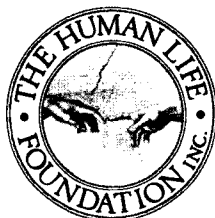


the HUMAN LIFE REVIEW



SPRING 2007

Featured in this issue:

James Hitchcock on The "Catholic Right"

William Murchison on *Children of Men*

Laura Echevarria on Personally Opposed, But

SYMPOSIUM: IS THERE A POST-ABORTION SYNDROME?

George McKenna • Frederica Mathewes-Green

E. Joanne Angelo • Georgette Forney • Ian Gentles

Melinda Tankard Reist • Vincent Rue & Priscilla Coleman

Alexander Sicree on The Dark Side of Abortion

Mary Meehan on Back to Eden?

Also in this issue:

Michael Uhlmann • Richard John Neuhaus • Hadley Arkes

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE . . .

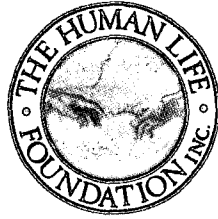
. . . the Spring *Review* was largely “put to bed” before the Supreme Court ruling upholding the federal partial-birth abortion ban was announced on April 18. While we expect to have more in an upcoming issue, we were able to include here three appendices on the subject, from three of the most astute participants in the abortion debate: Michael Uhlmann, a founding editor of this *Review*; Fr. Richard John Neuhaus, the editor-in-chief of *First Things*; and Hadley Arkes, the Human Life Foundation’s 2004 Great Defender of Life awardee whose book *Natural Rights and the Right to Choose* (Cambridge) is a powerful, indeed unparalleled exposition of the pro-life argument. Thanks to our friends at *First Things* and *National Review Online* for permission to reprint these thoughtful commentaries.

It’s not unfair to say, I think, that the partial-birth abortion epoch spanning the last dozen or so years has highlighted a rift in the pro-life movement: On one side are those who favor an “incrementalist” approach to legislation, on the other those of an “absolutist” bent, unready to support any bill that falls short of full restoration of civil rights for unborn children. This divide is perhaps nowhere more apparent than it is in Catholic circles and, according to James Hitchcock, has led to some mighty surprising political alliances. In “Abortion and the ‘Catholic Right’” (page 7), Professor Hitchcock takes a long hard look at conservative Catholic publications like *The Wanderer* and *The Remnant*, concluding that “even most informed observers” are ignorant of “the unexpected and intriguing fact that, for some on the Catholic part of ‘the Right,’ the life issues are no longer paramount, if they ever were.” It’s quite possible this provocative article will spark an “intriguing” debate of its own.

“Is There a Post-Abortion Syndrome?” The New York *Times Magazine* posed that question in a cover story earlier this year. Since this was the *Times* asking, you know the answer was NO! In fact, the main purpose of the story was to portray those who believe such a syndrome exists as nut-jobs. Obviously, we think the question deserves serious consideration, so we asked several past *Review* contributors (and a few new ones) to respond to it here. Some of them, as you will see, had even been interviewed by Emily Bazelon, the reporter who wrote the story, but their insights were either truncated or otherwise ended up *in toto* on the editing room floor. Well, we encouraged them to have their say, and what they gave us is the centerpiece of this issue, a 41-page symposium which not only unmasks the *Times* abortion agenda, but stands as a valuable contribution to the literature on post-abortion syndrome—yes, Emily, there is one.

Two generations (or nearly two) have been born since *Roe v. Wade* made it legally possible to kill off their unwanted brethren. It’s heartening when young people like Alexander Sicree, a new contributor (and at 15 years old, perhaps our youngest ever), are moved to join the anti-abortion struggle (“The Dark Side of Abortion,” page 80). We must hope at least that in *his* lifetime the struggle might be won.

ANNE CONLON
MANAGING EDITOR



the HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

WE OPEN THIS *REVIEW* with an article that will likely spark a vigorous debate. Many assume that the “religious right,” Catholics and evangelical Christians, can be counted on to vote pro-life. Not necessarily so, says Catholic historian and *Review* contributor James Hitchcock, at least in the case of conservative Catholics.

Abortion, along with the legal status of homosexuality, is the issue that above all causes secular liberals to identify “the Religious Right” as dangerous to American freedom. But in 2006 cracks began to appear on the Catholic side of “the Right,” something that cannot be explained in conventional journalistic categories but requires following a tangled and somewhat obscure thread.

I assure you Professor Hitchcock’s “tangled and sometimes obscure thread” is a fascinating, sometimes shocking, read, and his findings raise crucial questions for the health of the pro-life movement. We know that many liberal Catholics do not vote pro-life, not because they are necessarily pro-abortion, but because other issues take precedence. Now Hitchcock reports that writers for some conservative Catholic newspapers encourage the same, and some Catholics on the right, far from being “single-issue” voters, are essentially voting against pro-life politicians. This raises the question: may faithful Catholics, in good conscience, *ever* vote for a pro-choice candidate if there is a pro-life candidate in the race? The broader question is one that increasingly divides the pro-life movement: should pro-lifers engage in politics—politics meaning the “art of the possible,” tackling abortion in incremental steps—or is accepting partial restrictions an immoral sell-out? This divide has been brought into sharp focus recently by the widely differing reactions among pro-lifers to the April 18 Supreme Court ruling, *Gonzales v. Carhart*, upholding a ban on partial-birth abortion. Some warmly welcomed the decision, while others held it was “grotesque” and meaningless. This controversy, Hitchcock writes, helps explain the “seeming indifference” of some pro-lifers “to the likely effect of elections on the abortion issue”; “If anything short of the complete reversal of *Roe v. Wade* must be rejected, and if such a reversal is at present scarcely realistic, then pro-lifers are in effect being advised to base their votes on other issues.”

Shifting now to the cultural scene, Senior Editor William Murchison reports on a recent movie, *Children of Men*, heralded as based on P. D. James’ masterful novel *The Children of Men*. Murchison’s message: *Read the book*. While giving the movie its due as a gripping film, Murchison finds that it was a “missed opportunity” because it significantly alters the novel’s main point. P. D. James wrote a “richly imagined tale concerning the sudden, the unlooked for, the catastrophic failure of procreation.” Director Alfonso Cuarón creates a tale of a bleak future in the environmental, political and cultural realms, but de-emphasizes the lack of babies. “Why appropriate such a fine work and muffle its alarm bell?” asks Murchison. Because the movie does obscure the book’s central horror, he writes, it doesn’t

make much sense, but: “*Ex malo bonum*.” Alfonso Cuarón leads us to P. D. James’ hearth”—at least he hopes he will.

In a return to politics and abortion, our next author, Laura Echevarria, writes about perhaps our least favorite phrase, “personally opposed, but . . .” used by pro-choice politicians who “try to walk the fine line between offending their radical base and offending the rest of the country.” After the elections of 2004, Democratic leaders realized that their lack of religious language and their radical championing of abortion rights were losing them votes. They have since been working, as Echevarria explains, to “embrace religious speech” and change their abortion rhetoric—while not actually changing their positions. This tactic was effective in “peeling away” enough pro-life voters to make a difference in the 2006 elections.

Echevarria has little hope for true pro-life movement among the Democrats. *Review* readers will remember we have published several impressive articles about Democrats for Life, and I suspect they might object to Echevarria’s gloomy assessment. Some facts, however, remain grim: “The leadership in the House and Senate is consistently for abortion on demand, and even so-called pro-lifers such as Democratic Senator Harry Reid (Nev.) have had ratings of 100 percent from NARAL Pro-Choice America. This is even less likely to change now that the power in Congress has shifted to Democrats.”

Echevarria, like Hitchcock, questions common assumptions about voting patterns. Liberals often assume that voters conservative on abortion will be conservative on everything else. Not true, she says, and she quotes the Reverend Jim Wallis, founder of the liberal religious organization Sojourners: “Christians who are economic populists, peacemaking internationalists, and committed feminists can also be ‘pro-life.’ The roots of these convictions are deeply biblical, and, for many, consistent with a commitment to nonviolence as a gospel way of life.” If you are pro-life but against the Iraq war, or the Bush Administration’s economic policies, which issues determine your vote? And how might you be swayed? Echevarria warns that the Democratic Party’s work to *appear* more moderate on pro-life policies, without actually offering any legislation that would restrict abortions, might seriously erode pro-life support.

Such erosion has and will affect the all-important matter of judicial appointments (I quote once more from James Hitchcock):

Abortion became legal (and thereby respectable) through judicial fiat, and most legislation to curtail the practice has been invalidated by judicial decree, while the related life issues also await judicial resolution. . . . But amidst all the conservative Catholic criticism of Bush in 2006, the issue of the federal courts remained the elephant in the living room, something whose presence could not be candidly acknowledged.

Some in the liberal media have decided that the way to get the elephant out of the living room is to acknowledge it only to debunk it (it’s not a *real* elephant). Case in point: The day before the annual March for Life in Washington, the *NY Times Sunday Magazine* (January 21) ran a cover article, “Is There a Post-Abortion

INTRODUCTION

Syndrome?” Not surprisingly, the purpose of the article was to discredit evidence of actual post-abortion trauma for women, and to dismiss the issue as merely a new political tactic of the pro-life movement. The author, Emily Bazelon, interviewed several people who minister to post-aborted women (even some pro-choice women who are convinced that such a syndrome exists); yet she ultimately dismisses PAS as explained by “the theory of social contagion, which psychologists use to explain phenomena like the Salem witch trials.”

We decided to ask the real experts in the field to tell us what they thought of Bazelon’s treatment of PAS. In our special section, we have a symposium of responses from some of those interviewed by Bazelon: Vincent Rue, Priscilla Coleman, Frederica Mathewes-Green and Georgette Forney. Also contributing are Dr. E. Joanne Angelo, a psychiatrist with years of experience counseling women, men and children, who writes about the experience of losing a child; Canadian researcher Professor Ian Gentles, author of the important book, *Women’s Health After Abortion: The Medical and Psychological Evidence* (co-authored by Elizabeth Ring-Cassidy); and Australian activist Melinda Tankard Reist, author of *Giving Sorrow Words: Women’s Stories of Grief after Abortion*. Leading off the symposium is Professor George McKenna, who, with his brilliant insights into the journalistic decisions and motives of the New York *Times*, puts the piece, and its author, into crucial perspective. We also include, courtesy of Professors Rue and Coleman, a table of over two dozen recent studies, with significant findings. It looks as if, as a letter writer to the *Times* noted, Emily Bazelon didn’t do a simple Internet search before she declared there was no scientific evidence for post-abortion syndrome.

One of the obvious reasons the annual March for Life in Washington receives scant press coverage is that photos would tell a story the pro-choice press would rather not reveal: The ranks of the young among the marchers grow every year. Our next contributor is a very young man whose pro-life passion is inspiring. Alexander Sicree, just 15 years old, submitted a speech that won him first place in an oratory contest. We were impressed by his fresh style and wiser-than-his-years insights, and we hope he will continue using his talents to speak out for life.

Finally, in a change of pace, we have an article by Mary Meehan on a subject that concerns us all: nursing homes. I will bet that the first reaction most of us have to the words “nursing home” is a feeling of fear and sense of depression—fear of “ending up” or having to “put” a loved one *in* one, and depression at recalling the atmosphere of the nursing homes we have visited. But Meehan has some hopeful news to report: a strong movement to transform nursing homes, called the Eden Alternative. Starting back in the early Nineties, Eden has sought to humanize nursing homes, to transform them from cold, institutional, hospital-like places to lively group homes for the elderly, surrounded by gardens, where children are invited (sometimes the homes share grounds with a child-care center), pets are encouraged, and meal schedules are loosened from rigid hospital norms. This makes eminent sense: The elderly and disabled will naturally be happier—and healthier—if

they live in vibrant, multi-generational communities where they can make more choices about their daily lives. A crucial part of the Eden homes Meehan observed are the efforts on the part of the organizers to reform the way staff are treated as well: A team approach is stressed, with incentives for staff members to take initiative and have a sense of pride in the improved care they are helping to provide. One cannot overemphasize the difference well-appreciated, cheerful staff will make in the lives of people they serve. The Eden approach is desperately needed; we hope such movements will grow.

* * * * *

We didn't have much space left for appendices, but we did want to touch on the April 18 Supreme Court decision (we will have more about it in due course). *Appendices A through C* are commentaries on *Gonzales v. Carhart*, by Michael Uhlmann, a founding editor of this *Review* and close friend and collaborator of my late father J. P. McFadden; Father Richard John Neuhaus, editor-in-chief of *First Things*; and Professor Hadley Arkes, author of the Born Alive Infants Protection Act. There is no question that this ruling is limited, and even macabre, as it—in effect—differentiates between several terrible methods of killing and disallows only one of them. However, your servant finds it hard to argue that the decision was not a welcome development: at the very least, better than the alternative of another failure; and more positively, as an opportunity to force the public eye to focus on the terrible reality of any abortion, and as a first step toward more restrictions. As Father Neuhaus writes: "While the carnage continues, there is no place for false hopes or counsels of despair. It is not, I believe, a false hope to think that this week's decision has brought us a little closer to the goal—never to be realized within the limits of history—of a society in which every child is welcomed in life and protected in law."

Finally, we have included a few cartoons from our favorite cartoonist, Nick Downes. Although our subject matter is no laughing matter, maintaining a sense of humor is essential to sanity, we find. So give yourself over to a chuckle and enjoy the gift of shared laughter—we do, often, and we thank Mr. Downes for his marvelous and off-beat talent.

MARIA MCFADDEN
EDITOR

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honoring

CONGRESSMAN CHRIS SMITH

We have long admired the Congressman from New Jersey for his unwavering dedication to human rights. From his earliest days in Congress to the present, Smith has been at the forefront of countless efforts to protect the rights of the vulnerable. His impassioned and persistent defense of the unborn is legendary. He also works tirelessly on a broad spectrum of human rights issues, including: religious freedom; the protection of women and children from trafficking and violence; the safeguarding of the rights of veterans; initiatives for research and education into the causes and therapies for autism, spina bifida, and Alzheimer's; and the protection of the human embryo from destruction. Congressman Smith is also the author of the Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act of 2005, which provides \$265 million for umbilical cord blood stem cell therapy and bone marrow treatment.

Mr. Smith will be introduced by Melinda Tankard Reist, founding director of Women's Forum Australia, an independent women's think tank, and author of *Giving Sorrow Words: Women's Stories of Grief After Abortion*, and *Defiant Birth: Women Who Resist Medical Eugenics*. Also speaking will be George McKenna, Professor Emeritus of Political Science at City College of New York, frequent *Review* contributor, and author of the forthcoming (September) book, *Puritan Origins of American Patriotism*.

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Abortion and the “Catholic Right”

James Hitchcock

Abortion, along with the legal and social status of homosexuality, is the issue that above all causes secular liberals to identify “the Religious Right” as dangerous to American freedom. But in 2006 cracks began to appear on the Catholic side of “the Right,” something that cannot be explained in conventional journalistic categories but requires following a tangled and sometimes obscure thread.

During the 2006 election campaign, the syndicated journalist Joseph Sobran,¹ a Catholic who considers himself one of the few remaining spokesmen for authentic conservatism, advised readers that “if you must vote, you should almost never vote for an incumbent,” and characterized James Webb, the Democratic candidate for senator from Virginia and a former Republican, as someone “who commanded my immediate trust and respect” when they first met, adding only that “One hates to see him coming out in favor of abortion.” Later in the campaign Sobran proposed that the recovery of the country from the “disasters” of the Bush administration “may mean enduring a period of Democratic dominance,” although he judged that before long the Democrats too would discredit themselves.

What was most surprising about these opinions was that they were published (June 22, August 3, October 18), in the pages of the newspaper *The Wanderer*, one of the most conservative Catholic journals in the United States and a publication that is implacably anti-abortion.

During the campaign (October 18), Paul Likoudis, the news editor of the paper and someone whose byline appears on many of its articles, interviewed Howard Phillips, candidate for president on the Constitution Party ticket in 1992 and now head of the Conservative Caucus, which Likoudis described as a “nonpartisan nationwide grass-roots public policy advocacy group” that, among other things, opposes free trade and the income tax.

Worsening economic conditions, Phillips charged, are the result of deliberate government policies, and he cited liberal journalists to prove that the Bush administration acted surreptitiously and illegally in pursuing the Iraq War, actions that Phillips said were “in long Republican tradition, starting with Abraham Lincoln.”

Although major pro-life groups claim otherwise, Phillips charged that Bush

James Hitchcock, a professor of history at St. Louis University, is the author of *The Supreme Court and Religion in American Life* (Princeton University Press, 2004).

“has boosted the massive subsidies to Planned Parenthood and to population control programs overseas.” But when asked by Likoudis what issues ought most to concern the citizens, Phillips ignored abortion and announced that “The Number One Issue” is that Bush “wants to merge the United States with Mexico and Canada. He doesn’t want any borders. . . . Bush is a bigger danger to the Constitution of the United States than Saddam Hussein ever was.”

Despite Phillips’ obvious lack of interest in the abortion issue, Sobran has often endorsed the Constitution Party, which he says is the only reliably pro-life party in America, and after the election (November 16) he found it impossible to distinguish between two “factions” pretending to be two different political parties, but he expressed great satisfaction that Webb’s opponent, the “arrogant” Senator George Allen (who happened to be anti-abortion), had been defeated; then he declared (December 21) that Bush was a worse president than William J. Clinton (who happened to be by far the most zealously pro-abortion president ever to occupy the White House). Even later (January 18), Sobran judged that “I do not think Bush has been the worst American president ever. But he may prove to be one of the hardest to clean up after” and complained that the new Democratic Congress appeared unwilling to do anything about him.

After a 5-4 majority on the Supreme Court upheld a federal law regulating partial-birth abortions, Sobran (May 3) acknowledged that a Republican defeat in 2008 would be bad for the pro-life movement, but he blamed that likely outcome primarily on the President himself. A week later he praised the pro-abortion Democratic Senator Joseph Biden as “someone who takes his faith very seriously” and announced that, although the office of the presidency “ought not to exist,” he found Biden to be a trustworthy candidate.

Likoudis (November 16) surveyed the electoral disaster suffered by the Republicans, including significant defeats for the pro-life cause, and attributed much of it to Catholic “swing voters,” while Christopher Manion, an occasional contributor, also described at length (January 18) how the cause was imperiled. Neither writer recalled that, in turning so many pro-life legislators out of office in 2006, the voters had in effect followed Sobran’s advice in *The Wanderer*—vote against incumbents.

The defeat of Senator Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania was one such serious loss, and Likoudis attributed that defeat—at the hands of a pro-life Democrat, Robert Casey Jr.—to anger on the part of pro-lifers at Santorum’s past support of Pennsylvania’s other Republican senator, the pro-abortion Arlen Specter. Such anger was arguably justifiable, but Likoudis immediately introduced other issues, claiming that Santorum’s defeat was also due to his support for the Iraq War and for his having “accepted dictation” from

“neo-conservatives”—people whom Likoudis called Santorum’s “tenders,” appointed by the Bush administration to ensure his “proper behavior” on the issues. A *Wanderer* reader asserted (November 16) that Santorum’s real offense was not his support of Specter but the fact that he had departed from “Catholic teaching” concerning the state of Israel, and another reader (January 18) dismissed abortion as an issue and said Santorum had been defeated because of his “ungodly voting record on economic justice issues.”

After the Supreme Court’s decision on partial-birth abortions, Likoudis wrote a front-page article headlined “Supreme Court Ruling Might Not Prevent One Abortion” (April 26), in which he quoted a law professor, Charles Rice, as calling the decision “grotesque,” because it did not outlaw abortion completely, and a pro-life activist named Judie Brown saying that “If pro-lifers consider this a victory, then someone should check to see what they are putting in their coffee.” (Like pro-abortionists, Likoudis referred to partial-birth abortion in quotation marks, as though the term is somehow misleading.)

These reactions help explain *The Wanderer*’s seeming indifference to the likely effect of elections on the abortion issue—if anything short of the complete reversal of *Roe v. Wade* must be rejected, and if such reversal is at present scarcely realistic, then pro-lifers are in effect being advised to base their votes on other issues.

A weekly feature of *The Wanderer* is “From the Mail” (FTM), where letters from anonymous readers are published with replies from an anonymous editor. As one can discern from its obvious passion, FTM takes a view of the world that has economics at its center, and it defines economic relationships as essentially a conspiracy of the rich against the poor, offering few specific proposals for change but expressing an apocalyptic sense of doom. Almost every week the anonymous editor warns that American economic conditions are getting steadily worse, to the point where “working people” can scarcely even survive (one reader could not find a house costing less than \$863,000; people pay over 26 percent monthly interest on their credit cards). When a reader complained (November 16) that the paper was slighting religion in favor of economics, FTM replied in exasperation, “Where does one begin?” and asked sarcastically whether the paper should ignore “the two-party political charade that enables Washington to fatten while Michigan and Ohio go on economic life support.”

If politics makes strange bedfellows, none are stranger than the alliances forged by FTM, which sometimes cites left-wing commentators like Gabriel Kolko (December 7) to prove that the United States is collapsing. Kolko,

now half-forgotten but at one time a leading New Left historian, was described by FTM as “America’s preeminent historian of U.S. wars and warfare,” and readers were directed to his essay “‘As an Economic System, Capitalism Is Going Crazy’: Factors in Our Colossal Mess,” predicting a disaster for which, not surprisingly, the Bush administration is largely responsible. FTM also quoted extensively from a newsletter that advocates investment in precious metals, on the grounds that the dollar is sinking to the point of worthlessness, and has predicted (January 18) that the American economy will “implode” during 2007.

Marxists like Kolko have a vested interest in the collapse of capitalism, since Marx based his entire system on that supposition and, for 150 years, Marxists have repeatedly proclaimed various economic crises as heralding that collapse. But—far as it is from Marxism philosophically—FTM seems to have an equal vested interest in seeing that prophecy fulfilled. Sobran predicts (November 9) that America is “heading for total ruin” and that Communism might after all be “the wave of the future.”

For many years *The Wanderer* has printed, alongside the title of the paper itself, a warning by Pope Pius XI that “No one can be at the same time a sincere Catholic and a true Socialist.” But behind that bold warning lie complex issues unknown even to most Catholics. Thomas Storck correctly explained to *Wanderer* readers (November 23) that Pius XI condemned socialism not so much for its economic doctrines and practices but because of its predominantly materialistic view of society; this position was developed further by later popes. Catholic economic doctrine has never supported unrestrained free-market capitalism, and papal social teachings, dating at least from Leo XIII in 1891, condemn acquisitive competitiveness and advocate a society governed by moral principles, especially a “just price” and a “just wage.” But such a society has never existed anywhere, even in the old Papal States, so that it is difficult to know what it might actually look like. In the 1930s some Catholics thought they saw it in fascism, a judgment that had the effect of discrediting the entire idea unfairly.

Along with its approving citation of the Marxist Kolko, FTM printed a letter from Rupert Ederer, an economist who has been America’s leading exponent of a certain kind of Catholic economic theory. Ederer was cheered by the recent electoral defeat of the Republican Party and congratulated *The Wanderer* on its stands: “It is an act of patriotism to expose the actions and policies which are destroying our country. . . . fatuous free trade, tax, and monetary policies.”

In matters of economics FTM usually looks for guidance to treatises of past times, as in its periodic citations of the early-19th-century English radical

William Cobbett, whom Likoudis (February 1) characterizes as “the first [almost three centuries after the fact] to cry out against the new capitalism that grew out of the Reformation, the dissolution of the monasteries, and the enclosure of public lands.” FTM also frequently cites Hilaire Belloc, as in his charge that democracy is a sham and that modern society is governed by “a few quite unworthy controllers of our lives—the monopolists of material, of currency, of information, and transport; the tyranny of trust—masters of production, banking, journals, and communications” (October 26).

Prior to the election (October 26), Likoudis thought that, beyond particular issues, the habits of Catholic voters revealed a deeper divide, one that had been identified in 1941 by a Catholic sociologist, Msgr. Paul Hanly Furfey: a division between those who fully accept the Church’s social teachings and those who compromise with the “predominantly Protestant culture.” Furfey called for “thoroughgoing criticism of the present socioeconomic system that makes widespread want inevitable” and identified race, peace, and economic justice as the key issues, essentially the same list as that of present-day liberals.

There is no reason—either in 1941 or later—to think that the positions Furfey and Likoudis criticize are distinctively Protestant in nature, and Likoudis’s essentially populist social outlook is scarcely faithful to the Furfey tradition, insofar as Likoudis identifies free trade, the income tax, and unrestricted immigration as major social evils. To the contrary, the Furfey school argued for a moral obligation to welcome new people unreservedly and for taxation to support welfare programs, and most of those in that tradition now favor free trade as beneficial to non-Western countries. (Furfey was especially passionate about race relations and advocated strong government action in that area, something Sobran deploras.)

FTM also frequently cites Father Charles Coughlin, a Detroit priest who once had a vast radio audience, first with a religious message, then with sweeping theories about politics and economics. A populist who was severely critical of capitalists, Coughlin turned against the New Deal just as strongly, and FTM has recalled (October 26, December 16) that 70 years ago Coughlin charged that the Roosevelt administration was channeling wealth away from ordinary people and towards the rich, deliberately trying to impoverish the country and to bring American living standards “down to Third World levels,” a plot that FTM claims has now succeeded. (FTM overlooks the fact that, except for identifying poverty as an acute social problem, in most ways Furfey and Coughlin were ideological opposites of each other.)

FTM’s conviction that malicious government policies over many decades have ground ordinary people into the dirt requires denying that there was a

sustained and palpable rise in the general standard of living after World War II, and implies that Americans were actually better off a century ago, perhaps even during the Great Depression.

FTM sometimes posits economic conditions as the direct cause of the country's moral deterioration. The woman who allegedly could not find an affordable house proclaimed, without explanation, "I do see why 99 percent of all the young adults I know are sleeping together and contracepting. Our culture and economy are sickening!" A half century after it was first made, FTM resurrected (November 9) the claim by a Catholic radical of the 1950s that usury is the cause of sodomy, because the working class, unlike in times past, can no longer afford adequate housing and is forced into crowded quarters that make sodomy a major temptation. (With unrecognized irony, the man who posited this connection was described as an admirer of the early-20th-century Catholic artist Eric Gill, who had his own eccentric economic ideas and is known to have regularly, and apparently unrepentantly, committed incest with his daughters.)

Coughlin and FTM belong to the loosely defined American populist tradition that is neither "liberal" nor "conservative" in the usual sense but is hostile both to government and to business, often positing a malign alliance between the two. The maldistribution of wealth is at the heart of its critique of society, making every other issue, such as foreign policy, understandable in terms of plutocratic conspiracy. In identifying international capitalists as the principal conspirators, populists of this kind almost inevitably discover, as Coughlin did, that "the Jews" are key participants. FTM (January 4) claims that Coughlin "was subjected to an unprecedented publicity campaign based on lies and calumny, and silenced simply because he too often pointed out the Jewish role in the Russian Revolution," but Coughlin was in fact a full-blown anti-Semite and the order to cease his broadcasts came from his archbishop, acting at the behest of the Vatican.

The Wanderer is isolationist in its view of foreign policy, publishing a weekly column by Patrick Buchanan that argues for such isolationism in both political and economic terms. Often prefixing its citations with the word "respected," FTM sometimes cites far-left publications such as the *Guardian* in England and *The Nation* in America to find quasi-Marxist "proof" that the U.S. has nefarious, imperialist designs for the world. Likoudis himself sees the U.S. as the world's chief aggressor, warning (July 27) that American actions appear about to ignite World War III. He has strongly criticized support for Israel by pro-life politicians like Santorum and Senator Sam Brownback of Kansas and reminds readers that the United Nations (often criticized in *The Wanderer* for promoting abortion and other evils)

has repeatedly condemned Israel. Likoudis regards the threat of a militant Islam as “wildly overblown” (January 25), because Islamic hostility to the U.S. is attributable to America’s false moral values, its designs on oil found in Muslim countries, and its support for an Israel that mistreats Muslims.

Likoudis regards the Iraq War as not only mistaken and unjustified but as an instrument by which Americans’ liberties are being destroyed by their own government, perhaps deliberately; he proves that claim by quoting a left-wing law professor, Francis Boyle, who charges that the Bush administration, by its treatment of war prisoners, has set the nation on the road to totalitarianism (October 26). Although *The Wanderer* ordinarily regards left-wing professors as having a destructive effect on American culture, Likoudis praises Boyle as “one of the country’s leading experts on international law.”

Sobran questions the justice and wisdom of American involvement in World War II. Like Sobran and Buchanan, FTM (October 5) honors those who opposed American entry into the war, including a congressman who in 1940 charged that “the minds of American citizens are being warped by propaganda that comes from foreign sources” and several Catholic prelates who warned against war at that time. FTM has also lamented (November 23) that in the 1930s a congressional committee set up to investigate the sources of funding behind “pro-war propaganda” was subverted by Communists into an investigation of “anti-interventionists,” especially of German-Americans who were “an ethnic majority in the United States at the time.”

After the attack on the World Trade Center in 2001, Sobran wrote a series of articles questioning (and sometimes ridiculing) the fear that al-Qaeda constitutes a threat to American security, and five years later (December 7) he reported that for him the real experience of terror was having to undergo a security check at Dulles Airport. Noting that the screeners were from “the Third World” (one was “slightly paler” than the other), he complained that they detained him arbitrarily because he had an expired driver’s license; he asked them sarcastically, “Who do you people work for, al-Qaeda?” On board the plane he was further annoyed by a stewardess who “seemed to be warming up for Kwanzaa,” and he repeated the same question to her. “This is the government that is supposed to be protecting us?” he demanded. “It’s a gluttonous, irrational monster.”

Sobran considers himself a “homeless conservative,” because “neo-conservatives” have taken over the movement, including its flagship publication, *National Review*, where he was at one time a senior editor. His commentaries are relentlessly and witheringly critical of the Bush administration, without even a hint that anything positive can be said about it, but his antipathy

extends beyond specific policies to the claim that practically all government activities today are in violation of the Constitution and that the nation long ago departed from its roots, an apostasy in which Lincoln played a major role by opposing Confederate secession. (On the other hand, the pro-life movement often cites the anti-slavery crusade as a precedent for its own efforts.) The terrorist threat is minimized both because no legitimacy can be granted to the Bush administration and because by definition practically everything that the government does is detrimental to the nation.

Quoting the journalist Paul Craig Roberts (January 25), Likoudis claims that the U.S. imprisons far too many of its citizens—far more than totalitarian states like China—and that many of those imprisoned have never had a fair trial, having been pressured into confessing to crimes they did not commit in order to avoid even more serious charges.

Political and economic issues come together in *The Wanderer*, because the same malevolent, only half-visible forces promote—for reasons never fully explained—both foreign policies that undermine American liberties and economic policies that impoverish the nation. There is, according to FTM (November 2), a vast, interlocking political and economic conspiracy, so that “Americans have to realize the extent to which their brains are being manipulated, and how they are being deprived of their free will and reason without knowing it,” a process in which both liberals and the presidential adviser Karl Rove play major roles. Robert Hickson, an occasional *Wanderer* contributor, has identified (December 15) “a transnational managerial elite, closely allied with tax-exempt foundations and the governing elite which is intent on establishing a new feudal order called a ‘new mercantile order.’” Hickson characterizes the United States as a “rogue superpower” that “does increasingly seem to be out of control.”

To the right of *The Wanderer* is *The Remnant*, a newspaper whose name derives from the fact that in effect it seceded from *The Wanderer* after the Second Vatican Council, whose authority *The Wanderer* accepts but *The Remnant* does not. The schism runs through the Matt family—*The Remnant* is edited by the nephew of the editor of *The Wanderer*.

The Remnant’s disaffection with American society goes much deeper even than Sobran’s, since it condemns the Founding Fathers themselves as Masons whose rebellion against Great Britain’s divinely appointed king was motivated in large measure by the desire to destroy “the Catholic order” of society. The paper insists that no existing political order is legitimate and that it is necessary to return society directly to “the lordship of Christ.” (The editor, Michael Matt, asserts [October 31] that “The crusaders of old were

gallant gentlemen in every sense of the word.”) In *The Remnant* the “Jewish-Masonic conspiracy” (alternatively “Judeo-Masonic oligarchy” [September 15]) is simply taken for granted, routinely cited as an explanation for everything bad in both the church and the world, including the attack on the World Trade Center.

Christopher Ferrara (October 31), a regular *Remnant* author, has developed an extended account of how the United States grew from the poisoned roots of the Enlightenment (“a Protestant-Masonic revolt against the Kingdom of Christ”) and therefore lacks legitimacy. Practices like abortion and homosexual marriage flow inevitably from the philosophy of John Locke (one of Ferrara’s advertised lectures is “Hobbes, Locke, and MTV”), but the modern popes, beginning with John XXIII, have themselves become infected with a liberal political outlook that is incompatible with genuine Catholicism.

John Rao, another regular *Remnant* contributor, sees the American pro-life movement as itself spiritually dangerous, because its members accept the American idea of freedom and, in such things as attending White House prayer breakfasts, demonstrate their lack of authentic Catholic understanding (September 15). Because they accept the American idea of freedom, pro-lifers have no principles and have therefore reduced opposition to abortion to mere “hypocritical and stubborn whimsy” that “ultimately [depends] on whether the American Empire approves of it or not.” American Catholics, including those who are ostensibly orthodox, demonstrate that “the damage done by the Enlightenment to their own psyche is now so far gone that they, like their current victims, cannot ever hope to heal it.” The “current victims” are Europeans seeking to recover their own Catholic roots, who are being subverted by American Catholics imposing both Enlightenment ideas of freedom and loyalty to the “American Empire,” in acts of “precision bombing” against the “Catholic citadels of the Old World.”

Although the U.S. is usually seen as morally more conservative than Europe (there is little effective pro-life activity in most European countries), Rao claims that the moral corruption of Europe is something imported from the U.S., which seeks to impose on Europe a hedonistic and materialistic concept of freedom. (American Catholics have taught their European coreligionists that freedom means getting rich by building shopping malls and erecting advertising billboards.) He dismisses all elections as “meaningless” and urges Catholics to look to eleventh-century German emperors for moral and political guidance (April 15).

The Remnant sometimes exudes palpable satisfaction in reporting defeats for the pro-life movement, because those defeats vindicate the paper’s own invincible pessimism about the state of society. As Rao argues, to participate in

the democratic process in the fight against abortion is to lend support to a system that good Catholics must condemn. Logically, therefore, until the Second Coming of Christ, Catholics can do practically nothing about social evils except to attempt to convert people.

Two online Catholic journalists—Matthew Anger and Christopher Blosser (speroforum.com, March 7, 2006)—have revealed that a relatively new publishing house called IHS, which is dedicated to “bringing back into print the classics of the last century on the Social Teachings of the Catholic Church,” was founded by John Sharpe and Derek Holland, both of whom have associations with a complex and bewildering chain of anti-Semitic and neo-fascist movements. (Sharpe, for example, has strongly suggested that the American government was itself responsible for the attack on the World Trade Center.)

IHS has published two books attacking neo-conservatives and containing essays by a variety of strange bedfellows—on one hand, Buchanan, Sobran, and Likoudis; on the other, the radical leftist Noam Chomsky. The book was endorsed by a radical left-wing historian, Howard Zinn, but also by Bishop Richard Williamson of the schismatic Society of St. Pius X (“Lefebvrists”), an ultra-traditionalist group that rejects the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. (Williamson, who holds extreme right-wing political views, is excommunicated because the circumstances of his appointment and consecration as a bishop were irregular.)

For over three decades the pro-life movement has defined itself as a “single issue” constituency, although the issue of abortion has inevitably metastasized into euthanasia and other practices. Some pro-lifers do not believe that political activity is the best way to fight for life, but such activity is imperative, because no society can be allowed to withhold legal protection from any category of persons, and because it is primarily through politics that abortion has been made an accepted social practice.

But involvement in political action necessarily brings with it the moral ambiguities inherent in all politics. Citizens cannot simply will into being a political movement that perfectly satisfies all their principles; of necessity, they must work with existing parties and groups. Except in totalitarian states (and sometimes even there), politics remains the art of the possible.

Abortion as a political issue brought the pro-life movement into a somewhat unexpected alliance with the Republican Party, an alliance that has made many formerly Democratic pro-lifers uncomfortable. Such an alliance necessarily places voters in the situation of in effect having to buy a whole political package. Public officials have to take positions on a wide range of issues, so that, in supporting Republicans, pro-lifers are implicated in everything that party does.

History seldom moves in a straight line. Plans are often upset by unforeseen events and, as it turned out, the pro-life movement was at least temporarily derailed in 2006 by the strong public backlash against the war in Iraq. By no means all pro-lifers support the war, but support for pro-life Republicans has in many cases amounted to a vote for the war, or is seen as such.

Abortion became legal (and thereby respectable) through judicial fiat, and most legislation to curtail the practice has been invalidated by judicial decree, while the related life issues also await judicial resolution. From the beginning pro-lifers have realized that the political fight must take place in the courts and that this means the appointment of pro-life judges, especially at the federal level. But the Republican defeats of 2006 now make it almost impossible that such judges can be appointed in the foreseeable future, probably forcing President Bush to name the kind of “moderates” who usually turn out to be pro-abortion. But amidst all the conservative Catholic criticism of Bush in 2006, the issue of the federal courts remained the elephant in the living room, something whose presence could not be candidly acknowledged. Not once during the campaign did any writer in *The Wanderer* explicitly remind readers of the crucial importance of judicial appointments, and some even implied the contrary.

Senator Webb of Virginia is probably a reliable new vote against pro-life nominees to the courts. Sobran justified his admiration for Webb partly on the grounds that Bush betrayed the pro-life cause in giving priority to the Iraq War, as though a president cannot and ought not to take simultaneous responsibility for both foreign and domestic matters. Notably, Bush’s pursuit of the war did not prevent him from successfully nominating John Roberts and Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court, appointments that brought the pro-life movement to within one vote of having a reliable majority. But when Roberts was nominated Sobran did not welcome the appointment, saying (August 15, 2005) that he would withhold judgment until “my bellwether, Howard Phillips,” had spoken and that Phillips had not made up his mind.

After accusing the Republicans of betraying the pro-life cause, Sobran later judged (March 8) that “Abortion seems to be dwindling to an intramural Republican issue,” a judgment that seemed to recognize that the future of the pro-life movement depends on pro-life Republicans continuing in office.

A month after the election (December 7), Sobran lamented that “just when many were hoping for relief as the Age of Bush begins to wind down,” Democrats were talking about reintroducing the Equal Rights Amendment in Congress. After having said practically nothing on the subject during the campaign, Sobran at last acknowledged that “the Democrats will now have more to say about the direction of the federal judiciary,” as though that had

not occurred to him before.

However, he later (March 15) proclaimed that “We face a government essentially and practically hostile to the Church, and nearly all candidates threaten to make it worse if they can.” (Presumably President Bush, as head of the government, is among those hostile to the Church.) Sobran mentioned none of the Republican presidential candidates who have announced themselves as pro-life but instead speculated that the 2008 contest would be between Rudolph Giuliani and Hillary Clinton and judged that of the two Senators Clinton would do “less damage.”

In sounding the alarm over the civil-liberties implications of the Military Commission Act, Likoudis cited an analyst who predicted that the law in question will eventually come before the Supreme Court, where Roberts, Alito, Antonin Scalia, and Clarence Thomas can be expected to uphold it. Since this is precisely the group of justices most favorable to the pro-life cause, readers might reasonably conclude from Likoudis’s warning that, just as liberals claim, it is a judicial bloc that is dangerous to liberty—whereas a Democratic president would appoint justices who, even if pro-abortion, would have a proper concern for the nation’s freedoms.

During the 2006 campaign (October 18) *The Wanderer* published an article about the New Hampshire election explicitly suggesting that it was probably best to vote Democratic, and during the campaign its only explicit warning against doing so (November 2) did not have to do with abortion; rather, Likoudis’s complaint was that the Democrats are not reliable opponents of the Iraq War.

Despite the election results, *The Wanderer* has not sounded the alarm over likely Democratic support for abortion but apparently still considers other issues more pressing. FTM rejoiced (November 23) that, as it had predicted, the economy is likely to be the major issue in the 2008 election, along with the defense budget and the question whether it is necessary “to protect us from evildoers on the other side of the globe.” FTM (December 15) appeared to endorse a proposal that a TV commentator named Lou Dobbs be nominated for president, because he charges that the nation’s elites “are waging outright war on working men and women and their families.” But in offering that endorsement FTM did not find it necessary to inform readers of where Dobbs might stand on the life issues. Also without mentioning those issues, Likoudis (January 25) enthusiastically praised a Wisconsin lawyer seeking election to the state supreme court on the promise that he will fight to reform a corrupt criminal-justice system.

Following the electoral disasters of 2006, some pro-life critics of the Bush administration partly justified the Republican defeat by reporting a renaissance

of the pro-life cause within the Democratic Party. But so far, that renaissance has been mild indeed, and the party as a whole is about as likely to adopt a pro-life philosophy as the Republicans are to embrace socialized medicine.

One attempt to resolve the dilemma is to claim that Bush is not really pro-life, as Phillips—contrary to all the evidence—did in his *Wanderer* interview. But it is a claim that is at best uninformed and in most cases disingenuous. Besides appointing judges infinitely better, from the pro-life standpoint, than any Democrat would ever do, Bush has vetoed a bill authorizing fetal stem-cell research, refused to ratify various international agreements that sanction abortion as a human “right,” and refused to authorize American funding for international abortion programs.

The opposition of these conservative Catholics to the Bush administration has also led some of them to reject important pro-life allies. In their fierce denunciations of “neo-conservatives,” Sobran and Likoudis ignore the fact that neo-conservatives, especially in the pages of their leading publication, *The Weekly Standard*, are among the few secular people enrolled in the pro-life cause. TWS regularly publishes strong and highly intelligent articles against abortion, fetal-stem-cell research, euthanasia, assisted suicide, and other life issues, as well as against radical feminism and the homosexual movement. It is a moral conservatism that is not accidental, since “neo-conservatives” are usually defined as people who became disillusioned with traditional liberalism on a variety of issues.

Similarly, Likoudis’s dismissal of Santorum as merely a puppet of the White House and of a neo-conservative conspiracy impugned the integrity of a man who had been regarded as one of the most principled and effective Senate champions of traditional moral causes, and it is not at all clear whether Santorum was opposed primarily for his lapse in supporting Specter or for his heresy on other issues. Since his opponent was also pro-life, opposition to Santorum could be justified, but some of his Catholic critics implied that he had to be turned out of office without regard for the life issues.

Economics appears to be the engine that is now driving *The Wanderer*’s stand on public issues, and establishing its priorities. Neither liberals nor conservatives, as those terms are understood in the U.S. today, represent classical Catholic social teachings. But since the U.S. is a predominantly capitalist country, the teachings criticizing capitalism appear more pertinent to our condition than do the teachings against socialism; so, to the degree that the Republican Party champions the free market, some Catholics draw the conclusion that it is in effect immoral to support Republican candidates.

While this is usually considered a liberal idea, in the pages of *The Wanderer* it has a conservative counterpart that is in many ways almost indistinguishable from the liberal position. The paper stops short of advising readers precisely how to vote in order to achieve true social justice, but its economic ideas seem logically to lead to the conclusion that only strong state action can overcome the plutocratic exploitation of the people, something that has been the premise of left-wing American politics since the 1890s.

Abortion was not even remotely a political issue in 1941, but Furfey gave a hint as to how he might have dealt with it when he accused Catholics of compromising their principles partly in return for “a respect for the Catholic opinion [*sic*] on birth control”—which seemed to imply that what are today called “social issues” are not as serious as some others.

The economist Rupert Ederer has asserted (December 7) that there is an authentically “Catholic” position on such issues as trade, tax, and monetary policies: “We need to recognize that there are Ten Commandments, not one or two. Along with the Fifth Commandment (murder of the innocent) and the Sixth Commandment (against sodomy) there is also the Seventh, about stealing (depriving the working man of his just wages), and the Eighth, about lying (a devastating war based on lying).” His exhortation repeated the familiar liberal accusation that pro-lifers care only about the unborn and are preoccupied with sexual behavior rather than with justice, and it also used the common liberal Catholic ploy of equating absolute moral principles with prudential judgments about particular situations, a ploy that is the basis of the “seamless garment” by which some Catholics justify support for abortion by weighing it against the policies of the welfare state.

There is an obvious but unacknowledged internal conflict here, in that Sobran espouses a minimalist view of the state, according to which almost every project that government undertakes does nothing but harm, yet at the same time seems to justify voting Democratic, in order to punish Republicans who have betrayed authentic conservatism. Rao (*The Remnant*, September 15) has used the same ploys, accusing pro-lifers of being indifferent to the death of “live innocent babies” in the Near East, and, in a breathtaking slight-of-hand, reversing the traditional relationship between formal doctrine and prudential judgments, treating the decrees of Vatican II as highly debatable but any kind of statement by the Holy See about the Near East (although not necessarily about other issues) as infallible. He charged that conservative Catholics “seem eager to hop on board any aircraft available to aid Israel that can be guilty of no wrong, no matter who it bombs and how it does so” and, despite positing the existence of a “Catholic teaching” about the Near East, accused the Vatican of failing to condemn “imperialist warmongering” out

of cowardice and a fear of losing American money.

After asserting (December 28) that the war on drugs has failed (FTM's editor had a report from his son that large parts of Oregon are now directly controlled by Latin American drug lords with their own police forces), FTM quoted Coughlin at length claiming that Prohibition in the early 1930s was a scheme of the wealthy both to "grind more work out of their employees by depriving them of their beer" and to distract people from the real issues. FTM did not identify abortion as one of those issues, and Likoudis (February 1) has gone so far as to characterize the debate over embryonic-stem-cell research as "distracting" people from the dangers of the social Darwinian philosophy that dominates modern life. (Liberals also often cite the history of Prohibition as showing that "you can't legislate morality," and that therefore a legal ban on abortion cannot succeed.)

FTM's claim that moral evils are primarily the result of economic injustices and should therefore be combated primarily through better economic policies cannot help but make the pro-life movement seem naïve and shallow in its understanding of reality, even perhaps as an unwitting tool of the plutocracy—something that is, once again, a familiar liberal charge.

In judging that abortion has become merely "an intramural Republican issue," Sobran (March 8) offered a counsel of despair that, perhaps unintentionally, described the position that he himself represents:

. . . even most people who regard it as a grave evil have difficulty keeping it uppermost in their minds. There are just too many distractions, and in politics the urgent always tends to usurp the important.

A sense of futility, discouragement, abandonment, betrayal, and just plain baffling practical complexity makes it hard to sustain resistance. It is easy to succumb to the feeling that though it's terribly wrong, legal abortion is here to stay; that even our old allies have found other things to do.

A week later (March 15) he said that he regards abortion as "worse than aggressive warfare" but added that ". . . after all, legal abortion is going to be around for a while and the Iraq war, whatever you think of it, is urgent right now."

Many, perhaps most, committed pro-lifers are former Democrats who were rejected by their party and found themselves welcomed by the Republicans. Most of those converts are probably not conservatives in a principled ideological way, so that their presence in the Republican ranks has the effect of helping facilitate the "betrayal" of conservative principles that Sobran and others decry.

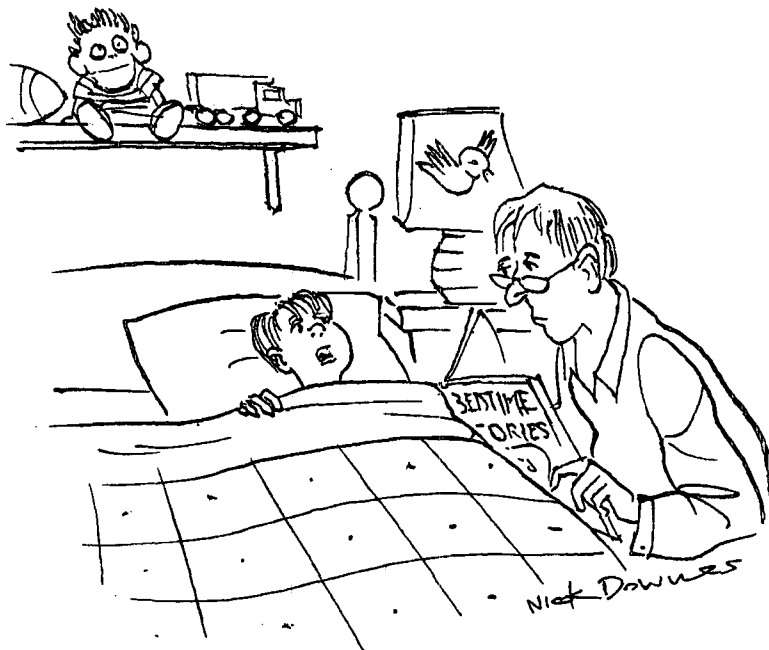
Hard-core conservatives tend now to hearken back nostalgically to the days of Barry Goldwater, ignoring the fact the Goldwater turned out to be

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fanatically pro-abortion, as well as very liberal on most other social issues, something that gives pro-lifers little reason to want to be “true” conservatives. Sobran’s way of dealing with the life issues can then be seen as the conservative counterpart to the liberals’ “seamless garment”—an attempt to persuade pro-lifers to transcend their “narrow” outlook and support a wider agenda.

The widely held, apparently self-evident, assumption that the pro-life movement is the creature of the “religious Right” has blinded even most informed observers to the unexpected and intriguing fact that, for some on the Catholic part of “the Right,” the life issues are no longer paramount, if they ever were.

¹ All citations to Sobran are to his writings in *The Wanderer*.



“‘Happily ever after’—that’s kinda September 10th, isn’t it?”

Children of Men: Read the Book!

William Murchison

A couple of months ago, several Murchisons rented the DVD of *Children of Men*, the then-new Alfonso Cuarón movie. At home, in front of our own television set, we watched soberly. I may have watched more soberly, not to say more skeptically, than the others. That would be because I was literally following Hollywood's breezy injunction from the '50s: "You've read the book. Now see the movie."

I'd indeed read the book when it was published in 1993. I'd liked it a lot, for reasons I will note shortly. By contrast, I disliked the movie considerably. Not because it played fast and loose with the excellent P. D. James plot. Remember Samuel Goldwyn's *Wuthering Heights*, which cut the Brontë novel squarely in half, finishing with a ghostly and wholly invented reunion of the suffering lovers? Good book; good movie, for all their differences. What about the screen writers who economically pruned two of Scarlett O'Hara's children? You have contrasting functions to serve when it comes to books and movies. We all know this. We let it go. We forgive—now and then with undue generosity.

The problem with *Children of Men* was a missed opportunity to say more or less what the James book—*The Children of Men*—had said with special eloquence and excitement about, well, the centrality of babies in human affairs. Let us toughen that a bit: the pure, absolute indispensability of babies in an age more and more given to clapping hands over eyes as the birth function loses priority to the imputed joys of aloneness and aloofness.

Ex malo bonum, I am wont to say concerning the movie: dark, dingy, weird, more concerned with explosions and Problems of the Moment, such as immigration and, inferentially, the Iraq war, than with the childless future P. D. James had imagined and invited us to contemplate. Out of bad may come good if a defective movie stirs customers to see what the book was all about, as could prove the case here, you never know. Do questions get more absorbing than how would life look—would it be life at all, and how would we live it—were the blessing of new birth to be taken from us, suddenly, mysteriously?

I cannot without fear of censure kick Cuarón around the room; I have discovered that quite a few viewers of his product like or at least respect its cinematic qualities—my wife among them. A graduate of Indiana

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University's esteemed theater department, she recollected for me Goethe's criteria for theatrical merit. First, what was the author trying to do? Then, did he do it? Finally, was the thing worth doing? This she occasionally (as well as good-humoredly) does when I am looking narrowly down my narrow nose at artistic ventures post-dating Samuel Johnson. Or John Wayne.

I had to admit that Sr. Cuarón did what he set out to do—render a joyless judgment on the near-term future of humanity in the environmental, political, and cultural realms. My question, nevertheless: Why this book as take-off point? Why appropriate such a fine work and muffle its alarm bell? Before him Cuarón had a richly imagined tale concerning the sudden, the unlooked-for, the catastrophic failure of procreation. All at once, no more human babies. None anywhere. In 1993, P. D. James was vaguely understood to be religious—an active communicant of the Church of England—but the present tale hardly fitted common understandings of her as a sophisticated spinner of detective tales. She would write later that alone among her novels *The Children of Men* failed to earn back its advance, “a depressing and somewhat demeaning thought.”

It was anything but an addition to her bookshelf of Adam Dalgliesh stories, with the poet-policeman digging for truth and certainty amid a heap of moral ambiguities and disturbing evidences of human failing. James's project, in the Dalgleish-less *The Children of Men*, was certainly arresting. No births, no babies for a quarter of a century, starting in 1996. She had read in the *Sunday Times* a book “dealing with the dramatic and so far unexplained fall in the fertility rate of Western man.” She wondered: What if the human race were “struck by a universal infertility”? She saw a gradual falling away of hope and expectation; the replacement of adventure by ruin; a world steadily running downhill, crumbling to the touch, “all hope and ambition lost forever,” the meaning of life itself quite gone.

In such a world, women wheel dolls around in buggies and bring cats to church for baptism. On another societal fringe, the elderly and basically defunct are subjected by the state to the cruel and bizarre Quietus—mass death by deliberate drowning as bands serenade the victims with songs of the World War II era.

Meanwhile, in the womb of one young woman, unborn life unexpectedly returns. And dramatic consequences flow torrentially.

What, then, did Cuarón, the Mexican director best known for his handling of the Spanish-language flick *Y tu mamá también*, and of *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*—what did Cuarón do with the copious material at hand? What he mainly did (besides axing “The” from James's title) was apply himself to the creation of a 21st-century nightmare concerning

pollution, dictatorship, bombings, prison camps (think Abu Ghraib), and the oppression of immigrants (think—I guess—Tom Tancredo). Oh, yes, and the lack of new babies. How the world got this way the audience isn't sure. Environmental factors may have played their part. It's a pretty awful world, we recognize quickly enough.

So, Herr Goethe, what was the artist trying to do? In the present case, he was trying to show us the consequences of political and environmental trends he saw as already afoot. The movie starts in 2027 with an urban bombing, al Qaeda-style. Boom! Smoke pours from a nearby door. Turmoil ensues. And continues. The movie concludes with nearly all the main characters—recharacterized from the novel—dead. (James isn't known for delicacy in the dispatch of victims, but her books hardly qualify as literary slaughterhouses, à la Cormac McCarthy. Cuarón, by contrast, seems bent on getting rid of pretty much everyone.)

In an advertising feature published in the *New York Times*, the director spread out the reasons for his treatment of the material. "I wanted to convey what's happening in the world," he said, "from the perspective of great minds who specialize in the fields of environment, population, and economics, as well as philosophers and critics of society. They offer a diagnosis about the reality we're living in. The picture is not a happy one; but, OK, now we know the reality, we know where we're standing, what can we do."

So in Goethe's terms, yes—the artist draws us a picture of dystopia, bidding us look on in horror. That's easy enough. In place of James's down-at-the-heels yet nevertheless civilized Oxford, we look perpetually at gray-brown desolation. Do we wonder what it all has to do with children, or the absence thereof? Only (for my money) when Clare-Hope Ashitey (as Kee, a character not in the book) becomes mysteriously pregnant and her anti-government associates convey her, at immense cost to themselves, to the keeping of a shadowy, never-explained entity called the Human Project, whose base is some kind of Greenpeace-looking ship. Far as I can tell anyway.

Children of Men won early accolades and a lot of buzz. At the Venice Film Festival, a blogger reported, "The crowds were all in shock. There were many people crying." Surely, reported someone else, who had evidently been in a different mood when the lights went down, this was "one of the best action movies we have seen lately." Another blogger expressed satisfaction that "the religious overtones" of the book had been "played down." (Omitted would be more like it. Unless I misremember, religion is represented in the movie by the exclamation, "Jesus Christ!")

Still another commentator mentioned the triumph of "hope over hopelessness." That would be right, I think. From a worn-out world, the new

mother (who in the movie is black rather than white, as in the novel: for reasons likely calibrated by Cuarón to fit the exhaustion of European civilization) is raised from desperation to fulfillment. She's got something no one else has—a baby! With babies, well, you know . . .

That's it, perhaps. We *don't* know, at least not in the way we once did: "we" meaning humanity. We have to raise our eyes a bit—look at the stakes in a way not entirely obvious amidst the haze of pollution and the hail of bullets (as we old newspapermen used to say). We move from movie to book, if properly invited to do so, as I believe we have been by the intrusion of this well-acted but depressing movie. We start to think—maybe—what's this thing all about anyway? This life thing, this vision of the sterility to come, maybe. What could there be to the preposterous notion of a time when a woman can't get pregnant, hard as she may try, deeply as she may yearn?

Oh, the idea has its inviting side. Who wants condoms, now that risk has disappeared from the equation? Come on—take, get, grab, satisfy, appease. It was never so good in Haight-Ashbury or Greenwich Village. And it's all free—provided by "free," you imply, as P. D. James surely does, the cool disregard of purpose and meaning in the sexual act. Only a few lines into *The Children of Men*, purpose recedes. I don't mean artistic, Goethean purpose. I mean human purpose. The narrator, Dr. Theo Faron, of Oxford University, 50 years old, relates: "We have had twenty-five years [to recover the reproductive function] and we no longer even expect to succeed. Like a lecherous stud suddenly stricken with impotence, we are humiliated at the very heart of our faith in ourselves. For all our knowledge, our intelligence, our power, we can no longer do what the animals do without thought. No wonder we both worship and resent them.

"[I]n our hearts few of us believe that the cry of a new-born child will ever be heard again on our planet. Our interest in sex is waning. Romantic and idealized love has taken over from crude carnal satisfaction despite the efforts of the Warden of England [Theo's cousin, Xan Lippiatt], through the national porn shops, to stimulate our flagging appetites. Our ageing bodies are pummeled, stretched, stroked, caressed, anointed, scented. We are manicured and pedicured, measured and weighed. . . . Golf is now the national game."

It started . . . how? "Pornography and sexual violence on film, on television, in books, in life, had increased and became more explicit but less and less in the West we made love and bred children. It seemed at the time a welcome development in a world grossly polluted by over-population. . . . As I remember it, no one suggested that the fertility of the human race was dramatically changing . . . Overnight, it seemed, the human race had lost its power to breed."

Fantasy. Fantasy with a purpose, as it happens. The purpose of recovery from an age without purpose—aside from that of breaking par occasionally. We allow the good writer these excesses of imagination. It is all part of the story-telling craft. In latter times Walker Percy and Flannery O'Connor have functioned to the same purpose—the grotesque-ification (if one may invent a word) of folly and selfishness so that very old impulses and convictions may seem normal and their opposites outrageous.

Ex malo bonum. Alfonso Cuarón leads us to P. D. James's hearth. At least I think he does. I hope so. We need to be precisely there, in order to examine urgent matters. On arrival, thanks to previous encounters with the author and her terrain, we expect saturnine detectives with aches and desires, stepping over pools of blood. We find instead self-immolation going on: the twilight of gods all godded-out, national porn shops or no national porn shops or pummellings, stretchings, and strokings. Until the end, that is, when behind fibers of charcoal gray, a faint glow of light may be seen. Cold, beaten down, run over and smeared as though by a freight car, life exhibits . . . life. What was the artist, the original one, trying to do? Something different than her imitator has done. Something far better, I think we might in fairness say.

It was ingenious on P. D. James's part—she with all those “religious” notions—to see a way of connecting new life and new hope: a novelistic way, with plot and characters. She would chase the point to its logical conclusion. If birth ceased, what would happen? What would the world look like? Modern life obscured these points. A million or so abortions per year might take place in the United States alone, but there were many more births, so you didn't really notice. Baptisms continued—no cats allowed. A pram could be counted on to contain a baby instead of a doll. No deer (as in the movie) roamed deserted classrooms. But something else went on: a new principle had taken root. It was that, while prams with babies were fine (for those who liked them), there was no societal reason to prefer such to prams in which non-human cargoes rode.

The achievement of P. D. James, in *The Children of Men*, was to take our societal noses—those we were willing to entrust to her—and rub them abruptly in dystopian mud. To their logical conclusion she drew and dragged matters. What if babies no longer came to women who desired them: as distinguished from those who didn't want them to begin with? What then? What would life be like? It might be dystopically violent in the way suggested by Alfonso Cuarón. Or its main characteristic might be vacancy, emptiness; not just the emptiness of school buildings and obstetrical wards, but of hearts and souls. May not a society perish in a stupor as well as explode in

flames, with tires screeching and machine guns chattering?

As we know, there's more money in explosions than in stupor. Enter Cuarón. And yet, forgive me—I don't wish to castigate a talented director, least of all a director who *sort of* sees the stakes in the game. I think we might call the story large enough to warrant multiple approaches—James's, Cuarón's, another's some day. The story framework is James's. The story is our own. Which is why we need it told to us, in the way mommies and daddies make up stories about their children, for telling to their children. If you think you've been told often enough what life means, evidently you haven't been. You need the artistic pin prick. You need *The Children of Men*, or something like it.

In a "fragment of autobiography"—her subtitle for the 1999 memoir *Time to Be in Earnest*, James noted that "the novel was not intended to be a Christian fable but that, in fact, was what I wrote." No wonder, perhaps, the wonderment. Sales were small by comparison with those for the Dalglish novels. I recall *The Children of Men* opening at or near the top of the New York Times fiction best-seller list, teetering there a week or two, then plunging once readers generally learned what it was all about, which wasn't Adam Dalgliesh (except in some spiritual sense). "But it has produced more correspondence," she would note, "particularly in theological circles, than any other novel I have written."

"Particularly in theological circles"? The hint here might seem off key—like Rosie O'Donnell weighing speaking invitations from her Republican fan clubs. In fact, P. D. James comes nearer than practically any living novelist one can think of—certainly nearer than any *successful* living novelist comes—to the gripping depiction of good and evil, truth and falsehood, sin and repentance, lived in the shadow of the Cross.

Writes Ralph Wood, in *First Things*: "Absent the love of God, James implies, human love also withers. Absent human love grounded in divine charity, marriages are difficult to sustain. Absent marital and thus parental love, children are orphaned in the ultimate, no less than the immediate, sense. Indeed, orphanhood is the moral and spiritual condition of many of James's murderers."

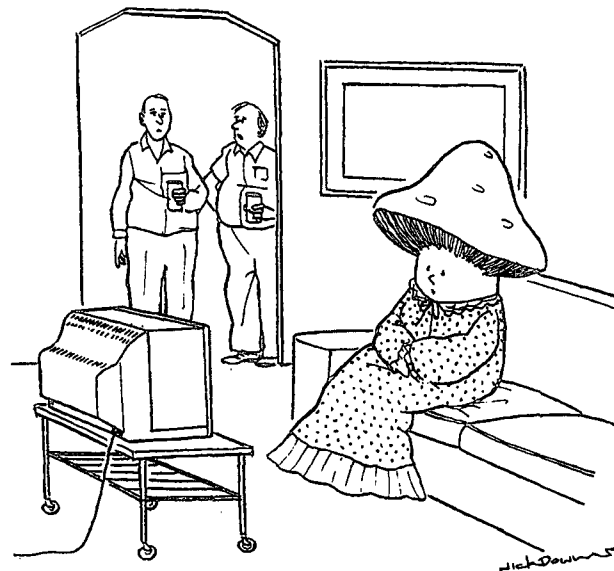
In *Children of Men*, the movie, there is just the sniff of recognition of life itself as the best hope for relief from the world's traumas. In *The Children of Men* is the explicit recognition that life *is* life. And that a higher power controls, directs, orders its ways and means. The new birth that bids to bring a dead world to life again is no "virgin birth." On the other hand—I will be cryptic, having no wish to spoil things for anyone inspired to pluck the book from a library shelf—an Anglican priest, frozen out by his progressive church

but faithful to “the old Bible, the old prayer book,” figures centrally in the narrative of redemption. His name is Luke. But enough of that.

I am not here to take a stand on behalf of *The Children of Men* as “Greatest Novel of the Twentieth Century”—a work of imperishable grandeur; a must-read. It doesn’t come close. Nor could P. D. James have expected that it would. She would have been glad, perhaps, had it sold. You cut a bit of slack all the same for a late 20th century novel, the competition for excellence in that department being so thin. In the whole department of Ideas the competition is thin, the quest for narcissistic pleasure needing no intellectual justification or defense. Just “do it!” Jerry Rubin instructed disciples amid great renown and acclaim, some three decades ago. So some did. Then many more, not asking why. Life, for these, came to seem a possession, usable on one’s own terms, with no sense of purpose and hope as a self-generating commodity.

Roe v. Wade spread the spirit far and near. Did that mournful decision do what the authors intended? Expressly. Was it done well? Even ardent defenders point more proudly to its purpose than to the legal and constitutional technique involved.

Was it worth doing? Give the imagination a jolt or two. Think of baby carriages bearing dolls, and of empty school rooms; think of a world expiring of emptiness. Now and then the imagination can show us more of reality than can the finest, costliest camera lens.



“After the birth of our first child, she just mushroomed.”

Personally Opposed, But

Laura Echevarria

*If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it,
people will eventually come to believe it.*

Attributed to Joseph Goebbels (1897-1945)

Hitler's Minister of Propaganda

*I oppose abortion, personally. I don't like abortion.
I believe life does begin at conception.*

Senator John Kerry, quoted in the *Washington Post*, July 5, 2004

When it comes to abortion, in nearly every election cycle pro-choice politicians try to walk the fine line between offending their radical base and offending the rest of the country.

To try to appease both groups of voters, they will make statements along the lines of "I am personally opposed to abortion, but I don't believe I should impose my beliefs on anyone else." It is as if a politician were to say, "I have lived next door to a drug dealer for the last ten years, but I didn't think I should impose my moral beliefs on him—so I never called the police." You could apply this same rationale to almost any other moral issue, and it would sound ridiculous on its face—but on abortion, it's designed to make a politician appear to have moral weight, when in fact he doesn't have any.

In 2004, *Newsweek's* Debra Rosenberg reported on a meeting that Democratic leaders and interest groups had a couple of weeks after they lost the elections. In the course of discussing what went wrong and why, the topic of abortion came up:

When Ellen Malcolm, president of the pro-choice political network EMILY's List, asked about the future direction of the party [John Kerry, who had stopped by to thank everyone for their support], tackled one of the Democrats' core tenets: abortion rights. He told the group they needed new ways to make people understand they didn't like abortion. Democrats also needed to welcome more pro-life candidates into the party, he said. "There was a gasp in the room," says Nancy Keenan, the new president of NARAL Pro-Choice America. . . . No one's suggesting that the party abandon its pro-choice roots. With George W. Bush expected to nominate as many as three presumably pro-life Supreme Court justices this term, advocates worry that

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the right to abortion is more imperiled than it's been in decades. But as a step toward ultimately preserving the basic right, some Democrats now favor embracing common-sense restrictions on it. One possible initiative: a bill banning third-trimester abortions with *broad exceptions for the life and health of the mother*. [emphasis added]¹

Of course, any legislation that includes exceptions for the health of the mother must, by law, conform to *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*—which means that Democratic offers of legislation “banning” third-trimester abortions that include a health exception are token gestures and would have no legal impact on abortion. But even the *appearance* of curtailing abortion is enough to make radical, pro-choice supporters of the Democratic Party blanch.

Newsweek captured what so many in the Democratic Party have failed to acknowledge: “Democratic lawmakers have found themselves boxed in by a pro-choice orthodoxy that fears the slippery slope—the idea that even the smallest limitation on abortion only paves the way for outlawing it altogether. As a result, most Democrats opposed popular measures like ‘Laci and Conner’s Law,’ which makes it a separate federal crime to kill a fetus—and a ban on the gruesome procedure called partial-birth abortion.”²

To correct this problem, a majority of leading Democrats would have to change their entrenched belief in *Roe v. Wade*. This is not likely to happen. Democratic leaders *may* offer abortion legislation, as long as it includes health exceptions; and they will probably work to pass legislation that seeks contraceptive coverage or federal funding for sex-education courses. The hope would be that these bills would find sympathy with constituents and soften Democratic lawmakers’ images on the abortion issue by offering what would be perceived as possible pregnancy-prevention measures. But these would be empty acts—the goal would be for Democrats in leadership to continue to be able to bow to the hardline orthodoxy of abortion on demand.

Liberals “Take Back” Religion

In 2005, a Harris Poll reported that 82 percent of Americans believe in God. But after agreeing on the existence of God, those polled increasingly disagreed on other questions regarding religious beliefs. Only 70 percent believed that Jesus is God or the Son of God, 68 percent believed in angels, 61 percent believed in the devil and only 59 percent believed in Hell.³ We all have the tendency to make God over in our image—our perceptions and experiences color our beliefs and values. And the way we perceive and interpret important values is never more in evidence than during election cycles. Every election gives us the opportunity to vote our values by electing candidates that reflect our personal belief systems. Whether liberal or conservative, we *all* have values. But liberals and conservatives have different values.

In 2004, Democrats—with a few exceptions—shied away from talking about religion or using the language of religion to define themselves or their campaigns. They lost. In 2006, more and more of their candidates were embracing religious speech as well as expressing their reliance on God. It worked.

In 2005, according to the Washington newspaper *The Hill*, House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) had created the Democrats' Faith Working Group in an effort to find ways to reach "centrist and conservative voters."⁴ Party leaders spent considerable time in discussions with such liberal luminaries as George Lakoff, a linguistics professor at the University of California-Berkeley, and Rev. Jim Wallis, the founder of Sojourners, a liberal religious organization. In a June 2004 editorial in *Sojourners Magazine*, Rev. Wallis offered considerable advice to Democrats regarding the abortion issue. He wrote that Democrats could do "something more" about abortion by

affirm[ing] that they are still the pro-choice party, but then also say[ing] what most Americans believe: that the abortion rate in America is much too high for a good, healthy society that respects both women and children. They could make a serious public commitment to actually do something about significantly reducing the abortion rate. Abortion is historically used as a symbolic issue in campaigns, and then forgotten when the election is over. Republicans win elections on the basis of their antiabortion position, and then proceed to ignore the issue (and the nation's abortion rate, highest in the industrial world) by doing nothing to reduce the number of abortions.⁵

Wallis's advice falls apart upon examination. First, the Democratic Party has not made any serious commitment to lowering the abortion rate and is not likely to do so. Second, the Democratic Party has been the *single most* significant factor in the lack of legislative movement on the abortion issue. Third, it is misleading to argue that Republicans have ignored abortion after elections and have been a "do-nothing" party on the abortion issue. Fourth, the U.S. has the highest rate of abortion in the industrial world because we have the most liberal abortion policy in the world—based not in law but on a judicial ruling.

Is the Democratic Party changing? No. But candidates have learned how to better appeal to voters. Party leaders have learned that to win, you have to openly support candidates who may appear more conservative than the party itself, and candidates who are not so conservative have to find ways to make themselves attractive to voters who are.

In an interview that appeared in the *Washington Post* a few weeks after the 2006 elections, writer David Paul Kuhn interviewed Wallis about the Democratic Party and the effect of the Christian vote in 2008:

"Can you win the majority of evangelicals to change sides? No, probably not," Wallis says. "But you know, the Republicans, they are not trying to win the black vote; they

are trying to peel off a percentage of it in Ohio. So you try to peel off percentages of the evangelical vote.” But to peel off percentages of the religious Christian vote, Wallis insists, “Democrats have got to run somebody who has a clue about religion, religious people, about poverty, about the environment, and will speak to those people in a moral language, able to talk sense about abortion. That candidate wins. That candidate wins tomorrow in America! Tomorrow!”⁶

Wallis is right: If Democrats can peel away enough evangelical Christians and Catholics who are interested in social-justice issues, they win. The purple middle ends up voting blue. As Wallis argued in his June 2004 editorial:

Many Democrats fail to comprehend how fundamental the conviction on “the sacredness of human life” is for millions of Christians, especially Catholics and evangelicals, including those who are strongly committed on other issues of justice and peace and those who wouldn’t criminalize abortion even as they oppose it. Liberal political correctness, which includes a rigid litmus test of being “pro-choice,” really breaks down here. And the conventional liberal political wisdom that people who are conservative on abortion are conservative on everything else is just wrong. Christians who are economic populists, peacemaking internationalists, and committed feminists can also be “pro-life.” The roots of this conviction are deeply biblical and, for many, consistent with a commitment to nonviolence as a gospel way of life.

And there are literally millions of votes at stake in this liberal miscalculation. Virtually everywhere I go, I encounter moderate and progressive Christians who find it painfully difficult to vote Democratic given the party’s rigid, ideological stance on this critical moral issue, a stance they regard as “pro-abortion.” Except for this major and, in some cases, insurmountable obstacle, these voters would be casting Democratic ballots.⁷

Wallis’s editorial was prescient. In 2006, in races where the Democratic Party ran “pro-life” Democrats, they ran them against pro-life Republicans who, for the most part, enjoyed the support of many of that district’s or state’s values voters because of social-justice issues such as abortion. But, in the end, enough voters were peeled away to elect the Democratic candidates.

Wallis asserted in 2004 that “on pragmatic grounds alone, not to mention the issue’s importance as a matter of conscience for many Christians and others, the Democratic Party could take a more respectful and even dialogical approach. Democrats, like Republicans, could still take a strong party stance (their official position being pro-choice) yet offer space for different positions. *Such a respect for conscience on abortion would allow many pro-life and progressive Christians the ‘permission’ they need to vote Democratic.*” (Emphasis added.)⁸

This strategy worked politically. But it won’t change the underlying truth: On the abortion issue, the Democratic Party will continue to produce . . . nothing. The leadership in the House and the Senate is consistently for abortion on demand, and even so-called pro-lifers such as Democratic Senator Harry

Reid (Nev.) have had ratings of 100 percent from NARAL Pro-Choice America.⁹ This is even less likely to change now that power in Congress has shifted to the Democrats.

Pro-life legislation will not see the light of day in either the House or the Senate, and any “compromise” bills offered will be hollow, pointless, and strictly for legislative show. In reality they will have no impact on the current status of abortion on demand—but that’s the point.

The New, Improved, More Tolerant Democratic Party?

In February 2005, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* ran a story headlined “Some Democrats Want to Repackage Party’s Abortion Message”:

Democratic National Committee chair Howard Dean says he wants “to make a home for pro-life Democrats.” Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts echoes the idea. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton of New York says that abortions, ideally, should be performed “only in very rare circumstances.” And key strategists think that Pennsylvania treasurer Bob Casey Jr., an abortion foe, might be the best candidate to unseat Republican Rick Santorum in 2006.¹⁰

In the same article, William Galston, who was a domestic-policy adviser to President Clinton, was quoted as saying, “Those who won’t ever compromise on ‘choice’ should spend a bit more time with folks who are 100-percenters. Because if the 100-percenters keep insisting on total obedience, they will end up dominating a party that will never again win another national election.”¹¹ But also quoted in the article are the words of a memo circulated by EMILY’s List, a bundling PAC that raises money for pro-choice Democratic candidates. The memo’s author argues that “support for a woman’s right to choose has, in many ways, become the scapegoat for Democrats’ losses.”¹²

Scapegoat or not, the fact remains that the Democratic Party’s history is replete with examples of purist insistence on abortion on demand. Dave Andrusko, editor of *NRL News*, the widely circulated newspaper of the National Right to Life Committee, wrote in an e-mail to one reporter that Democratic leaders mistakenly believe “that their richly-deserved image as the party of abortion can be erased with a couple of rhetorical swipes, like sentences off a chalkboard.”¹³

In a January 2005 speech before the New York State Family Planning Providers, Senator Hillary Clinton tried to strike a “common ground” tone:

I believe we can all recognize that abortion in many ways represents a sad, even tragic choice to many, many women. Often, it’s a failure of our system of education, health care, and preventive services. It’s often a result of family dynamics. This decision is a profound and complicated one; a difficult one, often the most difficult

that a woman will ever make. The fact is that the best way to reduce the number of abortions is to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies in the first place.¹⁴

But her fealty to abortion on demand sneaks through in several places in the same speech:

- “I am so pleased to be here two days after the 32nd anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, a landmark decision that struck a blow for freedom and equality for women.”

- “Today *Roe* is in more jeopardy than ever, and I look forward to working with all of you as we fight to defend it in the coming years.”

- “Now with all of this talk about freedom as the defining goal of America, let’s not forget the importance of the freedom of women to make the choices that are consistent with their faith and their sense of responsibility to their family and themselves.”

- “I heard President Bush talking about freedom and yet his Administration has acted to deny freedom to women around the world through a global gag policy, which has left many without access to basic reproductive health services.”¹⁵

Is it possible that a leading Democrat would ever want to “compromise” on *Roe*? Or are gestures of tolerance, openness, and welcome merely ways of appearing sympathetic without actually changing?

Liberal columnist Richard Cohen wrote in the *Washington Post* on December 14, 2004, that the Democratic Party “entertains no doubts and counters reasonable questions and qualms with slogans—a woman’s right to choose, for instance. The party is downright inhospitable to abortion opponents. . . . It is almost inconceivable that a Democratic [presidential] candidate could voice qualms about abortion. It is almost inconceivable, though, that the candidates don’t have them.”¹⁶ Yet, if candidates do have qualms, their voting records and past statements show how well they conceal them.

Reframing the Debate

The Democrats are working now—well in advance of the 2008 vote—to change the language they use on the issue of abortion. The goal is to appear less strident and more tolerant—the same strategy that worked in several races in 2006.

In 2004, Berkeley linguistics professor George Lakoff wrote a small book called *Don’t Think of an Elephant! Know Your Values and Frame the Debate*. Democrats lapped up the advice, and the results could be seen in 2006.

Lakoff argues that the real reason conservatives oppose abortion is that it violates their “father model” worldview. Lakoff insists that conservatives follow—either consciously or subconsciously—a moral code that views all

political, practical, and legal decisions through the lens of a strict father:

There are two stereotypical cases where women need abortions: unmarried teenagers who have been having “illicit” sex, and older women who want to delay child rearing to pursue a career. Both of these fly in the face of the strict father model. Pregnant teenagers have violated the commandments of the strict father. Career women challenge the power and authority of the strict father. Both should be punished by bearing the child; neither should be able to avoid the consequences of their actions, which would violate the strict father model’s idea that morality depends on punishment. Since conservative values in general are versions of strict father values, abortion stands as a threat to conservative values and to one’s identity as a conservative.¹⁷

He couldn’t be more wrong. Conservatives and pro-lifers believe that abortion is a fundamental issue regarding the right to life—and that the mother and child are equals, not combatants. But Lakoff’s book is revealing, and offers insight into how liberals or “progressives” think and what they think about conservative values.

And while his evaluation of why pro-lifers and conservatives believe what they do falls far below the mark, his political advice on how the Democrats can fix their credibility gap on values, specifically abortion, remains shrewd. By couching arguments in less strident language, by using the language of religion and appearing to embrace it, Democrats in hotly contested races in 2006 were able to talk to many swing voters in a language they could relate to and find comfort in. They appealed to voters who believe that there are too many abortions. Running a campaign as a “moderate” on abortion, a politician can confuse voters who don’t know his voting record or who don’t understand the scope of *Roe v. Wade*.

Pro-abortion Democratic Senator Ken Salazar of Colorado is a case in point. In 2005, Salazar said:

And just on your question, I consider myself to be a pro-life Democrat. And I think that the way that these labels have been thrown around is misleading. I believe in suicide prevention and the whole host of other programs that are programs that are intended to create full life for all people.¹⁸

Democrats are trying to erase years of extreme language on abortion with Orwellian Newspeak. The term “pro-life” has very specific connotations and, in the last decade, the public’s perception of the term has become much more positive—so now some Democrats are trying to appropriate this language to increase their appeal among Catholic and evangelical voters.

On the other side of the issue, the term “pro-choice” has been losing its appeal. On October 31, 2005, the following exchange took place between host Chris Matthews and Democratic National Committee Chairman Howard Dean on MSNBC’s *Hardball*:

MATTHEWS: Why do you hesitate from the phrase pro-choice?

DEAN: Because I think it's often misused. If you're pro-choice, it implies you're not pro-life. That's not true. There are a lot of pro-life Democrats. We respect them, but we believe the government should . . .

MATTHEWS: Do you believe in abortion rights?

DEAN: I believe that the government should stay out of the personal lives of families and women. They should stay out of our lives. That's what I believe.

MATTHEWS: I find it interesting that you have hesitated to say what the party has always stood for, which is a pro-choice position.

DEAN: The party believes the government does not belong in personal . . .

MATTHEWS: I'm learning things here about the hesitancy I didn't know about before. We'll be right back with Howard Dean.

DEAN: You know what you're learning . . .

MATTHEWS: Now, you're getting hesitant on the war and hesitant on abortion rights. It's very hard to get clarity from your party.¹⁹

Actually Dean was quite clear: He was intentionally trying to obscure his party's true position on abortion. Just as a magician uses smoke and mirrors to conceal from his audience what is happening right in front of them, Howard Dean was trying to use language to conceal from voters the true abortion-on-demand position of the Democratic Party.

In 2004, a post-election poll conducted by Wirthlin Worldwide showed that 42 percent of respondents said that abortion affected their vote. Of that 42 percent, 25 percent voted for the candidate who opposed abortion and only 13 percent voted for the candidate who supported abortion. The pro-life candidates enjoyed a 12 percent advantage over pro-choice candidates among voters who considered abortion an issue.²⁰

In 2006, the Polling Company found that 36 percent of voters said abortion affected their vote. Of these voters, 23 percent said that they voted for the pro-life candidate and only 13 percent voted for the pro-abortion candidate. David N. O'Steen, the executive director of National Right to Life, wrote:

The 23% who said they voted for pro-life candidates voted overwhelmingly for Republicans, according to the poll, while a large majority of the 13% who voted for pro-abortion candidates voted for Democrats, reflecting the fact that most pro-life candidates were Republicans.

However, the 60% who said abortion did not affect their vote voted heavily for Democrats. So, too, did the remaining 4% who were undecided on the question. In many races, this was enough to negate the pro-life increment.

The Polling Company found that 3.4% said abortion was the most important issue affecting their vote, and 70% of these said they voted for pro-life candidates. This yielded a 2% advantage for pro-life candidates among these voters.²¹

Add to these results the fact that the only races where Democrats put up pro-life candidates were races against pro-life Republicans, and you have a

formula for seriously eroding the pro-life advantage.

Former President Jimmy Carter, Colorado Senator Ken Salazar, Howard Dean and even Hillary Clinton herself are just a few among the many Democrats who have “modified” the language they use on abortion. Will voters believe that the Democratic Party really cares about unborn babies? That the party doesn’t use abortion as a litmus test for U.S. Supreme Court appointees? Or that groups like NARAL Pro-Choice America and Planned Parenthood won’t hold as much power in the party?

It’s possible. The Democratic leadership is off to an early start toward completely reinventing public perception of the party in time for the 2008 presidential elections.

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Is There a Post-Abortion Syndrome? A Symposium **The Right that Makes Women Grieve**

George McKenna

Every so often, if only to protect its interests, the Eastern Establishment gets curious about what the natives are doing. So it sends its Stanleys and Livingstones—its scribes—out into the hinterland for a closer look. One recent adventure in pith-helmet journalism came when the *New York Times Magazine* recruited a writer to go deep in the heart of Texas to cover the activities of a prolife woman who does post-abortion counselling. The author, Emily Bazelon, is identified in the piece as an editor of the online magazine *Slate*, but a short Internet search revealed that she is also a recipient of a George Soros-funded fellowship and a contributor to the leftist *Mother Jones* magazine. So the red light went on even before I started reading her—and she didn't disappoint me. Here is her first line, for some reason set in caps: "EARLY ON A WINDY SATURDAY MORNING IN NOVEMBER, RHONDA ARIAS DROVE HER DODGE CARAVAN PAST A WAL-MART AT THE END OF HER BLOCK. . . ."

So this is going to be an evocative piece. We have a gas-guzzling SUV driving past a union-busting, low-wage-paying mega-corporation run by Bible-belt evangelicals. At the wheel is Rhonda Arias, "who is 53, often wears silver hoop earrings and low black boots." She is on her way to a holy-rolling, Bible-shouting session with prison inmates who feel guilty about their abortions. Later, Bazelon watched them "drink in" Arias's preaching of repentance at the prison chapel, and, still later, observed them as they "shuffled out."

These are just the kind of people the *Times* pities and despises. It pities them for their ignorance and stupidity, and it despises them for their willingness to listen to right-wing rhetoric instead of what the *Times* considers to be their authentic self-interest. Thomas Frank, an author much feted in the *Times*, wrote *What's the Matter With Kansas?* from that perspective. What is wrong with these people?, Frank kept asking. Why do they care about fetuses instead of themselves? That people could have serious concerns about the moral condition of America, and be willing to support candidates who speak to those concerns, was baffling to him. The only explanation he could come

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up with was the old Marxist line about “false consciousness”: The poor wretches keep focusing on the symptoms of their pathology instead of its “real” roots in economic oppression, and that is what makes them vulnerable to “pro-family” hucksters. Emily Bazelon takes somewhat the same approach in diagnosing the ills of the women in Arias’s prison ministry. They suffer from troubled childhoods and troubled marriages, and they’ve messed up their heads with drugs and alcohol. Now they are being seduced into believing that their self-destructive behavior is the result of their abortions. At the end of her article she quotes a pro-abortion psychologist as saying that these women are preyed upon by fake therapists and religious “crusaders” who offer women a diagnosis “that gives meaning to the symptoms, and gives women a way to repent.”

The Svengali behind all of this, according to Bazelon, is Dr. David Reardon, a biomedical ethicist who has published several books and articles often cited by proliferers. On the basis of interviews with post-abortion women, Reardon concludes that many of them are suffering severe and long-lasting psychological distress as the result of their abortions, a pathology he calls “post-abortion syndrome.” Bazelon flatly dismisses this claim. “The scientific evidence,” she asserts, “strongly shows that abortion does not increase the risk of depression, drug abuse or any other psychological problem any more than having an unwanted pregnancy or giving birth.” As evidence she cites the results of studies by various “academic experts,” including the findings of a special panel appointed by the American Psychological Association (APA), which influenced the APA’s decision to issue an official statement in 2005 denying a link between abortion and subsequent psychological trauma.

She omits a couple of important facts. One, noted in a later letter to the editor, is the finding of a 2006 study by psychologist David Fergusson and a research team from Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Science in New Zealand. The study tracked post-abortive women over a 25-year period and found that they subsequently experienced high rates of suicidal behavior, depression, substance abuse, anxiety, and other psychological problems—and, significantly, found that problems could not be explained by anything else in their backgrounds. What makes the New Zealand study especially interesting is that Fergusson is a pro-choice atheist and began the study expecting to find that the women’s problems were due to what he calls “selection factors,” meaning that the background of these women “predisposed them both to abortion and to mental health problems.” He was astounded when “we found that was not in fact the case.” In the aftermath of his study, Fergusson complained to the American Psychological Association about its

continuing to assert that abortion posed no psychological risk factors, and the APA removed the statement from its Internet site.

On the surface it seems odd that Bazelon makes no mention of these recent developments. After all, even evocative articles should take account of facts. And these are facts that are not hard to find. As the letter-writer noted, they could have been uncovered by a fifteen-minute Google search. But there is a reason for these omissions, and the reason is that this argument over post-abortion damage to women is taking place in a political pressure cooker. Let us go back again to Dr. Fergusson. In a radio interview, he remarked that “the whole topic [of post-abortion psychological trauma] has been remarkably under-researched.” Why?, he was asked. “I—my view is very clear that it has actually frightened resear—well, I know that I’ve heard researchers say that we were foolhardy doing research in this area.” Then he added, “we had a certain amount of difficulty getting these results published, but . . .” The interviewer interrupted to ask why. “Well, we—journals we would normally have expected to publish them just declined the papers, and I think it’s—because the debate is so very hot, and I think this is particularly so in the US of A, and it’s notable that our paper was published in a British journal.”

Here is a respected researcher, a secular, pro-choice liberal, who has trouble getting his paper published in an American journal because his conclusion contradicts the received wisdom. He tells us that other researchers are “actually frightened” to publish articles in the field. This is not unfettered science. It is an enterprise so immersed in ideology that honest researchers are afraid to get mixed up in it. Whose ideology? It is hard to imagine that if Dr. Fergusson found no evidence of psychological harm caused by abortion—a conclusion he had initially expected to reach—he would have had such trouble getting his results published in the U.S. Not surprisingly, then, what Bazelon calls “the scientific evidence” in this area matches up almost perfectly with the ideology of Planned Parenthood and the *New York Times*.

Still, it is not hard to feel the current of defensiveness running through the rhetoric of denial, and it is clearly detectable in Bazelon’s article. She knows that the reason post-abortion ministries like Rhonda Arias’s are flourishing is that abortion is a very sad event in women’s lives. The Supreme Court calls abortion a constitutional right, but it is the only right that people don’t feel good about exercising. Bill Clinton said abortion should be “safe, legal, and rare,” but nobody ever says that about other rights. We don’t say people have a right to go to church or publish a newspaper but that they should do it only rarely. Bazelon acknowledges the peculiar nature of this

new court-crafted right when she talks about what she calls the “mushy middle” of Americans, “the perhaps 40 to 50 percent who are uncomfortable with abortion but unwilling to ban it.” She has the mood right, though her statistics are flawed. Opinion polls have consistently shown that it is not 40 to 50 percent but a majority, and that “uncomfortable” is quite an understatement; they are uncomfortable with abortion to the point of supporting a ban on it in all cases except rape, fetal deformity, and the life of the mother. What makes most pro-abortion rhetoric so slippery, so full of evasions and euphemisms and ellipses, is that just about everyone is uncomfortable with abortion, including the people who push it. Hillary Clinton has called it “wrong,” and even Kate Michelman, former president of NARAL, once blurted out to a reporter that it is “a bad thing.” (She later complained that she had been misquoted, until she was reminded that the interview had been taped.) Why is everyone so uncomfortable?

The only answer that will survive analysis is this: Everyone knows that abortion is a killing procedure. It kills something, and that something is not a fish or a hamster. Modern biological science tells us that it is the product of the union of a human sperm and a human egg; the zygotes of each get combined to produce a separate and unique living organism of the species *homo sapiens*—so we call it a human being. I am sorry to be so pedantic about what I learned many years ago in Biology 101, but I do it by way of reminding you that in more recent times a new science has emerged which calls this being “a blob of tissue,” “a woman’s fertilized entrails,” “potential life,” and other new names. The new science is not the work of biologists but of lawyers, judges, politicians, newspaper writers, and women’s studies professors. At some level Emily Bazelon knows that it is not science but primitive nonsense, but she is unwilling to follow through on her knowledge. She acknowledges that a doctor who reassured a woman before her abortion that there was “only blood” inside could rightly be sued for breach of professional duty. If, she writes, the woman’s allegation is correct, that doctor was “lying to her about the basic facts of pregnancy.” But Bazelon apparently objects to the woman’s lawyer’s characterization of what was inside her as “a complete, separate, unique and irreplaceable human being.” I wish Bazelon had told us which of those words she objects to. I can’t imagine my biology teacher objecting to any of them—but that was years ago, before *Roe v. Wade* brought us the new science of blobs and potential life.

The ultimate lesson to be learned from Emily Bazelon’s article is that when you try to defend abortion by evasion and denial you run a serious risk

of becoming incoherent. Bazelon's article is grounded on two premises: First, abortion does not produce long-lasting or severe psychological traumas in any significant number of women; second, abortion is not morally wrong, and therefore there is no reason for anyone to feel guilty about having one. By the end of the article she contradicts both of those premises.

She dismisses David Reardon's research on post-abortion trauma and gives her readers an extended, sneering description of Rhonda Arias's prison chapel ceremony. ("The guard . . . dimmed the lights and cued soft gospel music over a sound system. . . . Some oohed at the lights over the altar. Others walked in sniffing.") But it soon appears that Bazelon herself approves of healing ceremonies for post-abortive women—as long as they come with pro-choice labels. She commends the work of an abortion-clinic operator named Peg Johnston, who wrote a booklet for women "who are grieving after their abortions." One of the reassurances Johnston uses in her clinics is an adaptation of "the Jewish ritual of placing stones on the tombstones of departed loved ones"; she offers patients a "worry stone" to hold during their abortions. Another pro-choice healer she admires is Ava Torre-Bueno, the author of a 1994 book, *Peace After Abortion*. Torre-Bueno writes about the pain some women feel on the anniversary dates of their abortions, heightened by the fact that they have been holding it in for years, and so she has put together a series of "grieving rituals." In Bazelon's words, they include "writing a letter to whomever the woman feels she has harmed (*the baby, herself, God, her partner*), lighting a candle, filling and then burning a 'letting go' box." (Emphasis added.)

Let's try to put all this together:

1. An abortion does not put a woman at risk of long-term psychological trauma, yet in recent years the market for post-abortion grief counseling has been flourishing, and the women who avail themselves of these services include many who have been trying for years to repress their grief.

2. Rhonda Arias, who is pro-life, conducts stupid, sappy grieving rituals involving altars, lights, and gospel music. Ava Torre-Bueno and Peg Johnston, who are pro-choice, conduct moving, elevating rituals that include worry stones, candles, and the burning of "letting go" boxes.

3. If you've had an abortion there's absolutely nothing to feel guilty about, but for some of you it might be a good idea to write a letter of apology to your baby.

No wonder Planned Parenthood wants nothing to do with these people. Bazelon notes that Planned Parenthood officials have refused to promote Torre-Bueno's book and won't make referrals to people who do that kind of pro-choice counseling. I don't blame them. Start talking about "the baby,

herself” and the “departed loved ones” you might have “harmed,” and next thing you know you’ll be staring at sonograms. God knows what could happen after that. Look what happened to Dr. Nathanson.

Afterward

Most of Emily Bazelon’s article was based on interviews with Rhonda Arias and observations of her ministry, and from my reading it seemed to me that Bazelon’s strategy was to buddy up with Arias, to appear to be sympathetic to her. I assumed that Arias must have read the article and I wondered what her reaction was. So I phoned her.

Bazelon, she said, “e-mailed me a week after the article came out, asking me what I thought of it. I told her I didn’t know she was doing a piece denying that there is a post-abortion syndrome. I thought she did the best she could, and I told her that.” Did Arias think it was an accurate portrayal of her ministry? “She portrayed me as a self-atoning, emotional manipulator. I’ve been doing abortion recovery work for years, and I’ve done research on it. It’s real, and it needs to be dealt with. These women need forgiveness.” Did she feel that she’d been sucker-punched? “I felt somewhat betrayed but not sucker-punched. I’m not here to make judgments on her or anyone else. One thing surprised me. I didn’t know that she and her family were so steeped in the pro-choice movement.”

What are her feelings toward Bazelon today? “I remain open to Emily. I consider her a friend, though our views are totally opposed. I asked her what her religion was, and she told me she was Jewish. Her little boys go to Torah school. And she told me that she herself had suffered a miscarriage—which saddened her, though she didn’t think a human life was involved. I brought her into my home for three days while she did the research for this article, even gave up my bedroom to her. And I think there were some things she saw that may have softened her heart.”

Something No Woman Wants

Frederica Mathewes-Green

Shortly before Christmas, I got an e-mail from the journalist and Slate.com editor Emily Bazelon. She said that she was writing an article for the *New York Times Magazine* about “women’s experiences post-abortion.” She said she hoped to talk to me that day or the next, and apologized for the short notice. Since I was in and out of the office a lot those pre-holiday days, and thought we might not connect by phone in time, I drafted a quick e-mail in the hope that she could mine it for some quotes. Here’s what I wrote her:

I feel bad that I’ve gotten rusty on this topic—lately I’m writing more about Eastern Christian spirituality, etc. So I’ve forgotten all my statistics, and hope I can be a useful interview.

The main general reflection-thing I’d say is that it seems that the abortion issue is “cooling off”—not that advocates on either side are any less passionate about it, and not that the political fight is concluded, but that the public has lost interest. Other issues have grabbed their attention. I first noticed this in 2000, when Newsweek’s 6-page comparison of Bush and Gore on important issues did not include abortion.

So I like to say “The abortion debate is over,” meaning that folks aren’t listening any more. The “fight” isn’t over, from the point of view of either side, but the debate is over because we’ve run out of interested listeners. The auditorium is empty and the lights have been turned off.

I think in a way this is a good thing. That there is a lot of ambivalence about abortion out there, as well as much submerged post-abortion grief. This needs a “moment of silence” to be able to rise to consciousness, so people can admit and recognize these conflicted feelings, and move to a new stage. As long as the debate is hot, people immediately think in terms of “which side are you on,” and these deeper questions—about what abortion really is, about how it makes us feel, how it affects our relationships and our sense of ourselves—keep getting stuffed down.

One of the women I interviewed in my book “Real Choices” told me that after the abortion she felt she couldn’t tell anyone about her sad feelings. She said that if she told pro-life friends she was depressed about her abortion, they would reject her, saying, “You had an abortion? You’re a murderer!” And she couldn’t tell her pro-choice friends because they would say, “What are you complaining about? You had a choice. Are you a traitor to the cause?” It seemed like there was nowhere to go. As the heat cools off, voices like hers can be heard.

I think that as these conflicted feelings rise to the surface we’ll be better able to understand what abortion does to a society, and admit how many of them are negative. That abortion adapts women to a hostile situation, rather than challenging and changing

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that society—adapts her physically, like a whalebone corset does.

When I was a college feminist and championed women's right to abortion, I thought of it as something liberating. I had no idea that there would be so *many* abortions—I think the total now is 47 million. We all thought it would just be a few “hard cases.” But it seems like abortion is a funnel that women's complex situations get stuffed into—she gets changed, so that those around her don't have to. And the idea that an abortion was a liberating experience was quickly overturned by the reality that women go into it pressured and panicked, and come out of it weeping. Abortion is not something any woman wants. And if women are doing something 3500 times a day that they don't want to do, this is not liberation that we've won.

Best wishes for your article, and give me a call if I can help any more.

—Frederica

I did get a call from Emily a little later. I was struck by how young she sounded, and also by the fortification of her voice—the way responsible journalists talk when they're interviewing psychos. It was clear that there was nothing a pro-lifer could ever say that she could consider reasonable. A pro-lifer who sounds reasonable is worse than a clinic-bombing freak, because at least those guys are honest. A pro-lifer who sounds reasonable is also *lying*—misrepresenting herself and impersonating a normal person. And that's just sad.

Early in the conversation I learned that her article was not so much about post-abortion grief as about the political usefulness of the concept. And, though I might have had something to say about the pro-life cause in general, I'm a complete washout when it comes to politics. I took part in the Maryland abortion referendum of 1992, and finished the course depressed and drained. That was my first and last foray into politics, as I detailed in an essay for these pages (*Human Life Review*, Spring 1993).

After our phone conversation, I described it in a note to a friend:

I had a hard time getting a handle on what she was getting at. Her theory seems to be that some time, years ago, pro-lifers became interested in using post-abortion women in their political efforts. But after Surgeon General Koop disappointed them by failing to endorse the concept of post-abortion trauma they let it drop. (He believed that argument diluted the strength of pro-life argumentation based on the right to life of the unborn.)

I told her that it wasn't like that, from my perspective; post-abortion women had always been steadily present in the movement. And that I didn't think there was ever any broad attempt to “use” them in a political sense. Even though some of us had been encouraging a broadening of the pro-life message to emphasize the good works we do for women and their needs, the emotional core of the message pretty consistently focused on unborn babies and fetal development. I said, “We walk the walk but we don't talk the talk.” The great efforts pro-lifers make to help women are not something we parade in the public square or employ to change opinion.

Emily told me that there is now revived interest in post-abortion women, and mentioned the organization Operation Outcry. But, she asked, if pro-lifers support

post-abortion women, why won't they fund them? Why won't they give them money?

I kept saying "Huh?" Give them money? I didn't get it. Eventually I said that pro-lifers do fund projects for post-abortion women. They do it mostly through local pregnancy care centers, because that's where the services are.

It turned out that Emily meant funding for political campaigns. Apparently someone in South Dakota had told her that national organizations would not fund the recent campaign in that state, and Emily seems to think this is because the campaign used post-abortion women.

I said that couldn't be so. There was no blanket refusal to speak of post-abortion grief in political settings. There must be another explanation. I told her that I thought I'd read somewhere—maybe the New Yorker—that some pro-lifers felt the South Dakota campaign was not the right way to go. But that wouldn't have anything to do with the involvement of post-abortion women.

I don't think she was convinced. I am frankly not sure what she's getting at.

Since I'd proved my incompetence to answer Emily's questions, we concluded the conversation, and I suppose she went on to locate other pro-lifers who were more familiar with the topic under discussion.

This morning I went to a local Catholic girls' high school for Career Day; I talked about being a freelance journalist. Several of the girls want to write fiction and others want to be opinion or nonfiction writers; one wanted to be an editor. I warned them about how tough the competition is, and how hard it is to get started, and how thin the pay is even when you've been at it for decades.

But, I said, there's good news. One day, everybody who's my age will be dead. And people in your generation will be writing the novels and opinion pieces and features and book reviews, and editing them, too. The best, most influential writer of your generation is someone who is your age today, I told them. Why shouldn't it be you?

When that day comes, perhaps pro-life convictions and reasoning will be heard in the big Establishment publications, and allowed to express themselves in their own terms. I hope some of those girls will make it happen. I will be happy to lean over the edge of the cloud and cheer them on.

The Aftermath of Abortion Trauma

E. Joanne Angelo, M.D.

In my psychiatric practice over the past 40 years I have helped hundreds of women, men, and children grieve the loss of someone they loved. Grief and mourning is a universal human experience, shared by all cultures.

When a beloved old person dies, his or her loss is deeply felt by spouses, siblings, children, grandchildren, and friends. The grief process is eased if the death was anticipated and loving care provided to the dying person. It is more painful if there has been an ambivalent relationship with the deceased, or if the death was not anticipated or traumatic.

In other situations, unexpected death through violence, disaster, or suicide is more difficult to mourn, especially if the body is mutilated or unable to be located for burial. Spontaneous monuments often spring up on the site of a fatal accident or disaster where people bring flowers, mementos, and letters, as we still see at Ground Zero in New York City.

The death of a child is the most difficult for the family and for society to mourn. Funeral directors tell me that the younger the deceased, the larger the crowd at the wake and funeral. Schoolmates and neighbors as well as parents and siblings have a hard time accepting and making sense of the loss of a child. The large, supportive gathering around the immediate family helps them enormously during their time of deep sorrow. At a child's grave one often sees toys, candy, and bouquets of flowers, yet the emptiness created by the untimely loss of a young person remains an open wound for many years, even for a lifetime.

Grieving the loss of a premature infant is also a heavy burden for parents and families. Intensive-care nurseries for premature infants have developed programs to help parents and staff deal with the death of their tiny babies. Teams of nurses, doctors, social workers, chaplains, and parents who have had similar losses gather around the grieving family and help them create a memory box including pictures of the baby in their arms, and the child's footprints, clothing, hospital-identification bracelet, and birth and death certificates. A funeral is planned and burial may be arranged, perhaps in a shared grave with a relative who has gone before.

Mothers and fathers whose child is lost through miscarriage suffer profoundly

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as well, although their grief is often private or hidden. A 2003 article in the *American Journal of Maternal/Child Nursing* states: "We know from studies of women that miscarriage is a life changing event, and that women experience feelings of emptiness, dread, guilt, and grief. They have an increased need for support and they have many fears about their future child-bearing. Women have elevated depression and anxiety scores for up to a year after the event"¹. Common themes for women after miscarriage were anger and frustration, guilt, feeling alone, feeling that no one could really comprehend the depth of their sorrow, and feeling numb with grief.

All of the women in this study reported guilty feelings about causing the miscarriage, although most of them said they knew that, in fact, they probably had not caused it. Ambivalence about a pregnancy is common in the early weeks and ambivalent feelings make mourning difficult after the loss. These women often mourn alone. If they do share their experience, others may not understand—and respond with such comments as, "There must have been something terribly wrong, it's better this way," or "You will have another baby soon." Women tell me their feelings of emptiness, of being incompetent to nurture their child. They ruminate about what they could have done to cause the miscarriage: too much exercise, a glass of wine, poor nutrition, a fall, negative feelings about the pregnancy, or even wishing it away.

The death of a child by procured abortion is by far the most traumatic loss to grieve. The death is violent and untimely, the body is dismembered. For these parents there are no remains, no child to hold, no pictures to keep, no religious service, no grave to visit. Mothers and fathers of aborted children suffer their feelings of emptiness, grief, loss, and guilt in solitude—often not acknowledging them even to each other. Society offers them no validation for their overwhelming feelings. The parents' relationship with each other frequently falls apart due to their ambivalent feelings about the abortion and about each other's role in it. Grief, guilt, depression, self-loathing, and substance abuse cause them to have little physical or emotional energy to invest in personal relationships, work, or study. Their lives spiral downward. Women who can't sleep at night because of recurring nightmares of children being killed or dismembered often turn to alcohol, sleeping pills, or illicit drugs to get to sleep. Flashbacks to the abortion experience may haunt them for years, triggered by daily events such as the sound of a vacuum cleaner or the suction apparatus in a dentist's office, the music they heard at the abortion clinic, a baby in a TV ad, or a gynecological exam. Flashbacks cause them to relive the abortion procedure. They are overcome by waves of anxiety, palpitations, hyperventilation, and hypersensitivity to sound.

The date the child would have been born each year and the anniversary of the abortion trigger waves of sorrow and guilt. New pregnancies can be accompanied by feelings of incompetency as a parent—leading to multiple abortions. Deaths in the family trigger sorrow and remorse for past losses as well.

Depressive symptoms may become overwhelming and lead to suicidal ideation and completed suicides. A recent longitudinal study in New Zealand, where abortion is legal, followed over 1000 females from birth to age 25. Forty-one percent of women in this birth cohort became pregnant prior to age 25, with 14.6% undergoing an abortion. Those who had abortions were found to have elevated rates of subsequent mental health problems including depression, anxiety, suicidal behaviors, and substance abuse disorders. These rates were significantly higher than the rates of mental health problems in women who did not become pregnant, or who became pregnant and did not undergo an abortion. These findings could not be attributed to mental health problems in these young women prior to their abortions.² A study in Finland found the rate of suicide in women the year after an abortion (37.4 per 100,000) to be nearly six times greater than the suicide rate after live birth (5.9 per 100,000) and significantly higher than the suicide rate in the general population of women of childbearing age (11.3 per 100,000).³

Relationships with other children in families where abortions have occurred may be affected as well. Subsequent children may suffer from ambivalent attachment or overprotection by their mothers. Knowing that siblings have been aborted because of birth defects may cause other children to believe that any less-than-perfect performance on their part will cause them to be rejected as well. Grandparents, friends, guidance counselors, and school nurses who counseled abortions and abortion providers do not escape the ripple effect of this current epidemic of grief and guilt.

Other cultures too suffer the aftermath of abortion trauma. In Japan, aborted children are called “water babies” and are believed not to be free to return to God until they are rescued by means of prayers offered in the Buddhist temple by monks, and gifts and offerings of toys, candy, and clothing, which their parents place before small stone statues of infants in the temples.⁴ In Taiwan, aborted children are considered “spirit babies” who will return to haunt their parents, destroying their marriages and their businesses unless prayers are offered for them in the temples.

Forty-five million abortions in this country in the past 34 years since *Roe v. Wade*, and 1.2 million more each year, have created an overflowing pool of grief in the hearts of women and men who have lost their children in an untimely and violent fashion—grief which, until recently, they have been

concealing, at great emotional cost. As parents of aborted babies find a voice to tell us what a tragedy abortion has been in their lives and the scientific community corroborates their symptoms with irrefutable research data, the havoc which abortion has wrought in our society can no longer be denied.

When abortion is recognized as the traumatic event it is, and professional treatment (along with compassionate support and spiritual care) is made available to parents and others, then those who have suffered from abortion can become the wounded healers of our society, crying out, silently or in a loud voice, "No more." The pool of tears is spilling out into a cresting river of grief which is poised to flood our culture and wash it clean. When the river recedes, my hope is that it will leave its shores fertile for new life—for a culture of life that will emerge in our land and around the world.

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“Is There a Post-Abortion Syndrome?”:

A Study of Jaded Journalism

Georgette Forney

On a quiet day in October 2006, I received a phone call from Emily Bazelon. She identified herself as a writer for the *New York Times Magazine* and said she wanted to interview me for an article she was writing. I questioned her about what the point of the article would be and she assured me that she was writing a story about women’s experiences with abortion and the healing programs that were helping them. As the co-founder of the Silent No More Awareness Campaign, I was thrilled to hear that a national media outlet was interested in addressing abortion from the woman’s perspective; as Ms. Bazelon conducted various interviews with me and the Silent No More women, I got excited that this might be our big break. We would finally be able to get our message—“abortion hurts women”—out to a mass audience.

Unfortunately, the article Ms. Bazelon wrote left me feeling betrayed and disheartened. To help me decide if I was being overly sensitive about the article, I went over every paragraph and made notes where I saw inaccuracies or inconsistencies. Of the 70 paragraphs, I found problems with 23 of them.

- Paragraph 6 states that “the idea that abortion is at the root of women’s psychological ills is not supported by the bulk of the research. Instead, the scientific evidence strongly shows that abortion does not increase the risk of depression, drug abuse or any other psychological problem any more than having an unwanted pregnancy or giving birth.” However, Ms. Bazelon provides no specific study to support her statement. I am aware of 15 studies published since 2001 that support the theory that abortion is psychologically damaging to women, including one study titled “Abortion In Young Women and Subsequent Mental Health” (by David Fergusson et al., published in *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, January 2006, Volume 47). The study from New Zealand found that 42 percent of women in the study group who had had an abortion also had experienced major depression at some point during the past four years. This was nearly double the rate of those who had never been pregnant and 35 percent higher than those who had chosen to continue a pregnancy. (It should be noted that Mr. Fergusson is pro-choice and wasn’t happy with his findings, but reported them to uphold his scientific integrity.)

Georgette Forney is President of Anglicans for Life and co-founder of the Silent No More Awareness Campaign.

◦ Paragraph 11 contains an inaccurate description of Surgeon General C. Everett Koop's report on post-abortion. "Koop was against abortion, but he refused to issue the report and called the psychological harm caused by abortion 'minuscule from a public-health perspective.'" Bazelon does not cite the source for her quote. What he actually said in his three-page letter to President Reagan was that the available studies were flawed because they did not examine the problem of psychological consequences over a sufficiently long period.

◦ In paragraph 12, Bazelon mentions Theresa Burke, but fails to note that Burke is a Ph.D. and has written a well-known book on the psychological effects of abortion, *Forbidden Grief*. Neither the book nor Dr. Burke's extensive work with thousands of women affected by abortion are acknowledged or noted.

◦ In paragraph 15, she questions why post-abortive women do not "focus on why women don't have the material or social support they need to continue pregnancies." In fact, pregnancy centers don't worry about *why* women don't have resources, because they are more focused on providing them with practical help—like clothing, diapers, and parenting skills. Ironically, in paragraphs 44 through 51, Bazelon highlights the work of abortion clinics but never asks the same question of them.

◦ Paragraphs 20–22 get into research again. This time Bazelon claims that possibly 10 percent of women have problems after abortion but explains the sources of the trouble as being outside circumstances, or the fact that the women were "emotionally fragile beforehand." The research she quotes is from 1990; and the condescending "tough-luck" tone for unstable women and those with pre-existing risk factors is in remarkable contrast to the concern for women Bazelon professed to me during our interviews.

◦ Paragraph 25 notes that the American Psychiatric Association is currently reviewing the most recent scientific literature about the effects of abortion, but fails to mention that in September 2006 they removed a statement from their website denying any emotional consequences from abortion. Oddly enough, in the same paragraph, after pages of denying the scientific support for the pain of abortion, Bazelon writes, "For a minority of women, it is linked to lasting pain. You don't have to be an anti-abortion advocate to feel sorrow over an abortion, or to be haunted about whether you did the right thing."

◦ Paragraphs 26 through 39 are a description of a memorial service that takes place at a prison, and while she captures the raw emotion of this private and painful event, her words are tinged with doubt that the ministry being done is valid. This is the one place where Bazelon gives the reader a glimpse into the pain and suffering that women feel from abortion, but sadly

she closes the door before too much truth can escape.

- Paragraphs 44 through 51 talk about the pro-abortion approach to the after-effects of abortion for women. Bazelon explains that some clinics and pro-abortion groups are now providing counseling, which is ironic because she continues to question the credibility of the problem.

- Paragraph 59 expresses concern that state informed-consent laws that tell women about the emotional and physical risks associated with abortion are bogus, noting that South Dakota's "law requires physicians to give patients written state-approved information that supplies a link between abortion and an increased risk of suicide, though no causal connection has been found." Sadly, the writer missed the study titled "Pregnancy-Associated Mortality after Birth, Spontaneous Abortion or Induced Abortion in Finland 1987-2000," published in the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* in 2004. The research showed that the mortality rate associated with abortion is 2.95 times higher than that associated with pregnancies carried to term. Non-pregnant women had 57.0 deaths per 100,000, compared to 28.2 for women who carried pregnancies to term, 51.9 for women who miscarried, and 83.1 for women who had abortions (a 46 percent higher death rate than non-pregnant women). The study also revealed a sevenfold-increased rate of deaths from suicide among aborting women. The study included the entire population of women 15 to 49 years of age in Finland between 1987 and 2000.

- In paragraph 62, Ms. Bazelon finally mentions the Silent No More Awareness Campaign. Ironically, after she had spent at least eight hours conducting interviews with me on the phone and in person, the only comment she attributes to the Campaign is not relevant to the work we do to raise awareness.

In addition to these inaccuracies and inconsistencies, the entire article was littered with fiscal figures from the various pro-life groups mentioned. Bazelon appears to be insinuating that the effort to make abortion illegal is chiefly a money-making proposition. She realizes that public support for abortion is declining, so her true agenda is damage control—through discrediting our motivation for helping women. At two different places in the article she discusses the South Dakota abortion ban and pending lawsuits as strategies that use women and their pain; she never acknowledges our very real concern for women and children.

While the article was supposed to be about Post-Abortion Syndrome (PAS), the author never defines what that is, explains its symptoms, or tells any of the numerous real-life stories that were shared with her as examples of it. Instead of addressing PAS, as the title indicated, the article portrays those of us working with women wounded by abortion as extreme, law-centered,

manipulative, and at odds with the rest of the pro-life movement.

Bazelon's article could have helped so many women and unborn babies if only she had shared with her readers more of the women's stories, and the following ten facts about women and abortion that I shared with her. (You can also view, read, or listen to numerous testimonies at *SilentNoMoreAwareness.org*.)

1. Abortion creates emotional and behavioral problems for women.

After an abortion, many women find themselves dealing with increased use of drugs and/or alcohol to deaden their pain, recurring insomnia and nightmares, eating disorders, suicidal feelings, and attempted suicide. Women experience difficulty in maintaining or developing relationships, loneliness, isolation, anger, fears of the unknown, indecisiveness, and a sense of self-hatred. Since 2001, 15 studies focusing on the psychological effects of abortion have been done. These studies underscore the fact that evidence-based medicine does not support the conjecture that abortion will protect women from "serious danger" to their mental health. It indicates the opposite.

2. Abortion creates physical problems for women.

- Abortion advocates frequently assert that carrying an unintended pregnancy to term is more harmful to women than abortion. But all the research and women's personal experience say something else.

- In the U.S., over 140,000 women a year have *immediate* medical complications from abortion.

- Long-term health risks include an increased risk of breast, cervical, and ovarian cancer. Abortion can also lead to infertility due to hysterectomies, pelvic inflammatory disease and miscarriage.

- Abortion can cause the following complications during future pregnancies: premature birth, placenta previa, and ectopic pregnancy.

3. Women still die from abortion.

- Women still die from the abortion procedure, as well as from complications that occur afterwards.

- Studies also show that women with abortion history have an increased risk of dying from a variety of causes after abortion.

4. Abortion affects women spiritually.

Many women turn away from God, or fear a "greater power," because deep inside, we know we've taken the life of another being.

5. Women are pressured and coerced by family, friends, employers, institutions of learning, and sexual predators into having abortions.

In some cases, parents threaten to kick the girl out of the home, boyfriends and husbands threaten to leave, or women are told by well-meaning friends

that having a baby will ruin their lives and they simply have to have an abortion.

6. Abortion negatively affects women's future relationships.

- We struggle with issues of trust afterwards. How can we trust those who said they loved us and then allowed us to go through painful abortion?
- It affects how we relate to children we have in the future. Sometimes we can't bond with them or we over-protect them.
- Abortion is often a secret we keep from spouses, children, or parents. If we do want to seek healing, we must tell them. Telling others creates another set of problems and concerns.

7. Abortion is a band-aid that allows society to abandon women.

- Our culture has come to depend upon abortion so that individuals and churches don't have to get involved in caring for today's widows and orphans. It often frees many men from taking responsibility for their sexual promiscuity.
- Abortion stops being one choice among many and becomes the only choice because all the emotional and financial support dries up. Friends default to endorsing abortion so they don't have to be bothered.

8. Abortion is a form of racism against poor and ethnic women.

- Planned Parenthood identifies its core clients as young, low-income women of color. Black and Hispanic women represent only a quarter of American women of child-bearing age, yet account for more than half of all abortions in the U.S.

9. Abortion has led to increased violence against pregnant women.

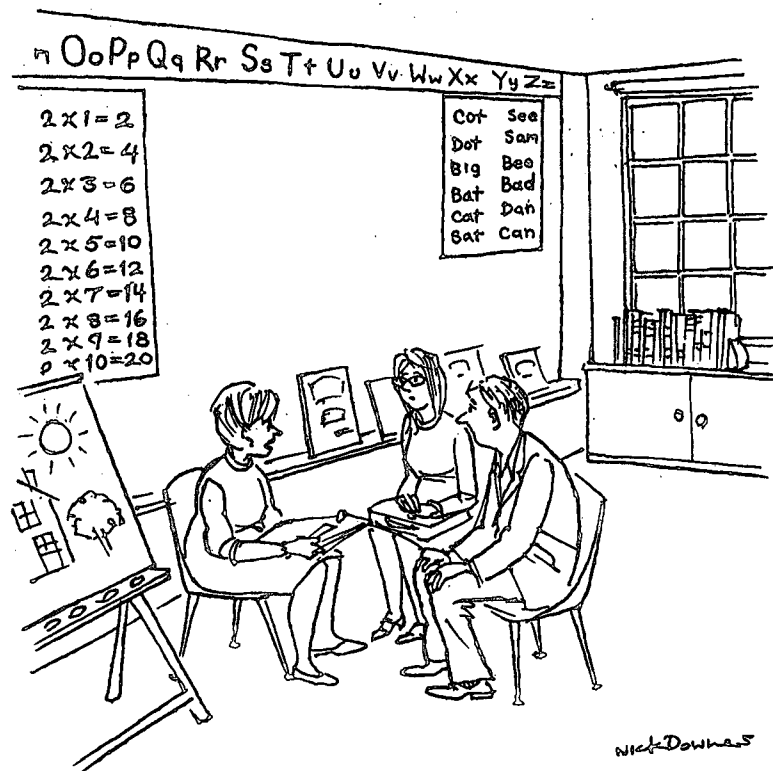
According to one study of battered women, the target of battery during their pregnancies shifts from their face and breasts to their pregnant abdomens, which suggests hostility toward the women's fertility. Women are literally being killed for refusing to abort. The leading cause of death during pregnancy is homicide. In one study of violent deaths among pregnant women, three out of every four were killed during their first 20 weeks of pregnancy.

10. Abortion compromises who we are as women.

- Women are designed to give life and nurture it. When we abort our children, we interfere with the natural process of procreation; this leaves an imprint on our heart, one that is often denied but never goes away.
- Bazelon, had she written a different article, could have had a positive effect on the lives of millions—by helping them consider the true effects of abortion on women. Instead, she chose to engage in a pro-abortion smear.
- A few days after the article was published I learned that Emily Bazelon

is the cousin of NARAL co-founder Betty Friedan, and granddaughter of pro-abortion judge David L. Bazelon. I found it ironic that Ms. Bazelon ended her article by implying that our pain can be explained away with the theory of “social contagion”—which may better describe her need to try to discredit women’s abortion pain.

◦ I wish she and her pro-abortion family members could be around when I’m sitting on the floor in some church, home, or conference room holding a sobbing woman as she begins to acknowledge and mourn the loss of the baby she aborted. It is a real, palpable pain that deserves mercy and compassion. If the abortion advocates can support a woman’s right to abort, why can’t they also support a woman’s right to regret her choice?



“You didn’t play ‘Baby Einstein’ tapes while Tyler was in utero?”

Poor God-crazed Rhonda:

Daring to Challenge the “Scientific” Consensus

Ian Gentles

We are not far into Emily Bazelon’s *New York Times* article on the post-abortion syndrome before she hands us some not-too-subtle clues as to how much faith we should put in the credibility of anti-abortion crusader Rhonda Arias. First of all, Arias wears silver earrings and low black boots. She talks a lot about God, even claiming to have had a revelation from Him. She is interested in Messianic Judaism. She prays out loud. She also has a history of “depression, drinking, and freebasing cocaine” as well as attempted suicide. As a child she suffered sexual abuse. The typical university-educated, left-leaning NYT reader will thus know how much stock to place in the evidence and arguments presented by this caricature of a pro-life zealot. Just in case there is any doubt about the matter, Bazelon, in an aside, coolly informs us that “the scientific evidence strongly shows that abortion does not increase the risk of depression, drug abuse, or any other psychological problem any more than having an unwanted pregnancy or giving birth.” Those few researchers who dispute the “scientific” consensus—people like David Reardon and his “ally” Vincent Rue—are dismissed as hardline anti-abortionists and consigned to the wastebasket. After all, we are reminded, not even Ronald Reagan’s anti-abortion surgeon general could find any psychological harm attributable to abortion. The dismissal of any factual basis to Arias’s moral crusade is completed by references to a number of pro-abortion “authorities” who categorically (but perhaps too emphatically) deny any link between abortion and psychological distress.

With the scientific question authoritatively disposed of, the progressive-minded reader is then free to enjoy the amusing tale of a wacky moral crusade being conducted by a 53-year-old exemplar of southern trailer-park trash.

But is there a possibility that Arias, in spite of Bazelon’s strong hints that she is intellectually challenged, and hysterical to boot, might have a point?

Let’s begin with Bazelon’s statement that “no causal connection has been found” linking abortion with an increased risk of suicide. Of course a *causal* connection has not been found. No epidemiologist worth his or her salt talks about causes, only about correlations. Between induced abortion and suicide the correlation has been shown to be massive and powerful,

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in numerous international studies published in the most prestigious journals. These studies are based on the experiences of hundreds of thousands of women, who have been tracked through record linkage. Record linkage in this context means using official hospital and mortality records to trace a given population to find how many have abortions, psychiatric-hospital admissions, or die after their abortion. Research based on record linkage is far more authoritative than research based on interviews. Record-linkage studies typically involve large populations; they are not contaminated by interviewer bias; and they do not suffer from the problem of the refusal of some subjects to participate, or the attrition of those who do agree to participate.

Ironically, it is David Reardon, the anti-abortion researcher, who, in his study of 173,279 low-income California women, found the *weakest* correlation between induced abortion and suicide. In the four years following their abortion, women who had abortions experienced a suicide rate 160 percent higher than women who delivered their babies.¹ A much larger study of 408,000 British women in the 1990s established that women who had induced abortions were 225 per cent more likely to commit suicide than women admitted for delivery of their babies.² The largest study, based on the records of more than 1.1 million births, induced and spontaneous abortions, and ectopic pregnancies experienced by Scandinavian women between 1987 and 2000 uncovered a suicide rate among women who underwent abortions *over six times* (518 percent) higher than among pregnant women who had their babies.³ The Scandinavian researchers also made the astonishing discovery that mortality from all external causes—suicide, homicide, external injuries—was more than twice as high among women who had induced abortions as among non-pregnant women, and over six times as high as among women whose pregnancy ended in birth. In light of this they cautiously suggest that not having an abortion may be better for a woman's mental health than having one. Remember that for decades we were glibly told that "abortion is safer than childbirth." That myth has now been buried, by the research published in the last decade.

And yet, we continue to be assured—by the American Psychological Association, no less—that "well-designed studies of psychological responses following abortion have consistently shown that risk of psychological harm is low . . . the percentage of women who experience clinically relevant distress is small and appears to be no greater than in general samples of women of reproductive age."⁴ It is dogmatic statements like these that fill Bazelon with enormous confidence in her own rightness. But as a New Zealand research team with impeccable credentials has recently pointed out, the APA

statement is “based on a relatively small number of studies which had one or more of the following limitations: a) absence of comprehensive assessment of mental disorders; b) lack of comparison groups; and c) limited statistical controls. Furthermore, the statement appears to disregard the findings of a number of studies that had claimed to show negative effects for abortion.”⁵ Perhaps that explains why the APA will no longer let you read the paper on their website.

Apart from the overwhelming evidence about the link between abortion and suicide, what else do we know at present about the impact of induced abortion on women’s mental health? In fact, a great deal. But the subject is a minefield of political correctness and evasiveness. Some abortion researchers deny in the conclusions to their papers the very information that they have uncovered in their research.⁶ Thus Zoe Bradshaw and Pauline Slade conclude that women who have abortions do “no worse psychologically than women who give birth to wanted or unwanted children.” Yet in the abstract they tell us that prior to undergoing an abortion 40 to 45 percent of women experience significant levels of anxiety, and around 20 percent experience significant levels of depressive symptoms. Following the abortion, “around 30 percent of women are still experiencing emotional problems after a month.” In the discussion part of the paper they also concede that the studies on which they base their conclusion are plagued by high rates of nonparticipation and attrition. Common sense suggests that women who refuse to participate in an abortion study, or who drop out in the middle of it are more likely to be psychologically distressed than those who sign on and participate to the end. They also reveal that negative effects on sexual functioning were reported by 10 to 20 percent of women in the year following their abortion. Negative effects were also reported on couple relationships.⁷

Nevertheless, Bradshaw and Slade assure us that in the long run abortion has little adverse effect on women’s psychological health, citing two studies whose authors’ bias in favor of abortion is glaringly obvious. They completely ignore Cogle and Reardon’s analysis of the U.S. National Survey of Youth, which revealed that women who aborted had significantly higher depression scores *ten* years after their abortion than those who bore their children. After controlling for a wide range of variables, Cogle and Reardon ascertained that post-abortive women were 41 percent more likely to score in the “high-risk” range for clinical depression. Aborting women were 73 percent more likely to complain of “depression, excessive worry, or nervous trouble of any kind,” on average *seventeen* years later.⁸ This finding is buttressed by a Canadian study of 50 post-abortive women in psychotherapy.

The researchers found that “although none had entered therapy because of adverse emotional reactions to abortion, they expressed deep feelings of pain and bereavement about the procedure as treatment continued. Typically, the bereavement response emerged during the period when the patient was recovering from the presenting problem.”⁹

However much pro-abortion researchers may like to assure us that abortion causes little psychological distress among women, or even, perversely, that abortion is actually *good* for women, they cannot refute record-linkage studies showing a much higher incidence of hospitalization for women who have induced abortions. Such a study was completed just a few years ago by researchers for the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario—hardly an institution known for its anti-abortion bias. Comparing 41,039 women who had induced abortions and a similar number who did not undergo induced abortions, the study revealed that in a mere three months the women who had abortions suffered a nearly five times higher rate of hospitalization for psychiatric problems than the control group (5.2 vs. 1.1 per thousand). In this short period the hospital (as opposed to clinic) patients also experienced a more than four times higher rate of hospitalization for infections, and a five times higher rate of “surgical events.”¹⁰

Fortunately, the study of abortion’s aftermath is less politically charged outside North America. Illuminating in this regard is the recent study by Fergusson, Horwood, and Ridder. They gathered data on a birth cohort of 520 females in Christchurch, New Zealand, and tracked them for a 25-year longitudinal study. After eliminating a host of “confounding” factors that have been the bane of most studies of this nature—such as mother’s education, childhood sexual or physical abuse, prior personality problems, smoking, alcohol and cannabis consumption, prior history of suicidal ideation, etc.—they judiciously conclude that “mental health problems [are] highest amongst those having abortions and lowest amongst those who had not become pregnant.”

The presentation of the evidence in their tables show how understated this conclusion actually is. By almost every measure—major depression, anxiety disorder, suicidal ideation, alcohol dependence, illicit-drug dependence, mean number of mental-health problems—those who terminated their pregnancy by abortion suffered much higher rates of disorder than those who were never pregnant, and those who were pregnant but did not abort. After “covariate adjustment”—in other words, taking account of the various “confounding” factors noted above—they found that those in the “not pregnant” and “pregnant no abortion” categories ran far lower risks of suffering various disorders.

Table: percentage lower risks experienced by Not Pregnant and Pregnant No Abortion, compared to Pregnant Abortion¹¹

<i>Measure</i>	<i>Percentage lower risk than Pregnant Abortion subjects</i>	
	Not pregnant	Pregnant no abortion
Major depression	52	65
Anxiety disorder	48	56
Suicidal ideation	58	76
Illicit drug dependence	80	85
Number of mental-health problems	34	42

Isn't it interesting that women who didn't have abortions were 80 to 85 percent less likely to have an illicit-drug dependence than those who did? Striking support for Rhonda Arias's hunch that a good part of America's big drug problem is "because of abortion."

Another recent, non-North-American study shines a spotlight on the various pressures brought on women to terminate their pregnancies, and the devastating impact this can have on their emotional well-being. The authors of this study of 80 Norwegian women admit up front that their sample represents only 46 percent of those who were asked to participate, and concede that because of this "our study may well be an underestimation of the negative emotional responses" to abortion. Fully one-quarter of the women reported pressure from their male partner as a reason for having the abortion. This is only the eleventh most frequently cited reason. However, the fourth most cited reason, given by over a third of the women, was that their partner "does not favor having a child at the moment." Small but significant numbers of women also listed pressure from friends, mother, father, siblings, and others as reasons for their abortion. If all these various sources of coercive pressure are combined, pressure to have the abortion emerges as by far the leading factor leading these Norwegian women to undergo the operation.¹² A sobering finding, that cries out for similar studies to be carried out in other countries.

To conclude, the whole subject of induced abortion and women's mental health is, in North America, fiercely contested political turf. The establishment media and such heavily politicized professional bodies as the American Psychological Association would have us believe that induced abortion has next to no adverse effects on women's mental health. Indeed, some social scientists go so far as to argue that abortion is often good for women: It relieves them of a terrible burden, and enables them to turn over a new page in their lives. If only certain groups would stop trying to make them feel

guilty for what they have done. On the other hand there are three large-scale record-linkage studies from the U.S., Britain, and Scandinavia that establish irrefutably a strong correlation between abortion and subsequent death from suicide and other causes. Other studies have established that women who undergo an induced abortion have a much higher rate of hospital admission for psychiatric problems. Studies have shown that these problems do not clear up quickly; on the contrary, they often haunt women for decades afterwards. Finally, a methodologically impeccable study from New Zealand has recently shown a clear correlation between induced abortion and a variety of mental-health problems including major depression, anxiety disorder, suicidal ideation, and illicit-drug dependence. So much for Emily Bazelon's glib assurance that abortion does not increase the risk of psychological problems "any more than giving birth."

NOTES

1. Reardon, DC, Ney PG, Scheurer FJ, Cogle JR, Coleman PK. Suicide deaths associated with pregnancy outcome: A record linkage study of 173,279 low income American women. *Archives of Women's Mental Health* 2001; 3(4) Suppl.2:104.
2. Morgan CL, Evans M, Peter JR. Suicides after pregnancy. Mental health may deteriorate as a direct effect of induced abortion. *British Medical Journal* 1997 March 22; 314(7084): 902.
3. Gissler M, Berg C, Bouvier-Colle M-H, Buekens P. Injury deaths, suicides and homicides associated with pregnancy, Finland 1987-2000. *European Journal of Public Health* 2005; 25(5): 460; Gissler M, Hemminki E, Lonnqvist J. Suicide after pregnancy in Finland, 1987-1994: register linkage study. *British Medical Journal* 1996 December 7; 313 (7070): 1431-1434.
4. American Psychological Association. *APA Briefing Paper on the Impact of Abortion on Women* (2005), cited in Fergusson DM, Horwood LJ, Ridder EM. Abortion in young women and subsequent mental health. *Journal of Child Psychology & Psychiatry* 2006; 47(1): 16-24. At the time of writing, the APA has withdrawn the paper from its website with the explanation that it is "currently being updated."
5. Fergusson et al. Abortion in young women. See note 4.
6. For a general discussion of this problem see Elizabeth Ring-Cassidy and Ian Gentles. *Women's Health after Abortion: The Medical and Psychological Evidence*. Toronto: deVeber Institute for Bioethics and Social Research, 2003, ch. 17.
7. Bradshaw Z, Slade P. The effects of induced abortion on emotional experiences and relationships: A critical review of the literature. *Clinical Psychology Review* 2003; 23, pp. 929, 943-4, 948.
8. Cogle JR, Reardon DC, Coleman PK. Depression associated with abortion and childbirth: A long-term analysis of the NLSY cohort. *Archives of Women's Mental Health* 2001; 3 (4) Suppl. 2: 105.
9. Kent I, Greenwood RC, Loeken J, Nicholls W. Emotional sequelae of elective abortion. *BC Medical Journal* 1978 April; 20 (4): 118-119.
10. Ostbye T, Wenghofer EF, Woodward CA, Gold G, Craighead J. Health services utilization after induced abortions in Ontario: A comparison between community clinics and hospitals. *American Journal of Medical Quality* 2001 May; 6 (3): 99-106.
11. The figures in this table are derived from Table 3 in Fergusson et al.'s study.
12. Broen AN, Torbjorn M, Bodtker AS, Akeberg O. Reasons for induced abortion and their relation to women's emotional distress: a prospective two-year follow-up study. *General Hospital Psychiatry* 2005; 27: 36-43.

The Heartless Bastards

Melinda Tankard Reist

"Is There A Post-Abortion Syndrome?"—Emily Bazelon, NYT Magazine, January 21, 2007

"My God, what a bunch of heartless bastards populate these message boards"—grn, April 10, 2007

Is there a Post-Abortion Syndrome?

I'm not sure. I don't exactly know when a pattern of symptoms and suffering become a syndrome.

Is there hatred and contempt for women who have had abortions and suffer afterwards?

Absolutely.

In a research paper published last year titled "Women and Abortion: An Evidence-Based Review," which drew from the available medical literature on the subject, my organisation, Women's Forum Australia (www.womensforumaustralia.org) found "Ten to twenty percent of women suffer from severe negative psychological complications after abortion."

Our research showed "depression and anxiety are experienced by substantial numbers of women after abortion." After abortion "women have an increased risk of psychiatric problems including bipolar disorder, neurotic depression, depressive psychosis and schizophrenia."

In regard to Post Abortion Syndrome, we found "for a small proportion of women, abortion triggers Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder."

Syndrome or not (and others may well demonstrate there is a syndrome, in this symposium) an increased risk of bipolar disorder, depression, psychosis and schizophrenia is pretty damn serious. You don't want to get any of these.

But the question of a "Syndrome" isn't what interests me most at this time.

What interests me are the heartless bastards.

The world appears to be populated by heartless bastards. I'm not sure it would make any difference if a post-abortion syndrome was established.

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The response I fear would be the same—dismissal, mockery, contempt and blame.

Why am I so cynical?

It's something I've observed over many years of collecting the stories of women. Some of these personal accounts appeared in my first book *Giving Sorrow Words: Women's Stories of Grief After Abortion* (on a happier note, recently published in the U.S. by Acorn books and available through the Elliott Institute). Many hundreds more women have contacted me since then.

When the book was published in Australia in 2000, critics wrote things like: "Abortion can be an emotional subject—particularly for people who choose to get upset about it. There is a movement taking hold called: 'I'll always regret what I did and want to burn in hell for it.'"

The women in my book were mocked as whiners and complainers, attention seeking, unsuited to the real world. They were depicted as a pathetic minority (the especially dismissive critics said 2 percent, others 10 percent)—as though there is some percentage below which we ignore suffering.

But it is a more recent experience that causes me to ponder the callousness of many to exquisite suffering.

I interviewed a woman who had undergone a termination. It was a harrowing account, full of darkness, mental affliction, and anguish. She had been pressured to have a termination she didn't really want. It seemed there was no way out at the time. Now she was seeking a way out with a noose. I posted the story on line. The vehemence of the responses took me aback.

The reaction to the article was swift. The bulk of messages posted to the site were brutal. The story was an invention. The woman was foolish for not using birth control. She lacked control. She was trying to blame others. She needed a more "pragmatic" outlook. She was depicted as a silly, emotional girl who was wasting everyone's time.

There were a smattering of supportive messages, little lights flickering in a sea of cruelty.

A woman who identified herself by the sign-in name "61": "That's right. A woman is assaulted. Blame the woman."

Wrote "grn": "My God, what a bunch of heartless bastards populate these message boards."

I was very grateful to "61" and "grn". In a few words they captured the cruelty of the majority of posters.

Those identifying themselves as "pro-choice" seemed more concerned with defending abortion than with the exquisite suffering of this woman—and so many others.

But no, you can't question abortion as a straightforward, morally unproblematic and unmitigated good for all women everywhere.

Even those who are firmly on the pro-choice side find themselves hammered when they do.

At a women's health conference in Canberra a few years ago, the speakers had talked about abortion as a "fertility control strategy," about removing the "embryonic implant," about pregnancy as "oppression." The status of the foetus was "irrelevant," they said.

A woman rose in the audience, clearly agitated. She was, she said, "facing a conflict between her politics and the reality of removing quite well-formed foetuses from women." Working in a Sydney abortion clinic for the past year, she felt no one was facing what abortion was really about, she had difficulty advocating for it, she felt it violated women's bodies too. And it was one thing to be pro-choice—it was another to deal with dead babies every day.

The reaction was brisk. She was told she had no right to express such doubts, that she was merely the provider of a service, that her personal feelings shouldn't come into it. The woman left the room and I didn't see her again.

The New York *Times* piece also provides evidence of the see-no-evil, hear-no-evil approach to abortion provision.

Observes ex-Planned Parenthood social worker Ava Torre-Bueno: "But then what you hear in the movement is 'Let's not make noise about this' and 'Most women are fine, I'm sure you will be too.' And that is unfair."

Torre-Bueno, solidly pro-choice but admitting abortion involves pain and needs grieving, published a book in 1994 called *Peace After Abortion*. She approached Planned Parenthood to ask if they would host a book launch for her. The director said no. "He called me a 'dupe of the antis,'" she remembers.

Planned Parenthood also stopped sending referrals to Charlotte Taft, who ran a clinic for 17 years which didn't ram women through to the abortion table assembly-line style. She resigned when the owner of the clinic she directed decided to run a more "traditional practice."

Then there's Aspen Baker, who expected counselling after an abortion she had at 23. But there wasn't any. She volunteered at California NARAL "and tried to talk about the sadness she was feeling. No one seemed receptive."

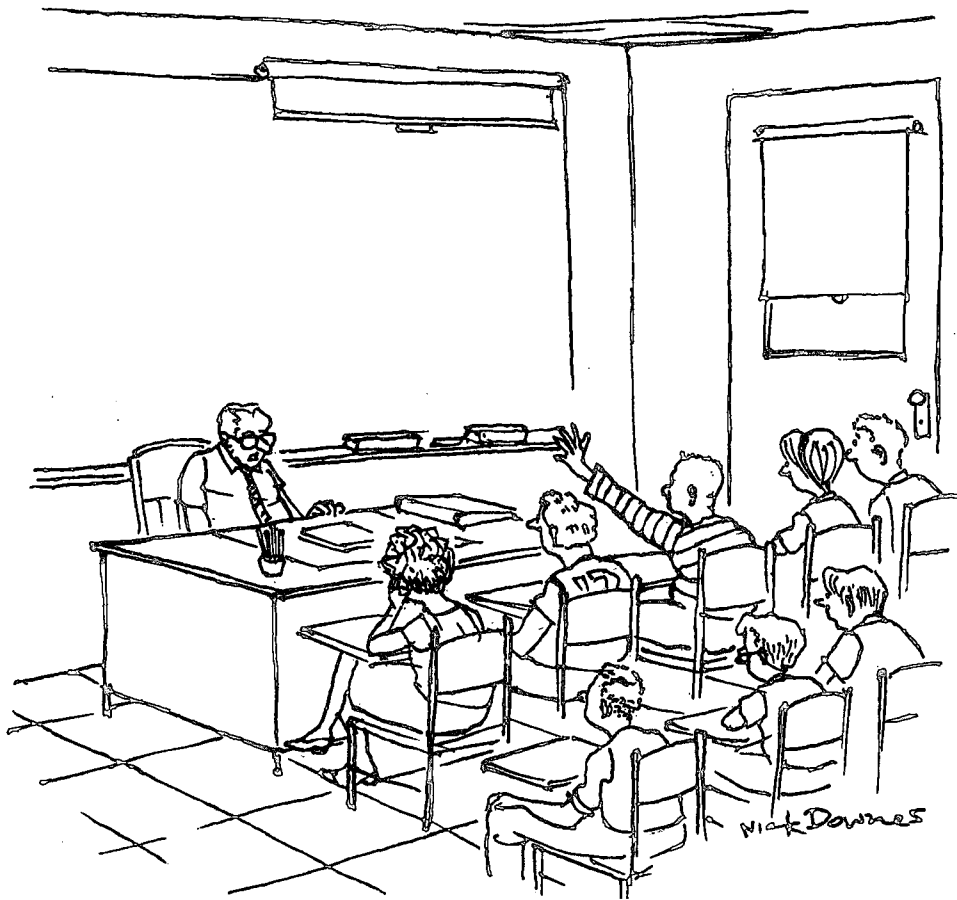
Why acknowledge a woman's grief and pain when you can thump them with a slogan?

The Bazelon piece tells us that when a group of abortive women gathered at the Supreme Court with banners saying "I Regret my Abortion," "two

dozen people in NOW and NARAL T-shirts chanted: "Right to life, that's a lie. You don't care if women die," and "You get pregnant, let me know. Anti-choicers got to go."

Abortion grief is greeted with well-worn chants. Slogans have become a substitute for an honest examination of how women fare after abortion.

I hope the heartless bastards don't win.



"That's O.K., Dugan—'Why do I even bother?' was a rhetorical question."

The Question Too Dangerous To Ask: **What If Post-Abortion Syndrome Is Real?**

Vincent M. Rue, Ph.D., & Priscilla K. Coleman, Ph.D.

There is an old adage about cross-examination at trial: “Never ask the witness a question if you don’t know the answer.” Given Emily Bazelon’s legal training and undisclosed, yet strong, pro-abortion bias, her article—“Is There a Post-Abortion Syndrome?” in the January 21, 2007 *New York Times Magazine*—was clearly not an objective exploration but merely an attempt to discredit. But who discredited what?

Bazelon focused on post-abortion counselor Rhonda Arias, to frame the post-abortion-trauma debate as if this entire issue were some sort of religious conspiracy—rather than a matter of scientific and clinical experience. Bazelon found no support for this syndrome in the “bulk of the research,” despite being extensively briefed on the support for it by Priscilla Coleman (co-author of this article). Instead, Bazelon concluded that Post-Abortion Syndrome (PAS) is merely a convenient psychological “dumping ground” on which women can blame all their suffering. Nevertheless, throughout the article, the voices of women traumatized by their abortions resounded loudly, including that of Arias (who attempted suicide following her abortion). Blaming the victim is an old ploy, patronizing and unacceptable in today’s world. If we can’t trust what women disclose about their pain and suffering, those of us in the medical and psychological sciences should simply fade away as rusting relics of pseudo-compassion. Bazelon would have penned her last article if she had implied that women who were raped should not be believed if they attributed their traumatic suffering to their rape.

The meaningful question Bazelon didn’t ask is: What if Post-Abortion Syndrome is *real*? What would this mean as a public-health concern? What would this mean to Planned Parenthood and those who perform abortions daily? What would this mean for informed consent and malpractice liability? What would this mean to the millions of women around the world who have had an abortion or are thinking of doing so? If PAS is real, then the consequences are serious and far-reaching. And—tragically—it *is* real.

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The Naysayers

Not surprisingly the three primary opponents of the idea of Post-Abortion Syndrome—Nancy Russo, Nancy Adler, and Brenda Major—are social, not clinical, psychologists. It's likely they have never treated a woman who has had an abortion—yet they know when a clinical syndrome doesn't exist! On the other hand, published pro-choice professional counselors Torre-Bueno, Baker, Rivera, Depuy and Dovitch, and others have affirmed that abortion can be traumatic and overwhelm some women's ability to cope.¹

Abortion as Trauma

Those of us who have either witnessed trauma or experienced it second-hand through disclosures in therapy know all too well that it is impossible to remain neutral. There are no sidelines on which to hide. Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur infrequently, but because they overwhelm our ability to adapt. The essential characteristics of a traumatic event include the following: *(1) the person has experienced, witnessed, or been confronted with an event or events that involve actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of oneself or others; (2) the person's response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror.* Delayed responses are also common. Abundant clinical and research evidence indicates that an induced abortion is an intentionally caused human death experience, and as such, is capable of precipitating psychological traumatization.²

The Evidence of Post-Abortion Syndrome

The first clinical evidence of PAS was presented in testimony before Congress in 1981, although many other mental-health experts had previously identified significant emotional harms following abortion. At the least, a fair understanding of the post-abortion literature by any reporter requires a careful read of the latest review articles in professional journals.³ Bazelon did not do this. Accordingly, we have provided a compendium of some of the compelling research that should have been identified by her. See Table 1.

Finally, Bazelon raised the issue that even if abortion has adverse emotional outcomes, the science supporting PAS doesn't "prove" that abortion *caused* psychological injury. Michaels and Monforton challenge such tactics in general, and demonstrate how opponents of public health and health regulations often try to "manufacture uncertainty" by questioning the validity of scientific evidence on which regulations are based.⁴ This strategy has been used by the tobacco industry, and by other producers of hazardous products. Purveyors of this strategy use the label "junk science" to ridicule research that threatens powerful interests. According to the authors,

the strategic plan developed by Hill and Knowlton to dispute regulations on or warning about smoking, and the so-called “cancer link,” used this very approach: “That cause-and-effect relationships have not been established in any way; that statistical data do not provide the answers; and that much more research is needed.” This sounds all too familiar in the abortion industry’s response, one echoed in Bazelon’s article. To them, no study can nor should ever justify regulatory measures for abortion. So too did the tobacco industry, until recently. The fact is, in medicine, psychology, public health, etc., *absolute* certainty is rarely derived from empirical studies. Determinations of causation are rarely definitive; they rely upon accumulated significant associations, controlling for as many variables as possible, using comparison groups, assessing effects over time, and assessing negative outcomes in statistical probabilities of health risk.

Conclusion

The ultimate injustice of Bazelon’s piece is that it politicizes PAS—and thereby dismisses the enormity of women’s and men’s suffering in the aftermath of abortion. This heightened insensitivity is startling given that every conceivable victim in society receives more attention and compassion.⁵ In another context, Bazelon’s strategy would be utterly shocking: It would be like trying to minimize the negative impact of war by attacking the legitimacy of post-traumatic stress disorder in soldiers. Whether denied, dismissed, or politically incorrect, the invisible and inconvenient injury of PAS remains. In the end, it is that cumulative toll of individual lives harmed that will render the decisive judgment about abortion’s fate.

NOTES

1. See: Torre-Bueno, A. (1996). “Peace After Abortion.” San Diego: Pimpernel Press; Baker, A. (1995). “Abortion and Options Counseling.” Granite City, Ill: Hope Clinic; Rivera, M. (1998). “Abortion issues in psychotherapy.” In Beckman, L. & Harvey, S. (Eds.) *The New Civil War: The Psychology, Culture, and Politics of Abortion*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association; and DePuy, C. & Dovitch, D. (1997). *The Healing Choice*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
2. See: Rue, V. & Speckhard, A. (1991). “Post-abortion trauma: Incidence & diagnostic considerations.” *Medicine & Mind*, 6, 57-74; Speckhard, A. & Rue, V. (1992). “Postabortion syndrome: An emerging public health concern.” *Journal of Social Issues*, 42: 95-119; Burke, T. & Reardon, D. (2002). “Forbidden Grief: The Unspoken Pain of Abortion.” Springfield, IL: *Acorn*; Bagarozzi, D. (1994). Identification, assessment and treatment of women suffering from Post Traumatic Stress after abortion. *Journal of Family Psychotherapy*, 5: 25-54; Selby, T. (1990). *The Mourning After: Help for Post-Abortion Syndrome*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker; Doherty, P. (ed.) (1995). *Post-Abortion Syndrome: Its wide ramifications*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge; and Rue, V., Coleman, P., Rue, J., & Reardon, D. (2004). “Induced abortion and traumatic stress: A preliminary comparison of American and Russian women.” *Medical Science Monitor*, 10:SR 5-16.
3. See: Bradshaw, Z. & Slade, P. (2003). The effects of induced abortion on emotional experiences

- and relationships: A critical review of the literature. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 23:929-958; Coleman, P., Reardon, D., Strahan, T. & Cougle, J. (2005). The psychology of abortion: A review and suggestions for further research. *Psychology and Health*, 20:237-271; and Coleman (2005). Induced abortion and increased risk of substance abuse: A review of the evidence. *Current Women's Health Reviews*, 1:12-34.
4. Michaels, D. & Monforton, C. (2005). Manufacturing uncertainty: Contested science and the protection of the public's health and environment. *American Journal of Public Health*, 95:S39-S47.
 5. See: Grossman, M. (2006). *Unprotected*. NY: Penguin, chapter 6.

Table 1: Research on Mental Health Risks of Induced Abortion

<i>Publications</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Results</i>
Coleman, P. K., Reardon, D. C., Rue, V., & Cougle, J. (2002). "State-funded abortions vs. deliveries: A comparison of outpatient mental health claims over four years." <i>American Journal of Orthopsychiatry</i> , 72, 141-152.	Women who aborted (n=14,297) or delivered a child (n=40,122) while receiving medical assistance from the state of California (Medi-Cal) in 1989 and who had no psychiatric claims for 1 yr prior to pregnancy resolution. Delivery group had no subsequent abortions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Within 90 days after pregnancy resolution, the abortion group had 63% more total claims than the birth group, with the percentages equaling 42%, 30%, 16%, and 17% for the 1st 180 days, yr 1, yr 2 and across the full 4-yr study period respectively. ◦ Across the 4 yrs, the abortion group had 21% more claims for adjustment reactions than the birth group, with the percentages equaling 95%, 40%, and 97% for bipolar disorder, neurotic depression, and schizophrenia respectively.
Coleman, P. K., Reardon, D. C., Rue, V., & Cougle, J. (2002). "History of induced abortion in relation to substance use during subsequent pregnancies carried to term." <i>American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology</i> , 187, 1673-1678.	Women who carried a pregnancy to term with a history of one prior abortion (n=74) were compared to women with one prior birth (n=531) and no prior pregnancies (n=738).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Compared with women who had previously given birth, women who aborted were significantly more likely to use marijuana (929%), various illicit drugs (460%), and alcohol (122%) during their next pregnancy. Results with only first-time mothers were similar. ◦ Differences between the abortion group and the prior birth and no prior pregnancy groups relative to marijuana and use of any illicit drug were more pronounced among married and higher income women and when more time had elapsed since the prior pregnancy. ◦ Differences relative to alcohol use were most pronounced among the white women and when more time had elapsed since the prior pregnancy.

<i>Publications</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Results</i>
Cougles, J., Reardon, D. C., & Coleman, P. K. (2003). "Depression associated with abortion and childbirth: A long-term analysis of the NLSY cohort." <i>Medical Science Monitor</i> , 9, CR105-112.	First pregnancy event of either an abortion (n=293) or delivery (n=1,591) between 1980 and 1992.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women whose 1st pregnancies ended in abortion were 65% more likely to score in the "high-risk" range for clinical depression. • Differences between the abortion and birth groups were greatest among the demographic groups least likely to conceal an abortion (White: 79% higher risk; married: 116% higher risk; 1st marriage didn't end in divorce: 119% higher risk).
Coleman, P. K., Reardon, D. C., & Cougle, J. (2002). "The quality of the caregiving environment and child developmental outcomes associated with maternal history of abortion using the NLSY data." <i>Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines</i> , 43, 743-758.	Mothers with (n=672) and without a history of abortion (n=4,172) prior to childbirth, with children between the ages of 1 and 13 yrs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower emotional support in the home among 1st born 1-to-4-year-olds of mothers with a history of abortion. • When there was a history of abortion, children (2nd & 3rd born. 1 to 4-yr-olds) of divorced mothers experienced lower levels of emotional support than children of non-divorced women. Decreased emotional support was not observed among children of divorced women with no history of abortion. • More behavior problems among 5-to-9-yr-olds of mothers with a history of abortion.
Coleman, P. K., Reardon, D. C., & Cougle, J. (2005). "Substance use among pregnant women in the context of previous reproductive loss and desire for current pregnancy." <i>British Journal of Health Psychology</i> , 10, 255-268.	Women with a history of abortion (n=280), miscarriage (n=182), and stillbirth (n=30) were compared to women without the respective forms of loss: no miscarriage, n= 221; no abortion, n=144; no stillbirth, n= 371. Comparisons were also made between women who reported wanting a recent pregnancy (n= 306) and those who reported not wanting it (n=344).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No differences were observed in the risk of using any of the substances measured during pregnancy relative to a prior history of miscarriage or stillbirth. • A prior history of abortion was associated with a significantly higher risk of using marijuana (201%), cocaine-crack (198%), cocaine other than crack (406%), any illicit drugs (180%), and cigarettes (100%). • No differences were observed in the risk of using various substances relative to pregnancy wantedness, with the exception of the risk of cigarette use being higher when pregnancy was not wanted (90%).

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<i>Publications</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Results</i>
Coleman P. K., Maxey C. D., Rue V. M, Coyle C. T. (2005). "Associations between Voluntary and Involuntary Forms of Perinatal Loss and Child Maltreatment among Low-Income Mothers." <i>Acta Paediatrica</i> , 94.	The 518 participants included 118 abusive mothers, 119 neglecting mothers, and 281 mothers with no history of child maltreatment. Reproductive loss information: 100 women had a history of one abortion and 99 had a history of one miscarriage/stillbirth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Compared to women with no history of perinatal loss, those with 1 loss (voluntary or involuntary) had a 99% higher risk for child physical abuse. ◦ Compared to women with no history of induced abortion, those with 1 prior abortion had a 144% higher risk for child physical abuse. ◦ A history of 1 miscarriage/stillbirth was not associated with increased risk of child abuse. ◦ Perinatal loss was not related to neglect.
Coleman, P. (2006). "Resolution of Unwanted Pregnancy During Adolescence Through Abortion versus Childbirth: Individual and Family Predictors and Consequences." <i>Journal of Youth and Adolescence</i> .	Adolescents in grades 7-11 who experienced an unwanted pregnancy that was resolved through abortion (n=65) or delivery (n=65).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ After implementing controls, adolescents with an abortion history, when compared to adolescents who had given birth, were 5 times more likely to seek counseling for psychological or emotional problems, 4 times more likely to report frequent sleep problems, and they were 6 times more likely to use marijuana.
Coleman P., Rue V., Coyle C., & Maxey C. (2007). "Induced Abortion and Child-Directed Aggression Among Mothers of Maltreated Children." <i>Internet Journal of Pediatrics and Neonatology</i> , 6 (2).	237 mothers who were residents of Baltimore and were receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children. Women with and without a history of abortion were compared relative to child-directed physical aggression. All of the women had a history of child maltreatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Abortion history was associated with significantly more frequent maternal slapping, hitting, kicking/biting, beating, and use of physical punishment in general.

<i>Publications</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Results</i>
Conklin, M. & O'Connor, B. (1995). "Beliefs about the fetus as a moderator of post-abortion psychological well-being." <i>Journal of Social Psychiatry</i> , 39, 76-81.	817 women, 132 of whom had a least one abortion and 21 of whom had 2 or more abortions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abortion was found to be associated with compromised self-esteem, decreased life satisfaction, and negative emotions among women who believed in the humanity of the fetus. • Women who even slightly disagreed that fetuses are human scored lower on the well-being variables than women who responded with a higher level of disagreement. • On the Beliefs About the Fetus scale, the potential range of scores was from 1-7, with higher scores indicative of endorsement of the fetus as human. Women who aborted had a mean score of 3.42 (SD=1.40).
Cogle, J., Reardon, D. C., Coleman, P. K., & Rue, V. M. (2005). "Generalized anxiety associated with unintended pregnancy: A cohort study of the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth." <i>Journal of Anxiety Disorders</i> , 19, 137-142.	First pregnancy event of either an abortion (n=1,033) or delivery (n=1,813). All were unintended pregnancies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The odds of experiencing subsequent Generalized Anxiety was 34% higher among women who aborted compared to women who delivered. • Differences between the abortion and birth groups were greatest among the following demographic groups: Hispanic 86% higher risk; unmarried at time of pregnancy: 42% higher risk; under age 20: 46% higher risk.
David, H., Rasmussen, N., & Holst, E. (1981). "Post-abortion and postpartum psychotic reactions." <i>Family Planning Perspectives</i> , 13, 88-91.	Danish study of over 27,000 women with an abortion history compared to over 71,000 women who carried to term.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall rate of psychiatric admission was 18.4 and 12.0 per 10,000 for women with a history of abortion and delivery respectively. • Among divorced, separated, or widowed women, the rate of psychiatric admission was 63.8 and 16.9 per 10,000 for women with a history of abortion and delivery respectively.

<i>Publications</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Results</i>
Fergusson, D. M., Horwood, J., & Ridder, E. M. (2006). "Abortion in young women and subsequent mental health." <i>Journal of Child Psychology & Psychiatry</i> , 47, 16-24.	520 women formed 3 groups (never pregnant; pregnant no abortion; pregnant abortion).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ For all outcomes (except alcohol dependence) rates of disorder did not differ significantly between the never pregnant and pregnant no abortion groups. ◦ Compared to the never pregnant group, those who had abortions scored significantly on depression, anxiety, suicidal behaviors, and substance use disorders.
Gilchrist, A. C. et al. (1995). "Termination of pregnancy and psychiatric morbidity." <i>British Journal of Psychiatry</i> 167:243-8.	13,261 women with an unplanned pregnancy requesting an abortion in the UK at multiple sites; 6,410 had abortions; 6,151 continued their pregnancies; 379 were refused abortion; 321 chose abortion but changed their mind.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Among women with no history of psychiatric illness, the rate of deliberate self-harm was significantly higher after abortion than childbirth.
Gissler, M., Kauppila, R., Merilainen, J., Toukomaa, H., & Hemminki, E. (1997). "Pregnancy associated deaths in Finland 1987-1994 definition problems and benefits of record linkage." <i>Acta Obstetrica et Gynecologica Scandinavica</i> , 76, 651-657.	Death certificates of all fertile-aged women who died in 1987-94 in Finland (n=9,192) were linked to Birth, Abortion, and Hospital Discharge Registers. 281 deaths were identified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Post-pregnancy death rates within one year were nearly 4 times greater among women who aborted their pregnancies than among women who delivered their babies.
Gissler, M., Berg, C., Bouvier-Colle, M., Buekens, P. (2004). "Pregnancy-associated mortality after birth, spontaneous abortion, or induced abortion in Finland, 1987-2000." <i>American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology</i> , 190, 422-427.	Population-based retrospective cohort study from Finland for a 14-yr period from 1987-2000. Deaths of women aged 15-49 were linked with Birth, Abortion, and Hospital Discharge Registers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The mortality was lower after a birth (28.2 per 100,000) than after an induced abortion (83.1 per 100,000).

<i>Publications</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Results</i>
Gissler, M., Berg, C., Bouvier-Colle, M., Buekens, P. (2004). "Injury, deaths, suicides and homicides associated with pregnancy, Finland, 1987-2000." <i>European Journal of Public Health</i> 15, 459-463.	Population-based retrospective cohort study from Finland for a 14-yr period from 1987-2000. Deaths of women aged 15-49 were linked with Birth, Abortion, and Hospital Discharge Registers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All external causes mortality rate was 6 times higher for abortion compared to birth. • Abortion was associated with a 10 times higher risk for homicide, a 6 times higher risk for suicide, and a 5 times greater risk for unintentional injuries when compared to birth.
Harlow, B. L., Cohen, L. S., Otto, M. W., Spiegelman, D., & Cramer, D. W. (2004). "Early life menstrual characteristics and pregnancy experiences among women with and without major depression: the Harvard Study of Mood and Cycles." <i>Journal of Affective Disorders</i> , 79, 167-176.	From a larger probability-based sample, 332 women who met DSM criteria for past or current depression and 644 women with no such history. Women with and without a history of abortion were examined.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compared to women with no history of induced abortion, those with two or more were 2-3 times more likely to have a lifetime history of major depression at study enrollment. • When only antecedent induced abortions in comparison to no history of abortion, there was a threefold increased risk of developing depression later in life. Marital status did not moderate the relationship—same effect whether or not marries.
Kero, A., Hoegberg, U., Jacobsson, L., & Lalos, A. (2001). "Legal abortion: A painful necessity." <i>Social Science and Medicine</i> , 53, 1481-1490.	211 who participated in a larger project on men and women who use abortion services in Sweden. Women with one and multiple abortions were included.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 46% indicated the abortion initiated a conflict of conscience. • 56% chose both positive and painful words when describing their abortion-related emotions. The most frequently chosen words to describe the abortion included anxiety, relief, grief, guilt, anguish, release, emptiness, responsibility, shame, and injustice. • 33% chose words conveying only pain.

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<i>Publications</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Results</i>
Major, B., Cozzarelli, C., Cooper, M. L., Zubek, J., Richards C., Wilhite, M., & Gramzow, R. H. (2000). "Psychological responses of women after first trimester abortion." <i>Archives of General Psychiatry</i> , 57, 777-784.	442 women who aborted at one of 3 abortion providers (1 physician and 2 free-standing) in Buffalo, NY.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Across time, relief and positive emotions declined and negative emotions increased; depression levels decreased from T1 to T2, but increased from T2 to T3 and from T3 to T4. ◦ Two years post-abortion, 28% were not satisfied with their decision, 31% would not have the abortion again, and 20 % were depressed. ◦ Younger age and having more children pre-abortion predicted more negative post-abortion outcomes.
Mufel, N., Speckhard, A., & Sivuha, S. "Predictors of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Following Abortion in a Former Soviet Union Country." <i>Journal of Prenatal & Perinatal Psych & Health</i> , 17, 41-61 (2002).	150 randomly selected women who had abortions in Belarus (former Soviet republic).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Posttraumatic consequences of abortion (elevated avoidance, intrusion, or hyper-arousal scores): 35% ◦ Evidence of PTSD, exceeding the cut-offs for both intrusion and avoidance subscales: 46% ◦ PTSD, exceeding the cut-offs on all 3 subscales: 22%.
Ostbye, T., Wenghofer, E. F., Woodward, C. A., Gold, G., & Craighead, J. (2001). "Health services utilization after induced abortions in Ontario: A comparison between community clinics and hospitals." <i>American Journal of Medical Quality</i> , 16, 99-106.	Patients who had induced abortions (n=41,039) performed in hospitals or community clinics and an age-matched cohort of 28,220 women who did not undergo an abortion.	The results revealed that health services utilization for psychiatric problems was 165% greater for the women with a history of abortion compared to the control group.

<i>Publications</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Results</i>
Reardon, D. C., & Coleman, P. K. (2006). "Relative Treatment Rates for Sleep Disorders Following Abortion and Child-birth: A Prospective Record-Based Study." <i>Sleep</i> , 29, 105-106.	15,345 women who had an induced abortion and 41,479 women who delivered and had no known subsequent history of induced abortion while receiving medical assistance from the state of California (Medi-Cal) in 1989 and who had no sleep claims for 1yr prior to pregnancy resolution. Delivery group had no subsequent abortions.	Women were more likely to be treated for sleep disorders following an induced abortion compared to a birth. The difference was most pronounced in the first 180 days post pregnancy resolution and was not significant after the third year. Specifically, there was an 85% higher risk for sleep disorders associated with abortion at 180 days and increased risks of 68%, 40%, 41%, and 29% for the 1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year, and across the full 4-year study period respectively.
Reardon, D. C., Cougle, J., Rue, V. M., Shuping, M., Coleman, P. K., & Ney, P. G. (2003). "Psychiatric admissions of low-income women following abortion and child-birth." <i>Canadian Medical Association Journal</i> , 168, 1253-1256.	Women who aborted (n=15,299) or delivered a child (n=41,442) while receiving medical assistance from the state of California (Medi-Cal) in 1989 and who had no psychiatric claims for 1 yr prior to pregnancy resolution. Delivery group had no subsequent abortions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within 90 days after pregnancy resolution, the abortion group had 160% more total claims than the birth group, with the percentages equaling 120%, 90%, 111%, 60%, 50%, and 70% for the 1st 180 days, yr 1, yr 2, yr 3, yr 4, and across the full 4-yr study period respectively. • Across the 4-yrs, the abortion group had 110% more claims for adjustment reactions than the birth group, with the percentages equaling 90%, 110%, and 200% for depressive psychosis, single and recurrent episode, and bipolar disorder respectively.
Reardon, D. C., Cougle, J., Ney, P. G., Scheuren, F., Coleman, P. K., & Strahan, T. W. (2002). "Deaths associated with delivery and abortion among California Medicaid patients: a record linkage study." <i>Southern Medical Journal</i> , 95, 834-884.	Women who aborted or delivered while receiving medical assistance from the state of California (Medi-Cal) in 1989 and died between 1989 and 1997 (n=1,713).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With adjustments for age, women who aborted when compared to women who delivered were 62% more likely to die from any cause. More specific percentages are given below. Violent causes: 81%; Suicide: 154%; Accidents: 82%; All natural causes: 44%; AIDS: 118%; Circulatory disease: 187%; Cerebrovascular disease: 446%; Other heart diseases: 159% • Similar results were obtained when prior psychiatric history was controlled as well.

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<i>Publications</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Results</i>
Reardon, D. C., Coleman, P. K., & Cogle, J. (2004). "Substance use associated with prior history of abortion and unintended birth: a national cross sectional cohort study." <i>American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse</i> , 26, 369-383.	Women with prior histories of delivering an unintended pregnancy (n=535), abortion (n=213), or no pregnancies (n=1144).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Compared to women who carried an unintended first pregnancy to term, those who aborted were 100% more likely to report use of marijuana in the past 30 days and 149% more likely to use cocaine in the past 30 days (only approached significance). Women with a history of abortion also engaged in more frequent drinking than those who carried an unintended pregnancy to term. ◦ Except for less frequent drinking, the unintended delivery group was not significantly different from the no pregnancy group.
Rue, V. M., Coleman, P. K., Rue, J. J., & Reardon, D. C. (2004). "Induced abortion and traumatic stress: A preliminary comparison of American and Russian women." <i>Medical Science Monitor</i> 10, SR 5-16.	Russian (n=331) and U.S. (n=217) women who had experienced one or more abortions and no other forms of loss.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ U.S. women reported more stress, PTSD symptoms, and other negative effects than Russian women. ◦ Russian women scored higher on the Pearlman Traumatic Stress Institute Belief Scale, indicating more pronounced disruption of basic needs impacted by trauma (safety, trust, self-esteem, intimacy, and self-control). ◦ No differences were observed relative to perceptions of positive effects (improved partner relationships, feeling better about oneself, relief, feelings of control). ◦ The percentages of Russian and U.S. women who experienced 2 or more symptoms of arousal, 1 or more symptom of re-experiencing the trauma, and 1 or more experiences of avoidance (consistent with DSM-IV diagnostic criteria) were equal to 13.1% and 65% respectively.
Söderberg, H., Janzon, L. and Sjöberg, N.O. (1998). "Emotional distress following induced abortion: a study of its incidence and determinants among abortees in Malmö, Sweden." <i>European Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Reproductive Biology</i> 79, 173-178.	Swedish study of 854 women one year after an abortion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 50-60% of the women experienced emotional distress of some form (e.g., mild depression, remorse or guilt feelings, a tendency to cry without cause, discomfort upon meeting children), classified as severe in 30% of cases. ◦ 76.1% said that they would not consider abortion again (suggesting indirectly that it was not a very positive experience).

The Dark Side of Abortion

Alexander Sicree

It is common knowledge that the culture of death has infiltrated every aspect of our culture. With this in mind, we are resigned to having our movies portray abortion and euthanasia in a positive light.

Sometimes, however, Hollywood surprises us and unintentionally gives us a pro-life message without even mentioning abortion. There is a good example of this in an extremely popular recent movie. This movie contains several of the common excuses pro-abortion activists use to justify abortion.

In this movie, a young couple are secretly married when the woman discovers she is pregnant. If the child is born, the marriage will be discovered, the wife will lose her job as a prominent government official, and the husband will be thrown out of his military order. To top it off, the husband, who has already displayed violent and vengeful tendencies, has discovered that there is a strong possibility of his wife dying during childbirth.

With all this in mind, what does the father-to-be say when he discovers that his wife is pregnant? Does he insist upon an abortion? No! He says, "This is the happiest day of my life." Abortion is not even mentioned as an option.

What is this movie, you ask?

Well, the father in this movie would not be a good poster-child for the pro-life movement. He is Anakin Skywalker. Never heard of him? He is better known as Darth Vader. The movie, of course, is *Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith*.

It may be that director George Lucas was not trying to make a pro-life statement in this movie. It may be that it was just impossible to make a pro-choice statement. For instance, imagine this conversation taking place during the movie filming:

DIRECTOR: TAKE 1. Action!

ANAKIN: You're pregnant? Maybe you should get an abortion.

CRITIC: CUT!!! CUT!!!

DIRECTOR: What's wrong?

CRITIC: You can't make Darth Vader, one of the most notorious villains in

Alexander Sicree, fifteen years old and the oldest of nine children, graduated in 2006 from the eighth grade at Our Lady of Victory Catholic School in State College, Pa. and is currently being home-schooled. We reprint here a speech he delivered for the 2007 Oratory Contest sponsored by the Central Pennsylvania Region of Citizens Concerned for Human Life on March 18 in Altoona. Mr. Sicree's speech won first place in the novice (9th and 10 grades) division.

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movie history, pro-choice. It will make the pro-choice movement look bad.

DIRECTOR: All right, all right, I'll change the script . . . [PAUSE]

Director: TAKE 2. Action!

ANAKIN: An abortion? No way, you know I am opposed to that.

CRITIC: Aaugh !!! NO, NO, NO!!!!!! You can't do that!!!

DIRECTOR: (exasperated) Now what?

CRITIC: This is even worse! Don't you see what will happen? The pro-lifers will have a field day. I can see them saying, "Abortion: the one crime that even Darth Vader wouldn't commit." Good grief, it'll be on bumper stickers everywhere! We'll never hear the end of it!

DIRECTOR: (very annoyed now) Oh, for Heaven's sake, just get rid of any references to abortion in the script.

This is a rare case where every single viewer of the movie will be opposed to this particular abortion regardless of his or her personal opinions on abortion in the real world. This is because *Revenge of the Sith* is a peculiar movie: it is a prequel of a movie we have already seen. Viewers of the movie already know and love the unborn Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia because they have most likely already seen the movie's three sequels.

In this instance, we are given the view of the unborn babies that God has of all of us. We know exactly what will happen to Luke and Leia just as God knows exactly what will happen to us. We know their names, we know their personalities, and we know that they are not just "blobs of tissue." We also know that they will eventually free the galaxy from oppression and save their father's soul.

In this galaxy far, far away, there are many technological marvels. Robots fly, amputated limbs can be replaced with robotic ones, ships travel faster than the speed of light, and interstellar messages travel instantaneously. Yet throughout this entire galaxy there is absolutely no mention of abortions, even illegal ones. This is surprising since there are slaves, smugglers, and assassins for hire. The technology is much more advanced than ours will ever be, so they should definitely be able to perform abortions.

Why are there no abortions in *Star Wars*? The simple explanation for this is that it would ruin the story if abortion were even mentioned.

For instance, Darth Vader's one redeeming quality is his love for his family. In the second episode, he rushes to the aid of his mother when he senses that she is in danger. In the third episode, he goes to extraordinary lengths to make sure his wife doesn't die. Finally, in the sixth episode, he sacrifices himself to save his only son and in the process saves the galaxy and his soul.

If Anakin had considered an abortion in the third episode, it would have been less believable when he sacrificed himself during episode six for love of his son. Darth Vader, no matter how evil he became, was still human. Even he could not bring himself to kill his own son.

You may ask, so what? How can we use this movie in the pro-life movement? As we know, there are several reasons why people support abortion in the first place. One reason is a lack of love. They don't have enough love for the unborn child and his or her mother. Another reason is a lack of knowledge. Some people may not be aware of exactly what happens during an abortion. The last reason is a lack of imagination. The supporters of abortion simply can't picture the unborn child as a significant person. This is where we can use fiction to our advantage. In *Star Wars*, we are given this imagination. Here we can picture the unborn Luke and Leia as people, and we realize the role they will play in the future.

Other works of fiction show us how an apparently insignificant person proves critical. In fairy tales it is always the youngest son or the orphan who inevitably saves the day. Sometimes women have an abortion because they can see no other way out of a seemingly impossible situation. Fiction can also help with this. In adventure stories, characters escape from impossible situation after impossible situation. In some movies, this happens every five minutes!

In the make-believe universe of the movies, we can see how abortion can spoil a good story. In our real universe, abortion takes a life and risks the souls of all who join in its dark side. Abortion can destroy the real world screenplay that God has written for all of us. Just think what would have happened if some historical figure like George Washington had never been born.

Like Darth Vader, we all need to turn away from the dark side of abortion.

Back to Eden?

Mary Meehan

Ah, the dread of living in a traditional nursing home! Many people view it as life in a warehouse where residents are fork-lifted like so many boxes, carted around, and then dumped somewhere they don't want to be. Or a long stretch in solitary for inmates who *already* live in confusion. Or the last, bleak stop on the railroad for passengers who are old and frail.

There is, though, a strong movement to transform nursing homes into modern-day Gardens of Eden. This approach, called the Eden Alternative, dates back to the early 1990s. It offers seniors with disabilities a way to avoid the ultra-medical nursing home with its rigidity, loneliness, and depression. The Eden homes meet the medical needs of their residents—sometimes better than traditional homes do—but they also provide a more natural environment for living. They emphasize the joy and spontaneity of life.

The approximately 255 Eden homes in the United States¹ do not form a chain. Rather, they share a philosophy and many ideas on ways to implement it. Some Eden homes are privately owned; many are non-profits; and many have religious connections. Recently I visited one Eden home in Maryland and two in western Pennsylvania, spoke with staff, and observed the residents.² The three used to be traditional nursing homes, but have been on the Eden path for five to eight years. They contemplate more change as they continue down that path.

A friendly receptionist greeted me at the Levindale Hebrew Geriatric Center, a non-profit home in Baltimore, Md., in late January. Later a French poodle named Lincoln bounded into the sunny reception area and added his welcome. Dogs, cats, birds, and fish abound at Levindale. It's part of a large complex of Jewish institutions, including a hospital, an adult day-care center, and a child-care center. There's much interaction between the kids and the older folks. From the nursing-home lobby, a gazebo outside, or the adult-day-care center, the elders can watch the children at play. The term "elders," which Eden homes prefer for their residents, emphasizes respect for the experience and wisdom of seniors—a respect that is key to the Eden philosophy.

Levindale staff member Heather Allen said a school group visits with elders, "and they break the challah bread." Communications coordinator Helene King remarked that such visits are nice for the children, too, especially since some have no grandparents in the area. One local mother, home-schooling her

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large family, brings her kids in once a week to visit with the elders. Another brings her baby in to visit. The children, King noted, “definitely brighten up the place.”

Freshly brewed coffee and freshly baked bread are available to the elders on their halls during the day. The home meets the clinical need for good hydration partly by sending an old-fashioned vendor cart (blue-and-white-striped) up and down the halls with sodas and ice cream. In a late-afternoon happy hour, the elders can sip beer, wine, or non-alcoholic drinks while chatting and listening to old-time music.

Levindale has its own synagogue, a large, peaceful room where there are Sabbath and Holy Day services, as well as daily prayers. Its rabbi is the home’s full-time chaplain. While Jewish residents predominate, many others are Christians, and another room is available for their regular services.

At Rolling Fields in rural Conneautville, Pa., about 30 miles southwest of Erie, I was greeted by a receptionist and also by Gabby, a lovely cockatoo who lives in a huge cage in the lobby. She was not truly gabby when I was there; but after looking me over for awhile, she did say a few words. On a tour, I saw dogs in the corridors and cats visiting with residents or staff. Some residents have birds in their rooms.

It was a cold day in February, with lots of snow on the ground, so I couldn’t really see the gardens outside. But Cindy Godfrey, vice president of Rolling Fields, told me about a vegetable garden in which residents had grown “the most gorgeous vegetables and entered them in the county fair,” where the beets won a prize. She said there’s also a cut-flower garden, a tranquility garden, and a garden with a couple of fishponds. Kimberly Moody, Cindy’s sister and the home’s administrator, told me about the large catch-and-release fishing pond, where some residents fish every day in good weather.

Rolling Fields, privately owned, is very much a family enterprise. The sisters’ parents started it many years ago in a smaller, home-like building that had to be replaced when it no longer could meet code. One sister explained that their Eden program is a return to the spirit of the original home. It includes afternoon tea in the lobby, as well as a happy hour. And as part of a continuing effort to get away from schedule rigidity, Rolling Fields offers a continental breakfast from 6-7:30 a.m. and a hot breakfast buffet from 7:30-9:30, thus accommodating both early risers and those who prefer to sleep in. A child-care center in the home is a major convenience for staff with small children; it’s also a source of joy for the elders, who can talk with the kids or do arts and crafts with them.

Beacon Ridge is a private, non-profit Eden home in Indiana, Pa. A county seat with a population of 15,000, Indiana is surrounded by a rural area with

many Christmas-tree farms. It used to be a major coal-mining area, too; so many Beacon Ridge elders come from farming or mining families. While its administrator said the home has “a Christian-based philosophy,” it is not affiliated with a specific church.

The elders enjoy regular visits from kids who attend a child-care center next door. There’s also a “junior volunteer” program involving children who are 8 or older. Administrator Kelly Pidgeon explained that this started as a summertime convenience for staff with children from 8 to 13 years old, because “you can’t leave them at home, but they don’t want to be at camp all day.” So, she said, staff “just bring their kids to work,” and the elders “*love* having all the kids around.” The children help the elders, and elders read to the kids or teach them how to bake, sew, knit, crochet, or work the gardens outside.

Beacon Ridge, too, has resident pets; Ronald Conrad, the nursing director, noted that his wife’s grandmother lives in the home and is greatly helped by a cat who practically “lives above her chair.” The varied activities available at Beacon Ridge include a quilting group and a men’s club.

Impressive as the three homes’ amenities are, they do not fully explain the difference that the Eden approach makes. Michelle Mills, a Levindale staff member, remarked that “a lot of folks think that Eden is the cats and the dogs and the kids.” But the “real crux” of it, she says, is providing care that is truly resident-centered, so that “we’re doing what a resident would do if they were home.” If an elder wants coffee and chocolate-chip cookies at two in the afternoon, for example, the relevant question is, “How do we make that happen?”

Eden planners realize that making it happen requires staff relations very different from those in traditional nursing homes. Old-style homes have what Eden founder Dr. William Thomas calls “a paramilitary command structure.” He adds, “Tightly restrict workers’ daily routines with rules and regulations, and you can expect the same to be visited on residents. Adopt a punitive stance toward mistakes and shortcomings, and residents will suffer under the same lash.”³

The Eden philosophy replaces the old style with a team approach in which staff have more responsibility and initiative. Kelly Pidgeon has a three-fold goal for Beacon Ridge: “Not only do we want to make it the best place for residents to live; we want to make it the best place to *work*, and we want to make it the best place to *visit*.” She likes to throw out challenges to her staff so they can improve the elders’ quality of life and clinical outcomes at the same time. One challenge was: “Guys, we need better hydration.” Someone came up with a nifty solution: providing elders with water bottles that rest in holders on their walkers or wheelchairs. Like bikers out on a mountain trail,

they now have water right at hand when they need it.

The more relaxed Eden atmosphere appears to make a real difference at all three homes. Staff seem more at ease, less hurried, and more friendly than in traditional homes. Residents, too, seem more contented and secure. When I dropped by to see the quilting group at Beacon Ridge, most of the ladies were very intent upon their work, each sewing a square from fabric they had selected on a shopping trip. Most spoke little, but one joshed a staff member who was also working on the quilt. The home's oldest resident, a venerable 102, stopped by to check on the quilters' progress. Propelling her wheelchair with the walking motion of her feet, and appearing to be quite alert, she watched and listened for a few minutes and then continued on her rounds. Activities director Deborah Fenner told me the oldest resident is a veteran of knitting, crocheting, and even the old art of "tatting" (a form of lace-making).

Doctor with a Vision

When Bill Thomas attended Harvard Medical School in the 1980s, both medical staff and students there focused on "rare and interesting diseases" instead of "the ordinary burdens of age, disability, and decay." In his four years as a medical student, he writes, "I never set foot inside a nursing home." As a young doctor, he loved to deliver babies and to care for young children; but he tried to avoid nursing-home patients. After all, "My medical training had led me to think of myself as a master mechanic who happened to specialize in the human body. . . . Struggling to keep a worn-out jalopy on the road is drudgery compared with fine-tuning a late-model sports car."⁴

After experience in family practice and emergency-room work, though, Thomas wanted a change. Someone persuaded him to consider becoming medical director of a nursing home. "Three weeks later, still wondering what I had gotten myself into, I was a nursing-home doctor." He found that he liked working with older patients, yet he was still bothered by the sterility and rigidity of nursing-home life. He felt that loneliness, helplessness, and boredom—rather than physical ailments—caused most of the residents' suffering. And it wasn't just tradition that caused the rigidity; it was also the dependence on Medicare, Medicaid, and other health insurance. "Because these programs have the greatest experience and comfort with hospital-like arrangements," Thomas says, "nursing homes devote considerable time and attention to remaining as much like hospitals as possible. . . . Reimbursement is based on the variety and number of treatments rendered. . . . For nursing-home residents, life is therapy, and therapy is life."⁵

With admirable energy, Thomas and his colleagues at the 80-bed Chase Memorial Nursing Home in New Berlin, N.Y., set about making Chase a

happier place for its residents. The key, he says, was to view it “as a human habitat” and to copy the rich diversity of such habitats. “Why shouldn’t we have pets here?” they wondered. “Why not bring houseplants into our home? Not just a few, but hundreds? . . . Why not start a summer camp for children? What about an after-school program? . . . Why settle for a lawn when we could replace it with a lush garden of flowers and vegetables? Why not grace our residents’ dinner plates with delicious food grown right outside their windows?” With the help of a grant from the New York State Department of Health, they were off and running.⁶

They were able to do everything they planned, and more. Changing the top-down staff structure to a team approach was essential to their success. Restoring the joy of life to the elders was the greatest improvement. But there were also clinical benefits: significant reductions in infections, the use of mind-altering drugs, and the death rate. There was a major drop in staff turnover, which tends to be alarmingly high in traditional homes. As Thomas notes, “reducing staff turnover is one key to improving residents’ quality of life.”⁷

One might guess that Eden improvements add a great deal to nursing-home costs that already are quite high. Thomas, though, says Eden “requires much more change in the heart than in the pocket” and that “start-up funds and supplies can often be procured from community and philanthropic groups.”⁸ And he emphasizes the savings from better clinical outcomes and lower staff turnover. My interviews and research confirmed these points, with one exception. When Eden involves major additions or renovations to promote a more home-like atmosphere, there is no way to avoid high costs. Levindale, for example, began its Eden journey in 1999. Three years later, the *Washington Post* reported that Levindale had “spent \$60,000 on a children’s playground, \$70,000 on a greenhouse, and \$500,000 on a cafe-style dining room for residents.” But Eden resulted in a much higher occupancy rate, which helped offset the higher costs.⁹ Moreover, both a strong Levindale Auxiliary group and private foundations have made substantial contributions toward the home’s Eden transformation.

Changing the Mindset

What’s the hardest part of changing over to the Eden approach? Dealing with regulators and inspectors? Or coping with older buildings that were designed like hospitals? Both present problems; but Kelly Pidgeon, the Beacon Ridge administrator, said the key problem is mindset. Involved in nursing-home work for 18 years, she remarked that “when you’re in a particular industry that is very highly governed by rules, it’s hard to change. And change,

from any perspective, for anyone, is difficult.”

One of her staff emphasized the challenge of “trying to get the other employees to buy into the whole concept” and “not think of it as just a job.” Deb Fenner, the activities director, believes staff thought the Eden approach “was going to be more work for them.” How do they respond now? “They’re getting better,” Fenner replied, to laughter from other Beacon Ridge leaders. “We’ll be honest: They’re getting better.” Nursing director Ron Conrad sounded more optimistic, suggesting that “we’re very close to having a good buy-in throughout the whole facility.” The sharp drop in staff turnover suggests he is right. Pidgeon said it used to be around 70 percent a year, then dropped down to 50, and is now in the teens, which “is unheard of.” It has taken a lot of training to reach this point. Pidgeon herself does the Eden training at Beacon Ridge. It involves a significant cost, since each staff member is paid during training. But Pidgeon believes she recoups that cost through her low staff turnover.

Over at Rolling Fields, Kim Moody and Cindy Godfrey also see staff training, or retraining, as the hardest part of implementing the Eden approach. The traditional schedule and the use of meal trays in the rooms, they said, tends to drive everything else. Part of the solution is a flexible meal schedule, such as their home’s 6-9:30 breakfast, but they also plan to get rid of the tray system altogether. That way, Godfrey said, the staff might realize “that they don’t have to get everybody up and ready because the trays are coming. If the trays aren’t coming, they don’t have to worry.” The alternative? The sisters hope to hire both a chef and a short-order cook so that elders can have just what they want, when they want it. While this sounds quite expensive, they believe it will save money in the long run by reducing food wastage.

In its first Eden year, Rolling Fields invested \$125,000 in staff education, including use of an outside trainer and paying staff during training. Now the home does its own training, much of it conducted by its “Eden Ambassador,” Wendy Vaughn, a young woman who clearly loves her job. Besides her in-house educational work, she spreads the Eden message to outside groups such as schools and Rotary clubs.

Kim Moody and Cindy Godfrey handpicked a leadership team of 15 to 20 staff in the early days and started the Eden education with them. “I think we’ve weeded out pretty much all the people who weren’t going to get it,” Godfrey commented. “And at this point, we have a great leadership team, absolutely great. . . . But we just need to get the rest aboard.” She said they are seeing clinical benefits from the Eden approach: fewer bedsores, fewer falls (“we’re not sending people to the hospital with fractures”), and less use of anti-psychotic drugs. Her sister Kim mentioned a case in which good

listening and a snack precluded the need for a pain pill. An elder named Ray approached the nurses' station in the middle of the night and said he needed something for his pain. Responding in a way seldom seen in traditional medical settings, the nurse asked Ray what *he* thought he needed. He replied that he had "a lot of pain . . . I really think that I need to have a peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich." And that was all he needed. Moody described another resident who had been "frequently obsessed with her pain." After they placed birds in the woman's room, she transferred her concerns to the birds' needs: Were they okay? As Godfrey remarked, the elders are "not sitting around, thinking about their aches and pains. . . . They have things to live for, things to get up and do."

How about state regulators? Are they an obstacle to Eden innovations? Moody mentioned a problem that arose over creation of a space where residents could visit casually in a chair and love seat "at the corner of an intersection" in the halls. They love to gather in such places, she said, so they can "see the comings and goings." She said the hallway wasn't blocked, and there "certainly was the ability to move a chair if there was a fire." But regulators had a different view, and "they made us move the furniture. . . . Recognizing it was movable and temporary and all those things, it still needed to go."

Regulators have been more flexible, though, about pets. One home, in fact, received its first pet from a state inspector. Apparently inspectors realize how much pets help ward off loneliness in the homes. While they may not be able to bless the pets officially, they don't want to shut them down, either.

Changing Buildings

Wendy Vaughn of Rolling Fields said that "we are making Eden happen in a building that was built to be an institution. That's one of the hard parts." She and her colleagues are fortunate, however, that everything's on one floor in their building and that it presents an attractive and welcoming appearance to visitors as they drive in. But Kelly Pidgeon and her staff are dealing with a building that used to be a bowling alley and was converted to a nursing home 30 years ago. She said that "we have built on and built on and built on to this building. And no matter how much space we add, we never have enough." She called it "an ugly old building"; yet there are pretty nursing homes that lack the great heart of Beacon Ridge. And its staff add beautiful touches wherever they can: having art students paint murals in the courtyards, for example, and showcasing art work by the elders themselves. The quilting elders, especially, are adding beauty as well as comfort to their home.

All three of the Eden homes I visited, though, have the long hallways and nursing stations that remind people of hospitals. But Beacon Ridge has removed one of its nursing stations, putting the record-keeping into a smaller space around the corner. This freed a large area for a gathering space for elders. Rolling Fields plans to remove its nursing stations. "In fact," Kim Moody remarked, "if you come back in two years, I'm sure they'll be gone."

Adding or changing space, Kelly Pidgeon reported, "is an incredibly tedious, red-tape process, through the regulators, to have your plans approved: perfect submissions, four sets of plans, codes." Putting up a brand-new home that's built around the Eden approach would be financially difficult, if not impossible, in Pennsylvania at present. The state has a virtual moratorium on new building in nursing homes. "You can't build any more beds and have it be paid for by the state—Medicaid beds," Kim Moody remarked. "You can build all the private beds that you want to." Kelly Pidgeon explained that there's also a major state push for use of home-based and community-based services instead of nursing-home placements. The high cost of nursing homes is driving this, she said. "It's all about the buck."

There are certainly cases where home- or community-based services are more appropriate. And many people need nursing-home care only for a short time; then they can return home and get by with help from family, visiting nurses, and/or home health aides. Yet the problem with many seniors is not that they enter a nursing home too soon or stay too long, but rather that they enter later than they should—sometimes after serious accidents at home. The many who have dementia, of course, are at special risk if they live alone. And anyone who has seen seniors pushed out of hospitals too early—only to see them readmitted a short time later, in much worse shape—is likely to question the idea of discouraging access to nursing homes. There is, however, another pressure for a shift to home and community services. It comes largely from younger people with severe disabilities who have had terrible experiences in traditional nursing homes, an issue I'll deal with later.

If Pidgeon had millions of dollars to start over, she would build a new home around the Eden idea. Each elder would have a private room, and the rooms would be arranged "in circles, with common spaces between each one." Similarly, if Kim Moody were starting over, she "would have lots more areas where small, intimate gatherings could occur."

Making Neighborhoods and Families

All three homes encourage small gatherings and projects through their "neighborhoods" (appropriately called *kibbutzim* at Levindale), which are smaller units within each home. At Rolling Fields, they are based on the

corridors, which are called streets and named after trees: Ash, Birch, Cherry, Dogwood, Elm, and Fig. Each street has two “families”; both elders and staff belong to families and make decisions together. Cindy Godfrey said the families “do constant fund-raisers now, because it’s fun for them to do.” They then spend the money as they want.

Neighborhoods over at Beacon Ridge enjoy parties and special meals—a picnic, a Pizza Day. They, too, have fund-raisers and vote on how to spend their money. There’s also a fund-raising committee with representation from all the neighborhoods. It runs major events, open to the public, to raise money for Eden programs. It offers a spring flower sale; it holds raffles of jewelry; it has organized a gambling trip to Atlantic City, N.J., and a trip to an amusement park in Hershey, Pa.

At Levindale, a *kibbutz* has a meeting of “residents, family members, staff, whoever wishes to attend,” Heather Allen explained. Everyone who shows up can vote on the color of curtains for the neighborhood, the color of the shower room (one neighborhood chose hot pink), or how to rearrange the fish tank. Allen remarked that “every little decision that’s made, when it comes to living in the community . . . we make it as a team.” But the meetings, called “circles,” are not for decisions only. Helene King noted that the participants “can talk about anything,” including weather, their favorite memories, or the current outlook for the Baltimore Orioles.

Activities and Volunteers

While Eden homes emphasize the small joys of everyday life, they also offer activities much like those of traditional nursing homes. Bingo is big at Rolling Fields, which also offers “Music with Frank” and, more intriguingly, an appearance by the “Amish Singers.” Any special day is an occasion for a party or competition: a “Senior Prom” for Valentine’s Day, a Mardi Gras party, and—this must be a real hoot—a contest for “Best Ground Hog Day Costume.” Rolling Fields has its own bus, which takes elders on shopping and restaurant trips, to festivals and county fairs, and to picnics and parades. There are regular church services on Sundays and Wednesdays, as well as Bible study on Thursdays.

At Beacon Ridge, Kelly Pidgeon remarked, “We would be shot if we didn’t have bingo!” The home’s bus takes elders out for antiquing, fishing, and picnics as well as visits to state parks and minor-league baseball games. Sometimes they go over to Pittsburgh for a riverboat cruise. Levindale activities include “Jeopardy” as well as bingo, music and dance therapy, and pottery. There’s a major emphasis on gardening, with a greenhouse, gardening clubs, and raised gardens (on carts) for wheelchair access.¹⁰ The Levindale

bus takes elders to destinations including art museums and an aquarium. Occasionally there's a boat trip in the Baltimore harbor.

Cindy Godfrey said it's harder for Rolling Fields, compared to a city-based home, to find volunteers, because "we're out in the middle of nowhere." They are working on it, though. "World Makers Wanted!" proclaims their flier seeking volunteers to host afternoon tea or happy hour, deliver mail, escort elders on outings, or help in other ways.

Levindale's volunteers include Keith Orem, who usually comes five days a week. "It beats sitting home," he told me. "There's nice people here. I enjoy coming here. I made a lot of friends here." Pidgeon doubts the Eden approach has brought more volunteers to Beacon Ridge, but said it has made a major difference in participation by elders' own families. On a recent walk through her home's therapy room, she noticed: "It's *packed*. It's half-family, half-residents." And family members help with therapy.

Women in the United States live, on average, about five years longer than men.¹¹ Women dominate nursing homes so overwhelmingly that I wondered if men might feel like an endangered species there. Are they lonesome for guy stuff? Apparently some are, for the three homes I visited all have men's clubs. Keith Orem, the volunteer at Levindale, hosts the men's club there for an hour every Thursday. They play basketball or toss horseshoes, sometimes "watch old sports movies" or "talk about old times" and "whatever they want to talk about," Orem said. In the Rolling Fields men's club, Wendy Vaughn reported, men are "welcome to come out and share their stories, maybe sit and have a beer or a glass of wine." At Beacon Ridge, men play cards or checkers with one another or garden together. But there was a different slant recently, when activities director Deb Fenner hosted a men's cooking session where, she said, the guys "had to make their own lunch."

How about young residents who have especially severe conditions? Do they find it difficult to be with much older people? "I always dissuade them from coming," replied Kelly Pidgeon of Beacon Ridge. "I hate to say that. But it's really not an age-appropriate setting. It is tough." Beacon Ridge offers them Internet access and a play station, but Pidgeon said it's hard for them to "absorb into daily life" in the home.

Rolling Fields currently has just a couple of younger people. Awhile back, when "we had a small handful of younger folks here," Wendy Vaughn recalled, "they simply wanted to go out and have a drink in a tavern like they used to. So one evening we loaded up the Rolling Fields bus, and we all went to the local tavern. And they shot pool and had a beer or two or three, and then we came back." She also mentioned a man who had Parkinson's disease and wanted to visit a nearby lake so he could "walk down the front

of the spillway all by himself. . . . And we did that. It just depends on what they would like to do.”

Many people with severe disabilities are pressing for paid attendants in their own homes, or in independent-living communities, as an alternative to nursing-home placement. The pressure comes especially from young and middle-aged people with disabilities such as cerebral palsy or brain injuries from accidents. Some have suffered neglect or outright abuse in bad nursing homes. Others find the atmosphere of traditional homes oppressive and cannot bear the thought of spending their entire lives there. Dependent on Medicaid and other government programs, many now obtain waivers allowing them to use government money to move to apartments or group homes and hire their own assistants to provide the personal care they need. This is a welcome development in many ways. It has liberated people who can and should live in their own homes or in group homes.

Yet there is reason for caution. The federal government now has a “Money Follows the Person” approach to encourage this process. While partly driven by the campaign of disability-rights activists, this is also—and perhaps mainly—a response to the high cost of nursing-home care. Federal and state governments are pressing for a “rebalancing” of long-term care, applying their own pressures for a shift to greater reliance on home and community programs.¹² Family members, other citizens, and legislators should monitor these pressures carefully, because they could lead to denial of nursing-home care to some people who really need it.

Looking Toward the Future

The formidable Dr. Bill Thomas has moved on to promoting “Green Houses”—small buildings that look like everyday homes, but are designed to meet the special needs of elderly people with disabilities. The pilot project for Green Houses opened in Tupelo, Miss., in 2003. It’s a complex of such homes, each with 7 to 12 residents and with staff who are “universal workers.” This means they are certified nursing assistants who also cook and clean and do nearly anything else the elders need, except medical care. A nurse visits regularly, and doctors make house calls when needed. So do therapists and social workers. Each elder has a private room and bath. Their rooms are clustered around a hearth area, dining area, and “country kitchen,” where elders able to do so are encouraged to help with cooking. Each house includes a screened porch and a patio.¹³

A *New York Times* reporter who visited the Green Houses in Tupelo two years ago gave a generally positive report. He noted the smell of “corn bread baking” at one home and quoted a resident who said, “This is the most

wonderful place I've been to yet. The people, the food, everything." The reporter added, though, that "the undisputed cheer that a homelike setting seems to provide still leaves the fact that old age is old age." He doubted whether, "for residents who suffer varying degrees of disability and dementia, anything more than dignity can be restored to life."¹⁴

Writing in *The Gerontologist* last year, Dr. Thomas and several colleagues described the pilot project and lessons learned thus far. They said the caregivers in each home work "the usual three shifts." Two caregivers are there during each of the first two shifts, but just one on the night shift. They receive extra training and higher pay than they previously received. But professional staff, worried about resident safety and their own "loss of power," were more resistant to Green Houses than expected. Apparently the tensions generally have been resolved, and many health professionals "have come to 'own the model' and be enthusiastic proponents."

The sponsoring agency, Mississippi Methodist Senior Services, operates nursing homes and retirement communities in Tupelo and elsewhere. So it's able to provide key administrative services for the Green Houses: accounting, purchasing, medical records, heavy cleaning, repairs. This seems to give the Green Houses the best of both worlds: small homes, yet economies of scale. Several foundations, especially the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, financed the pilot project. Thomas and his colleagues wrote that "building costs were less than the cost of a new traditional nursing home building and less than comparable renovation costs within the existing building [the Mississippi Methodist nursing home in Tupelo] would have been."

Thomas and his associates did not offer many specifics about effects of the Green Houses on the elders themselves. But it's encouraging to read that many "stopped using wheelchairs because they were able to navigate the short distances in the house." They are happy with their private rooms, where "hospital beds are rare." Also: "Elders are frequently outdoors, and when indoors they tend to cluster in the hearth room, at the kitchen table, or in the recliners in the living area." Their families "take advantage of the many areas for visiting and regularly stay for meals with the elders."¹⁵ Sounds like a real home.

Leaders of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, pleased by the pilot project, awarded a grant of \$10 million to a development corporation to establish more Green Houses around the country. By October 2006, Green Houses were operating in three states and were under development or construction in a dozen more. While Thomas and his colleagues acknowledge that the Green House is "not the only way" to go, they suggest it may be ideal in three cases: when a nursing home has an old building that needs

replacement; when a retirement community needs to add a nursing facility; and when a group wants “a dementia-specific care unit.”¹⁶

The future may include Eden homes, Green Houses, and other possibilities as well. It’s fascinating to see the way the Eden journey leads to so much creative thinking. The staff I met are impressive in the way they stretch themselves, using every talent they have and developing new ones along the way. They also find real joy in their work. Henry David Thoreau suggested that making a living should be “not merely honest and honorable, but altogether inviting and glorious.”¹⁷ The Eden staff make it so.

NOTES

Where quotations are not cited to notes, they are from one of the following interviews by the author (in-person interviews unless otherwise noted):

◦ *Beacon Ridge, Indiana, Pa.: Group interview with Administrator Kelly Pidgeon and staff members Brenda Bezilla, Ronald Conrad, Deborah Fenner, and Terri Watson, 8 Feb. 2007; and telephone interview with Kelly Pidgeon, 6 March 2007*

◦ *Levindale Hebrew Geriatric Center, Baltimore, Md.: Interviews with Heather Allen, Helene King, Frederick Lonesome (resident), Michelle Mills, and Keith Orem (volunteer), 25 Jan. 2007; and telephone interview with Helene King, 8 March 2007*

◦ *Rolling Fields, Conneautville, Pa.: Joint interview with Cindy Godfrey and Kimberly Moody and interview with Wendy Vaughn, 7 Feb. 2007; telephone interview with Cindy Godfrey, 6 March 2007*

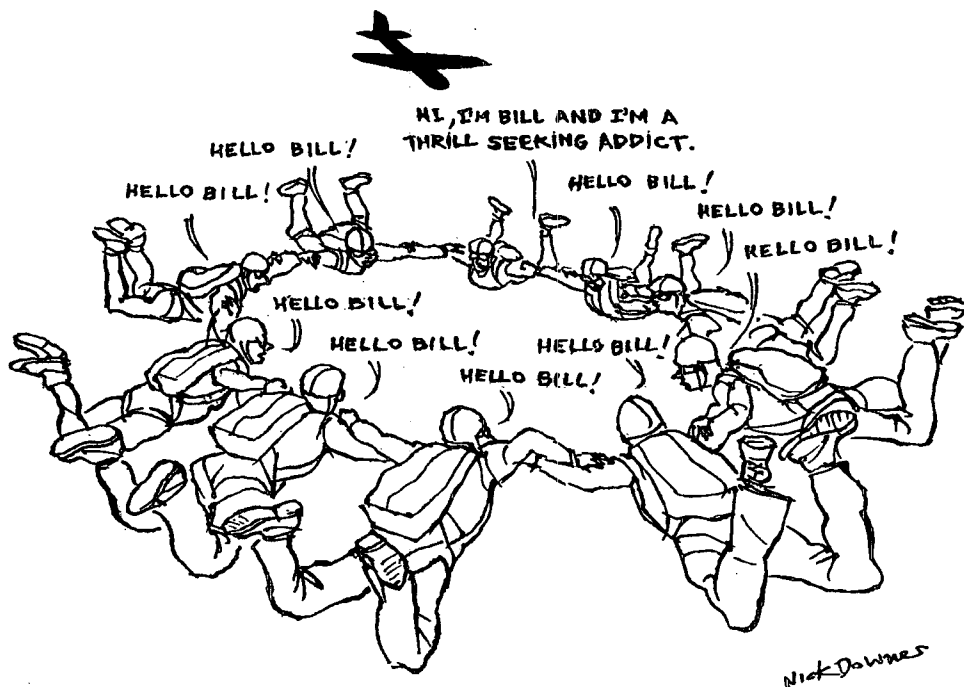
My special thanks to all for their time and valuable information. Additional thanks to Deborah Fenner, Helene King, and Wendy Vaughn for guiding me on tours, and to Wendy Vaughn for a helpful bibliography.

Most U.S. Eden homes are listed on www.edenalt.com/findinghomes.htm, which also leads to other information on Eden homes and the Green House initiative. Many Eden homes have their own websites as well.

1. Carol Ende, interview by the author, 7 March 2007. Ende is one of four staff at the Eden Alternative office in Wimberley, Tex. She said there are also Eden homes in Canada, some European countries, and Australia.
2. While I was able to do in-depth interviews with some staff, I did not speak at length with residents.
3. William H. Thomas, *Life Worth Living: How Someone You Love Can Still Enjoy Life in a Nursing Home* (Acton, Mass.: VanderWyk & Burnham, 1996), 69-70.
4. *Ibid.*, xi-xiii & 7.
5. *Ibid.*, xiii-xiv, 23-25, & 8-9.
6. *Ibid.*, 2, 30-31, 33-34, & 28.
7. *Ibid.*, 70; center insert, figs. 2-8; 47-53; 56-57; & 71-75.
8. *Ibid.*, 96.
9. Beth Baker, “Costs and Habits are Barriers to Change,” *Washington Post* “Health” section, 16

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- July 2002, F-6. This accompanied Baker's helpful article on Levindale and similar homes, "Old Age in Brave New Settings," *ibid.*, F-1 & F-6.
10. "Rolling Fields Monthly Activity Calendar—February 2007" (Rolling Fields, Conneautville, Pa.); "It Can Be Different" (Rolling Fields, Conneautville, Pa.), n.d., [7]; and "Eden Alternative," www.lifebridgehealth.org/levindale/levindalebody.cfm?id=2073, accessed 6 March 2007.
 11. [U.S.] National Center for Health Statistics, *Health, United States, 2006* (Hyattsville, Md., 2006), 176, Table 27, www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hus/06.pdf#027, accessed 7 March 2007.
 12. Joseph P. Shapiro, "Up from the Nursing Home," in his *No Pity: People with Disabilities Forging a New Civil Rights Movement* (Times Books/Random House, 1993), 237-57; www.adapt.org, accessed 7 March 2007; and [U.S.] Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, "Rebalancing Long-Term Care," www.cms.hhs.gov/NewFreedomInitiative/035_Rebalancing.asp, accessed 6 March 2007. Also, search for "Money Follows the Person."
 13. Judith Rabig, William Thomas, and others, "Radical Redesign of Nursing Homes: Applying the Green House Concept in Tupelo, Mississippi," *The Gerontologist* 46, no. 4 (2006), 533-39. See Fig. 1, p. 537, for the floor plan.
 14. William L. Hamilton, "The New Nursing Home, Emphasis on Home," *New York Times*, 23 April 2005, A-1 & A-9.
 15. Rabig and others (n. 13), 536 & 538.
 16. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, "Developing Small Community Homes as Alternatives to Nursing Homes," press release, 7 Nov. 2005, www.rwjf.org/newsroom/newsreleasesdetail.jsp?id=10375; Michael H. Brown, "'Green Houses' Provide a Small Group Setting Alternative to Nursing Homes—and a Positive Effect on Residents' Quality of Life," www.rwjf.org/reports/grt/057114.htm, accessed 6 March 2007; and Rabig and others (n. 13), 539.
 17. Henry David Thoreau, "Life Without Principle," in Brooks Atkinson, ed., *Walden and Other Writings of Henry David Thoreau* (New York: Modern Library/Random House, 1937), 716.



APPENDIX A

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***Roe* Hovers Like a Malign Shadow**

Michael M. Uhlmann

Concerning yesterday's decision in *Gonzales v. Carhart*, a few preliminary observations based on a very quick reading:

The Supreme Court's abortion jurisprudence remains a singular embarrassment. That fact is well known by, and infuriating to, *Roe*'s sophisticated supporters and foes alike. Despite what NARAL, Planned Parenthood, as well as their sisters, their cousins, and their aunts say for public consumption, they are well aware that the right to abortion is not now, and never has been, etched into constitutional stone. It rests, and always has rested, on the flimsiest of legal rationales, and on studied avoidance of the facts of life before birth. No matter how hard it has tried—and God knows, it has tried—the Supreme Court has been unable to escape the inevitable consequences of these failures.

The short history of abortion litigation from 1973 until the present hour is the history of an increasingly embattled pro-choice majority struggling to explain and justify its prior rulings. Yesterday, the majority lost one of its members and slipped into the minority; for how long we cannot tell. But consider this: Thirty-four years after the Court enacted *Roe* (I use the verb intentionally), the justices could do no better than 5-4 in deciding what they had previously decided. And this: The Court's own syllabus of yesterday's decision required six and a half pages of closely printed 10-point type to explain what happened. These are not what one would call measures of a coherent or confident body of law.

Here, a brief *tour d'histoire* may be helpful. The central problem with *Roe* (indeed, with all the cases that have followed in its wake) is that it never addressed what, or more precisely who, is killed during abortion. The Court, per Justice Harry Blackmun's majority opinion, thought it sufficient to describe the unborn child as a "potential" human being, implying that it was something different from (and less valuable than) an actual human being. In neither instance did the opinion offer the slightest factual evidence or philosophical reasoning to explain the difference, nor has any subsequent decision of the Court bothered to do so. The entirety of abortion litigation has proceeded on the premise that the only cognizable set of rights in question belongs to the pregnant woman. There is, of course, the little problem of the pesky fetus; his or her presence must be nominally acknowledged in some sense, to be sure, but no more than is necessary to get on with the essential business at hand—justifying the woman's right to do pretty much as she wishes.

As for the woman's right itself, Blackmun stated—to say "argued" would give him too much credit—that the Constitution protected her decision to abort her unborn child. This right was said to derive from a right of privacy, the putative

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existence of which had been discovered by the Court only eight years before and was said to reside in “penumbras formed by emanations” from various constitutional provisions. The strength of the woman’s right, Blackmun went on to imply, varied inversely with the child’s age *in utero*: It was essentially incontestable during the first trimester, somewhat less so during the second, and theoretically extinguishable during the third. He further implied that once the child reached “viability,” by which he meant the capacity to survive outside the womb, it became a rights-bearing creature.

Roe’s reference to trimesters and viability, however, were deceptive shadow play, for at all stages of fetal gestation, concern for the woman’s life or health could trump any claims that might be made on behalf of the child. The Court underscored the latter point in a companion case, *Doe v. Bolton*, by ruling that health included mental health and that mental health incorporated a subjective sense of complete well-being.

The 1973 abortion cases accomplished two goals at once, but only the first was intentional—to make abortion on request the constitutional law of the land. The second was an inadvertent by-product of the justices’ naïve arrogance, demonstrating that they had little understanding of the subject they had so cavalierly removed from legislative control: The initial opinions, by raising more questions than they answered, guaranteed that the Court would become a permanent council of statutory revision on all matters touching abortion. As the states pressed the Court for answers on what they were or were not permitted to do, the justices wandered deeper and deeper into a legislative morass without benefit of map or compass.

Might a legislature require a married woman to first seek her husband’s consent before obtaining an abortion? Require a doctor to preserve the life or health of the fetus after a pregnancy has been terminated? Ban saline abortions? Mandate waiting periods? Compel the creation of detailed medical reports? Require parental notification or consent before minors could undergo abortion? Forbid public funding of abortion? Declare that life begins at conception? Ban the use of public facilities for performing abortions? Require testing to determine extra-uterine viability?

As these and a host of other questions of legislative policy presented themselves in subsequent litigation, it became painfully apparent to all close observers, including the justices themselves, that *Roe* offered precious little guidance. Having misread common law and statutory history, and having cashiered constitutional precedent as irrelevant, the justices had no choice but to fabricate new law more or less *ex nihilo*. Gloss after gloss was layered upon the 1973 rulings until very little remained of *Roe*’s original rationale, other than the ritual invocation of a constitutional right to abortion, whose provenance and justification became harder and harder to explain or sustain. By 1989, Blackmun’s argument, including his deceptive trimester schema, resembled nothing so much as a child’s blanket that had been washed until it had more holes than fabric. *Roe*’s reasoning, strictly speaking, is not much honored today by anyone—least of all by the justices, who have abandoned essentially everything but its conclusion.

Roe nevertheless survives as symbol, and a very powerful symbol it is. A confused and confusing pro-choice majority on the Court clings to it like a drowning man clutching at a life preserver. Aging feminists rally 'round it as the *sine qua non* of their liberation from antediluvian religious authority and male bondage. Postmodernists of various stripes, who look to the Court as the font of endlessly evolving constitutional aspiration, continue to hail it as the moral equivalent of *Brown v. Board of Education*. *Roe* also hovers like a malign shadow, omnipresent even if not always explicitly acknowledged, over increasingly nasty judicial confirmations; and in the larger political realm, the case remains the supreme iconic representation of the differences that divide "red" and "blue" America. No Democrat can hope to be nominated without performing obsequies before *Roe*'s altar, and the current boomlet for Rudy Giuliani notwithstanding, it seems unlikely that a Republican can be nominated who fails to distance himself from the decision's moral and legal implications.

Thirty-four years after *Roe* fecklessly sought to settle the question by removing it from legislative control, abortion agitates the body politic as few other issues, and the justices are more perplexed and divided than when they began. In recent years, a slim pro-choice majority of the Court has sought to salvage what it could from *Roe*'s shards by re-potting the right to abortion in the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The prevailing test now holds that a regulation of abortion will not survive judicial scrutiny if it imposes an "undue burden" on the pregnant woman's decision.

The new approach, however, has proven no more availing than *Roe*'s original theory, which the Court had regularly invoked to strike down even modest restrictions on abortion. Law professors and their students, who have infinite faith in the power of words to compel results they favor, insist that "undue burden" establishes a reasonable bright-line rule that only fools would contest. In application, however, the rule is but a rhetorical mask that disguises the radical subjectivity of the judgment being rendered. In *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992), a sharply splintered majority employed the test for the first time to sustain diverse restrictions on abortion, including an informed consent requirement, a mandatory twenty-four-hour waiting period, a parental consent requirement for minors, as well as various recordkeeping and reporting regulations. In prior cases, however, the Court had decreed similar provisions to be unconstitutional. Did this mean that the justices had now abandoned *Roe* in all but name? Even as the Court upheld the regulations, the plurality opinion in *Casey* went beyond anything Blackmun said in *Roe* by endorsing the right to abortion as but one expression of a high-fallutin' theory of individual autonomy that, it said, lay at the heart of the Constitution. *Casey*, in short, appeared to point in two directions at once.

Casey did one thing more: It muted the talk about privacy and shifted the constitutional ground for abortion into the more comfortable territory (for the majority at least) of the Due Process Clause. This enabled the Court to *assume*, without actually

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having to argue, the existence of a substantive right to abortion, thus empowering the justices to decide whether a particular abortion regulation was or was not unduly burdensome. Having thus altered its own rationale for abortion, the Court then had the brass to say that it would be unseemly to overrule *Roe*. Sticking with precedent, after all, is the very essence of the rule of law, and for the justices to be seen shifting now this way and now that would undermine faith in the Court as our ultimate guide to constitutional meaning. This is constitutional *chutzpah* of the first order.

If you find all this bewildering and infuriating, you are hardly alone. Whatever else *Casey* sought to accomplish, it demonstrated for all the world to see that the justices themselves were hopelessly adrift. Witness the Court's syllabus of the decision:

O'Connor, Kennedy, and Souter, JJ., announced the judgment of the Court and delivered the opinion of the Court with respect to Parts I, II, III, V-A, and VI, in which Blackmun and Stevens, JJ., joined, an opinion with respect to Part V-E, in which Stevens, J., joined, and an opinion with respect to Parts IV, V-B, and V-D. Stevens, J., filed an opinion concurring in part and dissenting in part. Blackmun, J., filed an opinion concurring in part, concurring in the judgment in part, and dissenting in part. Rehnquist, C.J., filed an opinion concurring in the judgment in part and dissenting in part, in which White, Scalia, and Thomas, JJ. Joined. Scalia, J., filed an opinion concurring in the judgment in part and dissenting in part, in which Rehnquist, C.J., and White and Thomas, JJ., joined.

Given this disarray, it was hardly surprising, in the Court's next major outing on the subject, *Stenberg v. Carhart* (2000), that Justice Stephen Breyer practically twisted himself into a pretzel to overturn Nebraska's prohibition against a barely disguised form of infanticide. Along the way, however, he lost Justice Anthony Kennedy, who had co-authored the rhapsody to autonomy in *Casey*'s plurality opinion. Kennedy's *Stenberg* dissent was welcome news indeed, but his collective musings on abortion gave us no confidence that he would remain on the side of the angels. All one could tell for sure was that the constitutional case for abortion now rested on little more than increasingly desperate assertions of judicial fiat. The "undue burden" test was only the latest rhetorical cover for what five or more justices on any given day "feel" about abortion and its limits.

Congress replied to *Stenberg* by enacting the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003, the statute in issue in yesterday's litigation. Congress paid its respects at the house of *Roe* while refusing to concede that *Roe* protected all forms of late-term abortion. Based on reliable (although not undisputed) medical testimony, it found that partial-birth abortion was never medically necessary, and it took care to describe with precision (which *Stenberg* said the Nebraska law had not) the prohibited procedure. It also refused to include a specific health exception. Various plaintiffs argued that the Act was unconstitutional on its face because it contravened standards set forth in *Roe*, *Casey*, and *Stenberg*. Specifically, they alleged that the Act unduly burdened a woman's right to choose a second-term abortion, that its terms were impossibly vague, and that it lacked a specific maternal health exception.

First the good news. A 5-4 majority, with Kennedy writing, sustained the statute against these facial challenges. Kennedy distinguished *Stenberg* by saying that Congress (unlike the Nebraska legislature) had taken sufficient care to define the prohibited procedure with reasonable specificity. He further noted that the absence of a maternal health exception was not *per se* fatal, because Congress had found that partial-birth abortion was never medically necessary. Accordingly, the Act did not run afoul of *Casey*'s undue burden standard.

Kennedy's opinion is a step in the right direction, albeit a modest one. The decision, along with last year's ruling in *Ayotte v. Planned Parenthood* (rejecting a facial challenge to New Hampshire's parental notification statute) will increase the burden on those who wish to strike down even modest restrictions on abortion. The majority (at least for the time being) is not going to roll over every time the spirit of *Roe* or *Casey* is invoked as a reason to strike down abortion regulations. Plaintiffs, who have had rather an easy time of it over the years when launching facial challenges, will have to work harder to overturn statutes they don't like. As a practical matter, that is all one can say for sure about yesterday's ruling.

Proponents of abortion will, of course, scream to the heavens that *Roe* has been effectively eviscerated. Don't believe it for a minute. It is very much alive and well, as is *Casey*. The Court, and the Court alone, remains the final judge of what may or may not constitute an undue burden. All the Court decided yesterday was (a) that there might be a valid legislative role in a very narrow category of late-term abortions; and (b) what constitutes an undue burden will have to await the specific application of the Act's provisions to particular facts.

If you're inclined to be optimistic, you might place some modest hope in the prospect that Kennedy's opinion opens the door ever so slightly to an examination of what fetal viability means. But I wouldn't count on it. Once the Court starts down that road, it will have to examine and discuss the characteristics of unborn children—an undertaking it hitherto studiously avoided, and for good reason. Still, *Carhart* is the first occasion in which a majority has even nodded in the direction that late-term abortions might be legally problematic. *Roe* disingenuously implied as much, only to ensure that the implication was swallowed by the maternal health exception at all stages of fetal gestation.

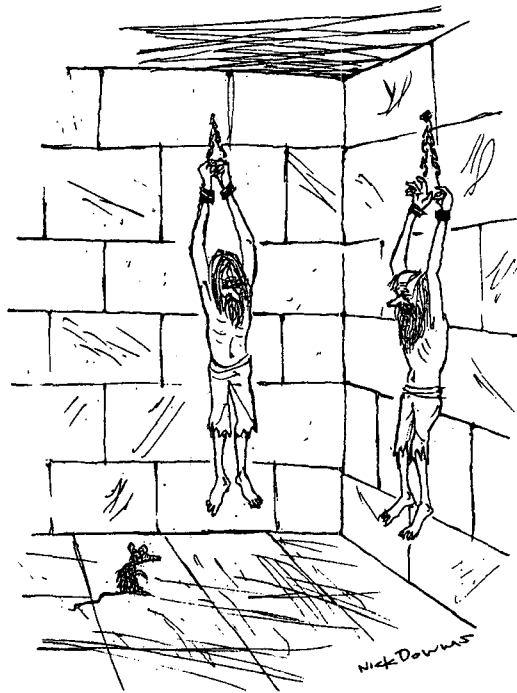
Now for the not-so-good news. Justice Kennedy made it clear that maternal health remains a viable constitutional standard. Indeed, he all but invited litigation that would present that issue in specific circumstances. What may be slightly less clear today than two days ago is that the maternal health exception may not be an absolute trump. Only time will tell.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg wrote a stinging dissent, which was joined by Justices Stevens, Breyer, and Souter. Kennedy's altogether modest hint that *Roe* may not have mandated abortion on demand under any and all circumstances was treated by Ginsburg as a total rejection of the Court's abortion jurisprudence. This is either rhetorical posturing or a measure of her capacity for legal fantasy.

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In the first place, Kennedy's opinion does nothing of the sort. It sustains the main thrust of *Roe* and *Casey* without substantial qualification. Secondly, what does Ginsburg make of the fact that *Casey* upheld a variety of procedural regulations? Her opinion reads *Casey* as if its paean to autonomy was the be-all and end-all of the abortion controversy; that is, she reads it as if its muting of *Roe*'s privacy rationale was mere rhetorical sleight-of-hand. Privacy and due process, it would seem, are for Justice Ginsburg just different labels for the same thing, which is to say, an absolute right to abortion. She seems genuinely puzzled that Kennedy fails to get it. Her position, of course, gives the lie to Blackmun's trimester schema and to the dicta about viability, which for Ginsburg and her allies seem to be so much wink, wink, nod, nod rhetoric that no one ought to take seriously.

The justice's angry opinion will, of course, be cited chapter and verse by the usual suspects. When the next vacancy opens on the Court, you can count on its becoming a centerpiece of the next nasty confirmation hearing, which will surpass all hitherto existing nasty hearings in vituperation. It will do so because the law of abortion, now more than ever, rests on nothing more than arbitrary judicial will. That being the case, it's the number of votes, not constitutional reasoning, that matters. Liberals have known this from the minute *Roe* was handed down. *Carhart* reminds them that the rationale for abortion can no longer be sustained by mere pretense; only a stronger assertion, of judicial fiat will do; and that now requires, more than ever, a secure fifth vote. Put on your body armor.



"I spy with my little eye, something that begins with 'R.'"

APPENDIX B

[Father Richard John Neuhaus, a priest of the Archdiocese of New York, is the editor-in-chief of *First Things* and the author of many books. The following appeared April 20 on the magazine's website (firstthings.com) and is reprinted with permission.]

Gonzales v. Carhart

Richard John Neuhaus

I'm not convinced that this week's Supreme Court decision on partial-birth abortion is as good as Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg says it is, but I certainly hope she is right. She says it is alarming; it reflects manifest hostility to the unlimited abortion license imposed by *Roe*; it supports judicial deference to the legislative branch; it permits moral and ethical considerations to impinge upon law; it treats sympathetically such traditional notions as a mother's love for her child; and it is a first step toward reversing the abortion regime established by *Roe*. As I say, I hope she is right, but I expect she may be exaggerating somewhat.

Nonetheless, the *Carhart* decision is to be warmly welcomed. (It seems to be generally agreed that the decision will be referred to as *Carhart* rather than *Gonzales*.) Commentaries on the decision abound, and we will have a thorough analysis in a forthcoming issue of the magazine. Michael Uhlmann's posting here yesterday provided a valuable overview of abortion jurisprudence since *Roe*, and there is nothing in it with which I would disagree, although I do think more attention might be paid some of the more promising aspects in Justice Kennedy's majority opinion. And I am one with Joseph Bottum on the additional points he made yesterday, except it seems to me that the response to *Carhart* from the many institutions of the pro-life movement, including Justin Cardinal Rigali's official response on behalf of the bishops conference, is considerably more positive than he suggests. And rightly so.

Justice Kennedy's 5-4 majority opinion is notable for accenting the society's legitimate, indeed imperative, interest in protecting innocent human life. That interest had received lip service in *Roe* and its judicial offspring, but this time it is an operative, albeit not a controlling, concern. President Bush hailed *Carhart* as bringing us closer to the goal of "a society in which every child is welcomed in life and protected in law." A very little bit closer to a goal still painfully far away.

In its emphasis on the society's interest in protecting unborn life, this decision builds on the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act of 2002, which was the baby, so to speak, of our own Hadley Arkes. As Hadley has argued in *First Things*, that act was a crucial wedge in establishing in public law the obvious truth that the unborn child is a child. It is notable that Ginsburg and the other justices in dissent do not even attempt to challenge that truth, although the dissenters grumble about the opinion making so much of it. (A sizeable portion of the dissent is about the language employed by the majority: "child," "mother," and "abortion doctor," for instance, when "fetus," "woman," and "physician" would serve just as well—in fact, would serve much better if your purpose is to disguise the obvious.)

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It seems to me that there is another question that should be pretty much settled now. Back in the 1990s, there was considerable argument among pro-life leaders about the wisdom of focusing on partial-birth abortion. It was a strategic decision. Pro-lifers opposed to it contended that partial-birth abortions accounted for only a few thousand abortions per year, and getting rid of that procedure would do nothing to protect the million and more other children killed by abortion each year. This was another instance of the familiar disagreement over the advocacy of incremental changes or frontal challenges to the abortion regime of *Roe*. Obviously, one would prefer a frontal challenge that would result in the overturning of that infamous 1973 decision. But it will not work, at least not now. Quite apart from specific decisions of the Court, the focus on partial-birth abortion has been a great success in educating the public to the reality of unborn life and the horror of abortion. In the dissent, Justice Ginsburg objects that the moral repugnance triggered by partial-birth abortion is true of all abortions. Precisely.

I expect it is in the minds of many, but so far there has been only marginal public comment on the fact that all five in the *Carhart* majority are Catholics. What can one say? Know-Nothings of the world unite? It is not a peculiarly Catholic perception, but it is an emphatically Catholic perception, that legitimate law cannot be divorced from morality. And in this constitutional order of representative democracy, the relationship between moral judgment and law is best expressed by the legislature. Almost a century ago, Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. declared that the realm of law should be entirely purged of moral judgment or vocabulary.

That, of course, is itself a moral dictate. But over the past fifty years, the Court has followed that dictate on numerous issues, thus reinforcing what has been called the naked public square. The Ginsburg dissent is right: In previous decisions, especially those dealing with abortion, the Court said there was no place in law for the “imposing” of moral judgments. *Carhart*, by way of contrast, evidences a respect for moral discernment, especially as expressed by the legislature. Every law of consequence reflects a moral judgment. The abortion license imposed by *Roe* previously enjoyed a most particular exemption from moral inquiry. *Carhart* quite clearly says that that exemption is now expiring.

It is nonetheless the case that, as Mike Uhlmann points out, the ban on partial-birth abortion leaves the abortion license itself in place. The only question addressed is whether the ban is an “undue burden” on the exercise of the license. As Ginsburg delicately says of the ban, “The law saves not a single fetus from destruction.” The Kennedy opinion is careful to point out that, even in cases when the child has reached full term, abortionists can avoid violating the ban by giving the baby an injection that kills it and then removing the corpse in pieces. So it is true that the unlimited abortion license, defined as the right to kill a baby at any point before live birth, remains unlimited.

It is also true, however, that the majority opinion is careful to say that the unlimited license rests on *existing* abortion precedents of the Court. Kennedy underscores that the present decision does not overturn those precedents. But Ginsburg

is, from her perspective, rightly alarmed that the opinion is very careful not to *affirm* those precedents. If it had affirmed them, it would not have been a majority opinion, since Justices Thomas and Scalia once again make clear in their concurring opinion that they believe the abortion license is without foundation in the Constitution.

Which raises the question of why Justices Roberts and Alito did not join in the concurring opinion. The answer, it is reasonable to believe, is that the main purpose of the concurring opinion is to make clear that Thomas and Scalia are not withdrawing their objection to the use of the Commerce Clause to federalize abortion and other laws, and Roberts and Alito have no dog in that fight, as yet. Moreover, if Roberts and Alito do agree that *Roe* and its offspring were wrongly decided, this case did not require them to say so publicly. And, in fact, if they did say so now, critics would make hay of their not being impartial in considering a future case in which *Roe* and its judicial offspring are overturned. So I see nothing ominous in the fact that Roberts and Alito did not join the concurring opinion in *Carhart*. To which it must be added, of course, that we do not know for sure whether they—possibly along with Kennedy and the next justice to be appointed—will support the reversal of *Roe* when an appropriate case is accepted by the Court, although we may reasonably hope so.

In reporting *Carhart*, the *New York Times* lede declared that the Court “reverses course” on abortion. That is true in a limited sense. Justice Ginsburg is correct about the differences between this decision and prior decisions in which the Court upheld pitifully minor regulations in the exercise of the abortion license. To be sure, there are no guarantees, but *Carhart* gives reason to think that Ginsburg’s fears may be vindicated and the abortion regime may be on its way, a painfully slow way, toward extinction.

While the carnage continues, there is no place for false hopes or counsels of despair. It is not, I believe, a false hope to think that this week’s decision has brought us a little closer to the goal—never to be realized fully within the limits of history—of a society in which every child is welcomed in life and protected in law. There will always be some abortions, as there will always be other forms of homicide, along with rapes, child abuse, and similarly grievous crimes. But the law—in its pedagogical, protective, and punitive functions—can discourage and prevent such great evils. *Carhart* has made that prospect a little more visible on the still distant horizon.

APPENDIX C

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Good May Yet Come

Hadley Arkes

Justice Kennedy has given new meaning to the aphorism that “anything worth doing . . . is worth doing badly.” The decision Wednesday in *Gonzales v. Carhart* seems to have set off chains of euphoria—and alarm—in the land. The pro-lifers have shown a joy that is surely out of scale with the narrow, constricted opinion that sprang from the mean nature of Justice Kennedy. And the pro-choicers, wringing their hands, seem not to have noticed that Kennedy has so cabined the approval of this federal law on partial-birth abortion that the “abortion liberty” seems to have been placed safely beyond challenge. As Kennedy was careful to assure his audience, the abortionist who goes merrily on his way dismembering a child—or, as he put it, the one who “disarticulates [a fetus] at the neck, in effect decapitating it”—is safely insulated from any danger of prosecution: The abortionist simply needs to avoid that indelicate matter of having a substantial part of the child dangling outside the body of the pregnant woman as he inserts a scissor into the skull of the child or finds another way of killing it.

Kennedy went out of his way to sound again the themes in the *Casey* case of 1992, in affirming *Roe v. Wade*. “We assume,” he said, “the following principles for the purpose of this opinion”—and then went on to list propositions that no one else among his colleagues in the majority is likely to accept. For example: that before the point of “viability” a state may not prohibit a woman from making a decision to “terminate her pregnancy.” Or that the state may not place an “undue burden” on a woman seeking abortion.

Beneath the Surface

During the oral argument on the case in November, the solicitor general, Paul Clement, argued that the bill on partial-birth abortion could be sustained without challenging in any degree the holding in *Roe v. Wade*. We took that as something he just had to say, and on the surface it was true. But what we sensed, beneath the surface, was that a decision upholding the law would mark the beginning of the end for *Roe*. The judges would be saying, in effect, that they were ready to start weighing seriously many limited restrictions on abortion, emanating from legislatures in the states. And in a chain those measures would surely come, step by step.

Now Justice Kennedy insists, in the same way, that the bill does not diminish *Roe v. Wade*, and we wonder whether we should discount that flat assertion in the same way we did Clement's. But Kennedy, in control of the opinion, has acted precisely to foreclose virtually all piecemeal challenges to *Roe*. He has made it

clear that the killing of the unborn can proceed almost wholly unchecked, as long as the grisly acts of dismembering or poisoning are taking place solely in the womb.

And yet, as he sought to mark off with exquisite precision the narrow dimensions of his judgments, he also took some remarkable steps to keep Dr. Carhart and his friends from coming into federal court again next week, with new rationales, which can tie up the bill once again. It may be a narrow decision, but Kennedy, to his credit, has taken some decisive steps to insure that this decision will stick.

Allowing for Restrictions

In a piece last January in *First Things* ("The Kennedy Court") I anticipated that Kennedy would try to resolve the case in the most limited way by simply rejecting the decisions in the lower courts to strike down a law on abortion in a "facial challenge." In most cases, a facial challenge will be accepted only when there appear to be no conceivable circumstances in which the law could be constitutional. With laws on abortion, however, the situation is inverted: The federal judges have been willing to enjoin the enforcement of these laws in facial challenges if there is any conceivable circumstance in which the law *might be unconstitutional*. Kennedy has now made it clear that this inversion of the law has been ended, and that is no small point: It means that laws on abortion will be allowed to work, to have their effect; that they will not be struck down flippantly on the basis of airy speculations offered by people who object to having abortions restricted. The laws would not be challenged then unless there is a concrete case of someone actually denied an abortion that could clearly be tested.

My own apprehension was that the Dr. Carharts in the country, or the agents of Planned Parenthood, would simply come into court again with any of the rationales that have worked in the past. Judges like Richard Kopf in Nebraska have already shown themselves altogether willing to credit any argument that is offered by the challengers. Most likely, I thought, the charge would be heard again that the law is fatally "vague." But Kennedy moved decisively to foreclose those kinds of challenges. He argued that there is nothing vague about the definition of the partial-birth abortion. When the doctors who perform this procedure are intending to dilate the cervix and bring most of the body of the child outside the birth canal, they must know that they are intending this.

Kennedy also foreclosed the move to claim the need for a "health exception" to the law. The law already contained an exception for the cases, exceedingly rare, when a woman's life would be in danger. And if a partial-birth procedure did not seem "indicated," the federal court of appeals in New York had noted that the abortion could take place in the ways now common or conventional; so there were other, safe methods still available. The claim that partial-birth abortions were sometimes the safer form of abortion had been found, by Judge Casey in New York, to be a claim wholly speculative and theoretical, without any evidence offered in support.

Kennedy confirmed what I had written last January: that he was willing to accept an "as applied" challenge to the law: A pregnant woman with cancer might

APPENDIX C

argue that it is especially risky for her to have instruments introduced into the womb. She might contend then the partial-birth abortion would be the safer method for her. But that kind of case is not certain to arise, or arise very soon. And Kennedy has been clear on the point that the law itself does not have to be overturned because it may not apply aptly in all conceivable cases.

The Next Steps

Then what kind of “good” may spring from a decision so limited? The decision in *Carhart* reaffirms yet again *Roe v. Wade*, but something else may be at work beneath the surface. There is a certain dynamism that comes into play when legislators are allowed to take hold of the matter again. About thirty states had passed laws on partial-birth abortion before they were invalidated in *Stenberg v. Carhart* in 2000. The states can now pass their own version of the federal bill, just tracking the language of that bill. That is all good practice. And once legislators get used to legislating again, other things may readily follow. Kennedy pointed out that the Court in *Casey* had upheld the requirements of informed consent. The legislatures can now start enacting those provisions again—most notably, they may provide for the use of sonograms to assure that the pregnant woman has something more than a vague impression of the child she is carrying. The viewing of a sonogram could be required, or it may simply be offered in the interest of letting a woman know what she is choosing.

In India, the use of sonograms has penetrated even poor areas, and brought the beginnings of a demographic crisis: Families anxious for sons have been altogether too willing to abort female babies. And given the sensibility of the time, the disposition of the government in India has not been to ban the killing of babies based on their gender, but rather to forbid clinics to make the information available. Of all things, we are hearing denunciations of these multinational capitalist firms, like General Electric, which do such underhanded things as to produce the equipment that gives people such information about their unborn children.

The next plausible move, then, is to bring back the scheme of banning any abortion performed on the basis of the sex of the child. My hunch is that that position, too, would command a large level of support in the public, comparable to the level of support for banning partial-birth abortion, and it too would recruit people who call themselves “pro-choice.”

But if legislators could take that modest move of banning abortions on the basis of sex, the public mind could be prepared for reasoning about the next step: barring abortions based on the disability of the child. In surveys in the past, more than half of the public were opposed to aborting a child if the child was likely to be born deaf. The opposition seemed to be invariant by the period of gestation. My own reading was that, if people thought it was wrong to kill someone because of his deafness, they did not think that the wrong varied with the age of the victim.

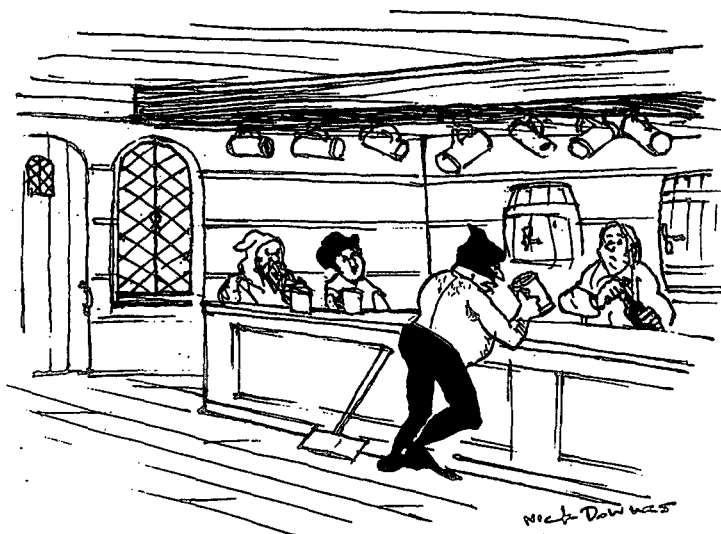
Here the legislatures could invoke the body of their laws dealing with discriminations against the disabled. And then perhaps they could get to the point of banning

abortions after the onset of a beating heart. One survey recently found that about 62 percent of the public would support that kind of restriction. It is worth noticing, too, that in none of these cases except that of the beating heart would the legislation start offering protections based on trimesters or the age of the child. There would be no need to play along, and confirm, the perverse fiction that the child becomes more human somewhere in this scale of age, or that it is legitimate to kill smaller people with reasons less compelling than the reasons we would need in killing larger people.

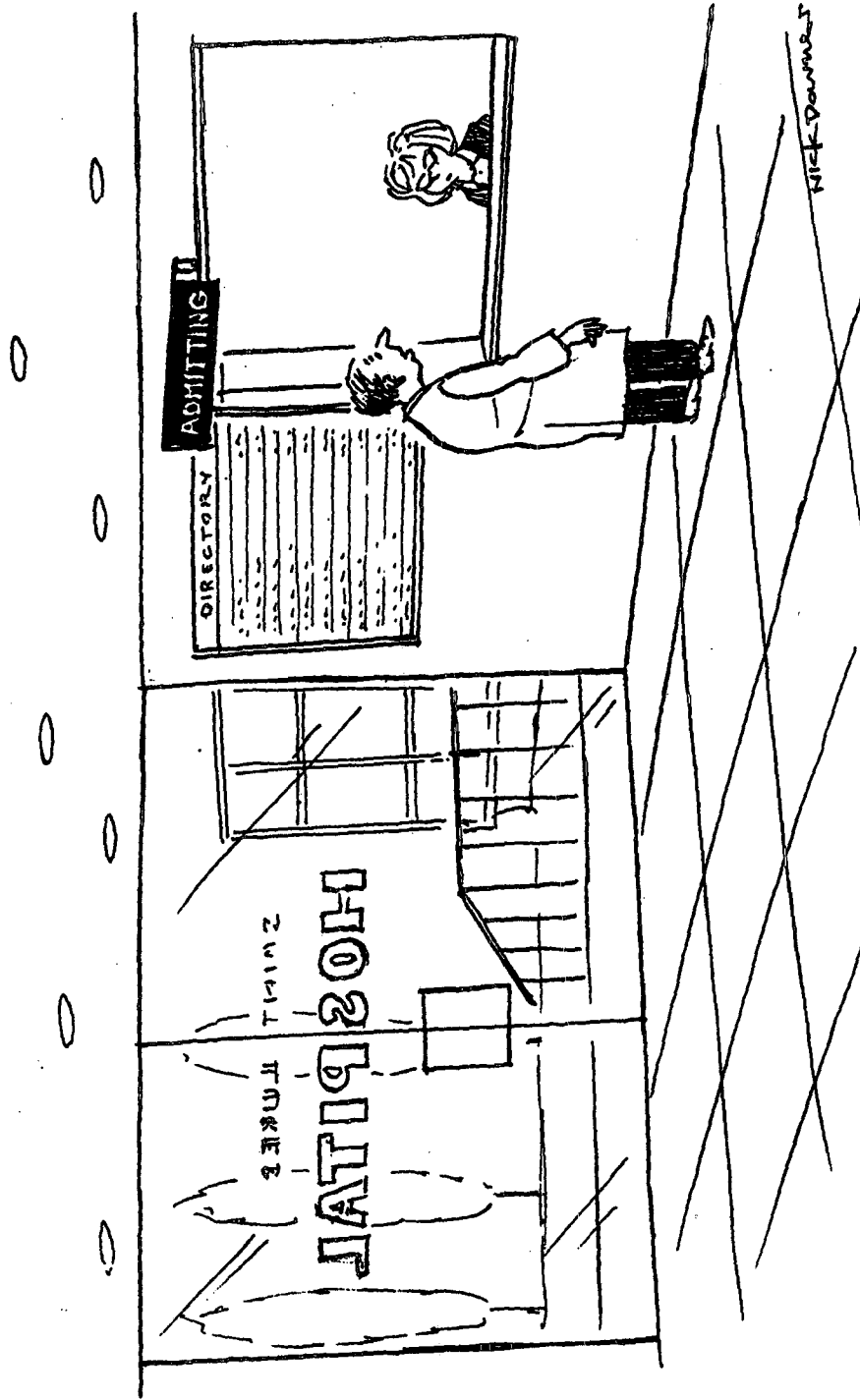
The Effects of an Impulse

In the most curious way, then, a decision so narrow, so begrudging and limited, may invite a series of measures simple and unthreatening, but the kinds of measures that gather force with each move. We need to remind ourselves that we have seen such things before. We may recall, in that vein, the Emancipation Proclamation. It was limited, as a war measure. For Lincoln did not have the authority to strip people of what was then their lawful property in slaves. The Proclamation freed only those slaves held in areas that were in rebellion against the government. It did not cover the slaves held in Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, Missouri. And yet . . . it was understood instantly and widely in the country that this measure had an “anti-slavery impulse.”

The decision on Wednesday, in *Gonzales v. Carhart*, was severely limited and diminished in its practical effects. But rightly or wrongly, there may be a sense that the decision opens the doors now; that it invites legislators and political men and women to deliver themselves from the reign of judges, and set their hands to this task once again.



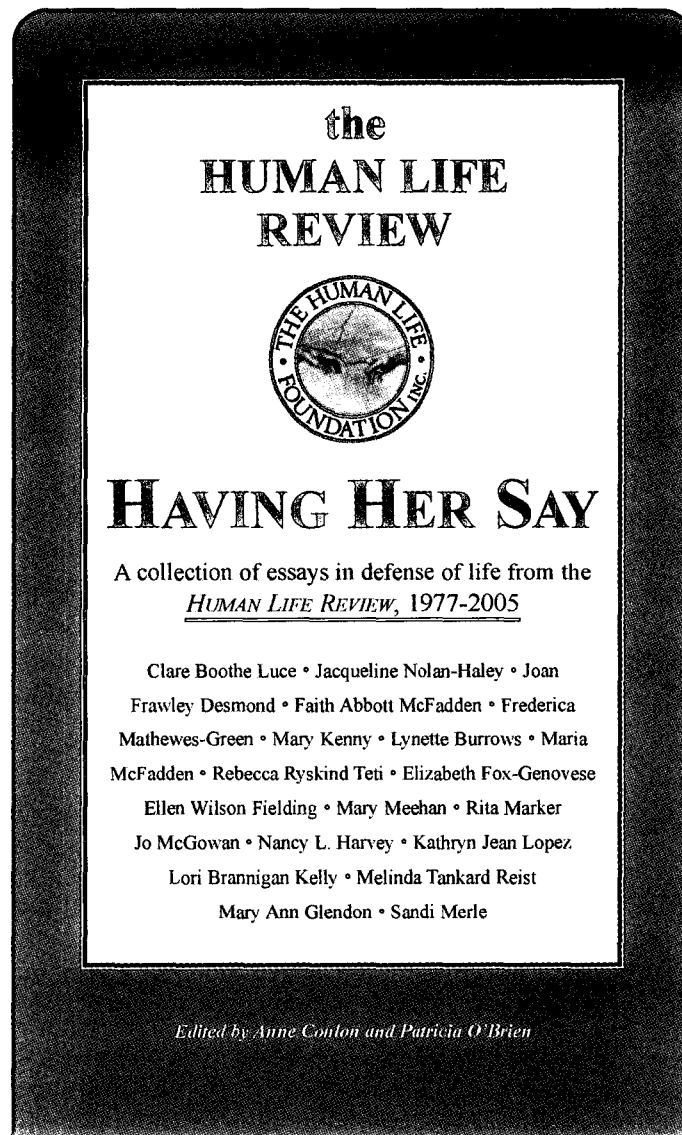
“Oh, it’s like any job where you chop people’s heads off.”



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