarco looks at the conflicts of our culture: "The central paradox of the culture of death is that in fighting disease, deformity, and unwantedness—themselves images of death—we *advance* the culture of death." DeMarco makes the case that "what all this comes down to, and perhaps most significantly, is a crisis in love." Love, not as shallow sentimentalism, but as the *true* love in which the lover accepts the dignity, the individuality, and the irreplaceability of the human person.

On to our final article, and a change of pace. Senior Editor Faith Abbott McFadden takes on a woman who is herself a walking paradox, the Australian feminist writer Germaine Greer, who has written a new book on her very odd sort of feminism, called *The Whole Woman*. McFadden's piece is not a review; rather it's a reflection of Greer's search for "the whole woman" and why it is she seems to be looking in the wrong places.

As always with one of Faith's articles, we accompany her on an invigorating mental journey: she views Greer through critiques of her work by noted reviewers, Greer's own words, in print and on television, and we even go back to the well-thumbed files of our late editor, J.P. McFadden, who had clipped an article by Greer which reveals a lesser-known side of her complex personalty: that of a nostalgic ex-Roman Catholic. Perhaps Greer is a sort of poster-woman for the unliveable contradictions of the culture we have been dissecting: she yearns for the religious

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trappings and the certainty of faith she once had, yet she has rejected the metaphysical and religious precepts that created that culture. She's left with her own "doom and gloom" version of feminism, with, as Faith explains, nowhere to go.

* * * * *

Our Appendices section begins with several pieces discussing the regrettable goings-on at Princeton University. Readers of the *Review* are well acquainted with Dr. Peter Singer's "ethical" theories, which recommend infanticide and euthanasia, as well as his controversial appointment to the Princeton faculty. Columnist Suzanne Fields, in *Appendix A*, unapologetically likens Singer's views to the Nazi doctors; *U.S. News and World Report's* John Leo (*Appendix B*) in his own trenchant column reports that Princeton "seems surprised by the intensity of the opposition to Singer." And in *Appendix C*, in an editorial from the *Weekly Standard*, J. Bottum says those responsible at Princeton, to their shame, know *exactly* what they are doing. Singer is primarily an activist—as a philosopher, his work is second-rate and would not merit an Ivy League appointment—but his presence at Princeton "transforms the slaughter of the innocents into a debatable moral question rather than an undebatable moral principle." Princeton thus takes its place in the forefront of the movement away from the inviolability of human life and toward a God-less utilitarianism—and perhaps an irrevocable slide down the slippery slope.

Appendix D includes two fascinating articles by our Australian friend, Dr. David van Gend. The first again deals with Peter Singer, but has a different twist: it turns out that Singer, who advocates the killing of the senile old as well as infants, now has a mother who has advanced Alzheimers and no longer recognizes her son. Has he made plans to "euthanize" her? Not at this writing; our deep thinker has actually said ". . . it is different when it is your own mother." Well, well. Van Gend's next piece, "Herod 2000" again evokes the slaughter of the innocents. He reports on a conference to be held in Australia to "celebrate the achievement" of abortion, a gathering of the International Society of Abortion Doctors (which took place in October). Featured speakers included U.S. late-term abortion specialists George Tiller and Warren Hern, who outlined their ghastly techniques. (As you will see in our note, the good Dr. van Gend and his colleagues quickly organized a rival conference which got good media attention, and, as he e-mailed us, they gave "your Dr. Tiller and Hern a tough time of it.")

"A Crisis of Compassion," *Appendix E*, is another piece hailing from Australia. Contributor Melinda Tankard Reist tells the heartbreaking story of a Chinese woman forcibly deported from Australia, despite her pleas that this would mean the death of her more than eight-months-old unborn child. She was subjected to a brutal forced abortion as soon as she returned. Reist writes "No government can claim to be unaware of the human rights violations which face women like this," and indeed Australia has deported several pregnant women, knowing they will be forcibly aborted. Dissent from China's one-child policy is a "crime against the State."

Can't happen here? Well, we're not literally forcing women to have abortions,

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but we're certainly "legally" engaging in the most horrible kinds of baby slaughter, as exemplified in partial-birth abortion. Columnist Paul Greenberg, in *Appendix F*, discusses the most recent (October) debates over partial-birth abortion in the Senate (the ban passed again, but not with a veto-proof majority) and reminds us that, though at times we wonder if the debates are futile, "this annual debate on one form of abortion shines a glaring light on abortion in general . . . opening eyes, hearts, and minds." Which, as we have noted repeatedly, is what this country sorely needs. In *Appendix G*, Chris Weinkopf highlights one spectacularly surreal exchange during those debates: a dialogue between Senators Rick Santorum and Barbara Boxer on what it means "to be born." You have to read it to believe it.

Finally, in *Appendix H* (also reprinted from *The Weekly Standard*), our good friend Wesley Smith focuses on another shameful direction of our country and our law—legalized euthanasia. Smith takes a look at Orgeon, where assisted suicide is legal, and demonstrates how the "safeguards" are working. They *aren't* (and were never really meant to be by the pro-suicide advocates). But, as Smith notes, the passing of the Pain Relief Promotion Act in the House is a positive step, and so we'll end here, on a hopeful note, and as usual, add some cartoons to lighten up the heavy going.

We'll be back with our first issue of the New Millennium.

—MARIA MCFADDEN
EDITOR

Abortion Gridlock

William Murchison

Never—I repeat that, never—does the issue of abortion lurk far below the surface of American politics.

Pick a day: for instance, the day on which I write these lines, a couple of weeks before Thanksgiving, 1999. It is as I have said: the headlines tell of a tussle over abortion.

Congress and the White House have been twined around each other like Saturday-night grapplers. The issue: whether taxpayer-generated funds (are there any other kind?) should support international “family planning” programs that promote abortion. You know the context, of course: The Reagan administration had said no in the mid-80s; came the Clintonites, subsequently, saying, oh, well, yes, we *have* to do it, the right to an abortion being inscribed in the Constitution and probably, if you looked, on refrigerator-door magnets and bumper stickers. November found congressional Republicans trying to rectify the situation, with the Clintonites resisting fiercely. The result: a measure tailored to the specific purpose of downplaying differences and saving faces.

All this, I would add, occurred just days after another abortion story: the defeat, by Maine voters, of a proposed ban on partial-birth abortion.

I remark the above occasions not for any out-of-the-ordinary relevance they will bear when those words are published at last in *Human Life Review*. My purpose, rather, is just to note that we don’t get away from this question. And, by the way, for wholesome and obvious reasons. The abortion question is about life and about God. More basic than that, more inescapable, you simply don’t get.

What you get, surveying the abortion issue on the eve of the 2000 elections, is ruminative. You may likewise get perplexed. I know I do.

That abortion lies just below the surface of our political concerns, everyone knows. Yet this political season it figures comparatively rarely in political speeches and programs. That would seem to suit the pro-life “right” at least relatively well. Abortion rhetoric in past presidential campaigns rubbed against our sensibilities like sandpaper. The grating is gone. The notes we hear are gentler, measured: Vivaldi’s “Spring” after a Penderecki whatever.

William Murchison, our senior editor, is a nationally syndicated columnist at the *Dallas Morning News* and a popular speaker on a wide range of current religious and cultural issues. His latest book is *There’s More to Life Than Politics*, out last fall from Spence Publishing Company (Dallas).

Concerning the pro-life cause, something is going on in our political life. Let us see, together, if we can figure what it is, and why.

I would begin by sharing an image. The image, from a book I have been reading—John Keegan's *The First World War*—is of the trenches on the Western Front, circa 1916, with armies of equivalent numbers and strength arrayed against each other: able to inflict pain and death but unable, for all that, to conquer. The Germans attack Verdun, the British launch the Somme offensive; though hundreds of thousands are killed and wounded, the lines hardly budge. I occasionally visualize the contending parties in the abortion conflict arrayed just about so; hostile, watchful, above all frustrated and immobile.

Another image comes to mind: an image more modern and civilian-like. It is of gridlock, the familiar urban condition that results when cars and trucks overload a segment of road or of city streets. Cars cannot move because the cars in front of them cannot move because the cars in front of them . . . it just goes on. In the abortion traffic jam, do not thousands sit in such a mess, wiping their brows, pounding their steering wheels?

Images are just that—pictures; incomplete and accurate only in the broadest sense. (E.g., pro-choicers, unable to change pro-life minds, still enjoy the legal right to pull off an abortion virtually anywhere they like; their frustration lies in not knowing how long that right may endure.) The images of which I speak are physical images, moreover. The struggle over abortion is intellectual; more to the point, moral; even more to the same point, spiritual. But I think we start to get somewhere, as it were, when we consider thoughtfully our present inability to get anywhere—or gridlock.

A new study by the American Enterprise Institute is helpful in this context. Everett Carll Ladd and Karlyn H. Bowman survey public opinion on abortion. The news is, there isn't much news. "Opinion on abortion," Ladd and Bowman write, "remains very much what it was in 1973 when the *Roe v. Wade* decision was handed down. Americans do not want to outlaw abortion, but neither do they think it should be completely unrestricted. Their views are at once complex and clear."

"Complex" seems clearly an understatement. Forty-eight percent of Americans, according to a 1999 poll, regard abortion as murder. In 1996, 48 percent declared that they were "personally against" abortion, with just 34 percent "personally for." Yet if asked whether public policy should stop this particular brand of murder, Americans reply in the negative. That would be to interfere. It would compromise the right of "choice." The right to "choose" murder? Yes, that very right. "Most Americans," Ladd and Bowman say, "are at once pro-choice and pro-life."

Moreover, that exceedingly odd state of mind has remained constant. In

1980, the America that just a few months later was to elect Ronald Reagan president affirmed by 62 percent to 19 percent that “If a woman wants to have an abortion, and her doctor agrees to it,” she should have it. Eight years later, as Reagan, our most pro-life president since *Roe v. Wade*, was leaving office, 61 percent said abortion under such circumstances was OK, 25 percent said it wasn’t. The “should” vote fell as low as 58 percent in September, 1989, but rebounded to 66 percent in February, 1995. In January, 1998, it stood at 59 percent. A consequence of the negative publicity “partial-birth” abortion has received? Possibly. And possibly not.

Nothing seems greatly to change in this great controversy. A pro-life offensive recovers some lost ground, then the defenders rally, counter-attack, recover a little of the ground—maybe more than just a little. It’s back to the mud, the suffering, the tedium, the waiting, while, back at headquarters, the generals plan new moves.

Not even the anticipated onrush of Hispanic voters, who are identified in a woolly way with the Catholic Church and “family values,” is likely to alter the circumstances of the struggle. A poll in March, 1999, for the *Wall Street Journal* (not included in the AEI study) said 70 percent of U.S. Hispanics support a woman’s right to elect an abortion.

“Public opinion,” even when measured diligently by poll-takers, remains a woolly and shapeless concept. It is a concept all the same to which politicians, who live and die by public opinion, pay rapt attention. You can tell the kind of attention they are paying in the 2000 election. It shapes the caution, the gingerliness, and the delicacy with which the issue is being handled, chiefly by the Republicans.

Bold prognostications about political trends, made in the heat of the political moment, usually end up embarrassing the prognosticator. Recall all those stories about “the death of liberalism” that followed the 1994 congressional elections. It seems relatively safe nonetheless to predict that abortion will not bulk large in the 2000 elections. The opponents of abortion will see to that.

The most developed consensus among Republicans holds that no Somme offensives on abortion are going to do anybody a bit of good—and in fact stand, if undertaken, to get a lot of people killed politically. Crossing No Man’s Land astride a white horse has been declared “out” for this season.

A year before the election—November, 1999—George W. Bush was the front-runner, as indeed he had been since declaring his candidacy. Bush describes himself as “pro-life.” What he means by “pro-life,” nonetheless, is something different from what, say, Gary Bauer means. Abortion, and the

need to abolish it, is a central theme of Bauer's campaign. It is a theme, but not a central one, of Bush's campaign.

Would he back a constitutional amendment to ban abortion? He would if the support were there. Is it there? Well, as the Ladd-Bowman study notes, a Yankelovich poll in May, 1996, showed only 28-percent backing for such an amendment and 64-percent opposition. When CBS and the *New York Times* asked the question in January, 1998, just 22 percent favored a human life amendment, 76 percent opposed it.

Elizabeth Dole, a centrist on human life questions, who opposes abortion save in cases of rape or incest and where the mother's life is at stake, got in trouble last spring when she called the human-life-amendment controversy "a divisive and irrelevant debate."

Stauncher pro-life Republicans than Dole were predictably incensed. More arrestingly, Kate Michelman of the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League fricasseed Dole for trying timidly to "have it both ways."

Unnoticed in the ensuing hullabaloo was that most voters seem to want it both ways. If Michelman was indisposed to award Dole any medals for courage, she might have rummaged up one for eyesight. The lady can read polls. "What I'm doing," Dole subsequently said, "is really reflecting what I'm seeing all around the country. For me, there's no question in my mind that people want to see us move forward and accomplish some good things, not just kind of endlessly debate something that really is not going anywhere. It's not going to happen."

Pro-lifers who expect George W. Bush to charge that particular machine-gun nest are likely to be disappointed. Bush prefers to talk about the need to reduce the number of abortions. In 1999, he backed and signed Texas' new parental-consent law. He declines to say he would appoint explicitly "pro-life" justices to the U.S. Supreme Court.

What fascinates is the willingness—nay, the eagerness—of many pro-life conservatives to accept the Bush style of pro-life campaigning. They'd like America to do much, much more for human life—but America, they infer, is unwilling to do much more. The time has come, they admonish, to face facts.

Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, and Ralph Reed say they are staring those facts in the eye. They are for Bush: who is not Reagan, granted. But several points (which the Christian right's Big Three don't make explicitly) arise here:

(1) Nobody also is Reagan, who (2) isn't running anyway, in addition to which (3) St. Ron himself never worked particularly hard to achieve a

human-life amendment and further (4), on the appointment of pro-life judges, had a mixed record, Sandra Day O'Connor and Anthony Kennedy being cases in point.

O put not your trust in princes, somebody said. Ah, what about Bush, then? Can he be trusted? The Big Three believe so. Likewise Dr. Richard Land, a notable pro-lifer who heads the Southern Baptists' ethics and religious liberty commission and says: "My impression among evangelicals and Southern Baptists is that they are at this point satisfied that Gov. Bush is strongly pro-life, that he is committed to changing the hearts and minds of Americans on this issue and that he believes we cannot substantially change the law until we change hearts and minds."

Even ex-Buchananites like Mike Ferris of the Home School Legal Defense Association are falling in line with the Bush position. Ferris told the *New York Times*: "Some people think it's a matter of great faith just to support the things that are unrealistic; I don't read the word of God to say that. We stand for ideals. But we stand for ideals in a way that they are going to be accomplished."

Ferris, last time around, was a national co-chairman of the Buchanan campaign. He acknowledges that Buchanan is stronger on pro-life issues than Bush, at the same time, his old hero is "not going to get elected." Sorry about that, Pat.

⁶⁶P pragmatism," once a dirty word in conservative Republican circles, is clearly making a comeback. Pragmatism—known occasionally as realism—implies a commitment to what actually works as opposed to what should but doesn't. But when much is at stake should workability be the standard? Firmly, unhesitatingly I would assert: It depends.

I have covered politics and real life—not always to be confused with each other—for 35 years. Let me take a crack at this question. I invite neither dissent nor agreement. Either is fine. The priority, it seems to me, is to talk.

The pragmatists' case rests on what seems to me—how could so many polls over so many years be collectively wrong?—evidence of a moral disarray to which politics is poorly adapted. People who regard abortion as murder, yet who refuse to stay, if you will, the murderer's hand—you want to shake such people hard; maybe, as we say in the South, whop 'em up alongside the head. But there they are. Such people vote. Politicians must find some way of engaging the affections and gratitude of such people, or at least disengaging their anger and wrath. For politicians not to behave like politicians—seekers after approval—would be for lawyers not to behave like lawyers, cooks like cooks, truck drivers like truck drivers. It happens, perhaps, but not regularly.

Now and again, such are the shifts in public mood, pragmatism falls into

disfavor. That happened in the '80s. The country stood in peril, and perceived itself so to stand. In this case pragmatism coincided with principle. Principle (e.g., anti-communism, free market economics) worked. It was a wonderful moment. Notice that last word: "moment." As the sun rises and sets, sets and rises, we're on to something else. We live momentarily, in a pragmatic age—one to which politicians like Bill Clinton have helped lead us and from which we labor to extricate ourselves. Yet we live in it.

What now? Unborn children are dying daily in the well-scrubbed, sanitized abortion clinics we were assured would deliver humankind from the misery of the back alley and coat hanger. And not just here: nearly everywhere. Even Catholic Ireland allows Irish women to travel to England for an action hateful to the church commonly supposed to have a death grip on the Irish conscience.

But this is just half the picture. The other half is that people don't care: not so many people at any rate that politicians, professional seekers after approval, are inspired to charge the machine-gun nests.

The minimum we have to do, I would think, is to be pragmatic about pragmatism: to make sure that the creed of workability itself works as advertised. Because it may not. Dangers, as well as opportunities, attach to the pragmatic approach.

It's better to do 50 percent than 30 percent, better 20 percent for that matter than five or even zero. So goes the half-a-loaf theory, a staple of pragmatic discourse.

George W. Bush is marketed as the pro-life cause's half loaf. Yes, of course, we'd love it, we'd adore it, we'd get down on our knees to celebrate Gary Bauer or Steve Forbes or Alan Keyes or Pat Buchanan smiting with a mighty hand those who would deliberately take human life. Dr. James Dobson could become secretary of health and human services, Pat Robertson attorney general. Except that, to quote Elizabeth Dole, it isn't going to happen in the present climate. What could happen is the resurgence of liberal Democratic morale and momentum and the election of Al Gore or Bill Bradley. Such is the pragmatic argument, the argument congenial to growing numbers of pro-life conservatives.

If we don't like the argument, why don't we confute it? Because it makes sense? It certainly does. But I want to mention something else that makes sense: something about human nature. It should put us on guard about half-loafism.

Pragmatism can mean drawing allies into your orbit so as to blow away the political bad guys. It can also mean the fast and easy way out of a predicament; the lowest-common-denominator approach to problem-solving; the relieved mopping of anxious brows by politicians tired of the hassle.

The rationale for backing Bush in 2000 is that his election would create space and opportunity for changing hearts and minds. Experience compels us to be coolly pragmatic about that rationale. Would it actually work that way?

What about an alternative scenario? To wit, Bush enters White House; pro-life “moderates,” when abortion comes up at strategy sessions, make excuses, leave the room; heart-and mind-changing initiatives fall into the congressional hopper, only to disappear mysteriously or return for more pragmatic handling; abortion issue in politics sinks below horizon.

Could it happen? Those who insist it couldn't, don't know the realities of politics, where the operative consideration, much more than morality, is power.

Manifestly abortion remains legal because the voting public, glossing over the immorality of killing the unborn, likes abortion legal and available. In the face of this fact, even those of us unsympathetic to politicians as a breed should acknowledge the predicament in which they find themselves.

Do the right thing! we cry. In an ever-more-pluralistic democracy, definitions of “the right thing” vary wildly. What's a people-pleasing politician to do? Ninety-nine times out of 100 he will start his search for the “right thing” in the political territory where the footing is firmest, the terrain least slushy and carved up by rivulets and gulches. The opinion polls will lay out the proper coordinates, and it's on from there.

On abortion, hearts and minds do have to be changed. Who changes them, is the question. The idea of looking to politicians for moral leadership grows ever more tenuous in the Age of Bill Clinton, whose right to novel pursuits, whenever and wherever, and with whomever, the U.S. Senate recently affirmed. The blunting of the impeachment drive could be called a high act of pragmatism, wherein ethics (should he have done it?) gave way to practicality and accommodation (he's there, voters love him, what can you do?).

Politics, in the modern, not the Aristotelian, context, centers on pragmatism. It concerns itself less with hearts and minds than with concrete achievements. I do not mean this cynically. Honest. It is how things are. We have to acknowledge the way things are as well as the way they would be if—in Madison's famous phrase—men were angels (which, you guessed it, they bloody well aren't).

That may be the way of things in politics, but politics, luckily, is far from the whole of life. The non-political rest-of-life offers opportunities for that conversion of heart and mind to which the politicians allude without telling us exactly how they mean to proceed, or on what political grounds. The

agents of moral change in Western society have never been the wielders of political power; they have been teachers. This means clergymen; it means writers; it means academics; and, of course, parents.

The collapse of the old moral dispensation in Western society, beginning early in the century but accelerating after World War II, is among the epochal events of post-Reformation history. The collapse occurred not because politicians changed laws but rather because determined interest groups—organized or unorganized; small like the Supreme Court majority in *Roe v. Wade* or as large as the surging mobs at Berkeley and the psychedelic throng at Woodstock—clamored to have their way with the rest of us. And got it, after encountering only the feeblest resistance from clergymen, writers, academics, parents. The abortion controversy is of a piece with the whole, ongoing controversy over life and love in an era of unexampled freedom and latitude. What have the teachers to say on these matters? Not enough yet to enforce a consensus on the politicians.

Law, and the politics through which the process of law-making operates, reflect and often enshrine morality. But law, on its way to enactment, has to navigate and find its way through powerful moral currents. I believe that may be where we are right now—all at sea, unable to make purposeful moral statements concerning truth, thus unable to tell our politicians what we really want.

No, you don't have to like politicians to sympathize with them: which, humbly, at this unintelligible moment, I do.



A New Strategy

Clarke D. Forsythe

Sixteen years after the last vote on a constitutional amendment on abortion in Congress and seven years after the *Casey* decision and the Clinton election, it is timely to ask: what are the goals of the cause for life? Renewed focus on goals, and the means to achieve them, is necessary to effectively direct precious resources now. The political, legal, and cultural environment has changed significantly, which should influence judgment as to what action will be truly effective in bringing about positive change.

In its broadest terms, the goal on abortion might be described as “a society in which every child is protected in law and welcomed in life,” in Richard John Neuhaus’ inimitable phrase. This statement captures the reality that a real solution to abortion must take account of both law and culture. Ultimate goals need to take account of the legal situation, and any account of the legal situation quickly reveals that the Supreme Court’s 1973 decision in *Roe v. Wade* is still a primary obstacle to a culture of life.

Because *Roe* created a national right to abortion and declared that unborn children are not “persons” with the same constitutional protection as born children, the political goal most frequently mentioned has been a Human Life Amendment (HLA). An HLA would declare unborn children to be “persons” subject to equal treatment under the Constitution and preclude discriminatory action by the states.

Unfortunately, no one has ever devised a coherent plan to achieve an HLA. Early efforts to pass such an amendment in Congress in the 1970s assumed public rejection of the *Roe* decision. Based on the cultural, political, and legal experience of the past 26 years, it is clear that an HLA cannot be achieved through education alone. The political and legislative processes of the states must first be opened up by eliminating a national right to abortion and returning the abortion issue to the states. Only by opening up the democratic process and allowing the beneficial impact of real legal restraints on abortion—along with other necessary social and cultural changes—might a national consensus for an HLA be created. Such a change in the political and legal situation can only be achieved through a federalism amendment (or equivalent Supreme Court decision) that would eliminate the national right to abortion and return the issue to the states.

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Some Background

The abortion issue has gone through four stages, generally speaking, over the past 40 years. Throughout these stages, the goals have changed as the nature of the problem has changed:

1) *the pre-Roe era*, roughly the 15 years between 1958-1973, marked by efforts to change elite opinion, public opinion, state law, and the courts in favor of abortion, and the counter effort to sustain state abortion laws, culminating in the *Roe* decision;

2) *1973-1983*, the first decade after *Roe*, during which the cause for life pursued constitutional amendments in Congress to overturn *Roe*;

3) *1983-1992*, when the cause for life emphasized efforts to overturn *Roe* through the courts. With the vote against constitutional amendments in the spring of 1983, and Justice O'Connor's 1983 dissents in the *Akron* and *Ashcroft* cases, focus shifted from a constitutional amendment to persuading the Court to overturn *Roe*. That strategy made sense at the time, because Ronald Reagan—the most pro-life President since *Roe* (following Nixon, Ford and Carter)—was determined to change the Court, and change seemed to be happening. Positive movement was seen in the Supreme Court's 1989 *Webster* decision. But, ultimately, as we know now, not enough change was achieved. The 1992 *Casey* decision revealed that the Court had not changed as much as people had hoped. Culture defeated reason; institutional ego defeated constitutional authority. In retrospect, it seems that the decisive institutional moment came with the congressional mid-term elections of November, 1986, when pro-abortion Senators took back control of the Senate, and the judicial nomination and confirmation process changed dramatically. Recall that the summer of 1986 (prior to the election) saw the relatively easy confirmations of Justice Rehnquist as Chief Justice and Antonin Scalia as Associate Justice; but the following summer saw the Bork Debacle, and the Reagan/Bush nomination process was never the same again.

4) Finally, *the fourth and current stage*, the post-*Casey* and Clinton era, when the cause for life has been defending itself against annihilation and focusing on broader and more indirect legal and cultural change. Long-range goals have been understandably muted during this period. The primary reason for this is obvious—vital resources were being deployed to counter various attacks, including the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA), abortion in national health care, and campaign-finance legislation. Some of the most extreme pro-abortion initiatives were defeated. It was understandable to put discussion of the big picture on the sideline while every effort had to be made to avert catastrophe during President Clinton's first term.

This threat abated somewhat when the 1994 elections changed the balance of power in Congress and created a favorable legislative environment for the introduction of a prohibition on partial-birth abortion (PBA). The educational potency of this issue is shown by the fact that it has spread like wildfire, state by state. Important strides have been made by the debate: for example, more Americans than ever before have been educated that late-term abortions occur and that they are legal. And exposure of the partial-birth procedure inevitably raises the question: is any other abortion, at any earlier time of pregnancy, more humane? Throughout these last six years, given the obvious political and legal obstacles, proper emphasis has been placed on broader educational initiatives and cultural reform.

The Challenge of Public Opinion

But where *does* the cause for life stand seven years after Clinton/*Casey*? At least two things stand out. First, nothing has changed since 1992 that would indicate that the Court is ready to overturn its blunders in *Roe* and *Casey*. In effect, as far as the Court is concerned, the cause for life is back where it was before Ronald Reagan was elected—with neither a pro-life President nor five justices who are inclined to overturn *Roe* and return the issue to the people. And the pro-abortion majority has only gained on the Supreme Court since 1992, with the addition of Justices Ginsburg and Breyer. Every indication is that this Court will invalidate any abortion legislation, state or federal, that flies in the face of the *Casey* decision.

Second, 26 years after *Roe*, Middle America (the 60 percent in the middle) sees abortion as a “necessary evil,” and this has enormous implications for future education. There is abundant evidence that Middle America sees abortion as an *evil*. A poll released in January, 1999 reported that 50 percent of Americans see abortion as “murder.” That reinforces the 1991 Gallup Poll, which put that figure at 49 percent. But the Gallup Poll went farther and showed that an additional 28 percent saw abortion as at least “the taking of human life.” So, a total of 77 percent saw abortion as at least the taking of human life, if not murder itself. We have won *that* public argument. Even though many Americans view abortion as an evil, many believe it is a “necessary evil.”

But “necessary” for what? The answer, in many Americans’ minds, is necessary to avert the back alley. The public has bought the myths of abortion history created by abortion advocates in the 1960s:

- the myth that abortion law did not effectively prevent abortions;
- the myth that women rather than abortionists were the target of abortion laws before *Roe*;

- the myth that hundreds of thousands of illegal abortions were performed every year before *Roe*;
- the myth that hundreds, or even thousands, of women died every year from illegal abortions;
- the *myth* that *legal* abortion means *safe* abortion.

In other words, the public unfortunately believes that laws against abortion will mean no fewer abortions, and result in many more deaths to women, and in unfair prosecutions of the survivors. “The status quo is bad,” many think, “but it would be worse if abortion laws were restored. What’s the alternative to the status quo?”

Confronted with the persistence of these moral qualms by a substantial majority of Americans, the purpose of the “choice” rhetoric is precisely to sideline Americans’ qualms. The tactic is to convince Americans that, no matter what they feel about abortion, the only real option is to persuade women to choose alternatives. Pro-life Americans have an immediate response to abortion—“because abortion takes a human life, prohibit it!” In contrast to this ready pro-life response, the effect of the “choice” rhetoric is to convince Middle America that legal prohibitions are *not* a reasonable or effective option. And the most enduring and effective argument that abortion proponents have used over 30 years can be summed up in the coat hanger. Again, this is not ideological, it is practical. Surrounding the coat hanger are a number of myths about the impact of abortion law in the pre-*Roe* era and about the safety of abortion since legalization. However bad Americans feel about abortion, the pro-choice rhetoric says, legal prohibitions would only make the problem worse.

The myth of abortion as a necessary evil explains why some polls can show that a majority of Americans think that abortion is murder yet think that it should remain legal: while they are against abortion, they don’t think that criminalizing it is a realistic solution. Alternatives, prevention, adoption, yes. Criminalizing, no. Thus most Americans support practically any regulations short of criminalization. If abortion prohibitions are not a reasonable option, the most opponents can do is to persuade women to choose an alternative (“choice”). There will be no dramatic turn around in the short-term in the uncertain public attitudes that we have unless we overcome the myth of abortion as a necessary evil. This myth has dominated public debate for thirty years, and the cause for life has never done the heavy lifting needed to dispel it, yet it may be the key to unlocking the puzzle of changing public opinion over the next decade.

There are at least three objectives for changing public opinion over the

next decade: dispel the myth about the back alley and the pre-*Roe* era, eliminate the sense that abortion laws would be targeted against women rather than abortionists, and heighten the public sense that abortion is not good for women (thereby diminishing the sense that the evil is “necessary”).

What a Federalism Amendment Would Do

In this context, what is the relevance of a federalism amendment? In order to see the great benefits of a federalism amendment, it is important to understand the practical impact of *Roe v. Wade*.

Roe did two things, one of enormous and one of little practical impact. First, it created a national (federal constitutional) right to abortion, empowering the federal courts to block state enforcement of abortion laws with injunctions. As a practical matter, that prevented the states from prohibiting the abortion trade. (At least one state, Rhode Island, tried to enact comprehensive protective legislation in the face of the Supreme Court’s decision, and that legislation was enjoined. After the *Webster* case in 1989, Louisiana and Guam also tried strongly protective legislation, but these were invalidated by the courts after *Casey* and the Supreme Court refused to hear the cases.)

By creating the most permissive national rule imaginable, the Supreme Court paralyzed the democratic process. The basic political problem with *Roe* is that it dismantled American democracy—it prevented the people from expressing their will on the issue of abortion through legislation, as they had for at least 150 years before *Roe*. As a result, public policy does not reflect public opinion. As the 1991 Gallup Poll shows, most Americans oppose most abortions. The Supreme Court still stands in the way and still prevents protective laws from being enacted and enforced. But we should not be lured into thinking that protective laws are not needed and that persuasion alone can significantly reduce abortion. Twenty-five years demonstrate that.

Second, *Roe* said that an unborn child is not a “person” with rights protected by the federal constitution. While this has been a great focus of ideological fervor, it did not introduce anything new as a practical matter. It meant that the states could legalize or promote abortion without violating the federal Constitution, but this was something that some states (15 to be exact) were already doing between 1967 and 1973, even before *Roe*. *Roe* did not lift an existing barrier to state legalization of abortion. What prevented states from legalizing abortion prior to 1973 was culture, not law. (And some states did reject legalization just before *Roe*.)

A federalism amendment would address the first, and most important practical impact of *Roe*. It could be patterned after the Hatch Federalism

Amendment introduced by Senator Orrin Hatch in September 1981 as S.J. Res. 110. (It was variously referred to as the Hatch Human Life Amendment [Hatch HLA] and the Hatch Federalism Amendment. The exact Hatch language was: "A right to abortion is not secured by this Constitution. The Congress and the several states shall have the concurrent power to restrict and prohibit abortions: Provided, that a law of a state which is more restrictive than a law of Congress shall govern.") As pro-life legal expert Dennis Horan explained in his testimony before Congress in 1981, a federalism amendment would be patterned after the 13th Amendment (abolishing slavery) in denying a "right" previously created by the courts. It would return the issue to the states and get the federal courts out of the way of blocking state laws against abortion, allowing the states to act.

A federalism amendment would thus eliminate the great corruption of the political process introduced by *Roe*. For example, some complain that the definition of "pro-life" public official is diluted by officials who will only support parental-consent or -notice laws, or informed consent for abortion laws, or prohibitions with exceptions. But it is not lack of pro-life will or conviction that prevents voters from defining pro-life legislators more strongly. It is because the Supreme Court has swept abortion prohibitions of any kind off the political map. Abortion prohibitions are not legal or political alternatives because the courts have uniformly and effectively quashed them since 1973. If they are not policy options, they are not electoral options, and they cannot be effectively used to define "pro-life." Asking a public official to commit to a theoretical position is much less effective than asking her to vote up or down for a bill right in front of her. Thus, the largest contribution to weakening the definition of "pro-life" public official over the past 26 years has come from the Supreme Court.

A federalism amendment would not be a "state's rights" amendment (as that term has been used concerning various amendments in the 1970s) because it would not seek to empower the states with some limited power to permit or prohibit abortion. (The second sentence of the Hatch Amendment was intended to prevent Congress from preempting state pro-life laws.) It does not express a neutrality toward human life. It does not say anything about states rights, and it would not give to states any powers that they did not have before *Roe*. (Recall that some state legislatures were already legalizing abortion before 1973.) A federalism amendment would remove abortion *from* the federal constitution without putting anything *into* the Constitution. It would not put any exceptions language into the Constitution. It would not make any distinction between human beings (or persons) with constitutional

protection and those without. It would leave this untouched, and by saying nothing about personhood, it would leave that issue to another day. Thus, it would not foreclose political leaders from achieving a greater measure of justice in the future.

A federalism amendment would contain no exceptions for a national abortion right and thus avoid an internal debate over “exceptions.” It would return the abortion issue to the states. To paraphrase Professor David Louisell, a federalism amendment “will return us to the status quo ante [before Roe].”

Alternatives to A Federalism Amendment

Of course, a federalism amendment would not provide perfect protection throughout the country. While it would remove the biggest practical obstacle created by *Roe*—disabling the effective exertion of the popular will through law—it would not supply that public will by itself.

It is susceptible to a number of reasonable criticisms. But what goal or strategy is perfect? Striving for perfection that is not achievable can prevent obtaining the good that *is* achievable. In a democratic society, where political power is widely diffused, and public opinion is a dominating factor (for good or ill), political prudence counsels that only the *best* strategy can and should be pursued. What goals, what strategy, might be superior to a federalism amendment in our secular, democratic society? There are basically eight alternatives.

1) *Human Life Amendment*. When pressed about ultimate goals on abortion, many pro-life leaders implicitly support a Human Life Amendment (HLA). This makes sense, ideally. An unborn child should be protected to the same extent as a born child, and if a born child is currently protected as a “person” under the 14th Amendment from state discrimination, an unborn child should be protected as well.

But it is in contrast to an HLA that the prudence of a federalism amendment is best illustrated. An HLA would overturn the national right to abortion and include the unborn within the protection of the 14th Amendment. Although an HLA would not criminalize abortion by itself (it would merely prevent every state from promoting abortion), the dominant public message disseminated by abortion advocates is that it would criminalize abortion without any exceptions. (And, if the logic of an HLA is that unborn children should be protected on a par with born children, just as the 14th Amendment does not act as a criminal code protecting born children, it should not act as a criminal code protecting unborn children. We really shouldn’t strive for more than parity, even in an ideal world. Protecting human life is, and should be, relegated to the states in our federal system.)

Assuming that an HLA is an ultimate goal, how can that be achieved? Frankly, the problem is that, after 26 years of abortion on demand, there is no realistic, viable plan for achieving a Human Life Amendment in the current cultural context. Many leaders still talk about a Human Life Amendment as the pro-life movement's ultimate goal, but no plan has ever been outlined since attempts to pass an HLA failed in Congress in 1983—16 years ago. Many seem content to assume that it will take “30 years” to achieve a Human Life Amendment.

Passing a Human Life Amendment would require moving public opinion from the status quo of abortion on demand to public support for a nationwide rule of no abortions. An HLA would most likely be perceived as a national rule prohibiting abortion without exception. And it would be necessary to achieve this change in public opinion through education alone—simply dramatically changing public opinion through education. With *Roe* still in place and the federal courts still blocking life-protective legislation, it would not be possible to secure a change in public opinion through the teaching of the law or by the practical effect of prohibiting abortions, anywhere, in any state, at any time of pregnancy. Before proposing a vote for an HLA in Congress or state conventions to ratify an HLA, the public could not be educated by experiencing the positive impact of abortion prohibitions somewhere in the country. The dominant public message by abortion proponents would be that a vote for an HLA would return America to the days of the back alley. In effect, we would be asking America, with one vote, to choose between the status quo and an uncertain future with abortion banned everywhere.

Consequently, some commentators reason that “a Human Life Amendment can be attained only when there is a firm and very broad consensus in favor of the right to life and that can happen only when abortion is relatively rare.” This makes enormous sense. One of the major differences between seeking a HLA in 1973 and seeking one 26 years later is that abortion had not pervaded the culture in 1973, and the repeat-abortion rate has nearly tripled since then. It seems doubtful that Americans would vote for an HLA at the same time that the culture still “supports” 1.2 or 1.3 million abortions annually. The cultural attitudes that produce more than one million abortions annually are not the attitudes that will support a Human Life Amendment.

But, if this makes sense, how do we make abortion “relatively rare” with *Roe* in place (preventing states from banning virtually any abortion, at any time of pregnancy)? It simply can't happen. We should not be lured into thinking that the law can just be ignored and that abortions can be radically reduced by persuasion alone, without legal inhibitions on abortionists. Based

on the experience of the past 40 years, there is absolutely no reason to think that this is feasible.

Consequently, a federalism amendment should be seen as a necessary (if not sufficient) means for achieving an HLA—by opening up the political and legislative process for life-protective legislation—not as a substitute. The only way to get to an HLA is through a federalism amendment. The only way to get to a national consensus that no state can discriminate against an unborn child is through building a consensus with political and policy changes, not just education.

Finally, the current climate of abortion on demand is the least favorable environment in which to argue for a *nationwide* rule against rape and incest exceptions. A Human Life Amendment is least likely to be achieved starting from a climate of abortion on demand. Rape and incest exceptions are best disputed when abortion for other reasons is already prohibited, not when abortion on demand is legal and hardly anyone can ever remember the time when any abortion prohibitions existed. Focusing on the injustice of rape and incest exceptions is best fought when abortion is otherwise prevented by law, and best fought by focusing exclusively on such exceptions and their reason for being. That is the nature of public policy—drawing differences and focusing on those differences. Fighting over the broadest differences, urging the most drastic change from the status quo, all in one vote, is the least plausible way to prevail.

To put it another way, in the context of a democratic society, where political power is so diffused, and freedom of speech is almost unlimited, and where public opinion plays such a dominant role, advocating one nationwide rule that so markedly contrasts with the status quo of abortion on demand in every state creates a stark contrast of absolutes, with a Grand Canyon in between, and no means of bridging that gap in public discourse. It presents a stark proposition of “all or nothing.” And when the public is comfortable with “nothing,” there are no effective means or symbols of persuasion to bring them over to the other side of the divide. Thus, a Human Life Amendment can only be reached as a *culmination* of an improving legal and sociological process across the country, not as a *reversal* of its opposite, and such improvement can only come by opening up the legal, political, and legislative process in the states.

2) *Have the President Confront the Court.* Some will object by saying that constitutional amendments are simply too difficult to obtain in our constitutional system and that other alternative solutions are preferable. Instead, some argue, a pro-life president is needed who will boldly ignore the judiciary and close abortion clinics.

The Lincoln analogy (comparing Lincoln's rejection of the Supreme Court's support for slavery in the *Dred Scott* decision) is sometimes used to support this idea. But one way in which slavery and abortion are *not* analogous is in comparing Lincoln on slavery and a pro-life President on abortion. Whatever Lincoln may have said about *Dred Scott*, Lincoln packed the Court only because the South seceded from the Union, dramatically changing the makeup of Congress which confirmed Lincoln's Supreme Court nominations. A modern President could not successfully defy the law without enormous public support.

3) *Have Congress Confront the Court*. Others would suggest that the relative success with partial-birth abortion be followed up with more aggressive legislation, in effect ratcheting down abortion step by step through federal legislation. The notion that we can simply use a federal partial-birth abortion ban as a foundation for greater and greater federal prohibitions is misguided. Such federal prohibitions may have educational and political value, but they are not an effective mechanism to overturn *Roe* or to achieve real, effective, legal constraints on abortion.

4) *Learn to Live with Roe*. Deciding to "learn to live with *Roe*" means giving up on effective legal protection for unborn children and giving up on significantly reducing the number of abortions in America. This is, in effect, capitulation to the culture of death.

5) *A Human Life Bill*. Some would urge that Congress be lobbied to enact a Human Life Bill (not amendment), like that introduced in Congress in 1981. The theory of an HLB is that it would seek to do, by statute, much of what an HLA would do by constitutional amendment. An HLB would seek to fill the gap created when the Supreme Court stated in *Roe* that it "didn't know" when human life begins. An HLB would fill that gap by defining conception as the beginning of human life. And an HLB would seek to do this pursuant to Congress' power under Section Five of the 14th Amendment (the Enforcement Clause), which gives Congress the "power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article."

If a human life bill was ever feasible, however, it is now deadlier than a doornail in the aftermath of the Supreme Court's 1997 decision in *City of Boerne v. Flores*. There the Court struck down the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), which Congress had enacted (pursuant to that same Enforcement Clause) to overturn the Supreme Court's 1991 decision in *Employment Division v. Smith* and to restore heightened federal protection for religious liberties. The Court in *Boerne* held that RFRA was an unconstitutional attempt by Congress to make a "substantive change in constitutional protections"—exactly what an HLB would try to do. The meaning of *Boerne*,

as Professor Michael McConnell has said, is that “Congress is limited to enforcing the 14th Amendment *as construed by the Court.*” If the Court overturned the politically popular RFRA on such grounds, an HLB would most certainly meet the same fate.

6) *A Supreme Court Personhood Decision.* Even though some pro-life lawyers continue to pursue it, the least likely route to success is a “personhood ruling” from the Supreme Court, holding that the 14th Amendment’s protection of “persons” encompasses the unborn child. Despite the strong historical evidence that Congress intended the 14th Amendment to encompass any “human being,” no Supreme Court justice has ever announced in favor of such a constitutional position. Virtually all have rejected it, even Justices Scalia and Thomas. At this point, a Supreme Court decision holding the unborn child to be a person and barring the states from promoting abortion is fanciful. A personhood ruling from the Supreme Court is the least likely of all theoretical routes to success.

7) *Continue to Change the Court through Judicial Appointments.* The Reagan-Bush nomination experience showed the great difficulty of this strategy. It is not enough to have a pro-life President; it is also necessary to have a pro-life Senate. What are the realistic prospects of achieving both in the near future? Even if both are achieved, what are the chances of having 3-4 seats to fill during the pro-life President’s term? Over the next decade or two, what will be the more feasible strategy to removing *Roe* as an obstacle—judicial nominations or a federalism amendment?

8) *Wait and See.* This will probably be the most common response. Some will undoubtedly say that it’s premature to talk about a federalism amendment. Any number of reasons will be given for why such talk is premature. For example, some will say, as long as a pro-abortion President is in office, we must at least wait until the next presidential election.

But agreement, preparation, and substantial cultural change would be necessary before pushing any amendment. If an HLA is impossible without first achieving the practical progress of a federalism amendment, why spend the next decade working as though an HLA is the only goal? What conditions—social, cultural, political, legal—would have to exist to reasonably achieve a federalism amendment? What timeframe would be reasonable? Because such strategies and tactics may be very different from those required to achieve an HLA, such goals and strategies need to be discussed now.

Devising A New Strategy

There will be no silver bullet that will restore the sanctity of human life in American law and culture. Not a new President, or a new Congress, or a new

program. Just as abortion on demand does not exist solely because of the Supreme Court but has sunk deeply into our culture, it will require a broadly based legal, political, cultural and educational strategy to restore the sanctity of human life in our law and culture.

But toward what end does such a strategy point? Does it make sense to pursue a legal, political, cultural or educational strategy with only short-term objectives in mind, without an ultimate goal? If a federalism amendment is not the goal in sight, what is? If it isn't time to articulate such a goal, when? If not this strategy, which? No passage of time will moot this question. Five years from now, it will still face us.

This is not a plea to introduce—or to have Congress consider—a federalism amendment in 1999 or 2000, or even in the immediate aftermath of the election of a pro-life President. Much political and educational groundwork would have to be laid to prepare Congress and public opinion for such an amendment. Rather, the task is to re-focus on principled, achievable goals and to lay the groundwork for such goals.

My argument is not that a federalism amendment is *preferable* to a Human Life (personhood) Amendment but that it is a *necessary* prerequisite to achieving one. It is the only way (except for a Supreme Court decision overruling *Roe*) calculated to opening up the legislative process to make abortion rarer and to create the type of social progress that could culminate in a Human Life Amendment. An HLA will come not from a culture and policy of abortion on demand but will be the culmination of a culture in which abortion is increasingly discouraged and rare.

A federalism amendment would require significant change in public attitudes. Starting from the current premise of public opinion that abortion is a “necessary evil,” it would require heightening the sense that abortion has been bad, not good, for women. Though a federalism amendment would require tremendous work and a creative educational strategy, it is best calculated to galvanize a great majority of Americans within any foreseeable future by recognizing public ambivalence and the myth of abortion as a necessary evil, and, relying upon such ambivalence, by suggesting that a national rule of abortion on demand has failed and that states should be free to adopt alternative approaches. And yet it does this without establishing, in words or principle, that anything less than a life-protective policy is encouraged in the Constitution itself.

This is a question about goals and plans. Much good work has been done since 1992 to make incremental progress politically, educationally, and legally. But to what is it all pointing? The experience of the past three decades—

since the first efforts to legalize abortion in state legislatures in 1967—suggests, on balance, that a federalism amendment is a necessary prerequisite to achieve a human life amendment and that it will do a great deal of good.

Finally, concern about division within the cause for life should not shelve a correct policy. Throughout American history, every social reform movement has experienced division of some kind or another—movements reflect the diversity of our democratic society. It is the necessary function of leadership to articulate principled goals, devise a promising strategy, and take the lead with effective action, seeking always to bridge that division. No doubt, a federalism amendment would be a monumental undertaking, but any legal or political solution that would restore significant authority to prohibit abortion would be a monumental undertaking. There are imperfections with such an approach, but, on balance, it would clear many obstacles out of the way, and promises more progress than the alternatives at any time in the foreseeable future.



"IT'S ALICE KRAMDEN!"

Abortion: A Tool for Modern Times?

When we first read Christopher Caldwell's essay, "Pro-Lifestyle" (in *The New Republic* last April), it gave us pause. His argument is the following: the reason there is such a split between what Americans *say* they think about abortion and what they are actually willing to *do* to make it less accessible is because the reported "moral misgivings" of the majority of Americans are "bogus"—Americans are used to an abortion-supported lifestyle, and they are not about to give it up.

Is he right? That's the question we put to our two respondents, Ramesh Ponnuru, and Father Francis Canavan, S.J. In this special section, we have reprinted Caldwell's piece, followed by the two commentaries. Without giving away the import of the replies, I think it's fair to generalize that both Ponnuru and Canavan would charge Caldwell with being unfairly dismissive of both the pro-life cause and the depth of the moral quandaries of many Americans.

Nonetheless, Caldwell's is a provocative position, because it cannot be denied that for at least one segment of society, abortion has become a lifestyle-enabler. In a country with more and more millionaires every year, abortion is often seen as a "necessity" not, ironically, because of the hardship of another little mouth to feed, but because the little one's needs are inconvenient to the "have it all" lifestyle of his or her parents. Abortion has become the *sine qua non* of the "haves"—the example Caldwell uses of a woman who didn't want a fourth child interfering with her family's already-arranged ski vacation is, sadly, not un-believable.

However, Caldwell seems to use such an example—and the general view that the multiple options for "fulfillment" in the American lifestyle would make the "convenience" of abortion impossible to give up—as justification to let the issue go, a position that implies that he is not convinced of the humanity of the unborn and the moral imperative to protect innocent life. Those of us who recognize the truth have no choice but to continue to be gadflies buzzing the conscience of "mushy middle" Americans. As Father Canavan writes, a society that turns its back on so-called "traditional" morality, where it involves life and death, is a society that will not (*ought not?*) survive.

—MARIA MCFADDEN

Pro-Lifestyle

Christopher Caldwell

Texas Governor George W. Bush's remarks on abortion as he announced his presidential exploratory committee have jolted Republican politics. Bush claims to like his party's anti-abortion "tenor" and to favor a constitutional prohibition. But he's also a "realistic enough person to know that America is not ready to ban abortions." The underlying message: Bush is a pro-lifer you can vote for without fear that your abortion rights will be curtailed.

Bush's rivals for the nomination have called those statements an appalling surrender. "Our role," says Christian rightist Gary Bauer, "must be to help shape public opinion." Pat Buchanan admits that "we don't have the votes for a human life amendment" but predicts that, if Republicans keep fighting, they might gain force "vote after vote after vote." In other words, pro-lifers not only claim that theirs is the right side; they also believe that, properly handled, it is the winning side.

Their familiar reasoning goes like this: One-fourth of all Americans favor abortion on demand, while only one-tenth think it should be banned outright. But the two-thirds of Americans in the center draw from both extremes: they are wracked by moral misgivings about their support of legal abortion. Pro-lifers have always thought that, by focusing on the misgivings, anti-abortion Republicans can win over middle America.

They can't. That middle two-thirds is not up for grabs, because the misgivings are largely bogus. Whether or not Bush's is a principled stand, it is a pragmatic one. Because the main thing Bush is "realistic enough to know" is that a pro-life regime is not really something Americans want—it's just something they feel they ought to want.

The central political fact about abortion in America is that there's a lot of it. While America's annual abortion count has fallen to 1.3 million in the late '90s, it averaged 1.5 million a year between 1973 and 1996, according to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, the research arm of Planned Parenthood. That's more than 34 million abortions. It's worth noting that the National Right to Life Organization does not contest these figures. Because, if we cast the net as widely as we can—from women who were pushing 40 in the early '70s to girls who are still teenagers today—only about 90 million women have passed through any part of childbearing age since *Roe v. Wade*. Even accounting for

Christopher Caldwell is a senior writer at *The Weekly Standard*. This article first appeared in the April 5, 1999 issue of *The New Republic* and is reprinted with permission (© 1999 The New Republic).

those who have had multiple abortions, that means close to half of American young women are using abortion—43 percent by age 45, according to the Guttmacher Institute.

In the polls, Americans profess ambivalence about abortion, openly supporting it only for “serious” reasons: for the health of the mother by 84 percent to twelve percent, for grave birth defects by 75 to 21, for rape by 77 to 19. They claim to oppose it for “trivial” reasons—for women who say they can’t afford another baby by 42 to 53, for those who don’t want another baby by 40 to 55, for those trying to avoid a shotgun wedding by 40 to 55. In other words, Americans claim not to back “lifestyle” abortions.

Yet the vast majority of abortions today are for reasons of lifestyle. Only about 14,000 women per year get abortions because of rape, incest, or to save their own lives. Of the other 1,286,000, three-fourths say a baby would interfere with work, school, or other responsibilities; two-thirds say they cannot afford a child; one-half say they do not want to be a single parent or are having problems with their male partner, according to the Guttmacher Institute.

Lifestyle always overpowers traditional morality in the war within the Western conscience, and nowhere more obviously than when abortions reach the level of pro-life parody, as they do more commonly than most abortion rights advocates will admit. The British gynecologist P. Greenhalgh writes of a rich mother of three who came to her for an abortion. She wanted a fourth child but not just yet, since the family had already reserved a ski vacation months down the line. Many ob-gyn specialists have stories like this, and, when one hears them, it’s easy to see why women feel so guilty about owning up to the pedestrian nature of their reasons.

But then most people don’t really consider lifestyle pedestrian, especially not their own. In a society organized around a succession of acquisitions and thrills, questions of lifestyle determine one’s identity, one’s rank in society, one’s allegiances, one’s loves and hates. It’s not a matter of monolithic, time-honored religion versus itty-bitty, flighty lifestyle. It’s religion—marginal vestige, subculture, private matter—versus lifestyle—the engine, the symbol, the central organizing principle of the most powerful nation in the history of mankind. The failure of the Southern Baptist Convention’s call for a boycott of Disney gives you an indication of which worldview wins when they clash head-on.

Indeed, lifestyle as a values system grows steadily more powerful as capitalism grows steadily more beneficent. In a socially stratified era antedating mass contraception, an unwanted pregnancy generally meant you’d get stuck in a cramped, limited village existence with the first man you fell in love

with, which is probably what would have happened anyway. Today, it still means getting stuck in a cramped, limited existence—but that’s decidedly not what would have happened anyway. What one loses out on is a vastly expanded roster of life choices: education, travel, career advancement, class advancement, money, fine dining, entertainment, and sports, plus a recreational-sex career that can run at full-throttle (if that’s what you want) for 30 years or more.

Republicans, at least the economic conservatives among them, are in a weak position to argue that Americans should throw all of this away. For in no other realm do they argue that the quest for lifestyle is a frivolous thing. The pro-choice position has much in common with their own. It is a market doctrine run amok in the nonmarket world. The underlying Republican defense of the American tendency to valorize, to monetize, to consumerize everything—from happiness to love to pride—has always been that the nature of those eternal pleasures is not altered a whit by having a dollar value attached to them. That ski vacation that the mother of three is aborting her child for might be a repository of all the happiness or love or pride she has.

Even where Americans claim to disapprove most strongly of abortion, they booby-trap their disapproval so that it never results in the actual curtailment of abortion rights. Take the crown jewel of Republican focus-group testing: partial-birth abortion. Following a barrage of graphic advertising and congressional legislation aimed at eliminating the procedure, 73 percent told pollsters they favored outlawing it. But, of those, 60 percent wanted an exception made for the health of the mother. And, while childbirth still has its dangers, it is so safe—with maternal death rates a fraction of a percentage point—that the health-of-the-mother business is almost surely a cover for something else. Americans want to register their moral disapproval and keep the procedure available at the same time.

Pro-life Republicans themselves have grown so comfortable with abortion as a last resort that they can’t even keep their lines straight. Take Dan Quayle’s remark in the 1992 campaign that, if his daughter got pregnant, he’d “support her in whatever decision she’d make” on whether to abort. (Would he “support her” in anything else he claims to think is murder?) Or take Barbara Bush’s calling abortion a “personal choice.” (Had she and her ostensibly pro-life husband crossed swords in a real abort-or-not argument over the dinner table, who do you think would have prevailed?) This is a pro-life stance that comes from debate prepping, not conviction, let alone traditional morality. Which is to say that, when push comes to shove, when it’s your daughter who’s stuck marrying the psychopath or skipping Yale to take

up single motherhood in your retirement home in St. Bart's, it's not a pro-life stance at all. It's idle moralism, freeloading off a pro-choice culture.

The story of Bob Barr, the thrice-married pro-life Georgia congressman who launched the impeachment inquiry against President Clinton, tells us even more about what pro-life sentiment means in the face of middle-class necessity. Barr's second wife, Gail, says in an affidavit that, in 1983, the couple found themselves in a situation straight out of a Clinton town meeting: saddled with two toddlers, Barr's law practice failing, no health insurance, she 38 years old, he in the middle of an extramarital affair and soon to remarry. When Gail got pregnant, Barr drove her to the abortion clinic and paid for the procedure. Barr's supporters insist he wasn't pro-life back then. They should realize that that goes without saying.

Abortion turns out to be an indispensable part of the normal middle-American toolkit. If Republicans like Governor Bush are giving up on the issue, it's because they've figured out that, even if Republicans win on abortion, they lose. The most they could hope to achieve is to shake middle-class life to its foundations in the name of values that, at the end of the day, neither they nor the middle class actually holds.

Americans' claims to be conflicted about abortion are a handy self-deception of the sort all nations engage in when a treasured self-image comes in conflict with a treasured reality. (Think of Britain, which persists in thinking the stiff upper lip central to its national character, even after a royal funeral that showed it to be the most emotional of advanced nations.) We should distrust the pro-life spin that Americans are more conflicted over abortion than citizens of other Western countries. They're not. What they exhibit is a rock-solid, European-style support for abortion, with American moral posturing plastered on top. The Bauer-Buchanan wing of the Republican Party would court voters by promising to expose them as hypocrites. Lots of luck.

Perhaps what Governor Bush has come to realize is that bringing down abortion would also bring down many of the implicit rules that govern American life. The result would be more than just a society with fewer abortions. It would be a society that actually *was* based on traditional moral values. That's a society that none of us would recognize and even many who call themselves pro-life would find intolerable.

Raw Numbers

Ramesh Ponnuru

One irritating feature of the abortion debate is how the abortion-rights side tries to monopolize it. Not content just to make their argument, they make ours as well—and invariably badly. Take their attempt to define implantation rather than conception as the beginning of pregnancy. They have no intention of regarding implantation as any serious constraint on themselves: they are willing to destroy embryos both before and afterward. No, their argument is that *we anti-abortionists* shouldn't oppose abortion before implantation, and presumably wouldn't if we were intelligent enough to understand our position better. Unless, that is, our position is merely sectarian and thus not amenable to rational analysis at all. It's hard to know which part of this gambit is more objectionable, the bad faith or the condescension.

Ronald Dworkin performs a similar maneuver: anti-abortionists can't really believe the premises they say they believe, because that would entail conclusions that are unacceptable even to them (such as the conclusion that women who procure abortions must be jailed); so Dworkin is free to reconstruct their argument and then knock it down.

Christopher Caldwell, thankfully, is no Ronald Dworkin. Where Dworkin errs in treating anti-abortionists' reasoning as opaque, Caldwell makes the opposite mistake of treating the public's reasoning about abortion as transparent. Caldwell argues, for instance, that the public's support in polls for a health exception to a ban on partial-birth abortions "must be a cover for something else," since such abortions are rarely (actually never) medically necessary. Does the public know this? I doubt it. Not only has there been a propaganda campaign, assisted by the President of the United States, to suggest that it is necessary in many cases, but most poll respondents will simply assume that such cases exist when they are presented the option of approving a health exception.

Caldwell imputes greater depth and consistency to the public's convictions than is actually there. For the central political fact about public thinking about abortion is that the public hates to think about abortion. Which is not to say the public is wholly indifferent; the aversion itself indicates distaste, at least. Caldwell writes that "a pro-life regime is not really something Americans want—it's just something they feel they ought to want." But he doesn't ask why they feel they ought to want it, or whether that moral senti-

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ment is something that could be built on.

Caldwell argues that anti-abortion politicians, to be successful, must reassure the public that they are no more serious about opposing abortion than it is. As I have argued elsewhere (“Not Dead Yet: The pro-life movement is winning,” *National Review*, May 17, 1999), it’s more likely that the public just wants to be reassured that its political leaders are not crusading, single-issue types.

Where Caldwell does score a point is in highlighting the sheer number of women who have had abortions. Let’s take a brief detour through the numbers. The statistics are spotty—reporting requirements vary, and are often lax. But assume there have been about 35 million abortions since *Roe v. Wade*. A Statistical Abstract makes it possible to calculate how many American women have spent how many child-bearing years since *Roe*; it won’t alter the numbers much to assume none of them have died. Accept, finally, the Alan Guttmacher Institute’s estimate that 48 percent of abortions are repeats, and the calculation results in AGI’s figure, cited by Caldwell, that 43 percent of women will have an abortion by age 45.

But this number doesn’t account for repeat repeat abortions. The Centers for Disease Control has a 36-state estimate from 1995—I have no idea how these states compare to the others—in which 10.7 percent of abortion patients had had two previous abortions and 6.7 percent had had 3 or more. Plugging those in yields a number closer to 33 percent of women having an abortion by age 45. The number would be a little lower if the abortion rate of the last ten years were used rather than the post-*Roe* average.

After any amount of fiddling, however, it’s still a dauntingly big number. Not every woman who’s had an abortion becomes a supporter of NARAL, of course. Reactions vary: some women repent; the latent guilt of others drives them to defend abortion more passionately; still others think about it rarely. Almost nobody, I trust, looks back on her abortion with enthusiasm. But for all the caveats, it cannot be denied that the sheer number of women who have had abortions represents a sizable constituency (of both sexes) in its favor.

In *Commentary*, Caldwell has written that “[a]bortion has been the linchpin of the American Way for decades now. It underwrites not just the sexual hedonism that has become an unenumerated right in the social contract but also the mobility and personal autonomy on which the whole labor market rests.” Thus, “abortion cannot be banned without shaking society to its foundations.” To put the matter differently: abortion has become, to some extent, a bourgeois virtue.

Orderliness is, after all, the quintessential bourgeois virtue, and everyone knows that children tend to upset order. Abortion, on the other hand, allows young women to continue with their plans, which usually include having children at some later time—when they've planned for it. Anti-abortionists tend to scoff at the pro-abortionists' claim that they are pro-children, but that's a mistake. The owners of those bumper stickers that say "Pro-Child Pro-Family Pro-Choice" may be deluded, but they are not dishonest. They think that they have to be able to invest phenomenal sums in their children to raise them well, and they will be able to invest more in each child if they have fewer children and have them according to plan. This is what Planned Parenthood means.

It's what Jerry Z. Muller meant when he wrote "The Conservative Case for Abortion" a few years back in *The New Republic*. While the familiar liberal case for abortion centers on choice, the conservative case is that abortion protects middle-class family values. But precisely because Muller's case does not hinge on choice, it supplies all the premises for, and no premises against, a regime of forced abortion. (A similar point could be made about a related argument, that abortion should be tolerated because it reduces crime and other social problems.) By laying out this vision of bourgeois order explicitly, Muller exposes the darkness at its heart.

Anti-abortionists, on the other hand, know that family values cannot be protected by killing members of the family; that, as Frederica Mathewes-Green has said, "In the land where mothers kill their unborn children, every lesser love grows frail."

Christopher Caldwell is always perceptive, and he's clearly right that abortion rights are woven into the structure of our society in all sorts of ways. (As other evils have been in ages past.) One of the few incontrovertible, if overwrought, statements in the Supreme Court's decision in *Casey v. Planned Parenthood* (1992) was that "for two decades . . . people have organized intimate relationships and made choices that define their views of themselves and their places in society, in reliance on the availability of abortion in the event that contraception should fail."

Which is another way of saying that *Roe v. Wade* has worked enormous changes in our society that will be hard to undo. As we already knew.

Lifestyle Trumps Morality

Francis Canavan, S.J.

Christopher Caldwell quotes George W. Bush as saying, "America is not ready to ban abortion." That is true enough, but Caldwell goes on to draw the conclusion that Bush's underlying message is that he is a pro-lifer one can vote for without fear that abortion rights will be curtailed. Yet between banning abortion rights and curtailing them there is, as the French say, a certain distance.

Caldwell insists, however, that hopes of limiting abortion by law are vain, because Americans who profess to oppose abortion do not really want "a pro-life regime." They say they do, but it is "just something they feel they ought to want."

He then proceeds to give the factual grounds for making that assertion. The reader has already seen them in Caldwell's article, along with Ramesh Ponnuru's reply to it. I will confine myself to some comments on the understanding of the American conscience, and more generally of the Western conscience, that is implicit in Caldwell's article and in two other recent pieces of writing.

Caldwell's central thesis is that most abortions are sought and performed for "reasons of lifestyle." Giving birth to a child would interfere with work, school, or other responsibilities; or it would cost too much to raise the child; or it would make the woman a single mother, which she does not want to be. So, as Caldwell states it, in the allegedly conflicted Western conscience, "Lifestyle always overpowers traditional morality." (The term "traditional" probably is significant, for if morality is nothing more than what earlier generations believed, with no further claim to permanence or universality, it can be replaced by a new morality better suited to the felt needs of the present generation. It may be that Caldwell does not mean that, but if he does, the implications are vast.)

Caldwell's statement reminds me of a remark made about a prominent politician in another country: "He wrestled with his conscience, and as usual, he won." Caldwell seems to have a similar opinion of the conscience of the American and Western middle and upper-middle class that is the principal beneficiary of our booming, acquisitive capitalist society. In such a society lifestyle is not merely a matter of satisfying tastes, it is of major individual

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and social importance. That is why it overpowers our basically religious morality. It embodies a different conception of life, its purpose and its meaning.

Lifestyle is the driving force of our economy, but it is more than that. "Questions of lifestyle determine one's identity, one's rank in society, one's allegiances, one's loves and hates." (Think of the floods of tears over Princess Di and John F. Kennedy, Jr., shed by people who never met them but admired them and would have loved to be able to live the way they did.) Therefore, as Caldwell explains, what is at stake in the decision to abort is "a vast roster of life choices: education, travel, career advancement, class advancement, money, fine dining, entertainment, and sports, plus a recreational-sex career that can run at full-throttle . . . for 30 years or more." Put that on the scale against a religion that is a "marginal vestige, subculture, private matter," and it is no wonder that lifestyle "always" wins.

So argues Christopher Caldwell. But what does he himself think? One could read his article as a damning indictment of a more and more materialistic and hedonistic middle class. Or perhaps as a detached sociological description of a once Christian people sliding back into a paganism in which one may pray to whatever gods may be, but only for success in this life and the goodies that go with it. Or yet again, it may be a progressivist prophecy of the inevitable improvement in life that will come as women are emancipated from bearing children they do not want and can join men as equals in the race to achieve what we now call "the good life."

Recall the passage in which Caldwell tells the story of a rich mother of three who sought an abortion. "She wanted a fourth child but not just yet, since the family had already reserved a ski vacation months down the line." One might say of her, in words borrowed from Peter De Vries, "Deep down, she's shallow." But Caldwell's comment is, "That ski vacation . . . might be a repository of all the happiness or love or pride she has." One could infer that for him, the ready availability of abortion is the bedrock on which the republic, or at least the American Dream, stands. Killing the unborn child is, therefore, a reasonable and even necessary choice.

Caldwell may be right, however, in assuming that that is how pregnant women and their parents and friends often, or even usually, see the issue. That point is also made, but from a very pro-life point of view, in an article by Paul Swope in the March 1999 issue of *Crisis* ("Heart and Soul: A New Abortion Strategy"). The New Strategy consists in approaching the woman who is considering an abortion, with compassion, seeing the issue as she sees it, in an effort to bring her to consider alternatives to abortion. Merely

trying to convince her that to have an abortion would be killing her own child is likely only to get her defenses up. She already knows that abortion kills, and rejects the argument against it as not understanding her situation.

Swope is an official of The Caring Foundation, a pro-life organization that initiated two studies of the reasons why so many women declare themselves to be “pro-choice.” He reports:

The key finding of these studies is that women understand that abortion kills, but they also view the threat of motherhood to be so serious as to represent a “death of self.” Many young women have not incorporated the concept of motherhood into their self-image. Who they are and plan to be revolves around school, career, and perhaps marriage. Motherhood is so alien to their sense of self that if it is suddenly thrust upon them it is seen as a complete loss of self, a death. When these women consider abortion, they see it as a death to the unborn life within them, whereas motherhood represents a death to themselves (a psychological death but a death perceived as real nonetheless). Ultimately, the choice of abortion is perceived as a choice of self-preservation.

It is not surprising, therefore, says Swope, “that young women who have not been taught basic virtues of self-sacrifice, who do not have a husband, home, or career, and who do not have a stable future of any kind should view sudden motherhood as a kind of death.” It is not that he agrees with them. On the contrary, he says, “We [pro-lifers] may be quick—and rightfully so—to prioritize the real death of the unborn child over the imagined death of the woman, but to do so is to miss the key ingredient that affects society’s attitude toward abortion, the welfare of the woman involved.” That, I take it, is Caldwell’s point as well, although he is willing to stretch the welfare of the woman to include ski vacations.

Which raises the question, what is this self that would die if the woman did not abort? It seems to be a rather weak self that attaches its self-image to a lifestyle that it cannot give up, or cease hoping for, or at least stop envying. A stronger self would be capable of a certain degree of detachment from what Caldwell calls the “questions of lifestyle [that] determine one’s identity, one’s rank in society, one’s allegiances, one’s loves and hates.” But that probably would require the development of an interior relationship with God that would make detachment from these external things possible.

The above view of the American and Western conscience is substantiated by a news report on “The Graying of Europe” that appeared on page one of the *New York Times* on July 10, 1998. The report does not mention abortion at all but calls attention to the growing concern of European governments with the “rapid, sustained decline” in birthrates that is causing a “population

implosion” among their peoples. “There is no longer a single country in Europe,” said the *Times*, “where people are having enough children to replace themselves when they die.” The social consequences as the elderly come to outnumber the young are grave, but need not be detailed here. What is relevant to our present subject is the reasons the *Times* gives for Europeans’ failure to replace themselves in sufficient numbers.

They are principally two: prosperity and the freedom of women, which lead them to have “fewer children than ever before.” As is customary in such journalistic reports, the *Times* quotes copiously from interviews with persons presented as being typical. One is Mia Hulton, “a true woman of the late 20th century.” Although she lives in Sweden, “which provides more support for women who want families than any other country,” at age 33 she “does not see how she can possibly make room in her life for babies.”

“There are times when I think perhaps I will be missing something if I don’t have a child,” she says. “But today women finally have so many chances to have the life they want. To travel and work and learn. It’s exciting and demanding. I just find it hard to see where the children would fit in.”

In Italy of all places, the land of *la famiglia*, the *Times* quotes Roberta Lenzi, age 27, who studies political science in Bologna, “the city with the lowest fertility rate in the world.” She says:

I’m thinking of having children in the future, perhaps two. I’m an only child and if I could, I’d have more than one child. But most couples I know wait until their 30s to have children. People want to have their own life, they want to have a successful career. When you see life in these terms, children are an impediment. At most you’ll have one, more are rare.

The reluctance to have children is not due to a choice made only by women, however. Sweden spends ten times more than Italy or Spain and three times more than the United States on programs to support family life, but the programs have no great effect. The *Times* quotes a recently married and well-off Swedish man as saying, “I am supposed to have an extra child to help the system?” He intends to have children “if and when it makes sense, not because the Government thinks it’s a good idea.” Voicing a commonly held belief, he adds: “It’s not as easy to have children these days as it once was. The sacrifices are not always acceptable.”

The sacrifices include the cost of raising and educating the children, the difficulty of raising them properly when both parents have well-paid but correspondingly time-consuming jobs, and surrender of the belief that the *Times* sums up in one of its subheadings: “The Good Life is Top Priority.”

All of this leads to the conclusion that Caldwell states in the closing lines

FRANCIS CANAVAN, S.J.

of his article. If abortion were banned or seriously reduced, it would produce "a society that actually *was* based on traditional moral values. That's a society that none of us would recognize and even many who call themselves pro-life would find intolerable." But how long could a society last that embodied the concept of the self expressed by these devotees of The Good Life? That would seem to be a question worth thinking long and hard about, in terms higher than the self and its satisfactions.



Aborting Maturity

Chilton Williamson Jr.

When I was living in New Mexico, one particular billboard on Highway 70 between Alamogordo and Las Cruces irritated me especially. WHAT'S THE GOOD WORD? the lettering above a picture showing a fastened seatbelt read: BUCKLE UP! The sign, with its echo of a mother's commonplace reminder to her young child ("What's the magic word? 'Please!'"), in time assumed the proportions of a major offense. It was up for months and barely survived my departure from Las Cruces, which occurred shortly before I could venture out in the small hours of the morning and fell it with a Stihl chainsaw. Just who, I thought, did these people (the New Mexico state government, the public relations agency, the so-called pro-bono groups, the auto insurance companies who collaborated in putting out this helpful message) think they were talking to?

The answer seems obvious: ordinary, middle-class Americans, biologically and actuarially adult but pre-adolescent mentally and emotionally; arrestedly developed products of the cradle-to-grave nanny state, described more accurately perhaps as the crib-and-playground one. In the United States today, the American elite accepts as axiomatic the premise that the average citizen is a fundamentally irresponsible dependent of a managing government, on the one hand, and a pawn in the larger consumer culture on the other, and that he both deserves and expects to be treated as such. This view—a direct result of the demoralizing effects of public policy, supported by a manipulative and exploitative commercialism devised and implemented by the American ruling class over the past century or so—reflects reality a little more accurately with every passing year.

America at the end of the 20th century is the embodiment of a dialectic (far more subtle and efficient than the one Hegel, Marx, and Engel thought they discovered) between ever-closer public control and increasingly un-governed self-gratification at the private level—a type of managed infantilism, a vast interlocking network of control-gratification relationships in which virtually all social institutions are complicit but to which our collapsing society owes what slight stability the system still possesses. It is the almost inevitable result of a progressive caesarism, the proletarianization of the American people by the leviathan welfare state, and the deep-tissue massage

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applied by therapeutic government, aggravated by the public's desire for total security guaranteed by the state and the elite class's congruent ambition for absolute power: the total control that infants crave as instinctively as they do an absolute and unassailable security. Here, in general terms, is how American society functions today.

Politicians, the bureaucracy, and other social managers seek control of both the business class and the proletariat as a means to consolidate their power over the nation-state and the society that state supposedly represents. Businessmen, in their turn, wish to control the politicians financially and manipulate the proles behaviorally in the interest of taking ever-greater profits. The cultural establishment (academics, artists, entertainers, journalists), for its part, hopes to forward the politicians' utopian agenda, with which it is largely in ideological agreement, by brainwashing the otherwise unwashed classes and intimidating the impressionable and cowardly business class into accepting that agenda—while redefining reality according to the desired specifications and skimming its share of the consumer economy's cream in the process. (Academics and some artists aim usually at abstruse mystification, journalists, and entertainers at the lowest common denominator in the interests of a wider influence and more money.)

For itself, the proletariat wants from government guaranteed security, from business cheap and plentiful goods, effortless and amoral enjoyment from the entertainment industry, and nonstop flattery and reassurance from the pundits, experts, writers, and talking heads who affect to instruct them. And since politicians, businessmen, entertainers, and the intellectual class are scarcely less puerile—though far more sophisticated in their puerility—than the proles they seek to manipulate, the result of their interactions is a series of vicious circles, spiralling endlessly downward. Managed public control and private self-gratification exist in symbiotic relationship, strengthening the hand as well as the resolve of the managers and manipulators—the new establishment monolith who keep the system running. Defenders and apologists (for example the welfare bureaucracy, advertising and marketing industries, Wall Street, Hollywood, and the Washington Beltway; the alternative health-care system providing “reproductive choice”) who claim that to interfere at any point in the circuit is to shortcut the larger system entirely are probably accurate in this assessment. The answer to their argument is, that the circuit functions as life-support for a dynamo slowly but certainly destroying the society it supposedly serves and that a merely systemic disaster, on however grand a scale, is preferable to a human one—human nature, after all, being designed more for hardship than for ease. (This truth the

dynamo will not accept, having been designed, in fact, expressly to deny it.)

The genius of the system that has deconstructed American society as a child's paradise, if not a fool's one, is to prevent children from growing to adulthood and encourage adults to regress to childhood. Modern capitalism has created an illusory world in order to market the real one; mass democracy, an illusory universe to sell itself. Both capitalism *and* democracy, to the extent that they are any longer separable or even distinguishable, have recognized the necessity for maintaining the adult population in a condition of perpetual juvenility in order to persuade them to accept unreality for reality, natural as well as metaphysical—including the fact of their discounted and reduced human status. Astonishingly (on second thought, perhaps, not so astonishingly) this goal has been substantially attained: physically through the “reproductive control” or “choice” that have so far destroyed thirty-million-plus potential adult lives, mentally and emotionally by more complex and subtle means (including freedom-below-the-belt for which a significant guarantee is of course abortion-on-demand) deliberately conceived and directed to effect the retardation of human moral and intellectual growth, the wholesale abortion of maturity.

An alternative to the abortion metaphor is the military one of sapperation: the undermining of a civilization's natural and artificial defenses by a besieging force. In this instance, however, the sappers are working from inside rather than out to destroy the society whose welfare they have accepted as a public charge and whose geese are busy laying for them golden eggs. This sabotage, targeting American society at three basic levels—the material, the intellectual, and the spiritual—has been under way since at least the 1930s, when the country's political leadership took advantage of economic crisis to reinterpret the nation's plan of government, remodel national governing and economic institutions, and make a start on remodeling the American people themselves as an early step in the process that Hillary Clinton, sixty years later, described as “redefining for ourselves what it means to be a human being in the twentieth century.”

The welfare or provider state imposed on the country by Franklin Roosevelt and his New Deal administrations is often narrowly identified by conservative critics as the single greatest blow to America's material resourcefulness and moral stamina. In fact, of the welfare state's many components, simple welfare may be, socially as well as economically speaking, the least damaging both in its public and private aspects. Every society in history has devised and maintained a system, however harsh it may appear to modern eyes, whereby the deserving and even the undeserving poor were provided for

(though you'd never guess it from the rhetoric of the architects of the modern welfare state). Of much greater importance than welfare to the demoralization of the American (and other Western) peoples has been the economic adjustments that have accompanied welfarism—democracy, as the historian John Lukacs observed some years ago, being inherently inflationary. The default from the gold standard in the 1930s, appalling to economic conservatives, led inevitably to soft money, easy credit, fiscal irresponsibility, and the rampant consumerism these engendered. (Alan Greenspan's periodic statements express a major national ambivalence regarding modern economic policy and well-being.) But, as Lukacs meant to suggest, inflationary economics produces effects far beyond the economic sphere, infecting society on the moral, intellectual, and cultural levels. The appeal to the lowest common denominator—"dumbing down"—in the education as well as the entertainment and publishing industries, combined with the exploitation of public and private weakness in taste, morals, and intellect, are part of the natural process of democratic inflationism. An accompanying, systematized abuse of language is a part of inflation, too. Also, it is something else.

In his book *La tête coupee: Le secret de pouvoir (Our Heads Cut Off: The Secret of Power)*, published recently in France, Arnaud-Aaron Upinsky distinguishes between what he calls "true language" and "strong language." True language is the means by which the user seeks to apprehend and explain reality, strong language a tool intended to influence belief and manipulate behavior, often in the hope and expectation of replacing reality with an artificial system. Strong language is the language of dominance, at once manipulative and numbing (or dumbing), whose aim is not the education of the listener but his de-education, leading him *away* not from truth only but from the intellectual capacity that distinguishes responsible and capable adulthood. In other words, it is the language employed by dishonest and unscrupulous adults in addressing children or childish people whom they have an interest in keeping that way. An obvious example of strong language is the word "choice" and the weird, illogical, and fundamentally infantile metaphysic on which its plausibility and cogency depend: the attempt by power to justify its end, coinciding perfectly with that of lust to create an intellectual defense for its own gratification. As Harold O.J. Brown has noted, "The language of choice . . . is used in our society only where it serves the purposes of power: In today's America, smoking is not a matter for 'choice,' nor is gun ownership." Also in today's America, thanks to several generations in which strong language has served as the language of public discourse, fewer and fewer people are alert to the discontinuity.

Still, the most diabolically ambitious engine for pulverizing the public intelligence and maintaining the citizenry in a condition of perpetual arrested development (as registered by what seems to be an increase in moral blindness, ignorance, and intellectual incompetency) has been the sustained public crusade against organized religion, the religious impulse, and metaphysical awareness itself. While government at every level has worked to replace religious institutions with political and social ones, and religious loyalties with ideological ones in the minds of American citizens, corporate America has aided and abetted the effort—whether deliberately or not—by cynically and systematically tempting “consumers” (“citizens” by another name) to trade a traditional spiritual orientation for the modern materialist one. Producers of goods and services, as clients of the advertising industry, have succeeded in creating a thoroughgoing commercial society whose anti-intellectualism is not simply a by-product of the system but a necessary result of it—and its guarantor as well, the means by which the unexamined-life-worth-living perpetuates itself. Similarly the entertainment industry—books, music, movies, theater—rejects what is aesthetically fine on the justification that modern life is so blessed in quantity it has no need of quality while, in its search for the lowest moral as well as intellectual common denominator, it dismisses moral virtue, aesthetic sensibility, and intellectual appreciation as qualities belonging to mature audiences of refinement who are not supposed to exist these days—not *en masse*, at least. (Here we can see the self-perpetuating cycle at work.) The system does have a delicate problem, though, which is how to keep Americans dumb enough that they can’t or won’t think for themselves on matters of large importance while shelling out huge sums of money to buy junk they don’t need and perhaps don’t even want, but also sufficiently smart as to be able to keep America economically “competitive” in the global market place. So far, it seems not to have the formula exactly right.

What all this comes down to is the public and private exploitation of private and public weakness in taste, morality, and intellect by an apparently benign engine that can never break down or run out of fuel—only explode. If we are to have a War on Drugs (whose sole accomplishment, by the way, has been to strengthen and increase the federal leviathan and lay the groundwork for a progressive police state), perhaps it ought to target rock music along with cocaine and heroin as an evil, infantilizing, bestializing addictive influence. How can anyone who grows up listening to rock music ever grow up? (To think that, a century and a half ago, Italian peasants crowded the provincial opera houses of Italy to hear the latest opera by Giuseppe

Verdi or Vincenzo Bellini!) A reason there are so few good children's books published today (books on the order of the classics of only a few generations ago, like *Winnie the Pooh*, *The Wind in the Willows*, *Treasure Island*, *Penrod*, *Little House in the Big Woods*) is because there are so few grownups adult enough to understand and enjoy—let alone write—them. (Another is that a society abstracted from natural experience and metaphysical reality is capable of supplying the fantastical component that is often found in good children's literature, but not the poetical one.) Whether fool's paradise or child's garden of worse, the new American Eden is also a closed system, which is why it looks—and is—so difficult to reform or even to redirect. "Our only hope is catastrophe," Edward Abbey wrote. Which, because it is the only thing imaginable that can restore hope and a livable future, would not be catastrophe at all.

It is a truism of pop psychology that evil people are frequently sentimental ones, a commonplace of the Trivial Pursuit type of historical literacy that Hitler, unlike W.C. Fields, loved both dogs and children. But whether Hitler ever kicked a dog or not, it is an historical fact of another dimension that he murdered some millions of children. Similarly, American business firms give large sums of money to popular causes like clean air and water with pharisaical publicity, while the advertising industry designs multimillion-dollar campaigns around such hallowed images as innocent children, unspoiled wilderness, marital affection, and family closeness: industrial America paying homage to those things it's most intent on destroying for profit. If the hypocrisy goes mainly unnoticed, as in fact it seems to, this is probably because modern-day America is less a hypocritical than a sentimentalized and sentimentalizing society, more childish than dishonest, faux-naïve rather than cynical. Until quite lately in Western culture, public displays of emotion were reserved for children (and often not even them), men and women being expected to keep a stiff upper lip and a poker face and to hold their heads high. Today, not only is almost every public event a public display of emotion, but public displays of emotion are organized as public events. "Run for the Cure" campaigns, AIDS ribbons, the self-conscious, partially manufactured hysteria surrounding school shootings, signs of "solidarity," heavily publicized (and publicizing) press and TV photos of people crying and hugging "victims" and "victims" "supporting" one another, mass gatherings at crash sites by the families of air-crash casualties (relatives of the deceased are now considered victims, too), incessantly heard demands for "closure" and "healing": some of these phenomena have their origin in the demonstration politics that began in the 1960s, itself the manifestation of political infantilism;

others are just expressions of infantilism, period. (The adult response to tragedy is to read the Bible, go to church, say a prayer.) Whichever it is, the systemizers we're talking about approve, the system being about management, manipulation, and control, which mass hysteria and public infantilism demonstrably facilitate.

It all happened so fast. Driving across the American West, as I so frequently do, I find it difficult to believe that just three generations ago (my grandfather Williamson was born in 1874 and owned a cattle ranch in frontier Montana) the American people were still a nation of hardy pioneers (urban as well as rural), self-reliant and independent, beholden to no one, keeping the government dependent on and responsible to the people rather than vice versa, educating their children adequately in the home, at school, and in church, maintaining and forwarding the civilization they had inherited, believing in a Creator and in God as at once the source and the object of freedom, at home with nature as in human society and aware of the mutual dependency between the two, inhabiting a natural world instead of a man-made, technological one, and cooperating with it to produce a livelihood. America was, in short, a nation of adults who spoke, thought, looked, and dressed the part. (Denim work clothes or business suits, not short pants and T-shirts; cowboy hats or fedoras, no ballcaps. The contemporary American workplace looks more like the first-grade room when I was at school.)

When did it begin? From living 20 years in Wyoming—still basically a frontier society of ranchers, miners, and farmers, where the immensity of the landscape and the severity of the elements fix the terms for human existence and the post-modern economy has yet to penetrate—my guess is the modern disengagement from nature as a fact of daily life can be shown to coincide historically with our disengagement from traditional adulthood: a process that in obvious ways has benefitted the systemizers who, though they did not begin it, recognized its potential decades ago and worked hard to forward it. In spite of wilderness set-asides, the creation of national parks and natural monuments, wildlife refuges, and “open spaces,” there seems something like a conspiracy on the part of government—abetted by environmental groups, anti-hunting and -gun lobbies, animal-rights organizations, and the War on the West—to remove people, especially young people, from living (by which I mean “working”) contact with wild nature, including that piece of it embedded within the human psyche that is necessary to the formation of the truly adult mind. This is not to imply that urbanites are doomed to perennial immaturity and underdevelopment: Real cities like New York, Chicago, London, Paris, and Rome have a physical integrity and a social

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complexity that give them the discrete reality of a natural ecosystem. The Bolsheviks understood there can be no rural proletariat, while pretending to believe in the existence of such a thing for the purpose of exterminating it. The real question is, Does an *urban* proletariat exist—by comparison, I mean, with the mass social phenomenon of modern suburbia? Had Lenin lived to witness the suburbanization of Western Europe and, especially, the United States, my guess is he'd have known what to do with it and that his operative strategy in this respect wouldn't have differed substantially from that of our native cadre of progressive systematizers who have enjoyed surprising success in taking a nation of strong men and women and turning them into 267 million oversized Mouseketeers.

And so, we have the government we deserve, headed by America's Adolescent-in-Chief (an unidentified author has described adolescence as a stage between infancy and adultery) who never met an abortion he didn't like, promotes infanticide, and whose idea of sexual seduction is not a dozen red roses sent up to her apartment beforehand, champagne and strawberries, a table for two and brandy after supper, a cab ride home through the park, silk dressing gowns and perfumed sheets, but . . .



“OH, HE’S JUST SULKING BECAUSE HE THINKS I BABY HIM.”

Who's in Charge?

Ellen Wilson Fielding

⁶⁶"I'm in charge here," Secretary of State Alexander Haig famously rushed to say when President Reagan was temporarily laid low by John Hinckley's bullet. He was criticized and made the butt of jokes for this overly dramatic leap into the pilot's seat, but in his defense, at least he had some grounds for his claim (Vice President George Bush being temporarily absent).

Nowadays "I'm in charge" is explicitly or implicitly everyone's understanding of the way their lives should be run. The French revolutionaries cast down the statues of kings, prelates, and saints, overturning the traditional hierarchies and the secular and religious bases for authority. In their place, however, they at least raised a statue to Reason, thus maintaining in theory an appeal to a neutral outside authority.

We today, however, are not publicly constrained by a universally binding understanding of the claims of reason either. Intellectual movements in the 19th century—the fallout of evolutionary theory, Freudian psychology, even Marxism with its thesis-antithesis-synthesis cycles of change—all cast down Reason's statue by presenting its workings as subjective, changeable, ever developing or moved by lurking desires for survival, sex, pleasure, and the like.

"I'm in charge" may now be a nearly universal claim, but it is not a proud boast so much as a rudimentary default system. It is not that we are thereby raising ourselves to heady heights of wisdom and competence; we are simply occupying a vacuum left by the exodus of other acknowledged authorities. We are like the night watchman or the office maid working in deserted quarters of a large lighted office building long after all "essential personnel" have left. If the phone rings, we may answer it, and we may even have to make a decision if forced to it (though more likely we will simply let nature takes its course), but we cannot defend our actions based on special qualifications or anything other than serendipity—we happened to be there at the time.

Thus, "I'm in charge" for feminists means I have a right to choose—whatever. Sexual orientation and activity, giving birth or aborting, etc. The great thing about the dethroning of Reason is that the feminist does not have to give convincing reasons—does not have to convince others that she has made the right choices. If there is no higher authority to which appeal can be made, there is neither the possibility nor the duty to convince another that you are doing the right thing. Because there is no right thing, in an absolute

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sense. There is only the thing you have chosen, for whatever “reasons” or emotions or biological impulses, to do.

Thus, to be “personally opposed” to something is effectively an oxymoron. There is really no other way than “personally” to be opposed to something. You can recognize that you would not do something. You can even recognize that you don’t like it when other people do that very same thing. But unless that unlikable thing is being done to *you*, you cannot universalize your distaste or aversion by demanding that someone else stop doing it.

Of course, living (and “thinking”) like this can be pretty isolating, even lonely. It gets a bit tiresome not ever being sure you are really connecting with someone else, not sharing special claims, duties, common acknowledgment of a common authority or ethos. You can talk to or associate with others who have arrived at the same opinion or choice as you. You can recite your reasons, in a vestigial ritual exercise that now owes more to a desire for self-expression than to a belief that others really should or could be convinced by the universal claims of reason. But that’s a bit like reciting your name, rank, and serial number—things that belong to you but which won’t necessarily give the hearer any useful information.

One woman writes an article in a women’s magazine on the joys of pursuing an education and a career and how an unlucky pregnancy almost threatened her whole future, until she chose to have an abortion. Another woman can write in the same magazine—in the same issue, perhaps—of the joys and unlooked-for fulfillment of watching her children grow. Perhaps she will admit to cutting back on her career for now so as not to miss any delightful stages of development in her young ones. Or she will present her own childcare or educational decisions and what motivated her choices. She will give “reasons” but not expect them to be binding on another—not attempt an appeal to Reason. She will be fashioning not an argument but an autobiography.

Most popular non-fictional nonscientific writing nowadays consists not so much of argument as autobiography. Self-help books are like this, with a coating of nutritional or economic or psychological detail. They are primarily self-expression, and even when the object is to give someone else the benefit of one’s learning or experience, they are designed to do so gently, obliquely, non-authoritatively. One Man’s (or Woman’s) Opinion might be the title for most of them—opinion understood not as a carefully thought out position after looking at the evidence in a rational way, but as a response to a highly individualized situation by a subjective psyche that hopes, but can’t be sure, her thoughts and feelings may resonate with others.

People are therefore almost desperate for self-expression because they

doubt whether there is anything else to express. Is there Truth? Is there Beauty? Is there Goodness? Or is there only *my* truth, *my* aesthetic sensibility, *my* altruistic impulses or sense of gratification from helping others?

Things are not nearly that bad, you may say, and with some truth. Even apart from traditionally religious people, parents tell their children every day what is good and bad, and teachers tell their students, and Ralph Nader and the vegans and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and Greenpeace and all sorts of highly opinionated people lay down the law, literally or metaphorically, to other people every day. Newspaper readers and TV news viewers react with horror to stories of evils such as child abuse, murder, and genocide. They go well out of their way to help the poor and disadvantaged, needy neighbors and ailing family members. What are these responses and reactions if not a testimony to the survival and drawing power of real truth and goodness?

One way to understand the difference is to put it this way: If in some sense people are now worse than they think they are, in another sense they are better than they think they are. That is, they are worse than they think they are because they routinely act in all kinds of ways that any pre-modern could tell you were wrong—cheating, lying, fornicating, committing adultery, acting immodestly and unchastely, patronizing pornographers and the like. It is not that people in earlier societies never did these things or things as bad (though to match current volume, you might have to go back to Sodom and Gomorrah). After all, many pre-Christian societies routinely practiced infanticide. Yet even these societies would condemn all the above-named practices, while a great many moderns condone or fail to condemn many instances of all these things on subjective, special-cases grounds of personal happiness or fulfillment, or on nose-counting grounds of “everyone does it.”

On the other hand, to the extent that people still viscerally recoil from certain kinds of acts and from people who perform those acts—pedophiles, torturers, child murderers, to name some non-controversial examples—they are in some sense better than they know, because they are responding to an appeal to conscience that is not subjective, and would not recognize exceptions or special pleading. *Nothing* could make the child-torturer’s choice right—no grievances, no claims of happiness or pleasure or fulfillment through that activity, no W.C. Fields-like complaints against the child. But why? How well can we articulate the reasons now in a way that will not also invalidate many of the choices we would defend our right to continue making? Do we use the argument that a child-torturer is harming another? But what then of other choices that harm others, such as abortion, divorce, adultery, to

name a few? How much harm is too much harm? How much pain is too much pain? Do we know? Can we construct a convincing argument, for ourselves as well as others? Or are we left floundering with our emotional reactions, which we hope and expect on these extreme issues to coincide with the emotional reactions of others?

Contemporary people seeking ways of dismissing or rejecting other people's choices without making moral judgments often seize on the diagnosing of illness. People who do bad—*really* bad—things are sick. This is a self-defining or circular argument, but it is better than nothing when we are confronted with cases of people who murder their own parents or children or make human torches of members of another race, or gang-rape a mentally retarded girl. It is our severest condemnation of another's behavior to call it "sick." Where earlier generations would have reached for the term *evil*, we substitute "sick" with similar intonations of horror and loathing.

New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's recent denunciation of an exhibit at the Brooklyn Art Museum as "sick art" is a perfect example. The traveling exhibit by contemporary "artists" included controversial items such as the bust of a man made from frozen blood, and a depiction of the Virgin Mary smeared with elephant dung. Earlier eras would use words like blasphemy, sacrilege, desecration, but not sickness. They would assume that the artist "said what he meant and meant what he said," and let his own acts condemn him. It would not occur to them to include this under the category of mental illness, though they knew the meaning of insanity.

But this September, a restrained New York *Times* subhead on the story read: "No More Talks on Art That Some Find Offensive." The chairman of the Brooklyn Museum of Art's board, in announcing litigation contesting New York City's right to withdraw funding from the museum, said "It is being undertaken in the interests of all public institutions—museums, universities and libraries—that are dedicated to the free exchange of ideas and information, and in the interests of the people they serve."

Did the museum board chairman's diagnosis of the offensive works differ from the mayor's? Did he conclude that neither the artists nor their works were "sick," though Mayor Giuliani might well be? We do not know, since he sidestepped the question of the artists and the character of their work, instead framing his argument in the familiar extreme interpretation of the First Amendment right to self-expression that we moderns are so comfortable with. No need to make difficult distinctions. No need to prove or disprove ideas, arguments, attitudes, or motivations. If it issued from someone in some way, shape, or form, and that someone or his agents wish to publicize it, it may be defended on First Amendment self-expression grounds.

Unless it happens to gore a modern sacred cow. Homophobic or racist “art,” for example, would not be likely to earn the self-expression defense from the Brooklyn Museum’s board. That kind of art would pose a danger to tolerant attitudes; in fact, it would incite intolerance of recognized victim groups. It might even be labeled “sick.” Charges of inconsistency would not greatly trouble a museum board nixing this kind of exhibit, since argument does not nowadays prove so much as it wages war. It serves more as tool or weapon than justification. The museum, for example, does not quote from Milton’s defense of free speech in his *Areopagitica*, but cuts to the chase with a lawsuit and a legal defense. It *asserts* a seemingly unqualified right to self-expression, but does not bother to trace the reasons why it is necessary for a free society to have such a right. The arguments, such as they are, offered by the board chairman in the *Times* story have to do with the freedom of public institutions to make whatever decisions they want without messy interference from government entities. But they don’t explain why such unbounded freedom is necessary, or useful, or desirable, and they don’t touch on possible exceptions. They are assertions, not efforts to convince or make distinctions.

An interesting event on the very crossroads of the shift from “evil” to “ill” was Ronald Reagan’s labeling of the Soviets as an “Evil Empire.” That was probably already an anachronistic use of the adjective in many circles, but Reagan carried it off—despite shocked criticism from the detente school—partly through the magic of Reagan, himself a warmly accepted anachronism for most Americans, and partly through the Spielbergesque echo of Star Wars in the term.

Bacteria, viruses, microbes of all sorts—these things, like other material manifestations, are still allowed objective existence, verifiable by any handy microscope. Unlike the state of the soul or the convolutions of speculative thought, illnesses are hard to explain away when a) modern science has taken such pains to document their origins and b) they may threaten our health or even our lives but not our authority to make choices. So successful has modern medicine been in explaining and treating and alleviating many modern ills, that illness-metaphors have become for us as common and powerful as mechanical metaphors were for the Deists at the dawn of the Machine Age. Hence computer viruses.

Thus in our uncertainty about how to universalize criticism of certain behavior, we reach whenever possible for clinical, medical, and psychological labels. Addiction (alcohol and drug abuse) is an illness that harms the body and shortens lives. An earlier generation called it a behavior, and identified

its chief evil effect as the unraveling of self-control, the sapping of moral strength not only to choose but to carry out moral choices.

In my home state of Maryland, it is now a crime not only to sell cigarettes to minors but for a minor to smoke or have cigarettes in his possession. Of course the intent is to discourage children from developing a physically harmful and sometimes lethal habit. Yet, to extend the legal smoking prohibition along the lines of drug prohibitions ignores the historically understood much greater harm of moral debilitation that follows on addictions to alcohol, cocaine, or heroin. If we were not mesmerized by the idol of the indefinitely expanding lifeline, the distinction would be obvious. Anyone who has known well a smoker/drinker can testify as to which was by far the more deforming and destructive habit.

But this is merely one instance among many, where the chief crimes are crimes against the body. This may be because we are more doubtful than our forebears about immortality, or because we doubt the idea of eternal punishment for wrongdoing. Illness and death are much easier for us to objectify, and hence unite around, than morally objectionable behavior. An earlier generation, which took for granted laws outlawing abortion and pornography and homosexual behavior, also registered lower rates of divorce, illegitimacy, and single parenthood. It also lacked seat belts and bike helmets, and paved its playgrounds with concrete. More stringent safety codes can save lives and prevent accidents, but as T.S. Eliot wrote in *Murder in the Cathedral*, “the worst treason/[Is] To do the right deed for the wrong reason.” There are things worth dying for. A paved playground is not one of them, but if our hypochondriacal preoccupation with health and physical well-being also makes us recoil from those sacrificial acts worth making, then we are morally and spiritually—yes, and psychologically—much poorer, no matter how high our average life span rises.

So if our “scientific” diagnosis of traditionally reared people as homophobes also pushes us to be tolerant of sexual practices and unions that undercut crucial social institutions like marriage, and consign many young lives to unhappiness and emptiness, we—heterosexual and homosexual alike—are gravely harmed even if a cure for AIDS is discovered.

Let’s return to the loneliness of those living with themselves as ultimate authority. It might seem, from the heightened levels of talk and the popular electronic means for exchanging confessions, explanations, and revelations—cable TV, the Internet, even talk radio—that our ability to connect with other people is much greater than ever. But there is a desperate frenetic quality to the sheer volume and uninhibited exhibitionism of much of this “shared” communication: the exposé books, biographical or autobiographical, the Sally

Jessy Raphael kind of confessions of weirdness. What else can we do but present ourselves as autobiographies, if we cannot reach confidently for the shared thoughts, beliefs, and reflections on eternal verities that earlier people could assume they shared? Yet, how can we know others will find our lives worth sharing, worth accepting, since our choices are only our own and other people claim for themselves the same sphere of authority? Yes, these stories are gobbled up by readers, viewers, listeners. But being consumed for our entertainment value is not the same as being listened to, respected, accepted as teacher, explicator, sage or fellow follower of the truth. Our stories are used as long as we are found useful, and then they are discarded in favor of the next arrival.

In contrast, consider the Old Testament prophets. Much of their message was neither nice nor pleasant to hear. They knew nothing of toleration or nonjudgmental attitudes. Judgment—God’s judgment—was their business, and when that judgment was heeded, it led to complete capitulation by the former offenders—sackcloth, ashes, rending of garments, repentance. When it was not heeded—when the people obstinately chose to continue transgressing the moral law, divorcing themselves from God and those who chose the clearly defined moral law—the result was also hard to miss. The unheeded prophets were imprisoned, exiled, or killed. Complete acceptance or complete rejection, with no room for “I’m O.K.—You’re O.K.” And that acceptance or rejection was based on the hearers’ judgment of whether the prophet spoke truly, and if so, whether the hearer was willing to risk great tribulation by continuing, *à la* Jezebel, to violate that truth.

Societies that cohere around a commonly held ethos that imposes morally binding behaviors upon all will still squabble over the details, such as how to apply that ethos to newer conditions. A minority of their members will always reject that ethos in theory and perhaps a majority may slip from time to time in practicing it. Despite this, such societies are united, are true communities in a way that modern self-consciously “tolerant” societies less and less resemble. The sun may shine on the just and unjust alike, but even the unjust know what the sun is and that evil deeds should be saved for darkness.

Meanwhile, in the modern world of independent little monads, those who still recognize and subject themselves to higher authorities carry on much of their commerce with one another outside the boundaries of the unfriendly domain of the naked public square. They do not ignore public life or public duties—they vote and talk about current events, and attempt to change the culture where it impinges on them, with fruitless letters to Michael Eisner and Disney boycotts and agitating about objectionable items on the required

reading lists in the public schools. In the midst of living and working and raising children and worshipping their Creator, they do the best they can to be salt and leaven, wryly recognizing how unsalty they often find themselves, how imperfectly differentiated from the culture.

Critics of Paul Weyrich's letter last year, in which he suggested that Christian families may need to separate themselves from the worst effects of the culture, may have imagined that he was recommending a kind of Ruby Ridge lifestyle, but those who inhabit or interact with these pockets of semi-separated populations know differently. There is a real dilemma, which traditionally religious people who attempt to pass on their beliefs and behaviors to their children (while loving and suffering with their country) live with. The "intolerant" segments of society—those who insist that all of us live under a higher authority—have not found a way to successfully engage the "tolerant" secularists on moral matters. This is true even if we measure success in the modest terms of achieving the common starting point of accepting the claims of a higher authority—whether that is a person or a Law of Nature. That is one reason why the Columbine high school shootings, and particularly teenager Cassie Bernall's martyrdom, had such a galvanizing effect in Christian circles. Not only did it stunningly reemphasize the need to put first things first, whatever the cost, but it stirred even the jaded what's-worth-dying-for secularists. Maybe something similar went on in the psyches of world-weary Romans of the first three centuries, munching the ancient world equivalent of popcorn as they observed Christians getting the worst of their encounters with lions.

Al Haig never gained much steam in his later bid for the Republican nomination, partly because, rightly or wrongly, his public moment of being "in charge" did not impress most people with his *gravitas*. Our century or two of emboldening cries that "we're in charge here" are not very impressive either, when we look at the body counts, the debased culture, the unhappy children and frantic adults and large numbers of "sick" people and "sick" acts.

In the "Sorcerer's Apprentice" sequence of Walt Disney's *Fantasia*, Mickey Mouse finds himself in a similar position after a similar power grab. The waters rise higher and higher as the brooms and buckets Mickey has brought to life with the help of the sorcerer's magic wand inexorably do their work. Only the return of the true sorcerer—and the apprentice's surrender of the wand he lacked the authority, power, and wisdom to control—end the escalation of chaos.

Perhaps we should start looking for the one who is really in charge, so that we can hand over some of our unmerited authority to rule over our rather sad solitary selves.

Not Making the Genetic Cut

Donald DeMarco

As we all know only too well, the Media have seized upon the dying of our present century to engage vigorously in evaluating and ranking the past hundred years' most distinctive accomplishments. The May 16, 1999 issue of the *New York Times*, for example, draws our attention to the great pianists of the past ten decades. Twenty-five recording companies have collaborated in producing a 200-CD collection of what they style the best piano recordings of the century. Seventy-four pianists, the *Times*' article informs us, "made the cut." Legendary wizards of the keyboard such as Busoni, Brailowsky, Rosenthal, and de Pachmann did not.

In another section of the same issue, a different meaning is attached to "not making the cut." Natalie Angier reports on "attacking genetic diseases" through "pre-implantation diagnosis." She refers to a procedure in which doctors remove a single cell from an eight-celled embryo in a laboratory dish to see if the embryo has an inherited disease, such as cystic fibrosis or Fanconi's anemia; if it has, they do not attempt to implant it in the mother's womb. Of course, in choosing not to implant, they are choosing to exterminate the embryo. They are not "fighting the disease" as much as they are attacking the subject who might, if given the chance to be born, bear the disease.

The embryo that does not make the pre-implantation cut is not relegated to a second-order status, such as the one to which Busoni and his confrères are assigned, but to oblivion. It is not allowed to enjoy whatever life its lesser status would afford, but is summarily dispossessed of *all* status. If medical diagnosis were routinely followed by the extermination of the patient, how many of us would be willing to see our doctor for an annual checkup? The eight-celled embryo has no choice in the matter. Others make the choice for it. They do so in the interest of ensuring that only an embryo with a genetic promise of health will occupy its mother's uterus. Those outside the womb who have cystic fibrosis or any number of other diseases should be thankful that a less sophisticated and more permissive generation allowed them to live.

We may be inoculated against moral revulsion by positive-sounding phrases. "Pre-implantation diagnosis" sounds like the first step in treatment

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of a disease. "Attacking genetic diseases" sounds like trying to find a cure for them.

At New York's Mt. Sinai Hospital a few years ago, the amniocentesis report on a woman carrying twins indicated that one, but only one, had Down Syndrome. The woman did not want to bring into the world a child who was handicapped and requested that he be aborted. Doctors performed what they called "the selective delivery of discordant twins." The phrase is a masterpiece of verbal deception that distractingly emphasizes the positive while carefully ignoring the negative. What they "selected" for the less fortunate twin was not a delivery but a death. And that twin's "discordance" was more with his mother and society than with the other inhabitant of his mother's womb.

Dr. Robert Casper, who heads an *in-vitro* fertilization center at the University of Toronto, explained to Canada's Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies that he does not discard surplus embryos but allows them to be "destroyed naturally" by placing them in the mother's vagina, where they are absorbed into her body. This adroit euphemism no doubt distracts his female clients from the grim realization that he is using their birth canal as a death chamber.

The mindset that permits the callous destruction of "undesirable," "unwanted," or "unusable" human embryos is, to give it a proper and precise name, *preposterous*. Derived from the Latin roots *prae* (before) and *posterius* (afterward), this word literally means placing before that which should come after. The "preposterous" is often ludicrous, as in bringing the soup spoon to one's face before opening one's mouth, or trying to put on socks *after* putting on one's shoes. When moral values are involved, however, the preposterous can become calamitous.

Destroying human embryos because they do not fit into our patterns of personal and social convenience is preposterous because it places a secondary good of life (convenience) before that which is primary (human life itself). The primary and substantive good of all human beings lies in their fundamental *identity* as human beings, their *dignity* as beings of intrinsic value, and their *subjectivity* as beings who are destined to experience life from their own unique center of consciousness. These goods—identity, dignity, and subjectivity—are intrinsic to the living human being and cannot be removed without removing something that is absolutely essential to it. On the other hand, there are secondary goods, such as health, attractiveness, desirability, status, and so on. These goods are transitory. They rise and fall, come and go. They do not exist in their own right, which is to say that they do not enter into the very substance of the human being. They are, in fact,

accidents or qualities that modify the human substance. It is the human being that enjoys health. Health does not exist by itself. Lewis Carroll's "Cheshire cat" may disappear leaving behind only its smile, but this image is fantastic and charming precisely because everyone knows that a smile cannot exist in the absence of a face.

The preposterous reversion of things involved in placing secondary goods ahead of primary goods has more dire implications than merely getting things backwards. Promoting the secondary goods of man to a position of primacy (making health more important than life, or sex more important than love) puts the primary goods at risk of being lost. Placing man first and God second has led, historically, to atheism. In this way, reverse order is tantamount to *disorder* or chaos.

As a personalist philosopher, Karol Wojtyla has asserted that each human being is *inviolable*, *irreplaceable*, and *unrepeatable*. These features describe our proper moral responses to the fundamental good of each person. Because each person (embryo, fetus, neonate, child or adult) has *dignity*, he must not be violated. Because each person has a unique identity, he is *unrepeatable*. Because each person has a unique subjectivity, that person is *irreplaceable*. Each human being comes into the world at a certain time and in a certain place and with a certain destiny. In denying these factors, one cuts against the very essence of the person involved.

In vitro fertilization, pre-implantation diagnosis, and abortion all make human life conditional. For a child to be born it must be wanted. For an embryo to be implanted it must be needed. For an early-stage embryo to continue its development it must be healthy. For these human beings to "make the cut," their primary good must wait on the evaluation of their secondary goods. But in giving primacy to secondary goods, we becloud the primary goods themselves and thereby reduce human life to but a shallow image of itself.

What this also comes down to, and perhaps most significantly, is a crisis in love. Love, as opposed to mere attraction, is an affirming response to the fundamental good of the other. The lover honors the dignity, identity, and subjectivity of the beloved. But if these moral realities are utterly devalued, the ground of love itself is removed and love becomes an impossibility.

In the insubstantial world of images, love defers to mere attraction. "The way to love anything is to realize it might be lost," as G.K. Chesterton reminds us. Love is profoundly concerned about the life and death of the other. But in the preposterous world of technologized disorder, there exists no substratum to serve as the object of anyone's love. We are attracted to the

ephemeral; we ignore what abides. We are fascinated by the shadow; we avoid the substance.

As the prospect for cloning is taken with increasing seriousness in our culture, we are confronted with the illusion that love is unnecessary because life cannot be lost. As soon as the announcement was made concerning the cloning of Dolly, the sheep, people began making inquiries about the cloning of "loved ones." A woman contacted British futurologist Patrick Dixon and asked him about the prospect of cloning her deceased father and possibly carrying the baby to term herself. Will cloning ultimately cheat death and insure an earthly immortality? And if so, in the absence of death, will it be possible for people to love each other passionately?

We need not grieve over those we lose if cloning can replace them. Already, a company that calls itself Clonaid has offered, at a cost of about \$200,000, to produce clones for infertile or homosexual couples, for singles, or for anyone who wants a genetic duplicate of himself or his significant other. Or if one wants to duplicate a favorite pet, a Connecticut company, grotesquely named, *Perpetuate, Inc.*, will collect and store its DNA. Although it does not guarantee results, for an initial fee of about \$1,000 and annual storage fees of \$100, it will attempt, when the propitious time arrives, to clone the pet.

The illusion of deathlessness is the logical outcome of the preposterous elevation of the secondary to the primary. Realistically, each of us is inviolable, unrepeatable, and irreplaceable. Technology cannot reverse the metaphysical order of things. It cannot eradicate essences and replace them with attractive qualities (at that, poor Dolly is showing disturbing signs of premature aging). It cannot remove the need to love and to be loved. It cannot fabricate a world in which people are merely images and death is only a distant memory.

But technology can tempt us to believe in illusions. The central paradox of the culture of death is that in fighting disease, deformity, and unwantedness—themselves images of death—by destroying the human agents who bear these characteristics, we *advance* the culture of death. Exterminative technology does not exterminate the problem, it exterminates the person.

It is an old and time-honored principle that "it belongs to the wise man to order." If we put first things first, then we place the primary good of human life ahead of the secondary goods that are associated with human life. In this perspective, though every effort must be made out of love to help our fellow human beings secure life's secondary goods, if they fail to acquire them they do not become expendable. Technology serves us only to the extent that we

are willing to use it to serve others without disregarding their fundamental human reality.

If we think of life as primarily a gift, we should go further and realize that its primary beneficiary is the recipient of the gift and not some outsider. The gift of life, even life conceived in a dish, belongs primarily to the living child rather than to the mother or the father, to a battery of scientists or society. Hence, their unwanting the child should not be either primary or decisive. There are choices to be made, but if we choose wisely we will allow the natural order of things to serve as our guide.

Gina Kolata, the science reporter for the *New York Times*, and the author of *Clone: The Road to Dolly, and the Path Ahead*, is enthusiastic about the prospect of cloning human beings. "After all," she writes, "it is an American tradition to allow people the freedom to reproduce themselves in any way they like." Kolata does not object to the preposterous reversal of the natural order of things that is inherent in cloning. Moreover, she banks her view of choice without check on the "American tradition." But if what she alludes to is, indeed, the American tradition, it has a peculiar way of concealing itself from the American people themselves. A poll conducted by ABC's *Nightline* showed that 82 percent of Americans regarded cloning a human to be morally wrong, while 87 percent declared that the attempt should be banned.

The epigraph she selected for the final chapter of her book is a quotation from the International Humanist Society that could not, by any stretch of the imagination, ever be construed as congruent with the "American tradition": "The potential benefits of cloning may be so immense that it would be a tragedy if ancient theological scruples should lead to a Luddite rejection of cloning." The Society, presumably, would not want to extend cloning either to theists or to critics of the technological imperative. Its own pool of candidates would hardly be representative of the "American tradition." Nonetheless, she quotes the reply given by Ian Wilmut, one of Dolly's reproductive engineers, when she asked him whether he thought we could improve human beings through cloning. He told her, "Only Saddam Hussein would say that."

All human beings should "make the cut" because they are inviolate, unrepeatable and irreplaceable. The path to abortion and the road toward cloning consistently and increasingly subordinate the primary good of the human being to some secondary good. This radical disorder threatens our ability to locate the center of loveableness in the other and, with it, our own capacity to love. Abortion attacks love. Cloning is the attempt to replicate the unlovable out of the ruins of lovelessness.

Is Greer Germane?

Faith Abbott McFadden

When I heard there was a new book out by Germaine Greer, I thought I should read it to see if there was anything “germane” in it for readers of this *Review*. I’d heard that the “feminist icon” had changed somewhat; that her views had “evolved” during the years since she’d burst on the scene with her revolutionary best-selling book *The Female Eunuch*, in 1970. So I bought this new book, *The Whole Woman*, and after a brief look-through I wished I hadn’t. Rather than a glossy bright red jacket, I thought, it should have come in a plain brown wrapper. Although there are no longer any children in my home, I felt the old instinct to hide the book—the way we used to try to hide some issues of *National Geographic*, the ones with pictures of bare-chested African women (which the kids always managed to find, anyway).

It was the *language* that turned me off; and I thought I might write an article about why I didn’t want to write about Germaine Greer or her new book. I did read the first chapter, though: titled “Recantation,” it begins with “This sequel to *The Female Eunuch* is the book I said I would never write.” So why did she write it? Because “it’s time to get angry again.” And why is she angry? Because (in a nutshell) feminism has not worked out the way it was supposed to. In the 30 years since *The Female Eunuch* had galvanized the women’s liberation movement, women had somehow got sidetracked: the claim that they “can have it all” is, in Greer’s view, just “a pacifying illusion,” and “fake equality is leading women into double jeopardy.” Complacency and denial have replaced feminist determination and militancy; things are getting worse: therefore it’s time to get angry. Again.

I had not read *The Female Eunuch* because in the ’70s I was a busy (and happy) housewife and mother of five, with little time to read even *reviews* of Important Books, so I was unaware of this sensational book that urged women to embrace their sexuality, become self-reliant, repudiate the traditional passive roles into which they’d been cast, etc. I suspect I would have “repudiated” the *book* if I’d read it then: looking at my three beautiful little daughters, I’d have thought How *dare* this woman say that “every girl child is conceived as a whole woman but from the time of her birth to her death she is progressively disabled”? And what about “A woman’s body is the battlefield where she fights for liberation”? Those dogmatic statements were shocking, but—assuming Greer’s “style” hasn’t changed—the language would

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have shocked me even more, for I am of a generation that never spoke some words aloud, and didn't even *know* most of them. Bodily functions, sexual excesses and perversions were not (as now) detailed in family newspapers nor reported on television—which most of us didn't have anyway. This being the '90s, Greer's scatological explicitness shocks me less than it would have in the '70s, I guess, but sneaking a quick look through the book again, to find out what it was *about*, made me feel almost voyeuristic. So I put the book away and decided to wait for the *reviews*: perhaps *they* could enlighten me about the content of *The Whole Woman*. At least, I thought, the *reviewer's* language wouldn't be off-putting. And maybe rather than reviewing the book, I could review the reviews?

The Whole Woman had been a #1 bestseller in England, and I expected rave reviews here. Encomiums from Greer-watchers such as "At Last She's Back! Another stunning block-buster . . ." and "Greer has finally written the long-awaited sequel to *The Female Eunuch*" . . . *that* sort of thing.

This didn't happen.

Michiko Kakutani, who reviews books for the daily *New York Times*, wrote on May 18 that *The Whole Woman* is as sour as "Eunuch" was exuberant, as dogmatic as [it] was original, as slipshod in its thinking as 'Eunuch' was pointed . . . None of the thoughtful insights into male and female psychology that animated 'The Female Eunuch' are to be found in this volume, just as none of that earlier book's intellectual analysis is to be found in its pages." What's unfortunate, Kakutani writes, is less that Greer has changed her views "than that she has done such a weak job of articulating her evolving vision and that her writing—and thinking—have grown so vituperative and shrill." She ends her review with "*The Whole Woman* is a castrated book."

(Interestingly enough, I came across Kakutani's 1984 review of Greer's book *Sex and Destiny* which ends with similar words: "It's a pity that Miss Greer does such a poor job of trying to explain just why and how her views have evolved.")

The *New York Post* on June 24th ran a column by Garry Wills in which he calls Greer "the heterosexual Camille Paglia"; Samuel McCracken in the September *Commentary* magazine calls Greer "a kind of Camille Paglia of the '70's" and venomous feminist Camille Paglia herself wrote, in the May 9 *New York Times Book Review*, that Greer's new book is "exasperatingly disjointed and scattershot"—that it is "shot through with unhelpful and passé invective against men"; that "the tone of this book is seriously unbalanced," and that Greer's "normal humor and oratorical propulsiveness seem lost in her orgy of contemptuous sardonicism."

In *The New Republic's* very long essay-type review (May 31st) Margaret Talbot writes that Greer's new book, whatever else it will be called, will most certainly be called a work of feminism; that the reasons for this will have almost nothing to do with the book itself, which is a "sour and undiscriminating litany of charges against men—all men, men as nature created them—wrapped around the wilfully obtuse argument that little or nothing has improved for American and European women over the last thirty years."

Danielle Crittenden, in the July 19th *Weekly Standard*, writes that "Opening the book is like opening a blast furnace. Greer doesn't want to engage her readers; she wants to sear them . . . With the '70's back in fashion—bellbottoms, platform shoes, even Donny and Marie!—it's not surprising that Germaine Greer and her in-your-face, death-to-the-male-power-structure feminism is back, too." She quotes Greer's "It's time for women to get angry again," adding "and so she has, scoffing at the young naysayers who insist feminism's work has been done and believe it's time for the women's movement to, in her words, 'eff off.'" (Only "eff" isn't the word *Greer* uses.)

Crittenden mentions Greer's announcement that she was "forced" to write the new book because she couldn't stand hearing that today's women could "have it all"—that the feminism of her generation had "gone too far" when it hadn't gone far enough; that most of *The Whole Woman* "is a diatribe against the ways of the West" which are patriarchal, soul-destroying, materialistic, oppressive, and so on. Apparently Greer thinks the Third World is the opposite of all those awful things: "She gushes over any society that dresses in festively colored cloth and goes about barefoot. But unlike other feminists who celebrate the 'naturalness' of tribal women, Greer is willing to acknowledge and accept tribal women's embrace of brutal tribal practices. She's even willing to defend female circumcision against such Western practices as the mammogram and the pap smear."

One gathers, from these and other reviews, that Greer's search for "the whole woman" or her dream of finding a whole-woman culture was dashed when she "discovered" that today's Western culture has subverted other cultures . . . that women are more "powerless" than ever because no sooner had she, Greer, caught sight of "the whole woman" than—in the words of one reviewer—"Western marketing came blaring down upon her with its vast panoply of spectacular effects, strutting and trumpeting the highly seductive gospel of salvation according to hipless, wombless, hard-titted Barbie." Greer's "strong women thrust their muscular feet into high heels and learned to totter . . . they spent their tiny store of cash on lipstick and nail varnish, and were made modern." The hard-working Chinese women, alas, began

curling their hair to prove that they too were real (i.e., phony) women. Margaret Talbot, in her *New Republic* piece, writes that Greer “is quite sure of what a real woman is. The secrets are in her possession. ‘Real’ women are women who live in sexually segregated societies. Chinese women were real before Western marketing distorted them.” And “Greer’s whole woman is just a sentimentalization of the natural woman. Her quarrel is finally with civilization. . . . She is no longer travelling to the beat of a different drum. Her stunts have become banal.”

David Quinn, editor of Dublin’s *The Irish Catholic*, titled his July 29th review “Insightful, but in the end incoherent.” “Germaine Greer is still doing her best to shock,” he begins; “She used to be good at it, but it’s hard to shock anyone anymore and sometimes her attempts simply fail.” (He doesn’t mention shocking *language*; guess I’m just a prude.)

In her review, Margaret Talbot says one reason the book was a bestseller in England was the author’s reputation but also “the insidious reach of an attitude that we will call Men-Are-Dogs-ism.” Would it be “simplistic” to say that Greer has a love/hate “thing” about men? Maybe “bi-polar” has a better ring. A few days before her book was published here, she was interviewed—in her English garden—by a New York *Daily News* reporter. When the subject of *men* came up, Greer said “It’s not that I hate men; on the contrary. One of my problems is I love them, I adore them, I fancy them. I’m terribly indulgent to them.” (She was married for three weeks in 1968.) Yet in her new book she says that men are “doomed to competition and injustice, not merely toward females, but towards children, animals, and other men.” They are “freaks of nature . . . full of queer obsessions and fetishistic activities and fantasy goals.” They’re also slothful and sponging: a wife (translation: “one who burdens herself with a husband”) will probably find that “the cost of feeding him, grooming him, humoring him, and financing his recreation is way out of proportion to the contribution that he makes in return.” She rages on: “Men bash women because they enjoy it; they torture women as they might torture an animal or pull the wings off flies.”

Perhaps one reason Greer is so pessimistic, wrote Kakutani in her blistering *Times* review (which was titled “The Female Condition, Re-examined 30 Years Later”) “has to do with her willful—and often perverse—insistence on seeing developments most feminists would embrace as signs of progress as symptoms of a vague male conspiracy.” I found it interesting that almost *all* the reviews I read had this quotation from the book: “Women are driven through the health system like sheep through a dip. . . . The disease they are being treated for is womanhood.” (I had to look up “sheep-dip”

in Webster's: it's a liquid preparation of toxic chemicals into which sheep are plunged esp. to destroy parasitic arthropods. Whatever *they* are.)

Camille Paglia writes, in her *Times* review, that in Greer's "grisly scenarios" modern medicine is simply "300 years of male professionals lancing women's bodies as if they were abscesses." Greer declares that screening for cervical and breast cancer is "many times more likely to destroy a woman's peace of mind than it is to save her life." Fertility treatments, rather than helping women, turn doctors into magicians; doctors are needed to manage female fertility "which becomes a medical problem" and "The initial treatment is pharmaceutical contraception." The woman who accepts this treatment "becomes a man-made non-mother"; *in-vitro* fertilization is a process leading to "manmade mothers."

What really galled most reviewers was Greer's denunciation of Western efforts to stamp out female mutilation in Africa. She calls those efforts "an attack on cultural identity," and while admitting that genital mutilation "represents a significant health risk," she argues that the brutal procedure (on girls who have no say in the matter) must also be "a procedure with considerable cultural value because it has survived 50 years of criminalization and concerted propaganda campaigns." (What was that about "pulling wings off flies"?)

Greer's fans and foes alike were startled to learn, in 1984 when her book *Sex and Destiny* came out, that she was advocating (gasp!) *motherhood*. Now, in *The Whole Woman*, she makes bold to say that motherhood should be a paid, genuine career alternative. But has she "evolved" on the abortion issue? She states that women who have abortions have submitted themselves to "the gynecological abattoir." The *Roe v. Wade* decision "did nothing to confront, let alone resolve, the deep moral conflicts surrounding the issue . . ." The abortion "right" was handed to women by a "masculine medical establishment" and a "masculine judiciary": what women "won" was

the 'right' to undergo invasive procedures in order to terminate unwanted pregnancies, unwanted not just by them but by their parents, their sexual partners, the governments who would not support mothers, the employers who would not employ mothers, the landlords who would not accept tenants with children, the schools that would not accept students with children. Historically, the only thing pro-abortion agitation achieved was to make an illiberal establishment look far more feminist than it was.

Abortion is the consequence of "oppression" and the unwillingness to give women the support they need to bear and raise children: "Feminism is

pro-woman rather than pro-abortion; we have always argued for freedom of reproductive choice. A choice is only possible if there are genuine alternatives." One "genuine alternative" has been provided by Scotland's Cardinal Winning who is offering financial support to women who would otherwise feel pressured to have an abortion: there are cries of "bribery!" but Ms. Greer applauds the Cardinal's initiative.

But what's missing in the "Abortion" chapter is any mention of the value of innocent human life: the fate of the aborted child is referred to just in terms of the *woman's* anguish. If she is "talked into termination" her "agony of mind is increased by the regular publication of results of research to establish whether and when human fetuses become aware, feel pain, can learn. In March 1998 we learned that fetuses are alert and can learn at twenty weeks gestation, before the formation of a cerebral cortex. The evidence was unconvincing, in that reaction was being construed as consciousness, but it had the desired effect, which was to worry women."

That bit seems a bit confusing, but what *isn't* is that Ms. Greer defends legal abortion: "There can be no gainsaying that women cannot manage their own lives if access to abortion is to be denied."

In his *Commentary* review, Samuel McCracken wrote that "A fair amount of ink has been spilled by earnest reviewers taking issue with the arguments, so-called, of this book." After noting that *The New Republic* devoted almost 7,000 words to "a solemn rebuttal" he asks "But what is there, really, to say?" He quotes from a recent edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*—in which Greer is described as an "Australian-born English writer and feminist who championed the sexual freedom of women." And says, "Assuming the statement was ever true, the past tense says it all."

I did steel myself to read the final chapter (titled "Liberation") of the book, wondering if Ms. Greer would take her "it's time to get angry again" into the new millennium or if she might leave the reader with something positive—perhaps some small, life-affirming bubble of optimism? But what I found was this: "The second wave of feminism, rather than having crashed on to the shore, is still far out to sea. . . . None of us who are alive today will witness more than the first rumbles of the coming social upheaval. Middle-class women have the privilege of serving the longest revolution, not of directing it." And "The ideological battles that feminist theorists are engaged in are necessary but they are preliminary to the emergence of female power . . . which will rush upon us in the persons of women who have nothing to lose, having lost everything already." Gloom and doom. Further: ". . . and the women of the rich world had better hope that when female energy ignites

they do not find themselves on the wrong side.”

“By the time the book is finished,” writes Midge Decter in the journal *First Things*, “one is left with the wish to liberate not women but Germaine Greer herself.” Whether or not Germaine is *germane*, Greer is certainly *drear*.

But she wasn't always. In her review, Camille Paglia wrote that *The Whole Woman* “does not give us the whole Greer . . .” The part that is missing, or submerged, was beautifully and humorously illumined by Greer herself in the London *Sunday Times* on April 3, 1983. My late husband Jim McFadden, editor of this *Review* until his death in October 1998, rather *liked* Ms. Greer. He told Patrick Allitt, during an interview for Allitt's book (*Catholic Intellectuals and Conservative Politics in America 1950-1985*) that “I like her—but then I liked her when she was a wild ideologue. Nobody ever gave Bill Buckley a harder time on *Firing Line* (though I believe Bill was under the weather—he had flu.) It was hilarious. She's tough as nails, yes, I like her. I guess if Clare Luce had really been the kind of feminist I don't like I would have liked her too, because I just plain liked her.”

Jim had kept that original *Sunday Times* feature: I found it in his “Greer” folder, and remembered that he'd wanted to use it, in some way, for this *Review*. He'd written to her and got a letter back (typed in *green*) thanking him for his letter and the copy of the *Human Life Review* and saying that he'd have to contact the *Times* and her agent but “provided you encounter no obstacles from either of these quarters, you have my permission to use the piece, but I fear it may well prove too costly.” (Signed: “Yours faithfully.”)

Whether there were “obstacles” of one sort or another I don't remember; Jim never used it but I have found the now rather yellowed piece well worth re-reading. Under the large title “STAR GIRL” there's this summary: “Germaine Greer describes the miseries and joys of her schooling at the Star of the Sea convent in Australia, and how she lost God along the way.” Greer begins her narrative (it's long: one and one-half full pages, with some photos) with “The nuns got hold of me when I was quite small, just turned four.” At which age she had “no chance of turning into anything but a convent girl, not that I'm about to revile the experience. I hope I belong to the ilk of the survivors of a Catholic girlhood, with Mary McCarthy, Simone de Beauvoir, Antonia White, Edna O'Brien and all, but the fact is that I'm really rather glad that I fell into the clutches of the good sisters.” The “convent girls” she mentioned are not “a bad advertisement of the system” and “if you add the ones who don't go on about it [she mentions Mrs. Gandhi, Imelda Marcos, and Madame Nhu] it seems very unlikely that convents are the best places

for crushing females into submission.” Had it not been for the nuns she “might well have gone to a secretarial college, had streaks put into my hair and married a stockbroker.”

She discovered music. Or, rather, the Presentation Sisters discovered that she could sing. Not just the tune but the *descansis*. So she “learned one of the greatest earthly joys, the one which will accompany us to heaven, of singing in harmony. I was allowed into the Special Choir, dropping plum into the *Missa Papae Marcelli*.” And she declared “If I am never happier than I was during those lunch-hours when we learned to build structures in tone and time, while lesser mortals played games and gossiped in the playground, I shall have nothing to complain of. We did not make music for its own sake, you realise, but the way we did everything. *Ad majorem Dei gloriam*. At the top of every page in our exercise books we wrote in flowing majuscules, AMDG.”

She describes her fascination with saints and martyrs and her intense “flirtation” with “mystical experience”—she thought she might have a vocation but then “disaster befell” her: she began to doubt the existence of God. “Here I was after 11 years of exposure, godless . . . I had heard of the dark night of the soul, but it seemed a little early in my mystical career to encounter such an advanced spiritual ordeal.”

One time, having been banished from the schoolroom to the corridor because of some polemical outburst, she was caught by Mother Superior, who—after hearing Greer’s explanation of why she was there—said “My dear child, you could be a great saint or a great sinner. Only you can decide.” After another banishment (they were frequent) when she was allowed back into class a friend whispered “Sister asked us to pray for you. She said you’d have a difficult life.” “The damn’ cheek!” Greer thought, but “The nuns took a good many liberties of that kind. Sometimes I imagine I can hear the cata-racts of Actual Grace they send roaring my way.”

She is not sorry that she spent so much of her youth “wrestling with the Catholic Church,” and says that “Compared to the anguish of scepticism the yoke of my religion was easy and its burden light. I love to go to the Easter ceremonies in the darkened church, and join in with the congregation in begging the light of Christ to return, as the candles are lit from the Paschal fire, and the bells are rung and the Gloria flames out. . . . I love Mother Church as the nuns love me, when all I can do for them is to get myself nominated as Australia’s foremost female ratbag.” She loves to teach her Catholic godchildren the Liturgy: “I don’t want them growing up not knowing why the Virgin’s heart is pierced with seven swords, or what Chartres is for. I owe it to Sister Raymond to explain the drama of Giotto

and I owe it to Sister Attracta to teach them the old Latin hymns, the Christus Vincit, the Pange Lingua, the Salve Regina, and the Dies Irae.”

In that April, 1983 feature article, Greer wrote that “This month Star of the Sea becomes 100 years old. Sister Raymond writes to say that she had a painting I did for her in the third form.” (There’s a charming picture of an elderly, beaming Sister Raymond “with cherished Greer painting.”) “It was my job to reproduce the image which appeared on Juan Diego’s mantle, of our Lady in a star-studded cloak, standing on a crescent moon, supported by a cherub . . .” The painting was for a school play about the miracle of Guadalupe; and “Thirty years she’s kept the blessed thing, and now she wants to frame it in a star and use it for the Centerpiece of the Altar for the Centenary High Mass. . . . This is heap powerful medicine; I bet they haven’t given up all hope of my canonisation yet.”

Is it too much to hope that—all these years later—the good nuns are, from their timeless vantage point, looking down on their pupil and sending “cataracts” of hints that she is looking in all the wrong places for “the whole woman”?

* * * * *

The title of Danielle Crittenden’s review of *The Whole Woman* is “The Cultural Contradictions of Feminism.” What I find quite intriguing are the cultural (and other) contradictions of Germaine Greer. If you happened to watch Chris Matthews’ cable TV show “Hardball” on June 8th, you’d have seen Ms. Greer as a half-bored, half-amused, sardonic interviewee, looking every bit her sixty years. But if you’d seen the PBS special, *John Paul II: The Millennial Pope*, you’d have seen a different (and younger-looking) Germaine. Toward the end, in the segment on Faith, she tells how she was drawn—by the resonating bass bells—into a church in St. Petersburg, Russia, as Mass was beginning. Though she’d lost her faith, she says, the “important thing” was that she’d been “imbued” with the culture of the Church: “I had been singing great choral music ever since I was about 12 and I loved the Mass and I loved the liturgy and I loved the liturgical year . . . and I’m greatly attached to them still.” The choir in that church sounded “like the craving of the human spirit for God and the total desolation that God is not palpable . . . to me even worse because God is not *there*. Then how amazing to listen to this extraordinary choir that was greater than grande opera—it was astonishing and I just stood there for an hour and a half and they never stopped singing.” When she went out, she discovered that the whole front of her clothing was sodden: she hadn’t realized that “I’d been weeping the whole time.”

Her later segment on the PBS special was about another time, when—if

sanctity is wholeness—she might have recognized *whole women*: “I think I learned about sanctity when I went to Ethiopia in ’84-’85,” she tells us, “and I saw people whose lives are profoundly religious. They never take a breath without consecrating it to God, Our Lady, or someone. Almost every day has a place on the liturgical calendar. To see these people coping with the *huge* humiliation of famine . . . because I think people who are not farmers don’t realize that famine is the ultimate failure for a farmer. . . . But these people under this pressure behaved like angels—I mean to me they really *were* garbed in celestial light.” Here her voice breaks and she cries, but goes on: “It’s hard to think of it without *rage* against God, you see, because those people followed their religious ritual into the worst kind of squalor you can imagine.” When they died they were “laid in their tombs as if they were precious things to rise on the last day and if you don’t believe that there’s a last day or that there’s any recompense for these lives of unremitting self-denial, then you cannot—I mean—if God exists I’m against him.”

I think I know now why my husband liked Germaine Greer, and I have come to sort of like her too—not her writings, but *her*, or the fragments of herself that she’s revealed. Who knows—perhaps she’ll write another book when “it’s time to get angry again” and her anger will be directed toward the Hound of Heaven who seems relentlessly in pursuit. Or maybe she’ll be caught.

APPENDIX A

[The following syndicated column by Suzanne Fields ran on September 21, 1999, and is reprinted with permission (© 1999 Los Angeles Times Syndicate).]

Princeton's "professor death"

Suzanne Fields

The crippled and the lame, on crutches and in wheelchairs, walking slowly with friends and family, will gather at Princeton University today to bear witness for humanity. Students with muscular, athletic bodies as well as the bowed and infirm will register their outrage.

Protestants, Catholics and Jews (in the season of the New Year when the Jewish people pray for their names to be written down in The Book of Life) will join hands to express their fury at the presence of a professor on their campus whose intellectual coldness and academic credentials have led him to a prestigious chair as tenured professor. This is a "scholar," whose ideas, if they had prevailed, would have denied many of them a life on the planet. Why should such a man be invited to teach ethics at Princeton?

Peter Singer begins teaching bioethics at Princeton's Center for Human Values in the fall semester. He is a very intelligent man. He has written politically correct books and articles in the right intellectual journals. He's especially well-known in this country for his espousal of a bizarre theory of animal rights, comparing man's domination of animals with the white man's domination of the black man in America.

Anyone who regards this as a specious argument, according to the professor, is a "speciesist" (as in racist and sexist).

But that's small potatoes if you read some of his other comparisons of humans and animals. He argues that killing an animal may be worse "ethically" than killing a severely disabled baby because the animal may have the capacity for greater pain.

What really upsets almost everybody except the Princeton administration is his idea that it could be OK to kill babies in the first 28 days of their lives. He specifies babies with "severe" disabilities, which include hemophilia: "When the death of the disabled [hemophiliac] infant will lead to the birth of another infant with better prospects of a happy life, the total amount of happiness will be greater if the disabled infant is killed."

Students call him "Professor Death." The New Yorker magazine describes him as "The Dangerous Professor." Nat Hentoff, who taught journalism at Princeton last year, reminds students that murder is still a crime, and Dr. Singer, an Australian, is advocating the commission of a crime.

Others note that Princeton is making it easier for decent men and women to descend the slippery slope, justifying and rationalizing euthanasia and Nazi eugenics. The defenders of Dr. Singer and his appointment bristle at the comparison to the Nazi doctors working for the Third Reich, but that comparison is apt. Both Dr. Singer and the Nazi doctors based their arguments on "utilitarianism." What Dr. Singer calls "the total view," the German doctors called "mercy killings." Both

rationalized “usefulness” as sparing suffering for parents and children.

Alfred Hoche and Karl Binding, two university professors respected in Germany in the 1920s wrote a book called “The Permission to Destroy Life Unworthy of Life,” which formed an intellectual basis for killing disabled adults as well as babies, an “allowable, useful act.” They talked about destroying life as “purely a healing treatment.” It wasn’t long before the Germans extended their logic of utility to include considerations including the good of the state.

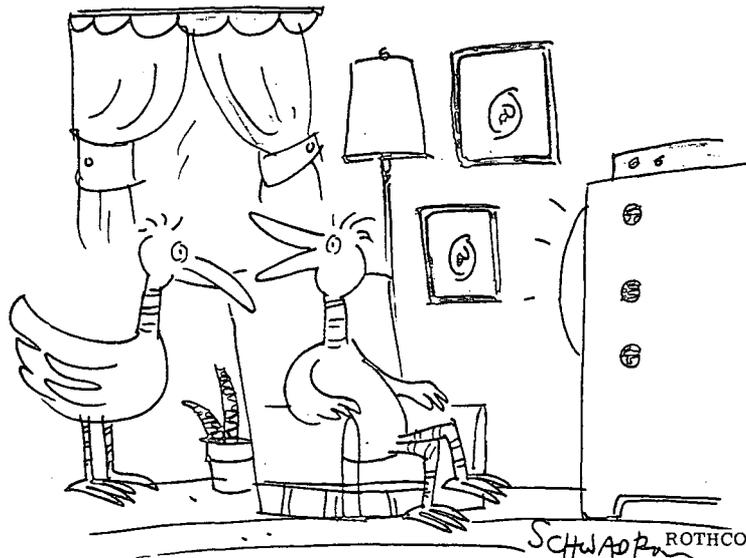
Dr. Singer has a more complex argument. He draws on the philosophical “utilitarians” whose logic called for the greatest good for the greatest number.

Robert J. Lifton, in “The Nazi Doctors,” describes a mathematics text for Germans of the 1930s which asked students to calculate how many government loans to newly married couples would be available to them if the state were not burdened with care for “the crippled, the criminal, and the insane.”

Peter Singer concedes that society must set strict conditions on killing inconvenient babies, “but they owe more to the effects of infanticide on others than to the intrinsic wrongness of killing an infant.”

Alfred Hoche, in his argument for compassionate killing, had a vision for Nazi morality: “A new age will come which, from the standpoint of higher morality, will no longer heed the demands of an inflated concept of humanity and an overestimation of the value of life as such.”

Listen now to Peter Singer. “The day had to come when Copernicus proved that the earth is not at the center of the universe. It is ridiculous to pretend that the old ethics still make sense when plainly they do not. The notion that human life is sacred just because it’s human life is medieval.” We must pray that he is not a Princeton visionary.



“I DON’T MIGRATE ANYMORE—I JUST WATCH THE TRAVEL CHANNEL.”

APPENDIX B

[The following first appeared on the Op Ed Page of the New York Daily News on September 25, 1999 and is reprinted with the author's permission. Mr. Leo is a contributing editor of U.S. News & World Report, and a nationally syndicated newspaper columnist.]

Only human: Animal rights guru mirrors Nazis

John Leo

As a thinker, Peter Singer is consistent, clear and as subtle as a tank rolling over a wheelchair. The world's best-known advocate of infanticide thinks that parents should be allowed 28 days after the birth of a severely disabled baby to decide whether to kill it.

Singer, founding philosopher of the animal rights movement, says the notion that human life is sacred is a "speciesist" illusion. Humans are just one animal among many. And he apparently thinks newborns should not have the rights granted by the U.S. Constitution.

"Killing a disabled infant is not morally equivalent to killing a person," he writes. Humans are not born self-aware, Singer explains, but animals are, so "the life of a newborn is of less value than the life of a pig, a dog or a chimpanzee."

Singer is serenely confident in his coldly abstract line of reasoning. In the words of bioethicist Arthur Caplan of the University of Pennsylvania, Singer is "an example of how theory can take you places way off the map."

Odd theory also can take you to Princeton University, where Singer has been installed as the first full-time professor of bioethics at the campus Center for Human Values. Unsurprisingly, the university is coming under heavy fire for making the appointment.

Last week, some 200 students, disability activists and pro-lifers protested Singer's first classes on campus. Presidential candidate Steve Forbes, a Princeton trustee, fanned the flames by announcing he will stop contributing money to the university unless it gets rid of the professor.

Singer, it should be said, has solid credentials, writes well and has had a major impact with his animal writings. The wretched excess here is not that he was hired, but that Princeton's one and only full-time bioethicist is someone so far out that he doesn't really have much credibility in his own field. Princeton President Harold Shapiro must know this because he's chairman of the president's National Bioethics Advisory Committee.

Maybe the idea was to stir up students and draw a crowd. If so, marketing has succeeded at the expense of common sense. It's peculiar to install at a Center for Human Values a professor who believes that traditional human values are mostly illusory.

Princeton seems surprised by the intensity of the opposition to Singer. Apparently, it didn't occur to the university that many people would resent the mainstreaming of his infanticide philosophy.

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Demonstrators often shout “Nazi” at Singer, which is excessive—three of his four grandparents died in the Holocaust. But there are some eerie parallels between his views and those of the medical establishment of the early Hitler days.

The Nazis’ first systematic attempt to eliminate a defined population group was directed at severely disabled children. Infants are a logical place to start. They’re not productive and can’t speak.

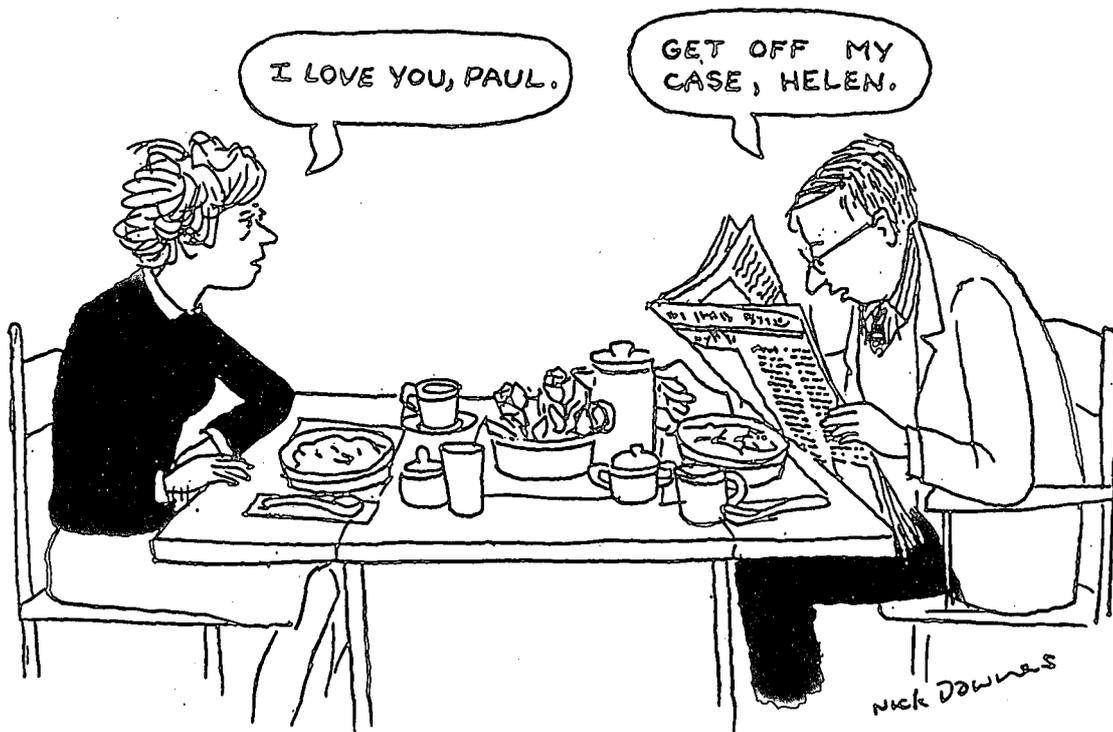
Singer denies some handicapped babies the protection of the word “person.” The Nazis thought to do that too, preferring the word “abortions” for disabled infants.

In the Nazi culture, the initial step onto the slippery slope was to deny that rights were inherent in every person. Instead, rights came to depend on physical ability or intelligence, as personhood for Singer now depends on self-awareness.

Those who think that Singer’s 28-day grace period for killing babies might easily be extended can find parallels in the German experience too. The Nazi three-year grace period eventually was extended up to the midteen years. Once protections no longer are assured at birth, there is nothing sacrosanct about 28 days or 56.

Trips down the slippery slope usually start with word games, blurring of lines and high-minded rhetoric intended to mask some ghastly option.

Singer, at least, is totally honest about what he wants. He puts his ghastly option right out in the open for all of us to see.



APPENDIX C

[The following editorial is reprinted with permission of The Weekly Standard, in whose November 1, 1999 issue it originally appeared. (Copyright, 1999, News America Inc.) J. Bottum, the editorial's author, is the Standard's Books & Arts editor.]

Princeton and Its Principles

The Weekly Standard

Steve Forbes has it right: The presence on the Princeton University faculty of Peter Singer—the Australian animal-rights activist who proclaims that a baby is of less value than a pig and who advocates a 28-day trial period before accepting newborns into the human race—is “intolerable and unconscionable.”

But Forbes, whose family has given millions to the university since his graduation in 1970 and who sits on its board of trustees with the likes of Bill Bradley and Senator Bill Frist, has now been publicly rebuked by Robert H. Rawson, Jr., the board's chairman. “The trustees collectively have a special and overarching responsibility to advance and protect the core values of the University, which include the essential principles of academic freedom,” Rawson wrote two weeks ago. “We sincerely regret that one of our members apparently is not willing to accept this fundamental responsibility.” This was in response to a letter of complaint from Amy Gutmann (who directs Princeton's Center for Human Values at which Singer holds the chair in bioethics), George Kateb (who led the search committee that proposed Singer's appointment), and two other faculty members.

The blow-up over Forbes is only the latest installment in the controversy that has raged since Singer came to Princeton in July. There was the public debate with the blind professor who accused him of desiring her death, the protesters in wheelchairs hauled away by the police from his classes, the ongoing argument about whether utilitarian moral theory actually implies that there are, in Singer's words, “living human beings whose lives may intentionally be terminated”—the newborn and the handicapped, the elderly and the infirm, and the unborn, of course (whom Singer believes are as much living humans as any other infants, and so equally eligible for death).

But let's be honest. Peter Singer was not brought to Princeton to slaughter the first baby, like the ceremonial cutting of a ribbon to open a new dormitory. He was not even hired primarily to advance the legality of infanticide, though the Laurence Rockefeller/population-control money that finances his position may desire that eventual result.

No, Singer was selected for a Princeton chair by Kateb and Gutmann precisely because his selection would generate controversy, and thereby use the stature of Princeton to raise as a debatable proposition—the inviolability of human life—what most of us supposed was a fundamental principle. “John Paul II proclaims that the widespread acceptance of abortion is a mortal threat to the traditional moral order,” Singer wrote in “Killing Babies Isn't Always Wrong,” a 1995 article in the *London Spectator*. “I sometimes think that he and

I at least share the virtue of seeing clearly what is at stake.”

There’s a megalomania here, of course: a vision of himself in which the gigantic figure of Peter Singer sits across from the pope at the chessboard of humankind, locked in a grim battle for the future of all us little folk. But there’s also a sleight of hand—so obvious, it’s positively shameless—in which any disagreement is arbitrarily defined as religious and everything religious is arbitrarily banned from rational discourse.

Academic courtesy, the collegiality that professors are supposed to show, has kept from news reports what is common knowledge among the faculty: that Singer is a second-rater. This is a man who has no real standing in bioethics, no significant publications in ethical theory, no major importance even in his own narrow world of utilitarianism. To animal-rights and abortion activists, Peter Singer is a founding philosopher, but to philosophers, he’s mostly an activist. On a campus with faculty of the stature of the epistemologist Saul Kripke, the constitutional lawyer Robert George, and, yes, even Gutmann and Kateb, Singer is an embarrassment. It’s no accident that he was not invited to join the philosophy department when he received his chair at the Center for Human Values, and he remains the only faculty member without an appointment to an actual academic department.

This is the disingenuousness of Gutmann and Kateb when they complain that Forbes’s “attack on academic freedom” has “struck at the heart of Princeton.” Singer doesn’t belong at Princeton, either as thinker, teacher, or even on the spurious grounds of intellectual diversity, which his defenders—with breathtaking bad faith—also invoke.

There exist distinguished thinkers with views opposed to Singer’s—the British philosopher G.E.M. Anscombe, for instance, who since the 1950s has translated Wittgenstein, written on moral theory, and defended pro-life positions. Suppose Anscombe were to argue (as she has not) that doctors who perform abortions have ceased to be human beings and we have a duty to assassinate them. Now *there* is a wrongheaded view that’s currently unrepresented amid the ostensible diversity of thought at Ivy League schools. But can anyone imagine the faculty and trustees rising in the name of academic freedom to defend the right of someone to pronounce it from a chair at Princeton University?

Of course not. Like professorial collegiality and the duty of trustees to defend their university, academic freedom is a real principle. But in the hands of Singer’s defenders, it has become only a slogan, useful chiefly for bullying into silence anyone who objects to their efforts to shatter the culture’s last vestiges of traditional morality. And, by prompting Rawson’s rebuke of Forbes, the device has proved successful once more.

It was, in fact, G.E.M. Anscombe who foresaw part of this. In a brilliant essay back in 1958, she pointed out that somewhere between John Stuart Mill in the 1840s and G.E. Moore in the 1920s, the British utilitarian tradition lost the ability to explain why the taking of innocent life is wrong. And she predicted that there would eventually come along someone willing to say that we *should* kill babies,

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because utilitarianism offers no explanation of why we shouldn't.

Anscombe seems to have imagined that the result would be the rejection of utilitarian ethics—for, after all, killing babies is wrong and a moral theory that arrives at a contrary result must be mistaken. What she didn't guess is that the one who came along to proclaim infanticide would be a second-rater like Peter Singer, or that he would be promoted as a stalking horse by those who don't actually care one way or the other about the sufferings of handicapped children or the philosophical problems of utilitarian theory, but only about wrecking the last remaining moral compass by which the culture can still steer.

But who could have guessed it? There is a sense in which Singer's promoters have already won. His presence at Princeton compels presidential candidates to take a position *against infanticide*. It forces columnists and pundits to explain that they are personally opposed to baby-killing, though they can't quite say why. Even if, after extended discussion, we answer as a nation that Singer is wrong, it is too late. His appointment transforms the slaughter of the innocents into a debatable moral question rather than an undebatable moral principle—the touchstone by which we are able to judge the rightness or wrongness of other moral claims.

And the key fact in the whole controversy is that Peter Singer didn't do it; any crackpot can rant and rave. Princeton did it, by giving that crackpot a distinguished chair. The fame, history, and eminence of our great colleges lend an immediate prominence to those they hire. Princeton University let itself be used, thoroughly and degradingly, by Amy Gutmann and her Center for Human Values, by George Kateb and his search committee, and by the population-control money financing them. Don't any of his fellow trustees—Mr. Bradley? Senator Frist?—see why Steve Forbes objects in the name of the school he loves?

—J. Bottum, for the Editors

APPENDIX D

[*Dr. David van Gend is the Queensland (Australia) secretary for the World Federation of Doctors Who Respect Human Life. The following appeared last August in The Courier Mail and is reprinted here with the author's permission.*]

Putting feelings aside: the predicament of Peter Singer

Dr. David van Gend

The recommendation to “put feelings aside” in the killing of unwanted infants or senile old people recurs in the writings of Professor Peter Singer, the Australian newly appointed to the chair of bioethics at prestigious Princeton University. His is a coldly cerebral approach to life, with an “impressive, if lunatic, consistency to his arguments,” as the Wall Street Journal put it; yet a tragic event in his own life, a flicker of complex human sentiment, may signal a thaw in this icy consistency.

The category of “non-person” has, until now, been crystal clear to Singer. Because “human babies are not born self-aware . . . they are not persons.” In fact, “the life of a newborn baby is of less value than the life of a pig, a dog, or a chimpanzee,” and we should therefore “put aside emotionally moving but strictly irrelevant aspects of the killing of a baby.” This means all babies, not just the lethally handicapped, and accounts for his defense of the killing of unwanted girl babies in China.

For the same reason, senile or severely handicapped adults “are non-persons”; they are not “self-conscious, rational, or autonomous, and so considerations of a right to life . . . do not apply.” For influential sentiments such as these, disabled groups label Singer “the most dangerous man in the world,” and have besieged Princeton with mass protests.

Enter his mother, Cora Singer, who has rapidly descended into Alzheimer's dementia and no longer recognises her son. One protester from the disabled group Not Dead Yet has not missed the tragic irony: “The whole terrifying point of his philosophy is that people like his mother should be killed if it's cost-efficient for the community or desirable for their families.”

The abstract edifice of his philosophy is one thing; his mother going gently and so slowly into that good night makes it hard to practice the art of “putting feelings aside.” Says Singer, “I think this has made me see how the issues of someone with these kinds of problems are really very difficult. Perhaps it is more difficult than I thought before, because it is different when it is your own mother.”

The question is, will this flicker of feeling be enough to thaw the ice of cerebral Singerism? Unlikely—but then, it is worth considering critically how thin this ice is. Look to the foundation of all his philosophy, his credulous Credo, which is found in one paragraph of Practical Ethics (p. 331) under the heading “Has Life a Meaning?”:

When we reject belief in a god we must give up the idea that life on this planet has some preordained meaning. Life as a whole has no meaning. Life began, as the best available theories tell us, in a chance combination of gases; it then evolved through random mutation and natural selection. All this just happened; it did not happen to

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any overall purpose. Now that it has resulted in the existence of beings who prefer some states of affairs to others, however, it may be possible for particular lives to be meaningful. In this sense atheists can find meaning in life.

It is a brave man who would adhere to such simplistic evolutionism with colleagues like Paul Davies at large, and a con-man who would try to sell this as a plausible motive for the nobler strivings of the human spirit. Our roots go much deeper than Singer allows—and perhaps Singer is beginning to sense that shallowness. The sole foundation of his ethical edifice is the blindly-evolved, chemically-determined preference for some states of affairs to others—a proposal so trivial and sterile that, when set up against the great gnarled growth of living ethics (Ghandi, Mother Teresa, “Weary” Dunlop), it should crumble in a rubble of derision.

Paradoxically, some of Singer’s adversaries consider that the appointment of such a radical ideologue may serve to brace and strengthen the traditional Western ethic that Singer so derides. One writes that “the appointment of a professor of infanticide to the faculty of venerable Princeton should be a loud wake-up call; a reveille.” Another, in the *Wall Street Journal*, wonders “what may happen when Princeton students begin to think critically about what Peter Singer is saying? . . . His philosophy may unintentionally do more damage to liberal pieties than a thousand Alan Blooms ever could.”

The last word on “putting feelings aside” might go to an older professor, who may have shared a bus with the young Singer at Oxford University. C.S. Lewis, the antithesis of the young atheist, observed in *Men without Chests*: “It is not excess of thought but defect of fertile and generous emotion that marks them out. Their heads are not bigger than the ordinary: it is the atrophy of the chest beneath that makes them seem so.”

[The following appeared in slightly different form in News Weekly the week of October 18. In response to the International Society of Abortion Doctors conference described here, the World Federation of Doctors Who Respect Life quickly organized a “rival” conference, “Confronting Abortion’s Culture of Death” in the same town and on the same weekend, which Dr. van Gend later wrote HLR, enjoyed “fairly sympathetic” media coverage.]

Herod 2000

As we approach the 2000th celebration of history’s most famous unplanned pregnancy, an international conference at the Hyatt Coolum “celebrates the achievement” of the final solution to this perennial problem. It is being hosted by Queensland’s Dr. David Grundmann, late-term abortion specialist, who considers abortion “an essential part of family planning . . . theoretically for the whole of pregnancy,” and who practices his art—as this paper first revealed—even on healthy,

but unwanted, babies older than those in our hospital nurseries.

This, the conference brochure says, is to be “celebrated”; yet if “achievement” means the construction of a mindset of annihilation towards one subset of the human family, then Grundmann’s is but one of many late-millennial causes to celebrate: do not forget the traders in subhuman Africans, the hunters and poisoners of inferior Aborigines, the efficient European processors of millions of non-person Jews and other “useless eaters.” Still, those achievements have lost their shine, and the only admirably durable holocaust of the late second millennium has been directed at the littlest of history’s “untermenschen.”

It has endured because it oils the wheels of the most popular revolution of the second millennium: the sexual revolution. “Let copulation thrive,” said the mad Lear—but only our generation has been able to fulfill this ancient leering quest for untrammelled fornication. Duty-free sex; copulation without consequence; every lecher’s dream come true—as long as the abortionist stands guarantor of his liberty. Every female free to be used at will, then vacuumed clean ready for use again, provided the abortionist is open for business.

Perhaps that is why Dr. Grundmann’s conference brochure features the recurring sketch of a naked, fully child-proof, young woman. An elusive fantasy figure for predatory males through the millennia, she is available at last to this generation, through our glorious revolution. Of necessity, foetuses are cast as the counter-revolutionaries who threaten adult freedom and must be liquidated. They are the only obstacle to total sexual license. Therefore the one not-negotiable demand of sexual revolutionaries, from President Clinton down (remember his veto upholding partial birth abortion?), is the liberty to kill all and any unwelcome products of conception—and, as we have heard from Dr. Grundmann, that means even when these unwanted “products” are older than the premature babies in our hospital nurseries.

He is flanked at the conference by two kindred spirits from the United States, George Tiller and Warren Hern, two doctors listed in that country as late-term abortion specialists. Tiller will outline a series of two thousand late-term abortions to an audience flown in from the four corners by Planned Parenthood and the UN Population Fund, with subsidies from Quantas. Dozens of other international speakers will frown upon Queensland for its unenlightened laws limiting abortion “services,” and no doubt the Women’s Taskforce on the Criminal Code will choose that time to unveil to the Queensland Attorney General their recommendations to repeal abortion laws.

Post-conference tours start in Brisbane, where guests will be guided through Grundmann’s abortion clinic. Perhaps the man himself will describe to them, as he has described to me, cases of six-month old unwanted babies (some entirely healthy or with readily correctable problems) whom he has stabbed through the head during birth (technically “cranial decompression”), with no pain relief, and with the comment that “there is no stage of pregnancy at which I consider the fetus my

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patient." The walls of his clinic should scream with the pain of those violated small bodies . . .

. . . We turned and saw
Within that place a surgeon whose dark skill
it was to do the hustling. He wore

A green gown, and his specialism was to kill
by puncturing infant skulls and diligently
suctioning out the brains. We stood stock-still,

Shaken by cries the world would never hear,
from those forbidden voices by decree
(the cost of living proving much too dear)
Returning from that nether-region, still
those cries pursued us: endless, indignant, shrill.

(from Bruce Dawe, *In the Vestibule*)

Public opinion which passes by on the other side of that road is as cowardly and complicit as it was before the slaves were emancipated or before the death camps were liberated. It took a civil war and a world war to end those evils. Perhaps we are weary of wars, and will tacitly agree to maintain just one programme of mass killing as a souvenir of the late-second millennium. We may, if we have a taste for the surreal and sadistic, celebrate it.



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[Melinda Tankard Reist is a freelance writer and advisor to Australian Senator Brian Harradine. This article originally appeared in the Winter 1999 issue of Zadoc Perspectives (Number 64) and is published with the author's permission.]

A Crisis of Compassion

Melinda Tankard Reist

In the same week that newly arrived Kosovar refugees were lovingly served jellied fruit, custard and Anzac biscuits, given Bananas in Pyjamas raincoats for their kids, and put to bed beneath handmade quilts, a shocking story emerged about Australia's treatment of another would-be refugee: a Chinese woman, forcibly deported, her eight and a half month old unborn child killed on her return.

The do-good, feel good "Safely in our Arms" atmosphere surrounding the arrival of the war-torn refugees, was dampened somewhat by the revelation about the Chinese woman. Debate about Australia's disparate treatment of those seeking our protection—welcoming some while moving others on—prompted a Senate inquiry into the Operation of Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program, in addition to a Government inquiry into the circumstances of the woman's removal.

Zhu Quing Ping was an illegal. She arrived by boat in 1994 and sought asylum. During three years' detention at the Port Hedland detention centre in WA, she gave birth to a daughter. Requests to be allowed to marry the child's father were refused. Ms. Zhu conceived a second baby in November 1996. All avenues of appeal were exhausted. The pregnancy was dismissed by a departmental office as irrelevant in a claim for refugee status.

Ms. Zhu pleaded not to be sent back, at least not until her baby was safely delivered: her only request was to go home with a live baby. "The manager said I couldn't. He said you must go back to China, all the procedures have been arranged. [He said] You won't be persecuted when you return to China," she said in the video interview.

The manager was wrong, Ms. Zhu's baby was returned to little more than a State-sanctioned death sentence.

Seven days after deportation she was subjected to an injection through her abdomen to destroy the baby's nervous system. Labour was induced, and the baby delivered (there were rumors the baby wasn't actually dead on delivery and may have been strangled, but the story is already gruesome enough).

Zhu received the bill for the abortion shortly after.

That might have been the end of it, had not Zhu dramatically reemerged in the public conscience at a Senate Committee hearing in May with a video-taped interview, as well as a written order by family planning authorities to security officers to apprehend the woman on arrival, a medical certificate ("On 21 July 1997, the second pregnancy eight months plus has been induced to be terminated in our hospital") and the bill for the abortion—all were smuggled out of China.

"It offends my own instincts and the instincts of millions of Australians," the

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Prime Minister John Howard said of the near-birth abortion, later adding: "Most Australians would consider it murder." The Catholic Bishops described the near-birth abortion as an atrocity, "offend[ing] every principle known to God and man" and condemned the Australian Government as having "blood on its hands." (For its part, China's state family planning commission said the woman chose to have a late abortion because her boyfriend had deserted her and she could not afford to have a second child.)

If the videotape didn't cause enough of a stir, a *60 Minutes* team tracked Ms. Zhu down and compiled a harrowing piece about her experience (aired 6 June 1999). She wept inconsolably as she spoke of the death of her almost-born son:

They forced me into a car and took me to the hospital. I told the doctors I am already more than eight months pregnant. I was begging them to wait for my husband to come and help me but they said no and they gave me the injection anyway and I went into labour. After the baby was born I couldn't get out of bed. I asked the nurse what sex the baby was and she said he was a boy. A baby boy. The boy weighed three and a half kilos. When I heard this I just burst out crying and I cried so hard I actually passed out.

Concerned for her well being, the journalists took her to the Australian consulate in Guangzhou, seeking protection for her and her three-year-old daughter Joycie.

Efforts by refugee advocates and Senator Brian Harradine to secure Ms. Zhu a visa by which she could leave China (and perhaps by which Australia could make amends) failed. Attempts to bring her here for the purpose of giving evidence to the two inquiries now under way (after all, she is Exhibit A, the key witness) continue to meet resistance.

Australian Government officials say they have secured "guarantees" for the woman's safety and the payment of fines. None are in writing and Amnesty International, among others, has asked questions about how Australian diplomats will monitor Chinese assurances about Ms. Zhu and her daughter. Their welfare depends on the same authorities Ms. Zhu accused of persecution. So fearful was she of being forced to leave the consulate protection, she tried to harm herself, according to Susan Engwerda, who cared for her almost two weeks. She recounted to ABC Radio's PM (16 June 1999) that:

She was in such despair she was crying out and she was begging me because her daughter was Australian born she felt that if she was dead that I could somehow take her child back to Australia and she was willing to give up her life so that her daughter could live . . . she was just howling with grief because she knew that I had to leave and she was terrified and she had got a razor blade out of one of the safety razors and I confiscated that . . . she was crying out. She was begging me, please Susan take Joycie, take Joycie. And it was the most heart wrenching thing I've ever been through . . .

It would have been easier for Australian and Chinese Government officials if Ms. Zhu had conveniently merged with the hundreds of thousands of other female victims of Government authorised birth control terror. Zhu's surfacing confronted

the Australian Government with the fruits of its aversion to pregnant Chinese women.

Ms. Zhu was not the first pregnant woman to be deported against her will. Another woman deported in January 1997 when five months pregnant, was believed to also have suffered forced abortion. Deportees with her had contacted refugee advocates in Western Australia to say she had been seized on arrival and taken away to be aborted.

An appeal for asylum for another Chinese woman pregnant with her fourth child also failed. Detention centre staff had allegedly refused her requests for a check up on a defective Chinese IUD which was causing her pain. She became pregnant and feared a late forced abortion, fines and imprisonment if returned to China. The Minister refused to intervene, saying that he had not considered and did not propose to consider whether to exercise his power to allow her to apply for refugee status. She was deported in May 1997.

Another woman who had suffered six forced abortions (two of them at six months) and had narrowly escaped forced sterilization by seeking safety on Australian shores, also lost her case for asylum.

It emerged recently that two other pregnant women (one five or six months pregnant) were deported on the same flight as Ms. Zhu. The Immigration Minister responded by saying this did not warrant investigation, saying no complaint had been received. (Maybe the women didn't know where in China they could go to complain.)

No Government can claim to be unaware of the human rights violations which face women like this. Three Senate Committee inquiries in recent years heard testimony from international authorities on family planning-related human rights abuses, along with first-hand evidence from a Chinese abortionist who obtained asylum in Australia. The Hansard submissions and subsequent reports would have been sitting on Ministerial bookshelves.

China perpetuates violence against women through the most barbaric fertility control plan in the world. Its policy has resulted in forced sterilisation, forced abortion, forced fitting of IUD's, female foeticide and infanticide and prenatal sex selection. A Chinese woman's right to bodily integrity and her freedom of conscience are forfeited daily.

China observes the right to life, liberty and security of persons and the right to form and found a family by coercively aborting and sterilising thousands of women a year. In many parts of China, women must present their bloodstained sanitary pads to family planning officials to prove they are not pregnant. Many must submit themselves for regular X-ray checks to ensure their IUD's are in place. Chinese orphanages, which some describe as "children's gulags," liquidate surplus baby girls by the thousands (see *Death by Default: A Policy of Fatal Neglect in China's State Orphanages*, Human Rights Watch, New York, 7 January 1996).

Fines for an illegal pregnancy can be more than a family's total annual income. Penalties for an unauthorised birth can amount to 40 percent of total income and continue up to 14 years. The children of non-conformists are penalised by being

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denied household registration, which is necessary to obtain medical care and other essential services. Dr. John Aird, former senior research specialist on China at the U.S. Bureau of Census, notes that they are known as “black” children (“China’s Coercive Family Planning Program: Deception, Hypocrisy and Human Rights.” Paper presented at a symposium on population problems at Grinnell College, Iowa, April 1993).

Amnesty International has reported on the persecution of Catholics in the northern province of Hebei for breaching birth control policies. A birth control campaign was launched against them under the slogan “Better to Have More Graves than More than One Child.” The villagers were being subjected to detention, torture including electric shocks and fines by local officials who have set up a traveling court and prison equipped with instruments of torture (“Catholics ‘tortured’ over one-child policy,” *The Australian*, 16 February 1995).

Probably the most harrowing testimony provided to the Australian parliament was that of Chinese gynaecologist Dr. Wong, who was forced to carry out abortions up to eight months into the pregnancy at a hospital in Jiangsu province. Women were brought to her kicking and screaming and tied by their hands and feet to the table for the abortion. Dr. Wong estimates she did at least 10,000 abortions in her seven years at the hospital. She was forced to kill almost full-term babies in the womb by lethal injection and put babies who survived abortion into rubbish bins to die.

Dr. Wong, who was granted asylum in Australia, told a Senate Legal and Constitutional Legislation Committee (6 February 1995):

In the hospital, you can see the women suffer and have pain for this one-child policy. It is only for this one-child policy that they came to the hospital; like they are coming to jail. They kill her baby, and they make her suffer. They make your heart break. This happens every day in China—every day. You can see the bodies of the babies—like a mountain of rubbish. Every day you see babies who want to try to get breath and who want to live. They did not die at first. They want to live. You saw miles of blood go out, and the mother crying. Every day mothers saw dead babies. The mothers catch the bare babies and cry.

Although a Christian, Dr. Wong believes forgiveness is beyond her. In an interview which appeared in the former *On Being* magazine (August 1995):

Every year at Christmas time we have a show for the birth of Jesus. When I saw the baby (who was playing the part of) Jesus, I think “I kill this baby. . . . I don’t think I’m really a Christian. I think I’m opposite to a Christian because I do so many bad things.” She told [this author] in an interview. “I didn’t try and do something for Chinese women. I’m not a very brave woman. I’m weak. In my heart I know Christian always brave, the Christian dies for God, for human rights, for life, for the right things. These things I cannot do, so I am not a Christian. I am evil. I think if I say I am a Christian, no one believe me.

Recently (8 June 1999). Senator Brian Harradine received an anonymous letter

from another former abortionist, also wrestling with forgiveness:

I gave forcible abortions and sterilisations to numerous women who wanted to have an extra child. I am confessing my sin for my hands are stained with blood . . . My conscience is printed with indelible sins. . . . I repent and beg the god to forgive me from the sin and beg him to bless that woman and the safety of hundreds of thousands of women who suffer forcible abortions.

But blessing and safety are far off for women when up against governments which choose not to accept the facts about the deliberate, systematic, institutionalized, government-sponsored violence against one fifth of the world's women.

The Immigration Minister prefers to cite Country Reports prepared by Departmental officials. "The country information available on China at the time of the case in question indicated that abortion on request is available in the PRC [Peoples Republic of China] but that forced abortions were not sanctioned by the Chinese government, and the likelihood of this occurring was low."

Hopefully he's got someone working on a new report.

Both this and the previous Government have attempted to legislate away their obligations to women who have suffered, or expect to suffer, fertility-control related persecution. (This is a common theme—whenever a court rules in favor of a refugee, legislation is immediately drafted to roll back their rights.)

In December 1994, Justice Sackville ruled that a married man and woman who had a well-founded fear that they would be forcibly sterilized if returned to China were refugees. He found that China's fertility control policies helped identify them as part of a "particular social group," on the grounds under the U.N. Refugee Convention under which claimants can apply for refugee status. The couple had arrived in Australia in 1993 when the woman was eight months pregnant and gave birth to a son. The then-Labor Government immediately enacted legislation to prevent any application on the basis of fertility control-related persecution. However, this became unnecessary when the High Court overturned the Federal Court ruling.

This means there are no grounds by which women in this category can apply. In the case of a Chinese couple in detention for six years and who have three children, there are no grounds on which they can make a case that they fear forced sterilization and other punishments for non-compliance with the policy (the mother has suffered two forced abortions before leaving China). They were denied permission to register their marriage when they married in 1989 and refused birth permission certificates for their two children born in 1990 and 1992.

While awaiting removal, their third child was born. A new attempt was made to secure their safety, by lodging an application on the child's behalf. While the Refugee Review Tribunal found in September last year that, as an unauthorized "black child," Martin would face persecution if returned to China, with the "denial of access to subsidised food, health and education and all other welfare benefits for many years," it determined this persecution did not fall within a Convention-based

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ground. The Federal Court later ruled in the boy's favour though this ruling was overturned.

Unless the Immigration Minister intervenes, this family also will be deported.

Diffidence and hostility greet unauthorised arrivals. Asylum seekers have been denied access to legal advice, detained for extended periods and held incommunicado in far-away places. As Human Rights Commissioner Chris Sidoti has pointed out: "Our policy to overseas asylum seekers in circumstances where we can control the number and choose those who we take is second to none. But if they come here and seek refugee status, then our record is one of the hardest, most uncompromising and least humane."

The Christian concept of welcoming the stranger and providing them comfort has steadily been eroded in this country. Mercy and compassion have fallen victim to the forces of economic rationalism, trade considerations and the need to avoid *diplomatic incidents*. Those in genuine need of our protection are falling through the cracks. Border control—not refugee protection—has become the watchword. With the arrival of recent boats, the assumption in the media and elsewhere is that all on board are illegals, invading our shore. No one appears to have asked whether there might be genuine refugees amongst them.

Our laws are supposed to serve the common good. Politics relating to pregnant Chinese women are serving no good at all. In the case of Ms. Zhu and her son, a grave offense has been committed against their dignity. How can that be tolerated?

But there is still time to make reparation.

If the Government wants to demonstrate it is truly distressed about its part in destroying the life of a baby, and in some sense the life of the baby's mother, it should move to ensure this never happens again. This could be achieved by following the lead of the United States, which allows asylum claims under the "political opinion" category of the Refugee Convention. Dissent from the one-child policy is considered by PRC authorities as a political act. To defy the birth plan is an act of treachery, a crime against the State.

If China views such defiance as political, we should also, and grant asylum on that basis.

Some argue this would "open the floodgates," that any favourable treatment towards women in this diabolical predicament would, in the words of Alan Jones, be noticed by "every woman of childbearing age in China" and "six hundred million Chinese women will presumably be able to make a similar claim. Let's get on the next boat, they'll say . . ." (*The Today Show*, 13 September 1996).

But we should not deny asylum to anyone on the basis that it may mean more applications. Each case needs to be determined on its merits. If you don't draw the line somewhere, aren't you advocating simply just opening doors to anyone who escapes on a boat? was a question posed to U.S. Congressman Chris Smith on ABC Radio's *AM* program early in 1995. "Well," he answered, "the saddest thing is that there are very few women who escape the tyranny of the Chinese Government."

The time is overdue for a more humane response to the few who do.

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[*Paul Greenberg is the editorial page editor of the Little Rock (Arkansas) Democrat-Gazette. The following syndicated column was published July 11, 1999 and is reprinted with permission (Copyright, 1999, Los Angeles Times Syndicate).*]

Life, Death and the U.S. Senate

Paul Greenberg

Once again, a majority of the U.S. Senate has voted to ban partial-birth abortion, which its defenders prefer to call “intact dilation and extraction.” Multisyllabic, latinate words are always preferable when a speaker doesn’t want to be too specific about what he’s advocating.

Whatever the procedure is called, it involves partially delivering the baby, feet-first, keeping its head in the birth canal, and suctioning out its brains before the entire, now dead baby—excuse me, fetus—is removed. Is this still abortion, or is it infanticide? It’s about half one, half the other—or maybe three-quarters one, one-quarter the other.

These are the fine distinctions now regularly debated on the floor of the Senate. Subjects that once naturally inspired a shudder, and roused every maternal and paternal instinct, are now smothered in latinate verbiage and set out to cool. Welcome to technologically sophisticated, spiritually retarded America circa 1999. We have forgotten how to shudder.

Once again, a majority of the Senate has voted against this form of barbarism by whichever name, and once again, the president is sure to veto this bill. Why, defenders of abortion ask, keep bringing it up? It’s a futile gesture.

One can understand why. In another century, nice people who really didn’t hold with slavery, but were prepared to let others practice it (call them pro-choice), also grew exasperated with the kind of troublemakers who wanted Congress to outlaw it in the territories.

The anti-slavery movement may have been the first example of single-issue politics on the American scene, and we all know how irksome that can be. Every session of Congress, these agitators produced their little bill outlawing slavery in the territories—the Wilmot Proviso, it was called—and every session it would get voted down. But they never stopped adding their proviso onto the really important bills. (Can anyone now recall just what they were?)

The defenders of partial-birth abortion are right about one thing: this debate isn’t about one form of abortion or infanticide, just as the movement to abolish slavery in the territories wasn’t about slavery only in the territories.

This annual debate on one form of abortion shines a glaring light on abortion in general, tearing away all those layers of euphemism, and opening eyes, hearts, minds. That’s why the pro-abortion lobby dreads this continuing debate and just wants it to go away; it stirs too many feelings, it opens too many minds, it examines too many unexamined assumptions.

Should these new abolitionists ever succeed in banning partial-birth abortion,

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they doubtless will go on to challenge the practice of unrestricted abortion any way they can . . . till the fetus is again recognized as something human.

And more and more of those on the other side of this question—good, decent people who just don't want to think about abortion anymore, who are tired of hearing about it—might think again, listen again and feel again. This issue isn't going away. Life is hard to stamp out.



“ORDINARILY, I LIKE THEME RESTAURANTS, BUT I DON’T THINK I CARE MUCH FOR THIS ONE.”

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[The following article was posted October 25, 1999 on frontpagemag.com, an on-line publication of the Center for the Study of Popular Culture in Los Angeles, Ca. It is re-printed here with the permission of Mr. Weinkopf, who is the webzine's managing editor.]

Barbara Boxer's Moment of Truth

Chris Weinkopf

Simple questions do not always yield simple answers, especially when asked on the floor of the United States Senate. Republican Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania spent several minutes Wednesday extracting a “yes” or “no” from his Democratic colleague, Barbara Boxer, to the question: “If [a] baby’s foot was inside the mother, but the rest of the baby was outside, could that baby [legally] be killed?”

It was a trap, and Sen. Boxer knew it. Throughout the Senate’s latest debate on the partial-birth-abortion ban, Mrs. Boxer and other opponents of the legislation masterfully managed to discuss anything but partial-birth abortion. Until that moment. Rick Santorum had baited her, and she bit.

It was a no-win situation. Answering yes would be to endorse infanticide, but answering no would expose the flawed logic of her position. Mrs. Boxer and her allies were fighting for the right of a doctor to kill living, breathing human babies at the time of delivery—while only their heads remain in the birth canal. How could she oppose killing when the foot remains inside, but not extend the same protection to the head?

So Sen. Boxer did what politicians usually do when confronted with questions they would rather not answer—she ducked it. “The baby is born when the baby is born,” she replied the first time around. Followed by, “You give birth to a baby. The baby is there,” and “to me it is obvious when a baby is born.” Credit Sen. Santorum for his persistence. After prolonged needling, she could stone-wall no more.

Mr. SANTORUM. . . . What you are suggesting is if the baby’s foot is still inside of the mother, that baby can then still be killed.

Mrs. BOXER. I am not suggesting that.

Mr. SANTORUM. I am asking.

Mrs. BOXER. I am absolutely not suggesting that . . .

Mr. SANTORUM. . . . But, again, what you are suggesting is if the baby’s toe is inside the mother, you can, in fact, kill that baby.

Mrs. BOXER. Absolutely not.

That might not sound like much, but it’s actually an extraordinary concession. It’s a rare, if not unique, admission that killing a baby on its way out of the womb — i.e., partial-birth abortion, which Mrs. Boxer defends — is wrong. When Sen. Santorum pointed out this inconsistency, Sen. Boxer immediately tried to rescind it. “Parliamentary inquiry,” she interrupted, “Let the Record show that I did not say

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what the Senator from Pennsylvania said that I did.” But the Congressional Record does not lie.

She must be kicking herself. By responding to Santorum’s interrogation, Sen. Boxer violated the cardinal rule of defending partial-birth abortion: change the subject. Early in her exchange, when she ignored Santorum’s questions, Sen. Boxer expressed an unwillingness to tackle the thorny subject of “when does life begin?” And wisely so, for that requires supporting her view, rejected by 75 percent of Americans, that life starts only when all of the baby is safely in his mother’s arms. That debate is one Mrs. Boxer cannot win, and with the one exception of that moment Santorum had her on the ropes, she dodged it consistently.

On Wednesday, for example, Mrs. Boxer and her allies sounded false alarms about the ban’s alleged threat to public health. “I want to make sure,” she gravely cautioned, that “if my daughter, or anybody else’s daughter, is in an emergency situation, that the doctor or doctors do not have to open up the law books and decide whether or not they can do what is necessary . . .” The claim is disingenuous on two fronts, as the ban allows for exceptions when the life of the mother is at risk, and the American Medical Association vouches that the procedure is never medically necessary. Former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, whose word is gospel among Democrats when the subject is smoking, has testified to the same. But reiterating false claims beats the alternative—answering inconvenient questions like Sen. Santorum’s.

On Thursday, Mrs. Boxer and company trotted out another red herring—a debate and vote on the merits of the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision. Partial-birth abortion, of course, has nothing to do with *Roe*, which covers babies inside the womb, not those well on their way out. That’s why many of the senators who voted for the *Roe* endorsement, including several pro-choice Democrats unwilling to ride the slippery slope from abortion to infanticide, also backed the ban on partial-birth-abortion. (They were still three votes short of overriding a promised Clinton veto.)

But in Washington, relevance is less important than spin, and so Barbara Boxer would rather tap dance atop the Senate rostrum than defend her position on partial-birth abortion. Given the way she was burned when Rick Santorum held her feet to the fire, who can blame her?

APPENDIX H

[Wesley J. Smith, an attorney for the International Anti-Euthanasia Task Force, is the author of *Forced Exit: The Slippery Slope from Assisted Suicide to Legalized Murder* (Times Books). The following article is reprinted with the permission of The Weekly Standard, in whose November 8, 1999 issue it first appeared. (Copyright 1999, News America Inc.)]

Suicide Unlimited in Oregon

Wesley J. Smith

Last week, Congress took up the issues of pain control and physician-assisted suicide, with the House voting 271-156 to pass the Pain Relief Promotion Act. The legislation, if passed, would improve pain control while deterring physician-assisted suicide. Doctors who prescribe lethal drugs for the purpose of killing their terminally ill patients would be subject to losing their federal licenses to prescribe.

On the floor of the House and in comments to media, supporters of the bill referred specifically to the example of Oregon, where assisted suicide is legal. They were right to do so. Oregon's assisted suicide law continues to demonstrate that permitting doctors to kill patients is bad medicine and even worse public policy.

The most recent assisted suicide in Oregon is a case in point. On October 17, 1999, the *Oregonian* published an account of one patient who committed suicide with the assistance of medical professionals. The patient's family had provided the newspaper with the details of the assisted killing, unintentionally showing how Oregon's law endangers those who are the least capable of defending themselves.

Kate Cheney, age 85, was diagnosed with terminal cancer and wanted assisted suicide, but there was a problem. She may have had dementia, which raised questions of mental competence. So, rather than prescribe lethal drugs, her doctor referred her to a psychiatrist, as required by law.

Cheney was accompanied to the consultation by her daughter, Erika Goldstein. The psychiatrist found that Cheney has a loss of short-term memory. Even more worrisome, it appeared that her daughter had more of a vested interest in Cheney's assisted suicide than did Cheney herself. The psychiatrist wrote in his report that while the assisted suicide seemed consistent with Cheney's values, "she does not seem to be explicitly pushing for this." He also determined that she did not have the "very high capacity required to weigh options about assisted suicide." Accordingly, he nixed the assisted suicide.

Advocates of legalization might, at this point, smile happily and point out that such refusals are part of the way the law operates. But that isn't the end of Kate Cheney's story. According to the *Oregonian*, Cheney appeared to accept the psychiatrist's verdict, but her daughter did not. Goldstein viewed the guidelines protecting her mother's life as obstacles, a "road-block" to Cheney's right to die. So, she shopped for another doctor.

Goldstein's demand for a second opinion was acceded to by Kaiser Permanente, Cheney's HMO. This time a clinical psychologist rather than an MD-psychiatrist examined her. Like the first doctor, the psychologist found Cheney had memory

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problems. For example, she could not recall when she had been diagnosed with terminal cancer. The psychologist also worried about familial pressure, writing that Cheney's decision to die "may be influenced by her family's wishes." Still, despite these reservations, the psychologist determined that Cheney was competent to kill herself and approved the writing of the lethal prescription.

The final decision was left to an ethicist/administrator who works for Kaiser named Robert Richardson. Dr. Richardson interviewed Cheney, who told him she wanted the pills not because she was in irremediable pain but because she feared not being able to attend to her personal hygiene. After the interview, satisfied that she was competent, Richardson gave the okay for the assisted killing.

Cheney did not take the pills right away. At one point, she asked to die when her daughter had to help her shower after an accident with her colostomy bag, but she quickly changed her mind. Then, Cheney went into a nursing home for a week so that her family could have some respite from care giving. The time in the nursing home seemed to have pushed Cheney into wanting immediate death. As soon as she returned home, she declared her desire to take the pills. After grandchildren were called to say their goodbyes, Cheney took the poison. She died with her daughter at her side, telling her what a courageous woman she was.

This sad story illustrates many profound and unsettling truths about assisted suicide:

Protective guidelines don't protect. Once the legal view of killing is shifted from automatically bad to possibly good, it becomes virtually impossible to restrict physician-assisted suicide to the very narrow range of patients for whom proponents claim it is reserved. The "protective guidelines" allegedly designed to guard the lives of vulnerable people soon become scorned as obstacles to be circumvented. And so, eligibility for physician-assisted suicide steadily expands to permit the killing of increasing categories of ill and disabled patients. Thus, an act that is supposed to be "rare" is likely to become more common. And what was seen as a last resort, something that might be considered if palliative treatment failed, becomes an alternative to treatment.

This has certainly happened in the Netherlands, where euthanasia has been permitted since 1973. The Dutch law, in fact, contains much stronger guidelines than Oregon's, yet these protections have long ceased to be of any practical use and are routinely ignored with impunity. Thus, in the Netherlands, not only are terminally ill patients who ask for euthanasia killed by doctors, but so are chronically ill patients, and depressed patients who have no disease. Babies born with disabilities are also killed at the request of parents who allege their children are incapable of a "livable life."

According to repeated reports on Dutch euthanasia, at least 1,000 patients are killed each year who did not ask to die. At the same time, 59 percent of the doctors who kill patients fail to report them as required by the guidelines. One recent study of the Dutch experience puts the matter grimly, saying physician-assisted suicide is "beyond effective control."

The same pattern is already developing in Oregon, where assisted suicide has only been permitted legally for two years. Rather than being strictly reserved for the rare case of irremediable pain, as Oregon voters were told it would be when they legalized the practice, it turns out that none of the patients reported to have undergone assisted suicide were in untreatable agony. Most, like Kate Cheney, were worried about being a burden and requiring assistance with the tasks of daily living. That is a serious problem to be sure, but one which experts on treating dying people are adept at relieving.

Doctor-shopping becomes the key to obtaining death. A major selling point of assisted-suicide advocacy is that close personal relationships between doctors and patients will prevent “wrongly decided” assisted suicides. But Oregon proves the utter emptiness of this promise. Kate Cheney and her family were not deterred in the least by a psychiatrist’s refusal to approve her self-poisoning. They simply went to another doctor.

Cheney’s family wasn’t so much looking for a medical opinion as an opinion that confirmed what they had already decided. This is reminiscent of the Woody Allen line from the movie, *Manhattan*. When Allen’s character bemoans his marriage breaking up, a friend reminds him that his psychiatrist warned him that his soon-to-be ex-wife would be big trouble. Allen smiles ruefully and says, “Yeah, but she was so pretty, I got another psychiatrist.”

Cheney’s case is not the only example from Oregon in which doctor-shopping has hastened death. As reported in newspapers and bioethics journals, the first woman known to have legally committed assisted-suicide in Oregon went to her own doctor when her breast cancer prevented her from doing aerobics and gardening. When he refused to help kill her, she consulted a second doctor. This physician also refused to help kill her, diagnosing her as depressed. So, she went to an assisted suicide advocacy group. After speaking on the phone with her, the group’s medical director referred her to a “death doctor” who was known to the group for being willing to issue lethal prescriptions. She died a mere two and a half weeks later from the poison pills.

According to the *New England Journal of Medicine*, at least five other people who died by assisted suicide in Oregon in 1998 went to multiple physicians before finding one willing to help kill them. The length of time between meeting with the prescribing doctor and death in at least a few cases was 15 days—the exact waiting period required by law. Legalizing assisted suicide thus distorts medical care for patients near the end of their lives.

Primary care physicians who would prefer treating a patient who wants to be killed are jettisoned in favor of doctors with an ideological predisposition toward assisted suicide. Moreover, physician-assisted suicide means doctors who refuse to “assist” are subject to emotional blackmail. Patients can simply tell their physicians: Either you give me the pills or I go to a doctor who will.

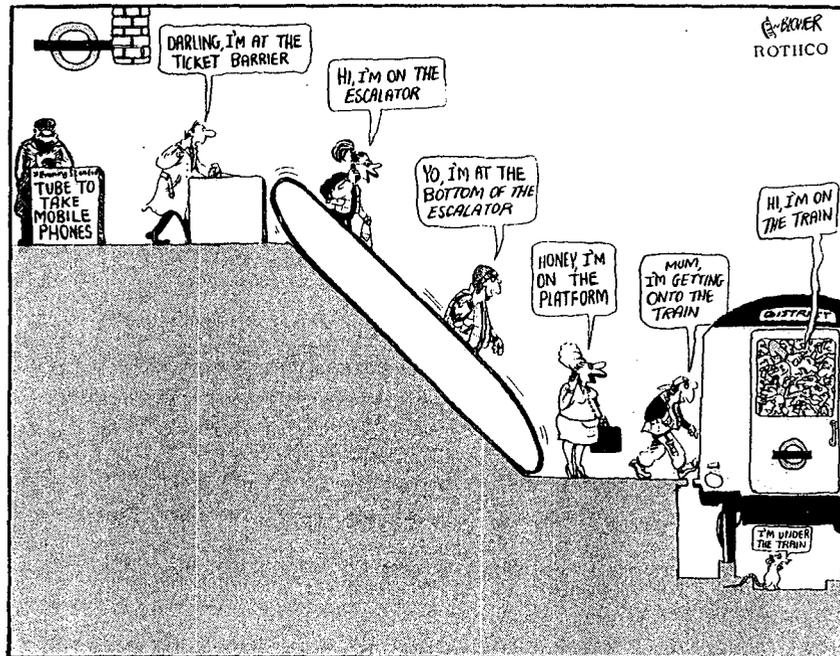
Death doctors are a malevolent twist on the draft doctors of the Vietnam war era who kept young men from being inducted by finding physical anomalies to obtain

APPENDIX H

medical deferment for their “patients.” But no one pretended that draft doctors were practicing medicine. They were engaged in politics, pure and simple. The same phenomenon is now happening in Oregon, only instead of trying to save lives, death doctors ideologically support the taking the of life. This means that even the most secure and long-lasting doctor-patient relationships provide zero protection against assisted suicide.

HMOs are a lethal part of the mix. One awful truth about assisted suicide is that it will be performed in the context of managed care where profits are made from cutting costs. In Kate Cheney’s case, the final authority was a Kaiser HMO medical ethicist. This raises the appearance, if not the actuality, of a terrible conflict of interest. The poison that killed Cheney cost Kaiser approximately \$40. It could have cost the HMO \$40,000 to care for her properly until her natural death. The potential for economically driven death decisions is too obvious to be denied and is likely to become more pronounced as people become desensitized to doctors’ acting as killers. The same can be said about government-financed health care. Oregon Medicaid, which rations health care to the poor, pays for assisted suicide.

Oregon illustrates the danger of redefining killing as a medical act. Yet, despite the warning signs, advocates continue to press legalization throughout the nation. Several states, including California, have legislation pending, while Maine voters will likely face a legalization initiative in November 2000. The only question is whether we will respond to terminal illness with better medical care, in which case last week’s House vote is a positive sign, or ignore the horrors of the Netherlands and Oregon and step intentionally off of the ethical cliff.



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