the weekly Standard

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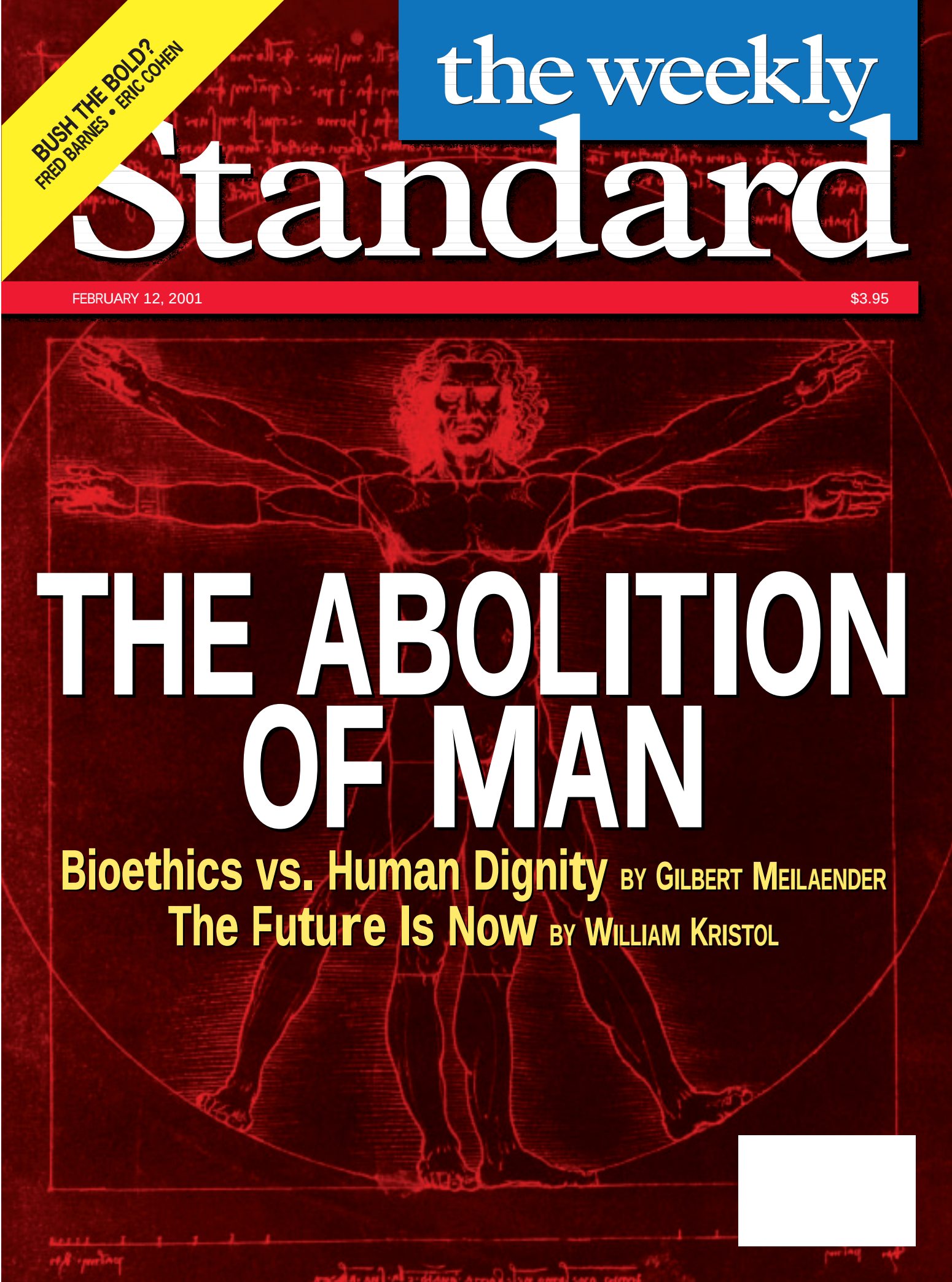
BUSH THE BOLD?
FRED BARNES • ERIC COHEN



THE ABOLITION OF MAN

Bioethics vs. Human Dignity BY GILBERT MEILAENDER

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the weekly Standard

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

Senator Boxer Clarifies Her Priorities

In October 1999, during floor debate concerning a bill to ban partial-birth abortions, senator Barbara Boxer of California, responding to questions from senator Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania, briefly let slip the startling notion that babies should not begin to enjoy constitutional and other legal protections in the United States~~ag~~ainst murder , for example~~un~~til after they arrive home with their mothers from the hospital. Here's the relevant passage from the *Congressional Record*:

SANTORUM: "I would like to ask you this question. You agree, once the child is born, separated from the mother, that that child is protected by the Constitution and cannot be killed. Do you agree with that?"

BOXER: "I think when you bring your baby home, when your baby is born . . . the baby belongs to your family and has rights."

SANTORUM: "Obviously, you don't mean they have to take the baby out of the hospital for it to be protected by the Constitution. Once the baby is separated from the mother, you would agree—completely separated from the mother~~yo~~u would agree that baby is entitled to constitutional protection?"

BOXER: "I don't want to engage in this. You had the same conversation with a colleague of mine, and I never saw such a twisting of his remarks."

Well. Lest it be inferred from the above that Barbara Boxer has a heart of stone where defenseless life is concerned, comes now the senator, during a January 30 floor debate over the confirmation of interior secretary Gale Norton, to set you straight.

BOXER: "We are talking about God's creations that we have a responsibility to protect. This is Mojave National Preserve Joshua trees. We have to move to protect them. Let us show some other habitat. Let us show the beautiful habitat of Alaska. Here we can see some of the magnificent caribou up in Alaska. . . . We have to think about their whole habitat if we are going to protect them and not have this narrow view that Ms. Norton has articulated."

Gale Norton probably thinks the caribou have to get home from the hospital before we need concern ourselves with their safety. But Barbara Boxer, by gum, has a very different view of "God's creations." ♦

Jesse Helms, Vindicated

On October 24, 1985, 24-year-old seaman Miroslav Medvid leapt from the deck of a Soviet freighter into the Mississippi River near New Orleans. Medvid told Border Patrol agents who took him into custody that he opposed his country's Communist government and wished to defect. But for reasons that remained cloudy~~and~~ over the vehement objections of North Carolina senator Jesse Helms~~the~~ Reagan administration decided that the poor man should be returned to his ship. Whereupon, so far as anyone in the West was able to determine, Miroslav Medvid simply disappeared.

Until last Tuesday, when Medvid, now a Catholic priest, paid a grateful visit to Helms's office. Back on board the freighter, Medvid explained to Helms, he twice tried to kill himself—knowing what was in store for him back home. Upon his return to his native Ukraine, Medvid's fears were realized: He was adjudged criminally insane, incarcerated in a "mental hospital," subjected to electric- shock "treatment," and prescribed psychoactive "medication." Released shortly before the fall of communism, Medvid entered the seminary. He now ministers to a small parish in the Ukraine.

Someday soon, THE SCRAPBOOK hopes, Sen. Helms will receive a similar visit from Elián González. ♦

Another Recount Myth Exploded

Remember how, during the Bush-Gore controversy in Florida, it became clear that the largest, poorest, and most urban counties in the country tend to use "antiquated" punch- card balloting machines, rather than the improved and expensive electronic voting systems developed only in recent years? Disproportionate numbers of African Americans live in such counties, of course. And so it is *their* votes, more than anyone else's, that are most likely to be overlooked through technological error on election night. Never mind, for the moment, what implications for law and justice this fact might have. Recall only how routinely it was bandied about by the Gore campaign, how universally it was accepted by the news media, and how~~fess~~ up, now—even you believed it was true.

Nope. Two researchers, Stephen Knack of the University of Maryland and Martha Kropf of the University of Missouri-Kansas City, have just completed a systematic, nationwide analysis and cross-tabulation of county-level data on demographics and voting equipment. Their surprising conclusion: "We find little support for the view that resource constraints cause poorer counties with large minority populations to retain antiquated or

inferior voting equipment. In most states, it is whites, the non-poor, and Republican voters who are more likely to reside in punch-card counties rather than African Americans, the poor, and Democratic voters. Moreover, counties with punch-card systems tend to have higher incomes, higher tax revenues, and larger populations than do counties with modern voting equipment."

Once Knack and Kropf's impressively detailed study ("Who Uses Inferior Voting Technology?") becomes more widely known, THE SCRAPBOOK predicts that Democratic party support for a national solution to the punch-card "problem" will shrink to nothing. ♦

Saul Bellow on Jesse Jackson's Bathhouse

There has been some excellent reportage on Jesse Jackson's love child scandal, but this week's scoop belongs to Michael Sneed of Jackson's hometown paper, the *Chicago Sun-Times*: "The Rev. Jesse Jackson likes to chill out in a bathhouse, the Division Street Bathhouse."Who knew? Who knew that Jesse hung out in a *schvitz*, or that this venerable Division Street establishment was still in business?

"This place is like a sanctuary,"a bathhouse source told Sneed. "Rich and poor come here from every ethnic background. It's like a brotherhood. You close the door and leave the world behind. You put on a sheet or a robe and chill out. . . . Like most of us, Jesse likes the experience of the heat room and the soap rubdown. And it's a place to reflect."

But why rely on this anonymous description? Nobel laureate Saul Bellow immortalized the place a quarter of a century ago in *Humboldt's Gift*:

"These Division Street steam-bathers don't look like the trim proud people downtown. . . . They have swelling buttocks and fatty breasts as yellow as buttermilk. They stand on thick pillar legs affected with a sort of creeping verdigris or blue-cheese mottling of the ankles. After steaming, these old fellows eat enormous snacks of bread and salt herring or large ovals of salami and dripping skirt-steak and they drink schnapps. They could knock down walls with their hard stout old-fashioned bellies. Things are very elementary here. You feel that these people are almost conscious of obsolescence, of a line of evolution abandoned by nature and culture. So down in the super-heated subcellars all these Slavonic cavemen and wood demons with hanging laps of fat and legs of stone and lichen boil themselves and splash ice water on their heads by the bucket. Upstairs, on the television screen in the locker room, little dudes and grinning broads make smart talk or leap up and down. They are unheeded. Mickey who keeps the food concession fries slabs of meat and potato pancakes, and, with enormous knives, he hacks up cabbages for coleslaw and he quarters grapefruits (to be eaten by hand). The stout old men mounting in their bedsheets from the blasting heat have a strong appetite. . . . There may be no village in the Carpathians where such practices still prevail." ♦

Casual

COLLARED

Last week, the president created an Office of Faith-Based and Community Outreach. Predictably, wall-of-separation alarm clocks, set for a Republican administration, have been going off all over the place.

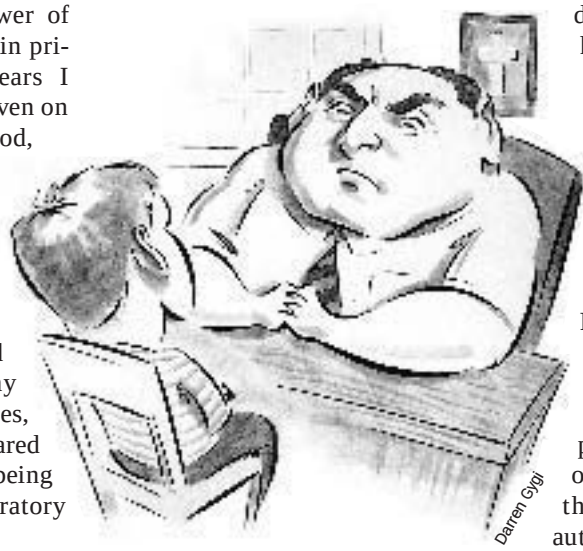
I myself find the phrase "faith-based institution" unsettling, and not only because it pushes aside less ugly terms like "religious charity." It's also because I know how the power of moral suasion is vested in certain private institutions. For ten years I attended Catholic school, and even on the day I was leaving it for good, its coercive extralegal authority followed me out the door.

That morning, I had fulfilled my final obligation of the academic year, an examination required by New York state. For the fall, I was enrolled in a public school. Now, by my reading of the relevant statutes, having finished the test and cleared off the premises, I had ceased being a student of St. Francis Preparatory High School.

I had a lot to do that afternoon. Talk to my buddy James about fundraising opportunities among our friends. Convince an artsy chick named Jen to lead a small expedition to Springfield Boulevard, via the public bus system, to buy a pizza pie and bring it back. Go to the supermarket with James for some orange juice. Only then would I get around to actually breaking the law, by purchasing a liter of vodka.

Our pizza and screwdrivers party took place down the street from St. Francis, on city property, in a park. We sat under a tree that all the cool students called Euripides. We were six or seven minors, including some girls I didn't know. Two of them, as someone later recalled, got "really buzzed" and had to go to the bathroom.

So the two girls walked down the street to use the facilities at St. Francis. Which wouldn't have gotten them in trouble had they not made a racket in the girls' room. In fact, all their clattering and cackling might not have attracted anyone's attention, had the nearby classrooms not been filled with sophomores taking state math exams. Only minutes after they were apprehended by a nun, I later learned, they answered the fateful question: Who bought the liquor?



A few days passed before the dean of men called me at home to set up a little get-together. He didn't believe me when I pointed out that I was no longer a student at his school. But since he was eager to involve my parents, I thought I should humor him and nip this thing in the bud.

I don't remember everything that was said at our meeting, but I do remember his first words: "So, Mr. Skinner, why don't you tell me what *transpired* the other day?" Then, as if using an SAT word weren't threatening enough, he flexed. The dean of men, it so happened, was also coach of the weightlifting team. And he was huge. His folded hands pushed hard against each other. One could see, just beneath his short-sleeved button-down shirt, his upper arms widening and his trapezius muscles swelling upward into his walrus-sized neck, which looked about to burst the confines of collar and necktie.

In my reply, I conspicuously replaced the word "transpired" with "took place" and made it clear that I didn't think he had a shred of authority to bully me like this. He noted that we could always call over "the boys" from the local police precinct to see what they would say. I hoped he wouldn't do that, I said, but still I couldn't see how it was any business of his if a boy who wasn't even a student at St. Francis celebrated the last day of school in whatever fashion he pleased.

The dean of men quickly tired of me and demanded another meeting with my parents, both of them if possible. That night at home, I begged my parents to tell him to get lost. They were strangely dismissive of my legalistic argument that the dean of St. Francis lacked the necessary standing to get all blustery and menacing about my off-campus activities. My mother and father made it plain that the dean was a member of the same committee of adults they belonged to and had as much authority to yell at me as they had to ground me.

At the second meeting, two things happened. My father nodded a lot while the dean repeated the litany of my crimes. And the dean convinced my father to drive me over to the store where I had bought the vodka and browbeat the owner for selling liquor to a minor. It was *so* embarrassing.

The village had spoken. My parents had happily allowed the dean to castigate their child. They even seemed grateful for the assistance. Returning the favor, my father was more than willing to get tough with the liquor store owner, both as a parent and on behalf of the school. Everyone was in cahoots and everyone had standing except me.

DAVID SKINNER

Caught Up in the Story

Voices on the left and right have praised President Bush's inaugural speech for its eloquence and emphasis on civility. But most, including William Kristol, have largely overlooked the speech's most striking and significant element: the strongly philosophical, and indeed theological, tenor of the entire address ("Enter Bush," Jan. 29).

Kristol tips his hat to Bush for making providence an "aspect" of the speech, but fails to acknowledge this theme's importance. Bush began, "We have a place, all of us, in a long story." He concluded, "We are not this story's author, Who fills time and eternity with His purpose." In so framing his message, Bush made himself smaller than the moment, paradoxically making himself seem larger. He also set himself apart from his postmodern predecessor, who almost certainly would not have asserted that America's "grand story" is a chapter of a meta-narrative written by an author "Who creates us equal in His image."

But most importantly, Bush explained to the American people his view of who we are ("a flawed and fallible people, united . . . by grand and enduring ideals") and why we are here ("our duty is fulfilled in service to one another"). An incoming president can do worse than show us his place in this world and ours, and thus enunciate his most basic philosophic disagreement with the outgoing officeholder. It was a superb effort.

Andrew Nichols
Washington, DC

Hold the Kindness

Having just read Fred Barnes's "Too Much Mr. Nice Guy?" I have to agree this is not the way to start a new administration (Jan. 22). President Bush better learn quickly that the Democrats will not be cooperative, ever, unless it's in their best interest.

Leaving Linda Chavez to swing in the wind (whether disclosing her illegal alien problem was a mistake on her part or not) sent the wrong kind of message to other Bush nominees and simply reinforced the Democrats' resolve to continue harassing and sniping at him.

If Bush fancies himself in the Reagan mode he is missing the point. Cabinet appointees derive their power from the president's use of his office to set the tone, even if it's behind closed doors. Bush made a very bad first mistake even before he took the oath of office.

Now, even if Bush can win confirmation for Ashcroft, the Democrats know they can push him around and get away with it. This weakness will stain Bush's effort to claim the leadership role he needs to succeed. It's going to be a very rough few months for the president.

Jack LaChance
Sierra Vista, AZ

Kudos to Fred Barnes for pointing out the hypocrisy of the liberal Democrats in Congress who cry for bipartisanship then accuse John Ashcroft of being a racist ("Too Much Mr. Nice Guy?" Jan. 22). The best defense is a good offense, but I have seen no Republicans fighting back.

If I were a senator I'd be asking John Ashcroft if he ever drove his girlfriend off a bridge and left the scene in a drunken stupor. The only reason Ted Kennedy gets away with his antics is because the Republicans have, as Barnes points out, unilaterally disarmed. Why hasn't someone accused the liberal Democrats on the Judiciary Committee of being prejudiced against conservative Christians? In their government, diversity is great if it excludes conservatives.

It's time for Republicans to stand up for themselves and put the liberals on the defensive.

Jimmy Conner
Tavares, FL

Exposing the Left

Congratulations to David Frum for his excellent article "What Clinton Did to the Left" (Jan. 15). I was impressed with the way he articulated the fundamental differences between Democrats and Republicans.

The left relentlessly seek a rule of experts. They arrogantly announce "what the people want" and try to hide a real effort to enlarge state power. It suggests they hold in contempt the public's intelligence and remain wrapped in their cocoon.

Bill McDaniels
Hobbs, NM

Victory Express?

Mike Murphy's article "Compromise First, Then Crush Them" is one of the best political articles I've read in quite some time (Jan. 22). I hope the article gets the widest possible dissemination within Republican ranks, as I believe he has articulated a winning formula.

Murphy had a tough year in 2000 between the McCain and Lazio campaigns. However he doesn't seem to have lost his focus or his foresight.

Ted DelGaizo
Malvern, PA

Bush's Racy Nominee

When Christopher Caldwell points out that, since 1789, only nine cabinet nominees have been rejected in the Senate—and none for ideological reasons—he has hit upon a key point ("Sackcloth and Ashcroft," Jan. 29).

There is no need, then, for Caldwell to weaken his own cogent arguments by pretending that those who question

Sen. Ashcroft's racial politics "assume a link between Ashcroft's religious practices and the American race problem."

Actually, those of us who question Ashcroft's racial politics worry about such offenses as an interview he gave to a racist magazine sympathetic to the Confederacy. Is it unfair to scuttle a cabinet nomination based purely on ideology? Probably. But Ashcroft has shown what is at best insensitivity about issues of race. Neglecting to mention this because it fails to abet the author's agenda could be considered propaganda.

DARIN STRAUSS
New York, NY

CLINTONOLOGY 101

DAVID TELL DESCRIBES Bill Clinton as having a personality disorder, calling him "a man convinced that no criticism of him can ever have justice" ("Exit Clinton," Jan. 29).

My former psychology professor described a different syndrome that might apply. A male child has been showered with praise and special reward for nothing, usually by his mother. He grows up adept in the ways of attracting adulation but subconsciously knowing that he does not deserve it. His subconscious tells him he deserves instead to be penalized, so the man keeps asking for punishment with behavior that pushes the limits, until he gets caught. He then employs his conscious indignation and charming wiles to extract himself and start the game all over again.

The teacher called this personality type a "kick-me player" and cited the example of~~no~~ surprise~~Ri~~chard Nixon. I've often wondered if she has switched her example to a far better player, Bill Clinton.

MANON MCKINNON
Falls Church, VA

CUT COSTS, SAVE MONEY

GARY SCHMITT AND TOM DONNELLY ignore a fundamental fact in their article "Spend More on Defense—Now" (Jan. 22). The Department of Defense (and the rest of the government) require a major demolition and reconstruction before they can use more money effectively. Just throwing money at defense is no more effective than throwing money at social problems.

Among the improvements required are fewer bureaucrats~~fif~~ty years after the creation of the Department of Defense, we still have departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force~~an~~d better computer systems~~m~~many jobs that should have been computerized long ago are still done by hand or only partially by computer. Implementation of these reforms will stretch the current budget and lessen the need for additional money.

JACK HALEY
Warner Robins, GA

THE BATTLE WITHIN

I WAS SURPRISED TO SEE your reaction to the Army's new recruiting slogan, "An Army Of One," in the Jan. 22 SCRAPBOOK. As a retired naval officer, I've always praised the Air Force's succinct and to the point "Aim High" and the Army's optimistic "Be All You Can Be" as short, inspiring slogans challenging recruits to achieve performance of the highest calibre~~nec~~essary for personal success in life and mandatory for survival in combat.

On first viewing the Army's newest recruiting video, my reaction was exactly opposite the mocking tone taken by THE SCRAPBOOK. The video and the slogan "An Army Of One" stress the abrupt reality of what each person joining the Army must come to grips with. Not that one may now "bring their Mom," as your title suggests, but just the opposite~~tha~~t their new challenge as an effective member of the armed forces must first be initiated by themselves, each from within.

That motivation may come from any number of sources: fear of failure, respect for one's comrades, love of country. But in all cases the courage to fight has to come from inside, during the silent conversations where one decides to persist or to quit.

My own boot camp experience some years back was recently echoed by my daughter's recruit training experience with the Air Force. While my incentive to persevere was raised slightly by the specter of the Vietnam War, we both shared similar bouts of inadequacy, fear of not meeting the tough physical and mental standards, and the constant harassment applied by our Drill Instructors.

We both came eventually to realize that only when one masters the battle posed by the "Army of One" can he or she truly be effective as a reliable member of a combat team. And yes, we both left our Moms at home.

RICHARD C. MCINTOSH
Kathleen, GA

SWEEPSTAKES DEPARTMENT

I RECENTLY READ Andrew Ferguson's article about the impending reemergence of the homeless problem now that Republicans control the White House ("Horrific Days Are Here Again," Jan. 22).

While driving to work on January 25 I heard a report on the local NPR affiliate about homelessness on the streets of Washington, DC. Of course, the report was respectfully nuanced, since not even the NPR crowd would believe President Bush could create a homeless problem in five days, but the writing is clearly on the wall.

Just wondering, do you have a prize for the first person to spot a report of the "new" homeless problem? If so, did I win?

STEVEN LENT
Arlington, VA

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the weekly Standard

The Future Is Now

A few news items from the first month of 2001:

"Scientists have created the first genetically modified monkey, an advance that could lead to customized primates for medical research and that brings the possibility of genetic manipulation closer than ever to humans."

Washington Post, January 12, 2001

"Britain eased curbs on embryo research, effectively sanctioning the creation of cloned human embryos."

Wall Street Journal, January 24, 2001

"Scientific research groups are becoming increasingly concerned that President Bush may block federal funds for research on so-called embryonic stem cells. . . . But equally alarming, some researchers say, are signals from the White House that Bush might also cut off funding for a related and much larger branch of research: studies that rely on conventional tissues retrieved from induced abortions. . . . More than 135 NIH-funded projects rely specifically on fetal tissues, and many more are believed to use those tissues incidentally. . . . Among the NIH-funded studies is one in California in which human fetal tissues have been transplanted into mice to create rodents with humanized immune systems."

Washington Post, January 26, 2001

"A well-known Italian fertility specialist and his U.S. colleague have announced plans to clone human beings, apparently becoming the first scientists with expertise in human reproduction to publicly set such a goal."

Los Angeles Times, January 28, 2001

"Late last year, genetic engineering watchdog groups warned that the European Union had granted a patent in December 1999 to an Australian company for a process that would allow the creation of 'chimerical' creatures—human/animal hybrids. . . . This patent specifically covers the possible creation of embryos made containing both cells from humans and mice, sheep, pigs, cattle, goats or fish.'"

National Catholic Register, January 28, 2001

"One of the leading children's hospitals in Britain illegally harvested hearts, brains, eyes and other organs from thousands of dead children without the consent of their parents, according to a government report published Tuesday."

Los Angeles Times, January 31, 2001

For years, we have been "progressing" step by step down a road while averting our gaze from the road's destination. Now it looms before us. Will we continue to sleepwalk? Or will we at least stop to consider where it is we are going—even if we cannot yet summon up the courage seriously to consider retracing some of our steps, and embarking on a new direction?

There will always be sophists and scientists, and humanitarians who will explain why any particular "advance" shouldn't be stopped, or can't be stopped, or isn't fundamentally different from previous steps we have taken. And it's of course true that the lines aren't as bright as one would like between medical gene therapy and eugenics, between scientific experimentation and exploitation, between a better human world and a new inhuman world. But to fail to draw lines is passively to submit to a scientific revolution in genetics and biotechnology that threatens our liberty and our dignity.

Over half a century ago, C.S. Lewis saw it coming. In *The Abolition of Man*, Lewis explained what "Man's conquest of Nature really means and especially the final stage in the conquest, which, perhaps, is not far off":

> [W]hat we call Man's power over Nature turns out to be a power exercised by some men over other men with Nature as its instrument. . . . [T]he man-moulders of the new age will be armed with the powers of an omnicompetent state and an irresistible scientific technique: we shall get at last a race of conditioners who really can cut out posterity in what shape they please. . . . It is not that they are bad men. They are not men at all. . . . [T]hey have stepped into the void. Nor are their subjects necessarily unhappy men. They are not men at all: they are artifacts. Man's final conquest has proved to be the abolition of Man.

Before this prospect, before this possibility, every other issue pales—not into insignificance, for many other issues are significant, but at least into lesser significance. The challenge of the scientific revolution in genetics and biotechnology, of scientific "progress" loosed from natural, human, or religious moorings, is *the* challenge we face. Isn't it time to start drawing lines?

—*William Kristol*

The Minister of Ministries

George W. Bush launches his faith-based initiative. BY FRED BARNES

SHORTLY AFTER the inauguration, Vice President Dick Cheney explained to Stephen Goldsmith, the former mayor of Indianapolis, how the new White House office of faith-based initiatives would be set up. But Goldsmith, Bush's first choice to head the office, had his own ideas, a counterproposal that included bestowing cabinet status on the head of it. Cheney was surprised. "You don't make a counter-proposal to the president," he said.

So John DiIulio, a Democrat, Catholic, scholar, and one-time adviser to Al Gore, became the assistant to the president in charge of faith-based initiatives. This is a signature project of the Bush presidency, touted early and often by Bush during the campaign. And DiIulio seems perfectly suited to run it: He knows more about grassroots programs run by churches than anyone and believes fervently in them. Goldsmith, the odd man out, will be an unpaid adviser and chairman of the Corporation for National Service, which runs Americorps and other volunteer programs.

Bush and DiIulio are an odd couple and a mutual admiration society. Bush is from West Texas, DiIulio from South Philadelphia, where he still lives. Bush is low-key and eager to please. DiIulio is intense and intent on persuading. Both have Ivy League backgrounds, but while Bush was an indifferent student, DiIulio was a star pupil of James Q. Wilson at Harvard and went on to become a professor at Princeton and now the University of Pennsylvania. Both are working in new fields. Bush failed in the oil business but succeeded as president of the Texas Rangers baseball team. DiIulio's academic specialty is public administration, but he's made his name in criminology and social policy. Bush told an aide last week, speaking of DiIulio, "I love that guy." DiIulio said of Bush: "I have total faith in this man's heart." Oh, yes, Bush's nickname for DiIulio is "Big John."

AP/Wide World Photos

DiIulio and Bush

The two almost didn't connect. DiIulio was known to Bush through his chief political strategist, Karl Rove. He is a prolific writer (including as a contributing editor to this magazine). "I'd read his stuff for years," Rove says. But when an aide to then governor Bush tried to invite DiIulio to a meeting in Austin in early 1999, he didn't respond. A half-dozen calls went unanswered. Finally, Goldsmith called, and he agreed to come. Normally, DiIulio says, "I don't hang with Republicans." And his experience with politicians had been unsatisfactory. "They invite you in, do 20 minutes, and hand you off." But, from their first meeting, he found Bush to be different. "He was engaged for the full two hours," DiIulio says.

What pleased DiIulio most was the absence of politics. Bush wanted to know what a faith-based initiative would involve and what programs might work. Later, in July 1999, Bush delivered a speech on compassionate conservatism in Indianapolis. That morning, he called DiIulio, who was vacationing at the Jersey shore, to thank him for his advice on the speech. It was only months earlier that DiIulio had met with Al Gore and advised the Democratic candidate on his own plans for supporting faith-based programs. Gore gave a tepid speech on the subject in May 1999.

The Bush-DiIulio relationship was sealed in June 2000 after Bush had won the Republican presidential nomination. Bush had come to Philadelphia for a speech, and DiIulio was asked to wait around to chat afterwards. They conferred for two hours, first just the two of them, then with Goldsmith and Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge. Once more, the subject was social policy, not politics. Bush was in "the what's good, what works, and think-big box," says DiIulio, which was what attracted him to Bush in the first place. As president, DiIulio figured, Bush would "surprise a lot of people. And he has."

What has DiIulio learned that others haven't about faith-based projects to aid the poor? He's been studying them for a half-dozen years, notably through his Center for Research on Religion and Urban Civil Society at Penn. First, he says, one has to be realistic about what, say, a church project can achieve. The chief characteristic of "highly effective outreach ministries" is that they form partnerships with other groups, often secular ones. Second, running these ministries does

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

not conflict with saving souls, the main job of religious groups. On the contrary, such work can help protect the religious and sacred characteristics of their organizations," DiIulio insists. Third, the country is crawling with small, unsung but effective programs that could reach more people if they had government and private funding.

"Washington can potentially play a useful role," DiIulio says. But it's not a slam dunk. The idea of building on grass-roots ministries is "promising but not proven." In other words, empirical evidence that lives will be improved is lacking. "From a social science standpoint, the jury is still out." However, DiIulio adds, "there's something going on here. It's what the good nuns said. Do the right thing in the right way and you'd be amazed what you can achieve." For DiIulio, strengthening local ministries and community efforts is "intellectually, morally, and in civic terms what I care most about."

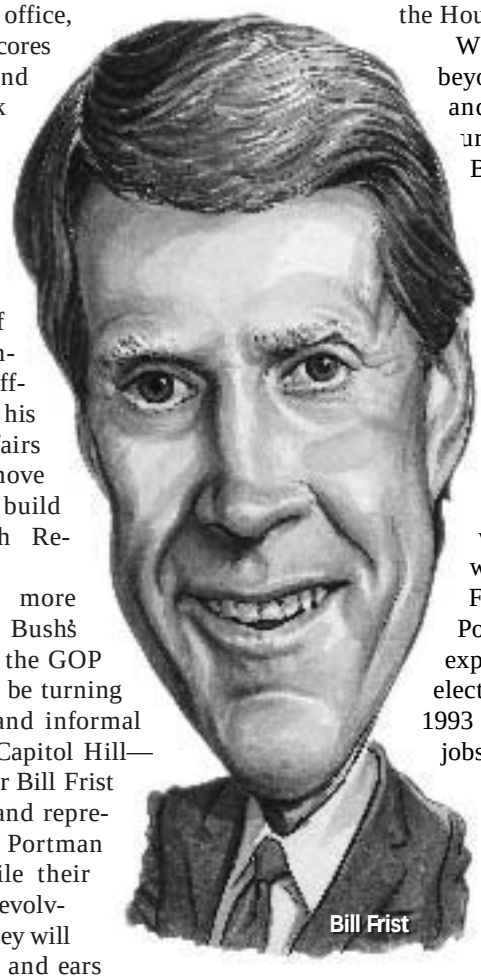
When Bush collected a group of advisers in Austin in early January to talk about faith-based programs, DiIulio seemed unlikely to be Bush's pick. DiIulio skipped the meeting, instead taking his three kids to New York to see *Beauty and the Beast* on Broadway. Then on day five of the Bush presidency, he got a call from a White House aide offering him the faith-based job.

DiIulio was reluctant initially, particularly because of his friendship with Goldsmith. He also worried that Goldsmith's demise might mean a trimmed-down program. But in two days of talks with senior Bush aides, he became convinced the president intends to give strong emphasis to the program. The last problem was the title of the office. Bush aides wanted it to be the Office of Community and Faith-Based Initiatives. If that was the case, DiIulio said, they would have to get someone else to run it. He wanted the words Faith-Based to come first, since expanding efforts by religious groups is what's new and significant about the program. To get DiIulio on board, the Bushies gave in. A very smart decision on their part. ♦

Bush's Men on the Hill

The president chooses his eyes and ears in Congress. BY MATTHEW REES

When George W. Bush was running for president, he maintained an arms-length relationship with congressional Republicans. Today, he's aggressively courting them. During his first week in office, he met with scores of members, and late last week he attended a GOP retreat in Williamsburg, Virginia. Bush has also hired a claque of esteemed congressional staffers to work in his legislative affairs office, a move guaranteed to build goodwill with Republicans.



Illustrations by Drew Friedman

But even more important for Bush's relations with the GOP is who he will be turning to as formal and informal liaisons with Capitol Hill—notably senator Bill Frist of Tennessee and representative Rob Portman of Ohio. While their roles are still evolving, it's clear they will be Bush's eyes and ears in Congress, alerting him and his aides to the mood on Capitol Hill and giving advice on routine matters like who's susceptible to lobbying on tough votes, when to press forward with particular legislation, and when to pull back. Portman's efforts will complement those of Roy Blunt, the House GOP's talented chief deputy whip and Bush's official liaison to the House.

While little known beyond Congress, Frist and Portman are natural choices. Like Bush, they came late to elective office, yet entered at a high level. Frist had never run for anything before knocking off a veteran incumbent senator, Jim Sasser, in 1994 (Bush's top political aide, Karl Rove, was among those who encouraged Frist to run). As for Portman, his political experience before his election to Congress in 1993 consisted of staff jobs in the Bush White House. Portman and Frist are also like Bush in that they bring a mild-mannered approach to politics; from a conservative foundation, they emphasize bipartisanship and place a premium on achievement. And all three hold Ivy League degrees: Bush went to Yale and Harvard Business School, Frist to Princeton and Harvard Medical School, and Portman to Dartmouth.

Matthew Rees is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Both Frist and Portman command respect from their peers on the Hill and hold leadership positions in their respective caucuses. Frist recently ran unopposed for chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee, the Senate GOP's campaign arm, while Portman was tapped by speaker Denny Hastert last month to be chairman of the House leadership, a position that guarantees a White House ally will always be present when House leaders are crafting strategy.

Frist is best known for his background as a surgeon who's performed over 200 heart and lung transplants (he is the first doctor elected to the Senate since 1928). During his first term, he labored on a number of important but obscure health issues and often found himself overshadowed by Tennessee's other Republican senator, Fred Thompson.

That changed last summer, when Bush made him his Senate liaison following the death of senator Paul Coverdell. Frist was sufficiently unacquainted with Bush that just a few months earlier he'd stood in line at a Republican fund-raiser to have his picture taken with the candidate, but he quickly established himself as a Coverdell-like figure who could assume ownership of issues without alienating his famously turf-conscious colleagues. And during the Republican convention, he co-chaired the hearings of the platform committee at the request of Josh Bolten, the campaign's policy director and now a deputy chief of staff in the White House. The usually unruly proceedings came off without a hitch, with Frist adroitly navigating the contentious debate on education.

Frist stayed active for Bush in the general election campaign, setting up weekly conference calls for his Senate GOP colleagues to speak with top Bush aides and mediating between Congress and the Bush campaign over the details of the patients' bill of rights legislation. More important, because he was up for reelection against a weak opponent, he was able to synchronize his advertising with Bush's, giving the Texas governor a little-noticed boost that even the Gore campaign completely missed. His labors paid off, as Tennessee, Gore's ostensible home state, went for Bush.

Frist's work ethic is the stuff of Senate legend. Aides regularly receive e-mail missives at 2 or 3 A.M. Partly this reflects the idealism of one still new to politics. But Frist also keeps a peculiar schedule: One night a week he simply goes without sleep, a habit left over from his days as a heart surgeon. His sleep pattern may also explain how, despite his Senate workload, he finds time to write (he co-authored a book, published in 1999, that profiled 17 Tennessee senators), travel (he leads regular medical missions to Africa), and exercise (he runs a marathon about every six months).

This stamina will serve him well as he chairs the Senate Republican campaign committee~~he~~ll be ably assisted by Republican operative Mitch Bainwol~~an~~d runs interference for Bush on issues like Medicare and health care reform, where there's already disagreement between Republicans and the White House. (Anne Phelps, a former Frist staffer now in the White House, will help iron out the differences.) One of his unlikely Senate allies may turn out to be Ted Kennedy. They've worked together on a number of health care issues, and in a statement given to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, Kennedy said, "I admire Senator Frist's ability to set aside partisan differences and work effectively across the aisle on key public health issues."

If Frist has anything to worry about, it's that his ties to the new administration are not of long standing. That won't be a problem for Portman, who has better connections to the Bush White House than any other member of Congress. He counts among his close friends senior Bush staffers Andrew Card, Josh Bolten, and Nick Calio~~all~~ former colleagues from his time working in the White House for Bush's

father (Portman is the only House member to have served in the first Bush administration). What's more, a number of Portman staffers now occupy top White House slots. John Bridgeland is a senior member of the domestic policy council, Joe Hagin is the director of administration, and Melissa Bennett is Card's scheduler.

Portman downplays his own relationship with Bush, saying, "I don't hold myself out as a close personal friend." Yet in November 1997, long before Bush had made public his presidential plans, he told Portman, during a ceremony dedicating the Bush library at Texas A&M, of his plans to seek the White House. And Bush clearly likes him. When Portman arrived late to a recent meeting between Bush and congressional leaders, Bush jokingly barked, "Portman, what are you doing here, serving coffee?" And in the ultimate compliment, Bush has given Portman an affectionate nickname: "Robby."

Portman got his start in electoral politics after leaving the first Bush White House for his native Cincinnati, where he practiced law. When the longtime local congressman, Bill Gradison, resigned from Congress in 1993 to run a health care trade association, Portman jumped into what became a fiercely contested Republican primary, which included a former congressman, Bob McEwen. But Portman prevailed, thanks to a radio ad in which Barbara Bush endorsed him, saying, "I always enjoy having Skyline Chili [a local favorite] with Rob Portman when I'm in Cincinnati." Portman returned the favor a few years later by sponsoring legislation to christen the CIA complex the George Bush Center for Intelligence, a change that became official in April 1999.

During last year's presidential campaign, home-state loyalties kept Portman neutral until his fellow Ohioan, John Kasich, withdrew from the race. Thereafter, he immediately endorsed Bush, and served as a surrogate for him in New Hampshire, where he'd gone to college. He also campaigned doggedly for Bush in the primary in Ohio, a key state that voted shortly after John McCain's upset victory in Michigan. Perhaps most significant of all, Portman took the role of Al Gore as Bush readied for the third presidential debate, and then spent a number of weekends in Wyoming playing Joe Lieberman to help prepare Dick Cheney for the vice presidential debate.

With Roy Blunt as Bush's formal liaison in the House, Portman's influence won't always be visible. But top White House officials say that given his history of working on a variety of tax and pension issues, his fingerprints will be all over any legislation in those areas. And though a conservative, he's popular with all the House factions. Representative Chris Shays, a leading GOP moderate, gushes over him, while representative Ben Cardin, a liberal from Baltimore, praises him as an "honest broker" who's more interested in achievement than partisanship. (Portman's tax staffer, Barbara Pate, is a Democrat who once worked for Democratic congressman J.J. Pickle.)

Given the GOP's razor-thin congressional majorities, if Frist and Portman can help deliver legislative victories for Bush on their specialty issues, health care and taxes, their relative anonymity will become a thing of the past. Regardless, both are seen by their colleagues and political observers as rising GOP stars. Portman is often mentioned as a future speaker, or perhaps a vice presidential nominee. Frist, who's not planning to run for reelection in 2006, is said to be positioning himself to run for president. Frist-Portman in 2008? You read it here first. ♦

A Bumper Crop of Alarmism

Rachel Carson would have loved this corn. Why don't environmentalists? BY WILLIAM TUCKER

When Rachel Carson wrote *Silent Spring* in 1962, she decried the use of chemical sprays, arguing for more benign and natural "biological" pesticides. One of her favorites was *Bacillus thuringiensis*, a common soil bacterium that produces a crystalline spore lethal to some insects. "Shortly after eating foliage coated with this toxin the larva suffers paralysis, stops feeding, and soon dies," wrote Carson. "[This is] an enormous advantage, for crop damage stops almost as soon as the pathogen is applied."

Under Carson's prodding , BT (as it is affectionately known to organic gardeners) became more widely used in agriculture. Then in 1990, molecular biologists isolated its insecticidal protein, dubbed Cry (for "crystalline"). Through the new techniques of genetic engineering, they were able to implant various strains of the Cry protein in the corn plant.

The result was an astonishing environmental coup. *Now the corn plant itself produces the pesticide.* There is no more need for indiscriminate chemical spraying. Non-harmful insects and other wildlife are spared, since the protein acts only against insects trying to eat the plant—in this case the voracious European corn borer. With 18 percent of American cornfields now planted with insect-resistant corn, pesticide spraying in 1999 declined for the first time in history.

You'd think champagne glasses would be clinking in the headquarters of environmental organizations all over the country. But no, environmentalists are opposed to the effort. What's more, their opposition—combined with weak-kneed science at the Environmental Protection Agency—is now ruining our export trade with Europe and Japan and may eventually cost American farmers hundreds of billions of dollars.

The problem has arisen from a single variation of the protein—Cry9C—marketed under the brand name StarLink by Aventis CropScience, a French conglomerate. Ordinarily, the introduction of new crop varieties requires no approval from the Food and Drug Administration. In a bureaucratic land-grab, however, the EPA has claimed jurisdiction over insecticidal corn on the grounds that the plant itself is a "pesticide." (When the first genetically modified crop, a frost-resistant strawberry, was introduced in 1990, the EPA also grabbed control, claiming frost itself is a "pest." The product never made it through testing.)

BT corn developed by Monsanto and several other companies passed muster. But Aventis's StarLink gave pause. Most Cry proteins break down immediately in the human stomach, but Cry9C was found to take about 30 to 60 minutes. This led the EPA to speculate that it *might* cause an allergic reaction.

Others questioned this reasoning. Allergic reactions are triggered by antibodies, but "it's highly unlikely that anyone would have ever developed antibodies against a protein that human beings almost never encounter," says Steve T aylor, head of the University of Nebraska's Department of Food Science and Technology and a leading expert on food allergens. "There is virtually no risk associated with the ingestion of StarLink

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corn in this situation." Only about 2 percent of the population suffers food allergies, usually involving the "big eight" (cow's milk, eggs, peanuts, wheat, fish, crustaceans, soy, and tree nuts). Nevertheless, guided by the "precautionary principle"—a current favorite of environmentalists that says, in effect, if you can't prove when you wake up that nothing bad is going to happen to you, you should spend the day in bed—the EPA pronounced Cry9C "unfit for human consumption."

In a cow's alkaline stomach, on the other hand, Cry9C does break down immediately. Therefore it was judged safe for animal consumption. In a move everyone was later to regret, the EPA issued StarLink a "dual registration"—fit for animal feed but unfit for humans. "If anybody had asked us, we would have told them it would be impossible to keep the two separate," says Jim Bair, vice president of the North American Millers Association. "But nobody asked us." Farmers started planting the variety in 1998.

By 2000, BT corn made up 18 percent of the American corn crop. Aventis's StarLink had a 3 percent share of the BT market, making it .5 percent of the entire American crop. Last June, however, environmental groups became suspicious that StarLink harvests weren't being segregated from other corn. Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth commissioned a sampling. Sure enough—traces of Cry9C showed up in Kraft Foods' Taco Bell taco shells and Frito-Lay's Chee-tos. The FDA ordered a recall.

By October, the StarLink panic was causing major disruptions in the Midwest. Cargill and several other wholesalers announced they would not accept shipments of corn tainted with even one kernel in 400 of StarLink. The problem was particularly acute for farm cooperatives, where crops from neighboring farmers are ordinarily mixed together. Corn delivery trucks spent hours outside grain elevators waiting for their crops to be tested. ConAgra shut down several milling plants and spent weeks trying to clean out the residues. Aventis quickly withdrew StarLink and has agreed to compensate farmers for the damages—generally estimated to begin around $100 million.

AP/Wide World Photos

Greenpeace pickets corn.

In the United States, all this amounted to little more than a run-of-the-mill environmental panic. (No cases of Cry9C allergy, it should be noted, were ever reported.) But in Europe, it has become a major international issue that may permanently affect trade relations between the two continents.

Europe has been in a snit for years over genetically engineered food crops—generally considered an "American technology"—and in 1998 banned its own farmers from planting them. Meanwhile, half the American diet now contains foods that have been in some small way genetically engineered.

One factor in the European antipathy is *bovine spongiform encephalopathy*, or mad cow disease. Although completely unrelated (it is a virus that spreads when animal remains are used to feed other animals), mad cow disease has become fused with genetic plant science under the rubric of "public distrust."

Perhaps more significant has been the fact that environmentalism, a movement fundamentally aristocratic in its origins, finds much more support in Europe among people in high stations. The principal opponent in England has been Prince Charles, who has sworn that no genetically modified food will touch the royal table. The prince's efforts have been opposed by Prime Minister Tony Blair, who has warned of an "anti-scientific attitude" and says genetically modified food products will be necessary to feed the world's people. (Two of the strongest supporters of modern genetic plant science in the United States are Jimmy Carter and George McGovern, both involved in international humanitarian efforts.)

Emboldened by royal and aristocratic approval, European environmentalists have become much more violent in their opposition. Activists have destroyed experimental plots and trashed laboratories. Last April, a British jury acquitted 28 protesters from Greenpeace and other groups who had dug up and destroyed a six-and-a-half-acre plot planted with Aventis corn. "We have known for a long time that people don't want to eat [such] food," said Lord Melchett, executive director of Greenpeace, one of the accused. "The time has come to stop planting it."

The panic over StarLink brought fears to a boiling point. By October, environmental groups were barricading Liverpool docks to prevent the unloading of American corn. McDonald's Europe announced it would no longer serve hamburgers made from cows that have supped on BT corn or similar products. (Some of this has been encouraged by European farmers, as always seeking protection from U.S. imports.) Similar barriers are now being raised in Japan, which will start labeling genetically engineered food this spring. "If consumer resistance develops, it's going to be a disaster for American farmers," says Lynden Peter, executive director of the American Corn Growers Association. The soybean crop now more than half genetically engineered will be particularly at risk.

What is really at stake is the future of agricultural research. Agronomists say it will be difficult if not impossible to improve crop productivity without genetic engineering. Seeds for "golden rice," a new variety developed for Third World countries, already sit in a grenade-proof bunker in Switzerland awaiting the outcome of several patent disputes plus litigation by environmentalists to stop its export. Golden rice has been bred to produce beta-carotene, the precursor to Vitamin A. Rice grown throughout the tropics does not produce Vitamin A, and tens of millions of people suffer from vitamin-A deficiencies, causing blindness in about half a million children every year. Yet environmentalists say there is greater concern in the possibly unknown consequences of fiddling with nature's handiwork.

Beneath the pseudo-science of environmentalism there has always been a clear nature-worship. Anyone suggesting we can understand nature or manipulate it to our advantage is thus flirting with sacrilege. Yet this "precautionary principle" which environmentalists want to apply to all technology has one fundamental flaw. It doesn't evaluate the costs of excessive caution. As the EPA is proving to American farmers, staying in bed all day carries its own risks. ♦

Where Terrorists Run Free

Twenty-five years of attacks on Americans in Greece have gone unpunished

BY WAYNE MERRY

WHEN TERRORISTS attack American embassies or kill our military personnel, the United States is relentless in bringing the criminals to justice. Right? Strangely enough, not if the crimes take place in Greece, our NATO ally.

It has now been 25 years since Richard Welch, a U.S. diplomat, was brutally gunned down in front of his wife, on his way home from a Christmas party in 1975. His killers still walk free.

Wayne Merry, a former State Department and Pentagon official, is senior associate at the American Foreign Policy Council in Washington.

Welch was a CIA officer on a diplomatic assignment, declared as such to the local government. Since his death, three more Americans—Navy Captain George Tsantes in 1983, Navy Captain William Nordeen in 1988, and Air Force Sergeant Ronald Stewart in 1991—have fallen prey to the same terrorist group. Over 30 more U.S. officials have been wounded in attacks intended to kill. No terrorists have been arrested, however, let alone brought to justice. No suspect has been identified, and no serious investigation is even underway. The chances the terrorists will be caught are very low, but the chances for

AP/Wide World Photos

November 17 weapons and kitsch

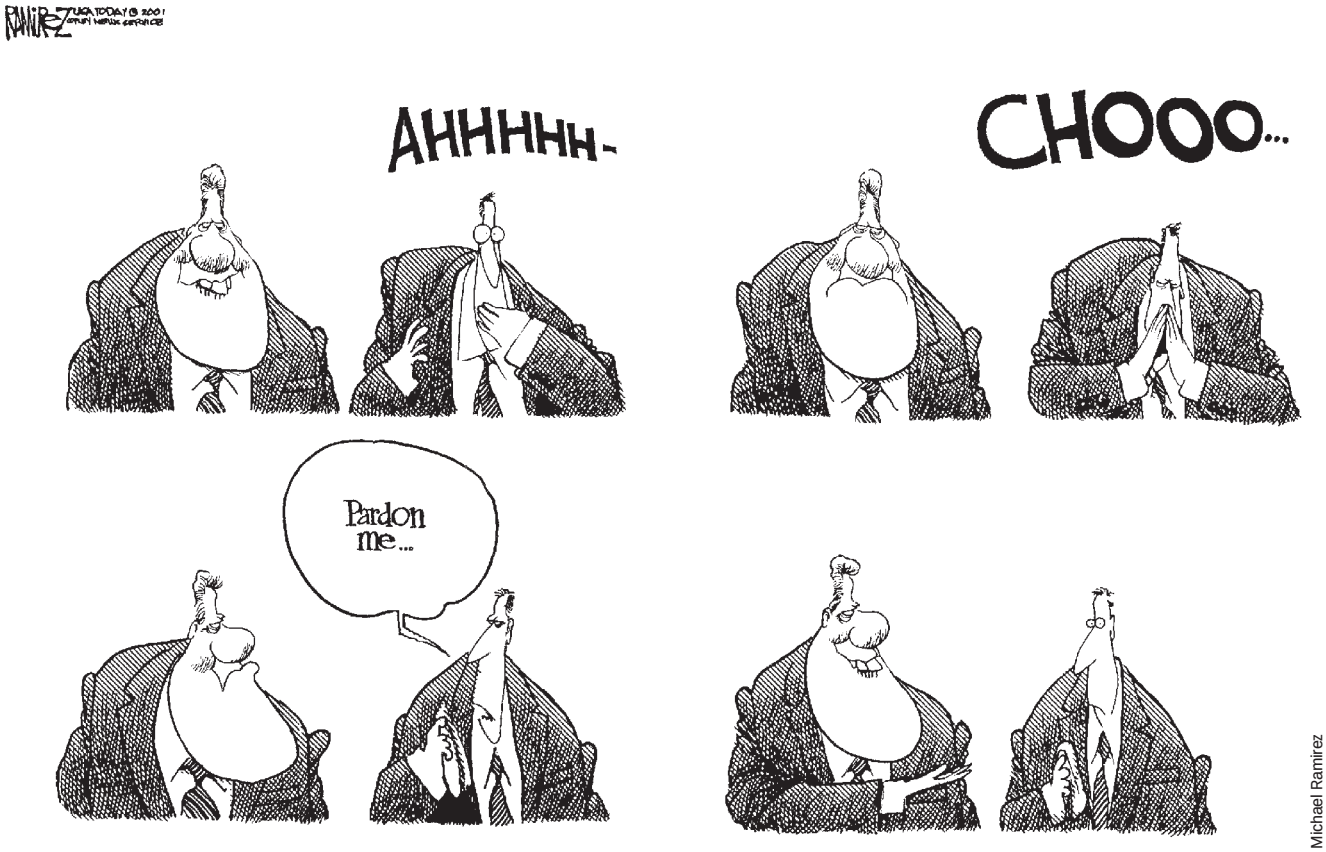
more American victims are high.

The Greek terrorists call themselves "November 17," to mark the crushing of a student uprising by a previous military government. In scores of operations, the group has killed a prominent member of the Greek parliament and wounded others, tried to kill several Greek cabinet members and other senior officials, and murdered or mutilated leading diplomats, judges, industrialists, bankers, and physicians. Most recently, just last June, it killed British defense attaché Stephen Saunders. The group uses firearms, high explosives, mortars, and rocket grenades (mostly stolen from the Greek police and military). It has brazenly bombarded the U.S. embassy in central Athens and routinely bombs banks, businesses, and diplomatic targets.

In this quarter-century reign of terror, the record of Greek law enforcement is zero: no convictions, no captures, no arrests, no suspects, nothing.

How can this be? Surely, if a U.S. senator were murdered in downtown Washington by a political group that had also killed officials of a friendly country (say, Greece), the FBI and Justice Department would work round the clock to make arrests, under intense pressure from Congress and the media. Not in Athens.

There has never been a systematic police effort to find November 17, whom the Greek media often portray as urban Robin Hoods. Recently, two major Greek newspapers printed full-page revelations of the evidence developed by a crack team of Scotland Yard investigators sent to Athens after the Saunders killing, information leaked from the Greek security services. Witnesses of terrorist attacks, known only to the police, receive threats from the terrorists.



Michael Ramirez

Serious journalists who ask too many questions do so in peril of their lives.

I worked on this issue for three years at the U.S. embassy in Athens and am persuaded the problem goes far beyond police incompetence and a few terrorist sympathizers. The problem is political. The ruling Pasok party fears exposure of its own prior links with November 17 if the terrorists go on trial. Prime minister Costas Simitis is almost certainly not directly involved, but his party is unwilling to arrest old comrades from the fight against the military junta. As a result, the government treats the lives of non-Pasok prominent Greeks and foreign representatives as expendable. Of course, it proclaims a "principled position against terrorism" and promises the 2004 Summer Olympics will be absolutely safe (though it doesn't explain how).

From their manifestoes, it is clear the terrorists believe their best days are still ahead. They have recruited a younger generation of killers, expanded their weaponry, tactics, and targets, and are supremely contemptuous of Greek law enforcement.

So where is the outrage in America? And why is there no anger from Washington? President Clinton made a state visit to Athens in late 1999 but neglected even to raise the unpleasant topic of terrorism, giving Greek leaders precisely the message they wanted. Many senators and congressmen publicly wrap themselves in the POW/MIA flag, but they do not demand justice for Americans killed in the line of duty in Athens. Associations of veterans and military personnel have lost interest, or perhaps hope. Some American media do question staging the 2004 Olympic Games in a city that had over 100 political bombings last year, yet they tend to accept Greek inaction against terrorism as normal.

The Americans who have survived November 17 attacks remember. The families and colleagues of our dead remember. Our public representatives remain silent.

Where is the outrage? ♦

Law and Order and Appeasement

Dick Wolf's finest hour.

BY MIKE MURPHY

DICK WOLF is my new hero. Wolf produces the NBC television series *Law & Order*. Last week he did something people in Hollywood never do. Wolf stood up against political correctness and bit the hand that feeds him.

The brouhaha arose out of a recent episode of *Law & Order*. The show, which fictionalizes stories lifted from New York City headlines, dealt with a group of teenage punks on a drunken rampage in Central Park. The inspiration was clearly the trouble in Central Park last year after the annual Puerto Rican Day parade.

Wolf's storyline, like the real thing , dealt with thuggish young men sexually assaulting various women. Some of the alleged offenders, both in real life and on the television show, were Hispanic. Predictably, lots of steam started hissing out from under certain professional sombreros, and a phalanx of political correctness cops sprang into action.

The National Puerto Rican Coalition demanded and got an immediate meeting with not one, but two network presidents: NBC West Coast president Scott Sassa and entertain-

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AP/Wide World Photos

Dick Wolf

ment president Jeff Zucker. Normally Jay Leno has to go on strike or Survivor Island has to burn down for a group of network brass to frog-march to a conclave like that. During an "extremely productive meeting" with the Puerto Rican Coalition, various suppliant apologies were offered and an NBC statement was quickly released saying the network had agreed to make the offending episode disappear, Stalin-style. It would never be re-aired on television.

Normally in Hollywood, a controversy like this would result in an apology orgy, with entire orchards of designer fruit baskets being flung to and fro between network brass and neurotic show producers. But Wolf did the opposite. After seeing the NBC manifesto of apology, Wolf released his own snarling statement blasting NBC's cowardice. The network "caved into the demands of a special interest group, and I am extremely disappointed with this decision," said W olf.

While it is common for television show runners to feud with their network clients over budgets for customized star trailers and the right to go around standards and practices to titillate audiences during sweeps week by peppering scripts with "brave" salty language or showcasing the latest advances in plastic surgery, it is rare indeed to see a fight over actual principle.

Wolf is not new to controversy. He is famous in the television production community for refusing to cater to star vanity. His shows are a throwback to the old Hollywood studio system; they are entirely story driven, so whenever a young starlet or star demands a huge salary increase, Wolf yawns and quickly replaces them. He casts his shows with reliable old workhorses from the Broadway stage who carry character parts quite well and show up for work on time. And he delivers a big audience; *Law & Order* is solidly in the Nielsen top twenty.

Some conservatives whine about *Law & Order*, just as they whine about every popular TV show. In Wolf's case the beef has to do with prior episodes that~~n~~o surprise here~~p~~or - tray violent pro-life zealots as panting, eye-bulging stereotypes. The critics have a point, but a minor one, since the few violent pro-lifers I've bumped into over the years in campaign politics are indeed panting eye-bulging extremists. In over a decade on the air, Wolf's show has made villains out of conservatives, but also out of just about everybody else. Wolf can also be a bit of a blowhard, but compared to the cartoonish *West Wing* (*Hogan's Heroes* with Republicans as the Germans), his *Law & Order* is an honest, equal opportunity offender.

Big TV networks of course never apologize when their shows pillory pro-lifers, Second Amendment supporters, and conservatives in general. They only fold in front of politically correct pressure groups, and they do so with shameless speed and spinelessness. Three cheers for Dick Wolf for having the courage to call them on it. ♦

Bush the Bold?

Our new chief executive could be more than a manager.

By Eric Cohen

At the luncheon after George W. Bush's inauguration, senator Mitch McConnell toasted the new president as an American "Joshua," whose ability to bring people together would lead the nation to the promised land. It was a religion-filled day with President Bush appealing to saints and angels in the cause of renewing "the spirit of citizenship." For a nation that has spent the last half century erecting barriers to religion in public life and ignoring the religious grounding of its own history, the first days of the Bush presidency have marked a striking change.

But that change should not be overestimated. For all the media revulsion that has greeted Bill Clinton's narcissistic departure from Washington, this is still a country that has so minimally defined the presidency that it gave the exiting Clinton a 65 percent job approval rating, the highest in modern history for an outgoing president. And if the passions and divisions of the Ashcroft hearing are any indication, then America may indeed need a political Joshua to bring it together on the most important moral issues. For despite Bush's unifying call, echoing Jefferson, that "every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle," many differences are just that deep, fundamental, differences of principle.

On no issue is this more clear than abortion where the absolutist agenda of choice over responsibility makes its most resolute claim. It is an issue that is important not only because of the moral gravity of the deed itself, but because it is intertwined with the moral challenges of the next generation human cloning, genetic engineering, and in general the extent to which we are willing to manipulate human life in the name of happiness, compassion, choice, and progress.

Bush's commitment to civility, the overarching theme of his first weeks in office, is a welcome change from Clinton's guerrilla-warfare style of politics. But civility is not always the highest political virtue, especially if it degenerates into appeasement in the name of poll-tested realism, and retreat in the name of bipartisanship. If by civility it turns out that Bush means doing obvious, easy things that no one can cavil at, he will not achieve the restoration of American character that he claims is his political mission.

So what can George W. Bush do? Is there a New Republican agenda to be forged and a new governing majority to be created? Or are we in for a period of cultural stalemate?

So far, there is cause for both optimism and concern. As political managers, Bush and Cheney and their team have performed admirably. Clearly, Bush is not simply an economic and political pragmatist (like his father) or an anti-government zealot (like the Gingrich revolutionaries). He seems to be grasping for a practical philosophy of conservative governance, one rooted in his own faith and broadly appealing to the "quiet of American conscience."

But the Bush team's commitment to and capacity for political entrepreneurship is not yet clear. The promise to "unify, not divide" cannot obscure the fact that on the most important, most divisive, moral-cultural issues, Bush has not persuaded key constituencies to think and vote and govern themselves differently. He has not yet tried to redraw the political map.

Bush's "faith-based" initiative is a much needed first step. But if it is pitched narrowly to the most suffering, most needy, most disadvantaged Americans without contributing to a moral awakening among the nonjudgmental, post-shame, pro-choice elites it will be a real but limited blessing, and perhaps in the end an unsustainable one.

To be fair, the new presidency has just begun. And perhaps Bush's strategy of blurring the middle during the campaign, avoiding divisive social issues, and quietly trying to bring together Republican pragmatists and conservative ideologues, is political genius. Perhaps it is the basis for a new Republican majority, which Bush can

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expand by refocusing the conservative agenda on traditionally "liberal" issues, like fighting poverty , improving public schools, and expanding health care coverage. And perhaps Bush himself is wisely taking the long view—using his first 100 days in office to build comity and consensus, so that he can address the most divisive, most important moral issues from a position of strength.

But this strategy, if it is a strategy, has limitations: First, bringing together these old Republican constituencies does not address the problem that Republican pragmatists and Republican ideologues still seem to add up to no more than 48 percent of the electorate, the size of Bush's vote.

Second, given the Clinton accomplishment of convincing much of the nation that Democrats can handle the economy just as well as Republicans, it may be that many Republican pragmatists are less firmly Republican than they once were. Indeed, if the economy falters, as it looks likely to do during the first part of the Bush presidency, even the 48 percent may be a high-water mark.

Third, the political viability and moral strength of the new coalition of compassion remains an open question. In the one area where he most tried to act like an entrepreneur~~by~~ reaching out to poor minority groups, especially blacks, as a "compassionate conservative" Bush performed worse even than Dole in 1996. And in the segment of society that may matter most~~t~~the university and technological centers~~h~~he lost decisively , especially among those who voted predominantly on moral issues.

And so, fearing division and divisiveness, Bush seems likely to downplay issues like abortion, the role of women in the military, affirmative action, and the excesses of popular culture. Nor has Bush shown any urgency in connecting the religious soul of America~~so~~ eloquently described in his inaugural address~~to~~ the new politics, laws, and moral transformation required to bolster that soul against life-altering technologists, who prefer their own renegade powers to "God's enduring purpose."

It is precisely because of the technological revolutions just begun and on the horizon~~be~~cause of what they mean for America's understanding of "the pursuit of happiness," because of the moral wisdom they require~~th~~at virtue matters most in American politics today, and not the virtue of compassion alone. And it is precisely because they are so powerful and so important that the political and moral disposition of the technological elite matters. And that disposition, right now, does not inspire confidence: This group lives by the creed that if it can be

done it should be done, that technology is destiny. Most of them have little or no political education, little or no sense of personal or national tragedy, little or no memory of war, little or no sense of the stakes of their own inventions. The elixir they offer is freedom without suffering—a false freedom that reduces human beings to their chemical and genetic makeup, and makes them accomplices in cheapening human life to extend indefinitely their own "healthy" existence. But in a nation where civic ties have been weakened, where mass divorce has created a generation born into anxiety, where sexual freedom has become the norm the potion is appealing. It has made its mark on the urban, new-economy centers that are largely Democratic strongholds; how long, one wonders, until it makes its mark, decisively, on the nation as a whole.

In response, the Republican party, if it is to succeed and to matter, needs to articulate an updated vision of the good society; a vision of America's role in history and the world that goes beyond Bush's call for "American humility," and a moral and political framework to deal with the riddles of the new technological age.

As yet, compassionate conservatism has not shown itself fully able or fully willing to do this. Instead, what Bush appears to be doing what he did fairly effectively during the campaign is combining honest religious witness and belief with a Republican form of identity politics. Because of his deep Christian faith and his appointment of Ashcroft he has been able largely to avoid political engagement with the moral issues that religious conservatives care most about. (Though one wonders what pro-life activists were thinking when Bush, asked in the debates about the FDA's approval of the abortion pill RU-486, replied, "I think once the decision's been made, it's been made." Or when Laura Bush, more recently, said she does not think *Roe* v. *Wade* should be overturned, and Ashcroft called that decision settled law.) And instead of staking out political positions, Bush has repeatedly defended his own and everyone else's "heart" the presumption being that a good heart translates into good politics.

God, we all must hope, has a hand in America's fate—as Bush, like presidents past, declared in his inaugural address. But so do leaders; and leadership does not happen on its own, even for those who are religiously serious. Perhaps religious witness is just what a demoralized America needs. But it won't be enough by itself. The religious appeal to dignity needs translating into a new politics of dignity, the religious call to sacrifice into a new politics of sacrifice, the religious heritage of America into a new politics of virtue.

If Bush is to succeed as a politician and statesman, he must find ways to combine the old Republican agenda—lowering taxes, streamlining government, reforming middle-class entitlements, rebuilding the military with a New Republican agenda: one that connects "old" moral issues like abortion and the nature of the family with "new" moral issues like human cloning and genetic engineering; one that reconciles, to the extent possible, the political equality of women and the natural differences between the sexes, and that addresses the meaning of those differences for American institutions and American families.

In short, Bush the political manager needs to be a political entrepreneur as well. A political entrepreneur might find a way to connect the pro-life position with the pro-environment position, and embrace both in the name of reverence over choice, sacrifice over autonomy. He might connect campaign finance reform with public standards for entertainment, and embrace both in the name of civility and decency in public life. He might stop conceding government support of art and culture to the postmodern Left, and instead assert vigorous and increased national support for cultural institutions that unify and ennoble American life. He might prudently use American power to defend human rights around the world, and in the process awaken the nation to the sacrifices that meaningful freedom requires. He might pledge to put an American on Mars by the end of the decade, which would demonstrate how technology can be used for heroic rather than simply narcissistic ends. He might, if he were really ambitious, connect the democratic impulse in the nation with the responsibilities of democracy and thereby restore a rudimentary understanding of the American political system and foster democratic resistance to judicial activism.

To be a political entrepreneur and Republican statesman, Bush will need to combine the politics of co-optation and confrontation; he must reframe the Left's best issues the environment, campaign finance reform, support for higher education, middle-class tax cuts to serve conservative ends, while shaming (or ostracizing) the worst elements of the cultural Left for their extremism, nihilism, and anti-Americanism. And he must have a political strategy and the powers of persuasion to make this agenda appealing to the very constituencies that are most inclined either to pay it no attention at all (the mushy, nonjudgmental middle) or to reject it entirely (the new technological elite). This would be, as Bush put it in his inaugural address, "the serious work of leaders and citizens." In politics, the supreme act of faith is to seek the votes of the unconvinced by challenging them rather than appeasing them. It is no small task. Perhaps God's words to the original Joshua are as good as any: "Be strong and resolute; do not be terrified or dismayed." ♦

Hong Kong in a Chokehold

One country, one system

By Ellen Bork

As if the world needed further proof that Hong Kong is faring poorly under Chinese rule, the Hong Kong government last week signaled a change in the way it will handle Falun Gong. Banned as an "evil cult" in the People's Republic of China, this eclectic spiritual movement has been mostly free to meet and march in Hong Kong. But Regina Ip, secretary for security in the Hong Kong government, warned Thursday that the group is "targeting the central government for attack" and therefore must now be watched closely by local authorities.

AP/Wide World Photos

A Falun Gong billboard in downtown Hong Kong

Secretary Ip's move comes just two weeks after the resignation of Anson Chan, Hong Kong's top civil servant. The only surprise is that Mrs. Chan lasted as long as she did. While no crusading democrat, she reliably spoke out in defense of Hong Kong's autonomy, press freedom, and rule of law. She also had a gift for deftly deflating Beijing's surrogates, who among other things spread rumors that Mrs. Chan was scheming to topple her boss, Hong Kong chief executive and Beijing apparatchik Tung Chee-hwa. If only that were true.

Now, Beijing's proxies, like Regina Ip, are in the ascendancy. Mrs. Chan's departure makes unmistakably clear that under Chinese rule, not only is Hong Kong not autonomous, but its government is actually collaborating to extend Beijing's control over more and more aspects of life in Hong Kong.

That, of course, was always Beijing's intention in taking over the former British colony according to the terms of the Sino-British Joint Declaration, a treaty signed in 1984. For Western consumption, China offered guarantees of Hong Kong's autonomy and freedom, including an independent judiciary, a free market, civil liberties, freedom of the press, and even a democratic legislature. But Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping's well-worn aphorisms, "Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong" and "one country, two systems," meant very different things to the Chinese leadership and the rest of the world. "To a Westerner," wrote Steve Tsang of Oxford University in 1996, "the idea of Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong within the framework of 'one country, two systems' may imply that after 1997 Hong Kong will be free to run its own domestic affairs with no interference from Beijing as long as PRC sovereignty is acknowledged. Such an interpretation is totally unacceptable to Beijing."

Deng's views, however, were no secret. Under the Basic Law, the constitution drafted by a Beijing-controlled body, Hong Kong would be run by a chief executive designated by Beijing. "Those who can be entrusted to administer Hong Kong must be local residents who

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love mother China and Hong Kong," Deng directed. "Can popular elections ensure the selection of such people?" For Beijing, the obvious answer was "no," and so Chinese leaders select the chief executive of "autonomous" Hong Kong.

Tung Chee-hwa, who has held the position since July 1, 1997, has not disappointed his masters. He readily casts aspersions on democratic values. "We are Chinese and we were brought up in Chinese traditions and values," he told President Clinton in 1998 after the president emphasized Tung's American ties, which include his children's U.S. citizenship. (Tung himself, who lived in the United States for several years, sidesteps the question of his own U.S. citizenship.) When pressed on the pace of Hong Kong's democratic expansion, he answers, "Slowly, slowly."

Tung and his officials have actively participated in undermining the freedoms and institutions they are supposed to protect. A telling example of this came in June 1999, when the Hong Kong government asked Beijing effectively to overrule Hong Kong's highest court in its first major constitutional decision under Chinese rule. The Court of Final Appeal had struck down a law restricting the rights of some mainland citizens to live in Hong Kong. In the process the court had articulated its power to invalidate laws adopted in Beijing if it found them inconsistent with Hong Kong's Basic Law. Confrontation with Beijing was inevitable.

Beijing has warned that the press will be judged on their "patriotism," and that coverage of Taiwan in particular will be closely scrutinized.

Over the next few months, a battle brewed. Beijing's allies in Hong Kong attacked the court, and the Hong Kong government itself issued a fear-mongering projection of the number of immigrants who would flood Hong Kong if the ruling stood. A spokesman for the Chinese leadership called the court's decision a "mistake" which needed to be "changed." Finally, Beijing summoned Hong Kong's secretary for justice, Elsie Leung, who emerged from a meeting with Chinese officials saying the judgment should be "rectified."

The Hong Kong government asked the high court to "clarify" its ruling. Later, the government acknowledged that Secretary Leung had had private contacts with the chief justice regarding the government's request. The court promptly caved in, issuing a statement reiterating its judgment but emphasizing the authority of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress in Beijing to interpret the Basic Law. Leung admonished the people of Hong Kong for their "arrogance," saying, "We shouldn't as a matter of course believe the Hong Kong system is the best."

All this legal wrangling was complicated, as it was no doubt intended to be. Beijing's sympathizers like to point out that the Basic Law provides for interpretation by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. Suffice it to say that nothing required Beijing to override the court or the Hong Kong government to ask it to. More important, Beijing's defenders fail to mention the fundamental illegitimacy of the Basic Law.

The Basic Law was part of Beijing's "united front" campaign, an effort to coopt Hong Kong's professional and business elite by involving them in a series of appointed committees used to provide cover for Beijing as it went about undermining Hong Kong's autonomy. The committee in charge of drafting the Basic Law had "enough Hong Kong members to make their participation appear to be meaningful but not so many as to concede control," Mark Roberti writes in *The Fall of Hong Kong*. Above all, the purpose of the Basic Law was to circumvent the Joint Declaration's guarantees on democracy and judicial independence and to provide the basis for an anti-subversion law.

The Court of Final Appeal episode was a devastating example not just of Beijing's willingness to hobble Hong Kong's courts, but of Hong Kong officials' willingness to collaborate. There are others. The Tung administration is engaged in "negotiations" with mainland officials on formalizing procedures for exchanging criminal suspects. These negotiations apparently grew out of two incidents when Beijing arrested and prosecuted defendants for crimes committed in Hong Kong. In 1998, Beijing executed Cheung Tze-keung (a.k.a. the "Big Spender," for his spectacular bets at Macao casinos), one of Hong Kong's most notorious gang bosses, for crimes including the kidnappings of two of Hong Kong's wealthiest men. The exact charges in Cheung's trial, which the U.S. State Department called "speedy and closed," were not revealed, and his Hong Kong lawyer was barred from the proceedings. A few months later, a mainland man was tried in southern China for the murders of five women in a Hong Kong apartment during an occult scam.

Very likely, Beijing chose these cases carefully. Neither defendant had public support in Hong Kong. Nevertheless, Hong Kong people were deeply disturbed not only at Beijing's brazen interference in their judicial system, but

AP/Wide World Photos

Mrs. Anson Chan and Hong Kong chief executive Tung Chee-hwa

also at the complicity of Hong Kong officials, who neither requested the return of the defendants, nor sought guarantees for the fairness of the proceedings.

Tung and his team have been similarly obliging to Beijing on civil liberties. Even before taking office, Tung endorsed a Beijing-appointed committee's recommendations for stricter laws governing demonstrations and other exercises of civil liberties. "The key question here for the community to debate is what is more important to the community~~so~~cial order , inconvenience caused to the public at large, or individual rights," Tung told a formal dinner in January 1997. The changes, Tung insisted, were merely "technical."

So far, it is true, as government officials say, that the laws have been little used. Last September, however, police arrested students for protests over the immigration issue. These arrests were particularly controversial because of their timing~~m~~onths after the actual protests, and just prior to National Day celebrations on October 1, which suggested a bid to demonstrate loyalty to Beijing.

The charges against the students were ultimately dropped, after much criticism. It may be, however, that this episode is part of an emerging pattern that Beijing and the Hong Kong government have used effectively on a number of occasions: Identify an objective, launch an attack, withstand any opposition, and then finish the job. Margaret Ng, a pro-democracy legislator, has seen it many times: "There is a public outcry. The demand subsides. . . . This is a planned pause in the strategy."

The press is also handled this way. Even before the handover, China's deputy premier , Qian Qichen, warned the media not to spread "rumors or lies" or publish "personal attacks on the Chinese leaders." Recently , the message has been sharpened. Beijing has warned that the media will be judged on their "patriotism," and that coverage of Taiwan in particular will be closely scrutinized. In 1999, the director of Radio Television Hong Kong was removed from her post following the station's broadcast of a brief commentary by Taiwan's unofficial representative as part of a regular Sunday morning program featuring prominent figures.

After Chen Shui-bian of the traditionally pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party was elected president of Taiwan in March 2000, the mainland's top official in Hong K ong, Wang Feng-chao, warned, "The media should not treat speeches and views which advocate Taiwan's independence as normal news items, nor should they report them like normal cases of reporting the voices of different parties. Hong Kong's media have the responsibility to uphold the integrity and sovereignty of the country. This has nothing to do with press freedom."

Hong Kong's top law enforcement official, secretary for security Regina Ip, issued a ludicrous but troubling criticism of Hong Kong's journalists for their coverage of the student arrests. Speaking in Singapore, Mrs. Ip likened the media to Napoleon, the pig representing Stalin in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, who is epitomized by the line "All animals are equal; but some animals are more equal than others." "On the one hand," Secretary Ip was quoted as saying, "the media pledge to safeguard human rights and freedoms. On the other hand, they have also monopolized the judicial processes of trial and prosecution. They even hand down their own verdicts."

Such attacks on government critics are becoming more frequent. Last summer, an aide to the chief executive pressured professors at two university polling projects to stop polls showing Tung's deep unpopularity. As this scandal unfolded, the *Asian Wall Street Journal* substantiated what had long been an open secret~~th~~at T ung had put pressure on big developers not to advertise their properties in *Apple Daily*, a pro-democracy newspaper run by Jimmy Lai.

As Tung came under attack, *Wen Wei Po*, a mainland-funded Hong Kong paper often considered an authoritative source of Beijing's positions, launched a " back Tung"

insert in its pages and charged that Tung's critics were conspiring to bring him down. On a radio broadcast, a Hong Kong deputy to the National People's Congress called Tung the "Great Helmsman," a reverential moniker for Mao, and accused student protesters of reviving the chaos of the Cultural Revolution. The deputy asked, "Will Hong Kong become another base for international communities to besiege China?"

Absurd as these charges sound, they reflect a dangerous new litmus test being applied in Hong Kong: "Here the politically correct thing would be patriotism—Beijing's version of patriotism," says Liu Kin-ming, general manager of *Apple Daily*. "If you don't subscribe to that, you don't love China, you don't love Hong Kong."

It was just this kind of pressure that Margaret Ng rejected during a legislative debate last May on a matter of nationalistic sensitivity—a motion opposing Taiwan's independence. While expressing her support for Taiwan's ultimate, peaceful reunification with China, Ng objected to the implications of the motion, which was introduced by the head of the largest pro-Beijing political party. The motion, she said, "suggests that reunification means that on political issues, we can no longer speak our own minds but must toe the line; that we are robbed even of silence, but are expected to take on the old mainland Communist culture of *biao tai* ['expressing the right attitude']. We have to outdo each other in exhibiting our loyalty or 'patriotism' for fear that insufficient enthusiasm will be branded as treachery." Alone among the 60 members, Ng abstained from the motion, although a number of pro-democracy politicians absented themselves from the chamber for the vote.

So, then, if the United States has given up on Hong Kong, what difference does it make? It matters plenty, for the millions in Hong Kong who fled communism—and for Taiwan.

It's impossible to conclude from the last few years' experience that developments in Hong Kong are anything other than disastrous. The many setbacks for institutional integrity include the abolition of the elected middle level of government and the packing of the lowest level of government, the elected district councils, with members appointed by the Tung administration. Nevertheless, the U.S. State Department last spring reported to Congress that Hong Kong "has continued to develop in a positive direction, with the Hong Kong government committed to advancing Hong Kong's unique way of life and the PRC Government generally respecting its commitments."

Pretending Hong Kong is in charge of its own affairs allows the United States to avoid confronting Beijing. Under the Clinton administration's constructive engagement, confrontation was to be avoided at all costs. Bad outcomes were acceptable, even normal. "No matter how egregious the Chinese provocation," writes Peter Feaver, formerly of the Clinton National Security Council, "the United States always has a choice—confront or accommodate—and accommodation prolongs the game, leaving open the chance that the Chinese will moderate their behavior."

During the crucial years leading up to Great Britain's return of Hong Kong to Chinese rule, the Clinton administration hid behind the British. It refused to criticize violations of the Joint Declaration, an agreement between China and Great Britain, claiming it had no standing to do so. After the British left, Washington needed another pretext for inaction and settled on the fiction that Hong Kong truly was autonomous. Last year, the administration aggressively used Martin Lee, Hong Kong's leading democratic politician, in its campaign to win passage of permanent normal trade relations for China. When I asked a Clinton official what Washington was going to do for Lee in return, the official was aghast and confused and told me the United States raises democratization with Tung at every opportunity and sees no evidence of Beijing's interference in Hong Kong.

In retrospect, it seems obvious that Washington never intended to stand up to Beijing over Hong Kong. "Here's the deal," an anonymous U.S. official told the *New York Times* shortly before Hong Kong was returned to China. "After July 1 we pretend that Hong Kong isn't part of China, even though it is. And we still insist that Taiwan is still part of China, even though it isn't."

So, then, if the United States has given up on Hong Kong, what difference does it make? It matters plenty, and not just for the millions of Hong Kong people now ruled by a Communist party they or their parents fled. Hong Kong matters for what it says about U.S. policy toward China and its implications for the future of Taiwan.

China's "one country, two systems" formula was originally designed for Taiwan—instructively, at the moment of Taiwan's maximum danger. In 1979, when President Carter broke diplomatic relations with Taiwan, "hopes surged" in Beijing that the end of the U.S.-Taiwan defense pact "would arouse a sufficient sense

AP/Wide World Photos

Hong Kong immigration protesters, escorted by police. Their banner reads "False judges."

of vulnerability within the Nationalist government to make it more susceptible to overtures from the mainland," writes Robert Cottrell in *The End of Hong Kong*. "If Taiwan would only bow to Beijing's sovereignty, then the Beijing government would promise to concede a very high degree of administrative autonomy to the Taipei authorities. The two systems," Communism on the mainland and capitalism on Taiwan, could then co-exist within a single country."

Today, after eight years of the Clinton China policy, Taiwan is vulnerable once again. Indeed, the Clinton administration deliberately weakened Taiwan militarily and politically to make it more susceptible to Chinese pressure and thus more likely to negotiate reunification on China's terms.

For instance, Washington prodded Taiwan to enter into "interim agreements" with the mainland. The phrase "interim agreements" was coined by Kenneth Lieberthal, a Sinologist from the University of Michigan, before he joined Clinton's National Security Council in 1998. Lieberthal proposed that an interim agreement "govern the cross-Strait situation for a period of five decades, at the end of which, on a date certain, formal talks toward political unification of the country [would] begin." The 50-year period matches the 50-year guarantee China gave Great Britain for the maintenance of Hong Kong's institutions and free market. Intent on establishing an entity to which the mainland and Taiwan would both belong, Lieberthal suggested coming up with a new name, "such as *da zhongguo* [greater China] to refer to the two parts of China together." The pressure from the Clinton administration, combined with its refusal to sell Taiwan major defense systems, soured relations between Taipei and Washington, further emboldening Beijing, which issued harsher and harsher threats across the Strait.

This is the situation the Bush administration has inherited. If the past tells us anything, American weakness in defense of Taiwan has only encouraged China to hold out promises of freedom and autonomy it has no intention of honoring. It is especially troubling that these empty promises have become the basis for U.S. policy.

In March, the Bush administration will for the first time submit a report to Congress under the U.S. Hong Kong Policy Act. It will be interesting to see whether the Bush administration takes its obligation to Congress more seriously than its predecessor. The United States has never made Hong Kong a major issue in its relationship with China. However, the U.S. Hong Kong Policy Act gives the president significant leverage, allowing him to decide whether to continue treating Hong Kong separately from China in matters ranging from textiles to technology transfer.

President Bush should make clear that if Hong Kong is to continue receiving the benefits of separate treatment under U.S. law, China must allow the people of Hong Kong to run their own affairs through democratic elections and an independent judiciary. By insisting on what "one country, two systems" should really mean, the new administration can help the people of Hong Kong achieve what they were promised and, in the process, let Beijing know President Bush won't buy into a bad deal for Taiwan. ♦

Bioethics vs. Human Dignity

Wesley Smith takes on the bioethicists

By Gilbert Meilaender

All color photos CORBIS

In his 1991 *Strangers at the Bedside*, perhaps the first history of the bioethics movement in this country, David Rothman observed that the emergence of bioethics in the early 1960s coincided roughly with the time when agitation for civil rights came to the fore. Bioethicists, he suggested, were in many respects just another sort of civil rights agitator.

Wesley J. Smith is a strong and passionate critic of the direction bioethics has taken, but his *Culture of Death* might be read as a continuation of that same concern for civil rights that has characterized bioethics since its beginnings more than thirty years ago. Smith contends, in particular, that the rights of those who are near death have been radically diminished by the theoretical maneuverings of bioethicists. He aims to persuade his readers that "the movement's leaders generally reject what until now has been the core value of Western civilization: that all human beings possess equal moral worth."

There is much to be learned from Smith's critique of bioethics, and much with which to agree. But, in the end, we need more than an appeal to civil rights to address the ethical problems of contemporary American medicine.

Smith is a lawyer, and it is clear that he has read widely in the bioethics literature. At the outset he devotes two chapters largely to depicting the development and the present shape of bioethics in this country. These chapters, especially the lengthy discussion of the Nazi eugenics program (which began, after all, with the disabled, and which medicalized and thereby sanitized killing), are likely to upset many who work in the field. Smith does sometimes paint with too broad a brush here. He is wrong, I think, to characterize bioethicists generally as operating with a "utilitarian" ethic. (At least he is wrong if he means that in any technical sense.) Nevertheless, his depiction of trends is not mistaken, nor is it obviously wrong to claim, as he does, that there is a kind of "moral equivalence" between views articulated by philosophers such as Peter Singer or Jonathan Glover and the medicalized killing of the Nazi program. Those who object to such strong language need to be relieved of the naiveté which supposes that they alone can claim to be defenders of civil rights.

Hans Baldung Grien (1484/5-1545)
Above: Death and a Young Woman.
Left: The Three Ages of Man and Death.

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The rest of Smith's argument unfolds in chapters that focus, for the most part, on end-of-life questions:

• He demonstrates how "patient autonomy" came to lie at the heart of much work in bioethics and how such claims to autonomy have been used to justify abandoning patients in their dying or "aiding" them by means of euthanasia or assisted suicide.


Georgetown University
Beauchamp

•He is deeply critical of the almost routine withdrawal of feeding tubes from severely disabled patients and of what he calls "the bioethics-driven medical policy called Futile Care Theory, which authorizes doctors to terminate wanted life-extending medical treatment over the objections of family and patients when the doctors believe that their patient's life is not worth living."

• He sees in some approaches to rationing health care, and even more clearly in claims that the elderly may have a "duty to die" rather than use up valuable resources on their medical care, still further pressures on the weak and vulnerable to get out of the way of those who are productive and capable.

• In a useful chapter on organ "donation," he depicts some of the tendencies within bioethical thinking that ~~in~~ order more readily to procure organs for transplant ~~jus~~tify calling patients dead when they have lost the capacity for conscious thought but while they retain brainstem activity that controls respiration.


AP / Wide World Photos
Kevorkian

•He notes that certain approaches to "animal rights" claim that at least some of the higher animals may deserve more protection than cognitively disabled human beings.

•And he concludes with a call for a "human rights bioethics" that will reject assisted suicide and euthanasia, that will prohibit medical caregivers from "unilaterally terminating wanted end-of-life medical treatment when the refusal is based on quality-of-life values rather than objective medical criteria," that will challenge (both legally and morally) the routine acceptance of withdrawing feeding tubes and allowing patients to die from dehydration, and that will reaffirm the tradition of Hippocratic medicine in which a physician's loyalty is to the good of his patient rather than to cost-saving measures of an HMO or the larger society.

In some respects, *Culture of Death* is less an argument than an exposé Smith's chief concern is to hold up to the light of public opinion what bioethicists say ~~so~~ that others may judge whether the trends he depicts are not, in fact, dangerous. He does this effectively and powerfully, but there are places where he is not careful enough to be fair to those he criticizes.

Culture of Death
The Assault on Medical Ethics in America
by Wesley J. Smith
Encounter, 250 pp., $23.95

For example, he describes bioethicists as "a relatively small fnsider clique of elite and powerful" people, a "cadre of experts." This is not entirely mistaken: One has only to note the way the same names turn up regularly on government-appointed bioethics commissions. Nevertheless, there is also more academic discipline and diversity in the field than Smith is willing to allow.

So, too, he is insufficiently careful in his dicussion of what bioethicists call the "Georgetown Mantra": the four basic principles (autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence, and justice) popularized in the widely read *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, by Tom Beauchamp and James Childress, both of whom were at Georgetown University when the book was published. In his discussion of the Nazis' medical cleansing of "life unworthy of life," Smith suggests that this Georgetown Mantra could, in fact, be used to justify such a program: One could characterize euthanasia as acceding to a patient's desire (autonomy), as relieving the suffering and disabled (beneficence), and as conserving resources for other important social needs (justice).

Perhaps so. But the Georgetown Mantra includes a fourth principle, nonmaleficence. No doubt a sufficiently creative interpreter could find a way to make it too support a program of medicalized killing, but it would take some work.

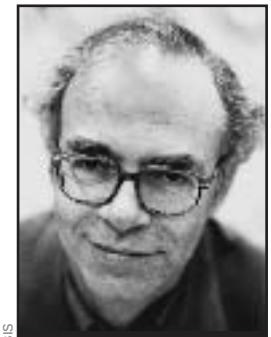
One more example: Smith notes that, beginning in the 1980s, at a time when public support for "outright euthanasia" would have been limited, bioethicists found a way to finesse this issue ~~a~~ way to get patients with poor quality of life to die without seeming to euthanize them. The means was removal of food and water delivered via feeding tubes ~~ch~~aracterized simply as the stopping of useless medical treatment. Smith writes:

> A consensus solution was required to this newly emerging "ethical problem." Bioethicists found it in intentional dehydration. Thus, in 1983 Daniel Callahan wrote, "a denial of nutrition may in the long run become the only effective way to make certain patients actually die. Given the increasingly large pool of superannuated, chronically ill, physically marginalized elderly it could well become the nontreatment of choice."

The unwary reader would presume that Callahan ~~as~~ well known a bioethicist as exists ~~en~~dorses intentional dehydration as a way of making certain that these "superannuated" and "marginalized" patients die. Such a reader might not know that these sentences come from an article in which Callahan, while granting that there could be

certain circumstances in which a feeding tube might properly be removed, argues against any routinized policy of removal.

None of this means that Smith's depiction of current trends in bioethics is not largely on target, nor that he is not on the side of the angels. But there are two important issues, somewhat obscured by his treatment, that anyone concerned about those trends needs to think through with care.


CORBIS
Singer

The first issue has to do with how and where we locate the problem. Smith depicts bioethicists as the villains—"the new high priests," an "elite" that has "dominated" and "steered" our society's conversation on these matters in a drastically wrong direction over the past several decades: "When I tell my lecture audiences that most doctors no longer take the Hippocratic Oath upon becoming physicians and that many no longer see it as relevant to their profession, they are shocked and disturbed. They believe, quite correctly, that the oath exists for their protection." Why, they ask, would physicians have abandoned this tradition that commits them first of all to our patients' well-being?

But then, in the next breath, Smith writes: "The answer to this important question is complex, having much to do with who we are as a culture and a people." He quotes Edmund Pellegrino's claim that the protections and limits embedded in the Hippocratic Oath "first came into question in the mid 1960s as part of the general upheaval of moral values that occurred in the United States."


Arizona State University
Callahan

So who is to blame: bioethicists or the culture? Are our current medical problems foisted on us by a small elite with values quite different from our own? Or do they derive from the whole culture, in which we are complicit? Is it only the cadre of bioethicists who believe that disabled life is not worth living? Or is it our entire society that so values productivity, intellect, and achievement that it must view those who lack such capacities as nonpersons?

How we answer such questions will be important for several reasons. The structure of Smith's *Culture of Death* implicitly presupposes the relative moral health of our culture. Alert people to what is actually happening, the book suggests, and they will be appalled. Alert them to the way in which the rights of the weakest and most vulnerable members of our society are being denied, and they will object.

We can hope that Smith is right. If the problem lies largely with bioethicists, we would be better off without national commissions of bioethics experts better off leaving such questions to state and federal legislatures, which will be sensitive to the values of the people.


University of Virginia
Childress

If, however, the rot goes deeper, then we need something more than the kind of civil rights agitation that Smith demands. We need better thought and argument, better images supplied by novelists and poets, better educators intent on inculcating a more truthful vision of what it means to be human.

The second issue in need of more careful sorting out involves the relation between patient autonomy and the medical judgment that a particular treatment is futile for a particular patient. When bioethics began, it was energized in large part by a desire to empower decision-making by patients in the face of well-established medical paternalism—which is why bioethicists tended to make "patient autonomy" the leitmotif of their developing discipline. This reached its highwater mark in the early 1980s with, for example, the influential reports of the President's Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine and Biomedical and Behavioral Research.

For the first decades, the working assumption was that patients would use their newly acquired autonomy to refuse useless, burdensome, and unwanted treatments. (One can see this assumption at work in the development of advance directives such as living wills, the whole point of which was thought to be the specification of circumstances in which one would not want treatment.)

Gradually, however, cases began to arise in which patients (or those authorized to decide for them) wanted continued treatment physicians thought useless or futile. This was a new twist to patient autonomy—now suddenly used not to reject perceived overtreatment but to protest perceived undertreatment. When we say treatment is "futile," we might mean that it can no longer benefit the life the patient has, or we might mean that it is not beneficial to have such a life—and which we mean makes all the difference in the world. If we withhold treatment because that treatment is medically futile, our act aims at caring for the patient as best we can. If we withhold treatment because we think such a life is useless to have, our act aims at dispensing with a life.

Hence, the stakes are very high, and Smith is right to focus our attention on the issue of futility in care. In so doing, however, he can push the argument too far. He sometimes seems to think that all patient requests must be honored—

Historical Picture Archive / CORBIS

Woodcut of the Dance of Death, from the Liber Chronicarum *(c. 1493).*

as if patient autonomy really deserved an entirely free rein. He knows better, of course, for he can also write that "consent is not the end-all of medicine. I could consent to have my nose cut off to spite my face, but no ethical doctor would perform the surgery." And there may be occasions when a doctor must respond by saying that continued treatment is futile so long as the doctor means by this that there is no way for medicine to benefit the life this patient has.

Smith recounts an occasion when, after he had written an article in THE WEEKLY STANDARD criticizing what he calls "futile care theory," he received from Daniel Callahan

> a courteous but critical letter in which he claimed that my article had done bioethics a serious injustice" because futility was not about saving medical resources but was meant to be "utterly patient centered." Callahan also wrote that while patients have the right to refuse unwanted treatment, they do not have the right to demand care from doctors who do not believe it should be rendered. "Doctors have to maintain their professional integrity," Callahan wrote, "[if] they are not to be likened to plumbers."

Smith rejects Callahan's claim by taking much too quick a refuge in claims of patient autonomy: "Like other licensed professionals such as attorneys, physicians are duty-bound to devote their unswerving loyalty to the patient as they are not requested to act unethically or unlawfully."

That is, however, precisely the point. An attorney may not destroy evidence even if his client wants him to. An attorney may not put on the stand a client whom he knows intends to perjure himself even if the client wants him to. He may not file countless motions devoid of significance—even if his client wants him to. Likewise, doctors are committed to attempts to cure and, when that is impossible, to care. They cannot agree to provide care that is not medically indicated without becoming simply the tool of patient desires. As the lawyer serves not only the desires of clients but also the good of justice, so physicians are to serve not only the wishes of patients but also the good of health.

None of this is intended to deny that Smith is working toward the good. Claims of futility are, I think, often misused today. They are sometimes claims about the futility of a life with suffering or disabilities, not claims that no treatment can benefit even a disadvantaged life. But it will not do simply to demand power for patients and their families.

In other words, a serious criticism of the current discipline of bioethics is necessary, but insufficient. If we are to defend what Smith calls "the core value of Western civilization that all human beings possess equal moral worth" we need an understanding of what it means to be human, which must be in part a recovery of the language of limits.

At least since Kant and Hegel, the great project of modernity has been a vision of human beings as free self-creators. And when that vision is joined to the ever-expanding technical possibilities of new reproductive technologies and increasing knowledge of the human genome, free self-creation actually begins to sound plausible. This is not something bioethicists alone have taught us; we all feel it in our bones. Gnostic to the core, we seek constantly to surmount the body's limits.

We are not likely to overcome this vision by demanding patient autonomy which involves, after all, the language of choice and free self-determination. If medicine seeks the good of health, then it cannot simply serve patients' desires. It must serve their well-being in their bodies, which can-

not simply be mastery of the body. We need a wisdom that can honor weakness, not just a power that conquers it.

This does not mean ceasing our attempts to cure illness or relieve suffering, but it does mean reminding ourselves why we do so. We need to do more than oppose a culture of death; we need also to depict a culture of life. Living human beings are not only reason and will, not only masterful beings.

They are also bodies—finite, loving, suffering bodies. Why should medicine care for those in need? Because we value the lives of the ill and the suffering—not only as they might be were they free of disability or illness, but as they in fact are.

This is what it means to give their lives worth: to say, as the philosopher Josef Pieper once put it, "it's good that you exist," even in your weakness and disability. We can hardly expect the ill to think or feel this about themselves if we have taught ourselves to believe that only the free self-creator is fully human.

From this angle we might wonder whether Smith has not left something important out of his *Culture of Death*. Except for partial-birth abortion, which he judges equivalent to infanticide, he deliberately and intentionally passes by the issue of abortion. "In these pages and in my public work," he writes, "I am agnostic on whether abortion should be legal or illegal."

It may be, however, that abortion is foundational in the culture of death that Smith opposes. It has embedded in our public morality the priority of the language of choice. It has taught us to believe that our dignity as moral beings lies not in accepting what may be unwanted and unexpected—not in accepting as sheer gifts our own lives and the lives of others—but in being free self-creators who shape our own directions. It is ironic that an age which seeks to recapture our relation to the earth and bids us tread lightly on this planet should simultaneously encourage us to think of ourselves not as bodies, not as animated earth, but simply as masterful wills.

Bettmann / CORBIS

Above: Gustave Doré (1832-1883), Death on the Pale Horse.
Left: William Strang (1859-1921), The Leecher of Death.

Historical Picture Archive / CORBIS

But that vision of the human being as fundamentally a chooser, as will, as free self-creator, is actually narrow and sterile. It cannot comprehend the mystery of erotic love or of the bond between parent and child. It can make no sense of death as a limit up against which we live. It is baffled by a compassion that, rather than holding suffering or sufferers at arm's length, accepts and shares that suffering. And most of all, perhaps, it cannot comprehend the mystery of a creature drawn by longing to bend the knee to the God whose very being constitutes our limit.

As David Rothman suggested in *Strangers at the Bedside*, part of the effort to overcome medical paternalism involved shoving doctors a little farther from the bedside, thereby making room for bioethicists to squeeze in as defenders of patient autonomy. Wesley Smith is quite right to see that some bioethicists can no longer be described as defenders of the rights of patients generally, since they see little point to the lives of some of the weakest members of the human community.

Simply to reassert patient autonomy in the face of that problem is, however, a partial and inadequate response. As Rothman noted more than a decade ago, to put autonomy at the center of the doctor-patient interaction means chiefly that "one more aspect of modern life has become contractual, prescribed, and uniform." It may be the best we can manage for now, and Smith charts some helpful directions in his final chapter, but a healthy bioethics will require a fuller and richer vision of what is human than the language of choice can provide. ♦

B&A

Writing Right

Our words, ourselves

BY TRACY LEE SIMMONS

We Americans are inveterate self-improvers. But we're also a choosy lot. We prefer to hand-select our virtues, punching through some of the choices clearly and dimpling the rest. Take the words that tumble forth from our mouths, pens, and computer keyboards. Historian Jacques Barzun has reminded us that while hordes of the gym-toned, Starbucks-sipping set may "give up smoking to avoid cancer, diet to grow more shapely, work on their bad posture or memory, [and] take courses to better their minds or increase their charm," they're not apt "to overhaul their vocabulary and grammar, let alone improve the quality of the sounds they utter." Yet the words we use are part of the gingerly wrapped résumé package we present to the world. They stamp us as certainly as does a cologne or bravado belching.

Teachers and other guardians of self-esteem have taught us to believe in our self-sufficiency. But somewhere deep within our spiked self-regard smolders an inkling that, despite all the college fees we've paid and books we've skimmed, we cannot speak or write much better now than we could in the eighth grade. We just know bigger, more expensive words.

Our suspicion isn't confined to home. Only with a magnifying glass can we set apart the educated from the uneducated stranger, as few people are conspicuously educated at all nowadays. We use, overuse, and misuse words like *parameter* and *closure*, probably the two sexiest words aloft today. Spicing our talk with them makes us feel a little smarter. (Never true? Consult your motives the next time they pass your lips.) But they really make us dimmer. Our scant, lumpish vocabularies echo the cheap pomp of techno-speak, the slangy banter of TV sitcoms, and the throbbing dreck of pop music. But amidst the din, we find, some of us are trying to mark ourselves off from the dirty commoners. Democracy may be a corking good ideal, but somehow it isn't fetching in the mirror. So we shouldn't be surprised to find a small but insatiable market for books purporting to keep us on the high road of verbal decency.

Word Court
by Barbara Wallraff
Harcourt Brace, 384 pp., $24

Lapsing into a Comma
A Curmudgeon's Guide to the Many Things That Can Go Wrong
by Bill Walsh
Contemporary, 256 pp., $14.95

Let's remember first, though, the groundbreakers in the field. The foremost guide is, of course, H.W. Fowler's *Modern English Usage*, without which civilization might have ended long ago. And Strunk and White's *Elements of Style* deserves its press. It offers brief, practical hints for achieving simplicity on a sheet of paper. If there's one book of this kind to post at your elbow as you write, this is the one. Its value as a pocket talisman against the sacking of the modern mind is almost scriptural. Any writer who doesn't have this one isn't one. Marriage to these two books will keep us on trimmed, well-trodden paths.

But we must not ignore new handbooks for the verbally engaged or challenged. Barbara Wallraff, a senior editor at the *Atlantic Monthly*, has been doing the work of angels for years through "Word Court," her regular column where alleged sins of the word, mortal and venial alike, are brought to the bench for adjudication. *Word Court* assembles her more judicious opinions, and it stands neatly alongside *Elements* as an entertaining browse through garden-variety blunders we all make every day~~va~~gue and improper pronouns, missing antecedents, *hopefully*, *between you and I*, et cetera: all those sticking points of grammar most of us would be hard pressed to explain. Within this book, we're told, "verbal virtue is rewarded, crimes against the language are punished, and poetic justice" gets meted out. Most of us would settle for a little prosaic justice, and here we get it, though it's tempered with mercy. We get a tour through the minefields of disagreement amongst her faithful and far-flung readers~~so~~me seeking advice, others delivering encyclicals on the way things ought to be, all believing profoundly that the way we say things matters. It's not so much the quality of Wallraff's pronouncements that stays with us~~high~~ as that is~~but~~ her welcome and refreshing solicitousness.

Why a rap forum on word usage anyway? The answer is that we're at a loss for words. This should give us pause. A glance into a few classrooms will reveal that many English teachers aren't teaching English anymore, but something far more lax, an amalgam we might call "cultural-consciousness-through-words." The rigors of grammar, along with activities like counting iambic feet and memorizing august passages from literature written before 1965, have been left behind. While some teachers still impose high penalties on students who talk and write like dolts, such teachers are a besieged platoon fighting a rearguard action. And unlike most teachers of decades past, the new recruits don't handle their weapons very well.

Then again we shouldn't dump too much on lame schools. A fairer explanation of our verbal ineptitude in an age of striking practical feats must be

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Harper & Row

William Strunk Jr. preparing a lecture.

the cheapness of our reading. We've reached a stage in our cultural devolution where newspapers count as literature. Try as we might to allay or overturn the effects of a lifetime of formulaic, pap reading, we can't easily pry open an atrophied ear. We can't write~~or~~ recognize~~lilt~~ing cadences or well-placed words because we don't often read or hear them. One suspects that many of the sensible queries made by Wallraff's readers wouldn't have been brought eighty years ago, not because readers were more intelligent, but because those who read books read better books than we do. Back then, readers knew in their bones that, for example, mixing pronoun numbers—*Each plaintiff fed their briefs* ~~ca~~lls the writer's care into question. We of course need to look up such things.

Wallraff handles delicately a few contemporary hornets' nests Fowler knew nothing about. What, for instance, about current fashions in usage, especially those touching upon gender? Here we need fine judgment, and Wallraff provides it with no posturing, and she's usually to be found on the side of good sense. Still, we can quibble. *Chairperson* she considers "harmless enough," and perhaps it is, but it's also clunky, and *chairman* no longer calls up an exclusively male picture. Most "person" constructions aren't necessary at all, and they're almost always ugly. (*Congressperson* is even worse; we can hear the stilts creaking under the weight.) But no matter. Wallraff makes us ponder much that we deemed either instinctive or beyond our mental grasp. Whether or not there's a "language instinct," as some claim, there's certainly no instinct for *good* language~~th~~at is, language that can be, in the right hands, clear, complex, exuberant, and subtle. Good language, like the cello, is learned.

Whenever we peruse books about English usage, we get the sense that the world of word lovers is divided between Apollonians and Dionysians, Guelfs and Ghibellines, Republicans and Democrats, gentlemen and cads. Few dispute that judgment calls must be made, but some are apt to apply stricter rules than others. Aficionados of the English language are rarely bipartisan.

But some are. Or at least they try to get along. We won't find Bill Walsh, a senior copy editor at the *Washington Post*, laying down Draconian laws, nor yawning over quotidian details. He simply takes us by the scruff of the neck and guides us through the fundamentals~~ag~~ain, teaching us the tricks that used to come free of charge in public schools. He's not out so much to make us stylists as to prevent us from looking like idiots. Adopting chic contemporary parlance, we could call his thoroughly delightful *Lapsing into a Comma* a *user-friendly* book (neither author, by the way, puts paid to that little monstrosity of an adjective). He designed his usage manual, he writes, "for all writers and copy editors," which isn't so tiny a group, for "in a way all literate people are copy editors, whether they be writers rewriting their own work or simply avid readers noticing a typo on a cereal box."

Walsh tells us that he is on the side of neither those who follow time-honored rules nor those who let rip whatever occurs to them. Yet this isn't a dodge. Many of the old rules weren't old as rules go; they were conventions, the verbal fashions of the moment. Recognizing this fact, though, ought to make us more intelligently skeptical of today's fashions and the foul words they give rise to~~say~~, *chairperson*.

Some of us still use *he* as an impersonal pronoun, at least when we can get away with doing so; it's quick, elegant, and swerves around that pothole of *he or she*. But choices are usually abundant, and there's no need to cause undue offense. "The 'he or she' solution is fine," Walsh writes, "if you're dealing with one or maybe two pronoun conflicts, but if it sends you down an endless road of 'his or her' references, you might as well add a footnote apologizing to hermaphrodites." Just so. And as he does with other such obstructions, he provides clean rewrites: "A trader can place his or her orders" becomes "Traders can place their orders." It's good advice, as the pronoun police stand watch at every corner. This book is full of such simple and balanced rules of thumb. Walsh

walks into another thicket when he blesses the old light and airy word "gay" as the mainstream word for homosexuals. Why? "It's here. It's queer. Get used to it." In other words, pick your battles.

Allow me to pick a skirmish with Walsh. Hopefully, he won't mind. Wait: Who's hoping? I am. Yet I'm nowhere to be found in that sentence; I'm just the mighty Oz pulling all the ropes and levers behind the curtain. The use of *hopefully* as a sentence modifier ~~m~~meaning "it is to be hoped that" ~~m~~arks a signature blooper for many of us who care about the state of the language. Walsh, adroit arbiter that he is, points out that this usage isn't so different from that of *frankly* in "Frankly, what you say isn't true." He's right, though that's clumsy as well. As the *American Heritage Dictionary* instructs us, while this *hopefully* can indeed be justified by analogy to other adverbs, "this usage is by now such a bugbear to traditionalists that it is best avoided on grounds of civility, if not logic." For her part, Wallraff says she stays away from this kind of disembodied hoping in her own writing. And Walsh does too, he admits, "if only to avoid the scorn of the misinformed legions." We're not misinformed, Mr. Walsh, just civilized.

That's a cheap shot, because Walsh is too. He belongs to a newer fraternity of authors on style and usage who, while being eminently helpful, also try to make their guidance palatable to the fearful by coaching with a sassy, quirky edge. His chapter titles are worth the price of the book. "You Could Look It Up!" is one, in which he demonstrates to adults the fine art of using a dictionary. (Don't laugh. Such an act could become as mysterious as a Masonic Rite before long.) Another chapter, called "Holding the (Virtual) Fort," delves depressingly into the chaos let loose by the Internet and the empty-headed word bandits it'll make of us all if no one is placed on patrol. Pay special attention to "Giving 110 Percent: Why You Needed All Those Math Classes After All." And his "Dash It All, Period: The Finer Points of Punctuation" doesn't lay out the finer points at all, just the basic ones, which need expounding a good deal more just now. This is a handbook on usage for those who don't like usage handbooks.

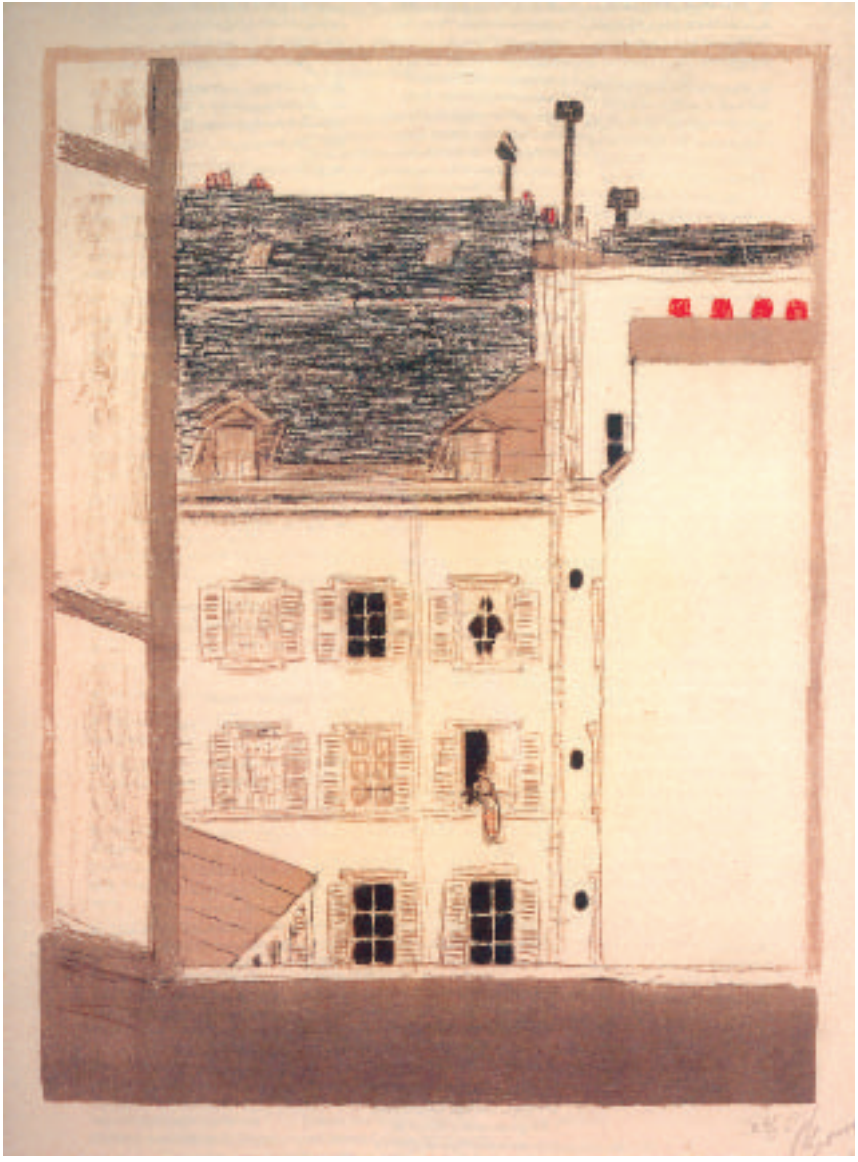
Harper & Row

E.B. White at his desk.

Both authors could have brought jargon, that miscreant extraordinaire, into the dock for more hectoring than they did. (Wallraff says a bit more about it.) For along with low schooling, jargon has made itself a bottomless fount of turgid verbiage, especially over the last fifty years or so when science has been enjoying high rewards. We don't so much learn it as take it in through our pores. Properly used, it's a shorthand to ease the work of specialists; improperly used, it escapes the confines of the office or laboratory and infects the language the rest of us use. Indeed, jargon can almost be scrutinized as a virus.

Sitting on an airplane recently, I heard a man ask a co-worker over the phone, "Can we access your input at the meeting next Thursday?" Slick, mechanistic metaphors may be inevitable in the age of the microchip, but that doesn't palliate or excuse their elemental crappiness. They drip with self-importance. The urge to use them ought to be stanched, unless we're joking. We think jargon makes us sound in the know, but to those with ears to hear, it reveals within us a dearth of confidence or a want of words. Or take this specimen from a memo~~a~~—general memo not directed to a specialized crowd~~so~~meone passed on to me: "At this point in time the paradigm shift extends beyond recognized parameters on a daily basis."

I'm not quite certain this bilge is even English, let alone prose. In fact, it's anti-prose: It militates against meaning. One sure way to recognize jargon ~~o~~other than by buzzwords ~~is~~ by the way it's built. That last sentence isn't so much an ordering of single, sovereign words as it is a grouping of word clusters ~~"~~at this point in time," "paradigm shift," "recognized parameters," "on a daily basis." That's the way jargon works. It's a pretentious patchwork sewn together from a box of drab, predictable patterns, designed to convey some misty idea or picture, but mostly to grab our lapels with the writer's insight and profundity. It's a lazy habit, and one to which the clever are signally prone, especially if they've been to college. Vigilance is the only antidote. ♦



Pierre Bonnard's *Maison dans la cour*. Photos courtesy the National Gallery Of Art.

Paris in Prints

The National Gallery shows how exhibitions ought to be done. **BY STEVEN C. MUNSON**

Only one false note is struck in the National Gallery's exhibition of French printmaking from the late nineteenth century. It's there in the show's catalogue, where the otherwise excellent lead essay speaks of the "numerous artists, especially Bonnard," who "played a dynamic role" in Paris in the 1890s, "illustrating books and journals and combining words and images in the design of posters, theater programs, menus, and other ephemera." So far, so good. But then the writer attempts to link this intense activity to, of all things, "the genesis of aspects of the modern aesthetics of conceptual art."

Whatever else one may say about conceptual art, its tendency is to disparage feeling, slight the visual, and dismiss the physical qualities of a painting or a print. With conceptual art—as one of its leading theoreticians and practitioners, Sol Le Witt, has put it—"all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair." As the National Gallery show itself makes clear, nothing could be farther from the aesthetics of Bonnard and the turn-of-the-century Paris avant-garde.

"Prints Abound: Paris in the 1890s," on view in the East Building of the National Gallery until February 25, opened in the fall to almost no notice. That's a shame, for it is everything a museum show ought to be: informative, delightful, and educational. Indeed, the lack of press coverage may have kept many from visiting the show. What they have missed is proof that a museum—by approaching a subject with modest aims and on a modest scale—can use its permanent collection to bring viewers to a real appreciation and understanding of the art before them. In the age of the often unmanageable "blockbuster" show, this is well worth remembering.

The exhibition consists mostly of lithographs and photo-reliefs, along with a sprinkling of woodcuts, zincotypes, etchings, and aquatints. There are works by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Felix Vallotton, Eduard Vuillard, Paul Gauguin, Odilon Redon, and others, executed in different styles and reflecting different expressive purposes. But the star of the show is plainly Pierre Bonnard. The examples from Bonnard stand out both for their unsurpassed quality and for what one recognizes immediately upon seeing them: Here is a bridge from nineteenth-century impressionism and post-impressionism to twentieth-century modernism.

The impressionist remnant is evident in Bonnard's use of scenes of Paris by day and night, indoors and out. But in exploring such themes, the impressionists had sought a new kind of realism: the physical and psychological realism of Degas, or the realism of visual perception epitomized by Monet. Bonnard had something different in mind. Perhaps the best way to see what he was up to is to compare his prints with those of Lautrec, who is represented in the show almost as amply. Both were master draftsmen. Both, too, had a marvelous sense of color. But in their prints they used color in different ways.

Take, for example, Lautrec's lithograph *Partie de campagne* (1897). More than half the off-white paper has been

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left untouched, giving the print a modern "unfinished" look that is as appealing today as it was then. At the same time, the use of color remains basically descriptive: blue sky, green grass, yellow carriage, a woman's red hair. One gets an impression of receding open space in this image of a country outing.

Unlike Lautrec, Bonnard, working early in his career and under the influence of the Gauguin-inspired Nabi style, fashioned his print-images with broad, flat areas of color. This has the effect of presenting a sensation of space rather than an illusion of space. The absence of modeling of forms is especially evident in *L'Enfant à la lampe* (1897), *Scène de famille* (1893), and *La Petite Blanchisseuse* (1896). These images appear both flat and bodied, contrived yet lifelike, socially realistic yet aesthetically pure. The use of color is anti-naturalistic, but the result, strangely, is not. Locked in formal tension by an odd geometry of line and color, these prints create a mood of extreme intimacy.

In looking at Lautrec's prints, one feels oneself an observer; in looking at Bonnard's, one feels as though one is somehow participating in the delicate feelings they evoke. Here, indeed, is the intimation of a modernist impulse to create an intensity of feeling by exploiting the two-dimensional surface of the print medium.

In two other prints, Bonnard achieves even more amazing results. *Promenades des Nourrices, Frise des Fiacres* (1895), a large four-panel color-lithographic screen, evokes the exquisite refinement and still beauty that one associates with the Japanese artists whose woodblock prints did so much to influence the late nineteenth- century Paris avant-garde.

So complete is Bonnard's evocation of this non-Western aesthetic with his use of large areas of empty space, his spare use of color, and his use of both patterned and "calligraphic" markings that one at first does not even notice the busy and humorous social scene being depicted.

Something similarly startling occurs when one looks at *Maison dans la cour* (1895-96). The central image a partial view through a window of two buildings of unequal height is created out of two blocky interlocking L shapes, the larger resting on its back, the other fused on top of it. The L shape was used earlier by Bonnard in a series of color lithograph relief-prints he did to illustrate a children's music primer. In such illustrations as *Do Ré Mi* (1893), as the catalogue points out, "the task of creating images that would elucidate . . . verbal explanations of musical theory . . . offered Bonnard a perfect opportunity to engage in an amusing exercise in symbolist equation of form and meaning . . . : galloping horses to convey the sense of 'prestissimo' and an overweight woman to symbolize the whole note."

Bonnard's poster for Figaro.

The catalogue notes that for Bonnard and his contemporaries, music illustration was an arena for stylistic experimentation, as the artists moved from naturalist to more abstract symbolist modes." *Maison dans la cour* is the most abstract of the Bonnard prints on display. As with his four-panel screen, what strikes one first is the overall arrangement of various elements: four closely aligned squarish red dots here, three spaced-out black ovalish dots there, the scaffolding of lines, the asymmetrically blackened windows, the cluster of irregular chimney pipes they all combine to create staccato and counterpoint effects. Indeed, one can almost "hear" the graphic reverberations in this remarkably musical print.

The use of this sort of geometry (along with his retention of the impressionist technique of strokes and daubs) would become a central part of Bonnard's painterly art, which ranks as one of the great twentieth-century achievements. And it is striking to see the seeds of that art in these early prints. It is also striking to see how he and others in illustrating books, journals, and advertising posters elevated popular and commercial art forms. Bonnard's *Le Figaro* (1903) is an outstanding example of the promotional poster art of the time, not least because it shows both the kind of pictorial innovation of which he was capable and the good-natured humor with which he often seems to have approached his work.

In reflecting about such works, one cannot help thinking that the situation in Paris in the 1890s is the reverse of the situation in America today, where mere take-offs and simulations of popular and commercial art are celebrated as genuinely serious achievements. To see the gem-like "Prints Abound: Paris in the 1890s" a model of an unpoliticized museum exhibition is to wish there were more like it. ♦

"During my tenure as Assistant to the President, from 1997 to 2001, I have had consistent and unique access. My personal knowledge and information from this time has been exclusively reserved for this book and almost every page will recount a previously unknown anecdote . . . a first-hand account from the inside of the Clinton White House by one who was at the center of the conflicts, politics, scandals, and successes of the presidency. . . . *The Clinton Wars* will encompass the political campaigns of 2000, both Hillary's and Al Gore's, in which I played major roles every day. . . . I intend to write a book that will serve as a central and essential reference for all historians of the future."

from Sidney Blumenthal's book proposal, as leaked to the Washington Post.

A History of Planet Earth from the Dawn of Time to the 34th Century

by M3 Romula

Historians know very little about American civilization in the 20th and 21st centuries. The cataclysmic meteor shower of 2359 destroyed almost all written and electronic data from that age. However, in 2768, archaeologists made a stunning discovery. Underneath several miles of molten rock, they discovered several hundred copies of a book entitled *Blumenthal: Story of a Leader* by Sidney Blumenthal and published by a firm called Farrar, Straus & Giroux. Almost everything we know about American civilization during its golden age comes from this volume.

When archaeologists discovered the books, they were at first puzzled by the fact that each copy had a sticker with the word "Remainder" affixed to it. But they quickly concluded that this tag "Remainder" was the earthlings' highest honor, awarded only to the crowning works of their civilization. As the text itself makes clear, Sidney Blumenthal was the most brilliant and powerful human being of his age. He seems to have been the great leader of a religion called the Third Way, which guided 20th century Americans in all aspects of their personal lives. While Blumenthal seems to have made most of the decisions that shaped his epoch, he was apparently aided by several apostles, of whom the names Bill Clinton and Tony Blair have survived in history. Blumenthal describes a series of transformational meetings, and at each one of them Blumenthal himself is the center of attention, the charismatic, visionary, yet sensual man to whom all turn in search of wisdom and courage.

One of the things that Blumenthal's book makes abundantly clear is that he was the most beloved man of his age. When he entered a room, people flocked to his side to enjoy his convivial company. People in crisis sought him out for emotional support. The book contains a series of parables in which Blumenthal gives spiritual counsel to people in distress. For example, there is the Parable of the Wronged Woman. In this episode a distraught wife, who goes by the name Hillary, comes to Blumenthal because she suspects her husband is unfaithful. Blumenthal assures her that the tales are untrue, lies perpetrated by a Vast Right Wing Conspiracy.

Historians differ over exactly what Blumenthal meant by the phrase "Vast Right Wing Conspiracy." Some close readers believe the phrase was an updated name for the devil, a religious concept and supernatural being who was the source of all earthly evil. But others believe that the Vast Right Wing Conspiracy was actually a group of savage tribes who lived in the dense forests deep in the American heartland and occasionally descended on the civilized regions, pillaging the countryside and bombing abortion clinics. Tribal leaders with names like Hitchens and Fund apparently led marauding bands.

Blumenthal's prose seems turgid and almost unreadable to modern sensibilities. But it is clear from this volume that he was regarded at the time as a supreme literary craftsman, his nation's Shakespeare or Homer. On the back of the book, there are paragraphs of lavish praise. A writer named Joe Conason called it "Brilliant. Groundbreaking." Someone named David Brock called it "A masterwork." Historians suppose that Conason and Brock were the most respected intellectuals of the age.

Fortunately, Blumenthal includes 45 pictures of himself in the book, which provide a

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