

[CHRONICLES, April, 1999]

*Principalities and Powers*

*Samuel Francis*

*Gleichschaltung*

When a new religion displaces an old one, the gods of the old faith become the demons of the new. So it is with the demigods and heroes as well, and as new cultures, races, and nations begin to blossom where once the fruits of European and American civilization flourished, it is not surprising to see the myths of the old civilization fade and those of the new take their place. As in all revolutionary transformations, this one is not led by the mass population of the new civilization (if that is quite the right word for what is emerging) but by a vanguard drawn from the wreckage of the old civilization that is being subverted and destroyed -- or, as we now primly it, "deconstructed."

The transformation is clear enough in religion itself, with the conversion of the mainstream churches and their clergy into active partisans of the enemies of their nation, people, and civilization, but it is increasingly clear also in the re-definition of the secular heroes and icons of the civilization. Thus, major writers like Conor Cruise O'Brien can now attack Thomas Jefferson for his "racism" and his commitment to small government, localism, and states rights, and the subtext of last year's reportage of genetic testing that supposedly "proved" (it did nothing of the kind) Jefferson's paternity of a child on his

slave Sally Hemings was the discrediting of Jefferson as an exploitative hypocrite as much as it was the legitimization of President Clinton's goatishness.

But Jefferson is not the only hero of the old civilization to be demonized. Last year also, a public school in New Orleans removed the name of George Washington because Washington was a "slave owner." This immediately spawned a small crop of columns by various neo-conservatives who whined that, yes, he was, but he was a kind slave owner, thereby missing the whole point. That point is not whether Washington was kind or cruel but that he (and Jefferson too) violated the central doctrine of the New Order, to which both the left and most of the right (including neo-conservatives) now adhere -- the equality of human beings and the diabolical character of the old order precisely because it denied the doctrine.

This was precisely the argument of Columbia law professor George P. Fletcher in an article in The New Republic in 1997. Mr. Fletcher maintained that the old Constitution, which such demons as Thomas Jefferson and Timothy McVeigh supported, was abolished by the American Civil War and that Lincoln's Gettysburg Address "signals the beginning of a new Constitution" in which "equality, absent from the original document, comes front and center.... the United States evolves from an elitist republic into a democracy 'of the people, by the people, for the people.'" Mr. Fletcher's argument is almost exactly the same as that of his counterpart on the "right," Harry Jaffa, who has been spouting the same view for decades and whose flawed interpretation now seems to be triumphant

on the mainstream American right, despite its refutation and rejection by M.E. Bradford, Willmoore Kendall, Russell Kirk, and Robert Bork, to cite only the more eminent of Mr. Jaffa's critics.

The main difference between Fletcher and Jaffa seems to be that the former argues that egalitarianism was the product of war and revolutionary imposition from above in the Civil War, while Jaffa claims it was present in the old Constitution from the beginning.

Of the two, Mr. Fletcher is closer to the truth.

What Mr. Fletcher calls the "reconstituting of 'We the People'" necessitates an extended program of what the Germans (at least those who flourished in the 1930s) like to call Gleichschaltung -- disciplining of the opposition. In Germany, Gleichschaltung meant you got packed off to a concentration camp (if you were lucky), and it may in time come to mean that here as well. But for now what it means is that serious dissent from or political-ideological challenge to the New Order is simply demonized, and the most effective means of demonizing the opposition is to accuse its opponents of deviating from the egalitarian orthodoxy of the regime -- in short, to denounce it as "racist," "white supremacist," or even "neo-Nazi."

These terms, of course, were unknown to the English language prior to the early 20th century, and most them, in so far as they signify anything at all, merely mean whatever those who lob them want them to mean. They are equivalent in every respect to what the Jacobins meant by "aristocrats" in the Reign of Terror (most

of whose victims were drawn from the non-aristocratic Third Estate) and what the Bolsheviks meant by "counter-revolutionaries" -- i.e., merely devil terms by which those to whom they are pinned are delegitimized and branded for liquidation.

The ideological goon squads of the New Order have had themselves some fine sport last year and this in pinning their labels anywhere they could stick them. The labels came in useful for the Democrats during the elections last fall when they tried to paste them on Republican opponents. In Missouri, one Democratic TV ad solemnly warned that voting Republican would result in more burnings of black churches, while Republican candidates in various districts were accused by their Democratic opponents of being "white supremacists." Carol Mosely Braun, desperate to snatch victory from her failing bid for re-election, even smeared her opponent as a "white supremacist" because he had once attended a function at the Rockford Institute.

So much fun was the name-calling that the goon squads decided to keep the game going. As Bill Clinton's impeachment loomed, the Washington Post ran an article claiming that Republican Rep. Bob Barr, who had almost single-handedly pioneered the impeachment a year or so before, had attended and spoken to a "White Supremacy Group" called the Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC). It also reported that Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, who was expected to play a major role in the forthcoming trial of the president, was an actual member of the CCC, had spoken to it, and had

endorsed its views. Both Mr. Barr and Mr. Lott quickly started backpedaling to put some distance between themselves and the Council (on whose National Board of Directors I happen to serve and whose meetings I regularly attend, including the one at which Mr. Barr spoke), and it soon turned out that neither politician had the faintest idea of what they had done, what they had said, or what the Council itself stood for. Mr. Lott, whose spokesman at least at first declared that the senator had never been involved with the CCC at all, merely succeeded in making a fool of himself when the Post published a picture of him speaking under the Council's banner at a 1992 national convention. Had both men simply said, yes, they had spoken to the group; no, they did not necessarily agree with everything it stood for; but they saw nothing wrong with it, belonging to it, or speaking to it, the controversy would have died quickly. That indeed is exactly what Mississippi Gov. Kirk Fordyce said when asked why he had spoken to the Council last fall. His response, both courageous and honest, effectively killed the story, and no more was heard about it. Bill Clinton is not the only politician who has recently discovered what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive.

The smears directed at the CCC were of course really directed at Sen. Lott and Rep. Barr for their involvement with the Clinton impeachment, but the story soon acquired a life of its own. By the middle of January, the Washington Post had run no fewer than

five news articles, three opinion pieces, two letters (including one from Abe Foxman of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith), and a major article in the Style section on the CCC and its "racist" background, leaders, and positions. An estimated 74 other newspapers carried similar stories. The New Republic chimed in with an article that mainly regurgitated what the Post had published; various hacks with one or another leftish newspaper coughed up much the same serving, and left-wing witch hunter Morris Dees' Southern Poverty Law Center released a not-particularly accurate "report" on the Council that several newspaper articles immediately swallowed whole. It was soon clear that the regime had discovered an entirely new demon to exorcise.

It is not my purpose here to defend the CCC against the false charges, mistakes, distortions, misrepresentations, omissions, and slanted reporting that the Post and most other papers and magazines writing about the group published and perpetuated. It is entirely true that the CCC, as its chief executive officer Gordon Baum of St. Louis, wrote in a letter to the Post, "speaks out for white European Americans, their civilization, faith and form of government, but we do not advocate or support the oppression or exploitation of other races or ethnic groups." Indeed, the Council does not actually take many official positions of any kind. Its main attraction is that, unlike almost any other conservative organization in the country, the CCC has real members and real local chapters, which engage in grassroots activism on a

variety of issues, and it attracts working and middle class people with strong roots in local communities rather than the perennial misfits, oddballs, and over-educated and under-employed eggheads that seem to sprout in other organizations of the American right.

Precisely because the CCC is a real grassroots group and has real members, some of them sometimes say and do things that the Washington Post, and even the Washington Times, don't approve of.

That is simply the price you pay for having a grassroots group; you can police it up to a point, but if you do so very much, it will cease to be a serious and attractive group.

The onslaught against the CCC was by no means the first or the only occasion in which an organization on the Hard Right has been systematically demonized by the regime's Thought Police, and the attack on it was not inherently different from what the same thugs have tried to do to Pat Buchanan and several other men and groups of the right that refused to bend the knee to the idols of the New Order. Nor does the significance of the attack lie in the obvious hypocrisy and dishonesty of the left in launching it. The Post's Style section piece -- a profile of Mr. Baum -- snickered over its subject's working class origins ("a former auto worker, a small-time lawyer churning out worker's comp cases") and neighborhood ("a working-class suburb of the faded Midwestern city of St. Louis") -- so much for putting equality "front and center" in the New Order. On the same day the Style section was sneering at the Council's positions, beliefs, and social status, the same

newspaper's Outlook section sported a front-page article by a black writer deploring that Washington's new black mayor Anthony Williams is not "black enough." As the article explained the concept of "blackness," "Blackness, like any other characteristic that defines an oppressed group, is a state of spiritual idealism that serves to unite the group for the purpose of survival.... there is not one person of color who can separate himself or herself from the rest of the people of color." Racial consciousness and solidarity are OK with the Post if it happens to be the right race. It's simply white racial consciousness that brings the Thought Police to your front door.

But though exposing the hypocrisy and dishonesty of the Post and similar organs of the New Order is not my point, they do serve to bring me to it. The significance of the hypocrisy and dishonesty is not so much their moral meaning but that they direct our attention to the political utility of such concepts as "equality" and "anti-racism" for the regime. Equality is indeed at the "front and center" of the regime; it's just that equality doesn't really mean what you think it means, nor does "anti-racism" nor most of the other smooth little words that go with it, like "toleration," "harmony," and "diversity." These are codewords, political formulas, the meaning of which cannot be grasped through merely formal or abstract analysis but only through a concrete analysis that places them in their political and social context.



For those who use the codewords, it is not a contradiction to idolize "equality" at the same time they sneer at the working class background of their adversaries, nor is it a contradiction to denounce the "racism" of one group while promoting the "racism" of a different group. They may be contradictions in formal logic, but the real context of these words reveals an underlying consistency in their usage. They are simply terms by which the power of one race and the cultural and political institutions associated with it are "deconstructed" and delegitimized and those of a rival race and the embryonic institutions associated with it are erected and legitimated. What imparts consistency to their apparently contradictory and hypocritical usage is the unity of political purpose they possess. The point is to be master -- that's all.

The attack on the CCC was thus one more installment in the managed displacement of the old civilization and its institutions by an emergent one, and as in most such displacements, the attack is led by a vanguard drawn from the wreckage of the old order. Yet it's important to note that the demonization of the Council of Conservative Citizens did not quite work. Mainly what the attacks accomplished was to give the CCC more publicity than it had ever enjoyed before, to attract new members to it, and to gain for its web site some 10,000 visitations more than it usually receives. What that indicates perhaps is that the birth of the New Order and the destruction of the old may not be quite as easy and painless

as the Thought Police of the former want to believe. The more they attack, the more clearly are the lines of battle drawn in the cultural and political sands, and the sooner the battle is joined, the sooner we will know whose gods and whose demons will be master. ■

[CHRONICLES, May, 1999]

*Principalities and Powers*

*Samuel Francis*

*The Right's Un-Magnificent Obsession*

Almost precisely a year after the name of Monica Lewinsky began to displace those of Princess Diana and Jackie Onassis from the headlines of supermarket tabloids, the one-time object of Miss Lewinsky's more tender affections emerged triumphant over his foes in what are still laughingly called the "conservative movement" and the "Republican" "Party." The conservative and Republican crusade to cleanse the land of the Clintonian plague finally whimpered to its pathetic conclusion when the Grand Old Party, after losing the 1996 presidential election to Mr. Clinton and losing again the 1998 congressional elections to the Democrats, lost yet a third time in the Senate vote on Mr. Clinton's conviction. On the last occasion, the party was not only unable to cadge the two-thirds majority needed for conviction but also could not even bring along all of its own members. The sobriquet of "The Stupid Party" is entirely too kind; "The Loser Party" would perhaps be a more appropriate label for a political organization so incompetent that in a series of contests against what is undoubtedly the most corrupt administration in American history, it not only loses but comes close to destroying itself.

Yet to serious observers on the political right, it was always clear that Bill Clinton was never in any danger of being

driven from office by his conservative and Republican adversaries.

Those on the right who were convinced he would be forced out simply made the mistakes of insulating themselves in the fortress of their own opinions and of grotesquely exaggerating the influence their own propaganda exerts on the American public. The truth is that, whatever the merits of the charges against Bill Clinton and whatever the merits of the many other accusations made about him, as long as his power base in the Big Media and the Democratic Party remained secure, there was nothing the political right could do to him. And that power base did remain secure, not least because the political right never has the faintest idea of how to attack it effectively.

So far from discrediting and destroying Mr. Clinton, then, the crusade against him by the right has come perilously close to destroying its own sponsors, and it has done so in two ways. First, the failure of the impeachment campaign has backfired on the conservatives who pushed it from the beginning, leaving Mr. Clinton himself able to crow over the "partisanism" that motivated his adversaries, allowing him and his own party to plan and gloat over the forthcoming political extermination of their conservative Republican enemies in future elections, and enabling the left wing of the Republican Party to claim, somewhat plausibly as a matter of fact, that it has been the party's conservative leadership that has brought the GOP into public disgrace and endangered its majority in Congress.

Almost everything the American right has done in the last six or seven years has centered on discrediting, exposing, and

denouncing Bill Clinton -- as a KGB agent, an embezzler, a murderer, a drug smuggler, an adulterer, a sex maniac, and a perjurer. The scandals and crimes in which he is supposed to have been at least involved, if not the actual mastermind of, are too many to enumerate, and entire books have been devoted to unraveling and substantiating them. The American Spectator, The Washington Times, The Wall Street Journal editorial page, and various talk show hosts, publishers, and self-appointed sleuths, muckrakers, and conspiracy hunters have dedicated themselves to ferreting out the sinister "Truth" about Mr. Clinton and his "secret life."

But what is now clear, and indeed has been clear for some months if not always, is that this entire crusade has been a total and complete failure. The president has not been discredited in the eyes of most citizens, his popularity is higher than ever, that of his political opponents is lower than ever, the attempt to force him from office has failed, and it is now his adversaries and not he who face political oblivion. His chief adversary, House Speaker Newt Gingrich, has already vanished into the ample bosom of political oblivion, and it is not unlikely that Mr. Gingrich's colleagues in what once strutted and chirped as the great "Republican Revolution" and its ideological mentors in the "conservative movement" will soon join him there.

The second way in which the obsession of the American right with Clinton scandal-mongering has helped destroy those who

spawned it is that the obsession has served to drive from conservative consciousness virtually every other serious idea, principle, and issue with which the right should have been concerned. I personally am convinced that this was the intended result of the obsession, that some of those politicians and publicists who pushed the scandal-mongering the most did not really want to mobilize conservative sentiment against Clinton on the basis of serious issues at all. They did not wish to do so because they knew and feared that the issues around which conservative sentiment could be mobilized would be issues they did not want to invoke -- issues like immigration, trade policy, a national-interest based foreign policy, racial questions, and questions concerning moral and cultural restoration. Is it really an accident that the publications mentioned above as the most zealous in the Clinton hunt are also those most inclined to neo-conservative influence? By encouraging rank-and-file conservatives to become preoccupied with Bill Clinton's alleged crimes and misdemeanors, those of his wife and associates, and every tawdry detail of his extramarital affairs even down to the anatomical peculiarities of his masculine equipment, those who pushed and hawked the scandal-mongering made certain that the American right would never concern itself with more important -- indeed, nationally and civilizationally crucial -- matters.

But even if my suspicions about the intentions of the obsession are unfounded, the results are much the same -- the

virtual disappearance of any body of thought that mounts a serious critique of what the Clinton administration has stood for. How indeed could the "right" of today, the "conservative movement," have mounted such a critique? When Bob Dole and Jack Kemp debated Bill Clinton and Al Gore in the 1996 presidential campaign, it was anyone's guess as to what they would be able to debate about. Neither Republican candidate had ever made much of an issue over the bloated scale and power of the federal government, and both candidates agreed with the Clinton-Gore policies on NAFTA, the World Trade Organization, trade policy generally, immigration, a globalist foreign policy, and civil rights and affirmative action.

There was, as I recall, some muted verbal swordplay over abortion and budgetary matters, but at no point in the debates did either Republican candidate reveal any fundamental disagreement with the world-view, values, and political ideals endorsed by Mr. Clinton and his running-mate. Such remains the case today, and perhaps the two most damning accusations the Republicans can think of to launch against Mr. Clinton's policies are that he has stolen Republican ideas and language and that he has allowed some Iraqis to remain alive. If the distraction of serious conservatism by scandal-mongering was not a deliberate plan to subvert a serious right, then surely scandal-mongering has flourished because it remains the only means the Republicans and what today pass for "conservatives" have to show that they disagree with Bill Clinton at all.

But whatever the cause of the obsession with scandal, conspiracy, and crime, the result is that both the GOP and the conservative movement are close to being smashed. Only a few days after the failure of the vote against the president in the Senate, liberal Republicans were congregating in Florida to plan how to take over the party from the incompetents of the right. Leading the complaints about the conservatives, Connecticut Governor John Rowland lamented that conservative dominance had "alienated women, union members, immigrants, minorities, the elderly, teachers, homosexuals and environmentalists," as the New York Times reported. The good news, the governor reported sarcastically, was that "the rich people and the business people still like us.... [But] unless they can vote four or five times each, we've got some problems in the next couple of campaigns."

Well, Gov. Rowland is probably correct about his last point, but it may be noted that the constituencies that he is so worried about alienating are the core constituencies of political liberalism. There probably are no policies and positions that any party could adopt that would attract "women, union members, immigrants, minorities, the elderly, teachers, homosexuals and environmentalists" that would not be liberal to left-wing. Every one of these constituencies consist, in practice, not of the actual citizens and voters but of powerful organized lobbying blocs that define the interests and agendas of their members in terms of the left. There is simply no way for the Republican



Party to win those constituencies (or at least the organized blocs that claim to represent them) without becoming entirely indistinguishable from the Democrats, which is more or less exactly what the Republican left has always wanted. It should be noted also that throughout the discussion of their coming takeover of the GOP, at no point did any of the liberal Republicans mention the actual merits of the positions that would appeal to these constituencies. Their entire discussion was confined simply to the question of how to gain their votes and the naked mechanics of grasping political power by doing so.

Nevertheless, the liberal Republicans had a point, which is that the "conservative" wing of the party has proved itself a dismal failure, an embarrassment, and a danger to the party. Perhaps more to the point, it has proved itself to be a danger to serious conservatism, in part by insisting on Mr. Clinton's removal despite the obvious obstacles to accomplishing it, then abysmally failing to remove him at all and allowing him to emerge from their attack with more power than ever, and in part by talking and thinking about virtually no other issue except Mr. Clinton and his immoralities for the last several years and thereby distracting conservatives from elaborating serious political ideas and mobilizing a coalition around them. It is precisely for that reason that the current crop of "conservative" leaders in the Republican Party should be dispatched to the nearest brick wall and follow their discredited "leader" Mr.

Gingrich to political Nirvana.

And those who succeed them should not be the governor of Connecticut and his cronies but real leaders able to articulate an authentically conservative critique of Bill Clinton and the New Age globalism that has oozed out of him and his administration, a critique that attracts and speaks to the concerns and interests of Americans, regardless of which power bloc purports to represent them. But of course what should be done is not necessarily what will be done. By now, it is probably impossible for anyone in the Republican Party to achieve leadership who is neither the flaccid sort of conservative that has led the party to its current contretemps or the sort of liberal that Gov. Rowland and the New York Times would admire. The reason it is impossible is precisely that all during the years when conservatives were jabbering about who killed Vince Foster and how much loot Bill and Hillary scraped out of Whitewater and what the president told Vernon Jordan to tell Sidney Blumenthal, no one bothered to talk about real ideas, real issues, or real leadership, so that today, even if those real things showed up on the door step, very few Republicans would recognize them. I for one don't regret the ignominious finale of the great impeachment caper of the last few years. Bill Clinton is indeed some of the evil things his adversaries claim he is, but the evil he has done to this nation is dwarfed by that wreaked by Franklin Roosevelt or Lyndon Johnson, to name only two of the most dangerous and harmful political figures in our history, and we can

survive Mr. Clinton and his silly little girl friends as easily as we can survive frauds like Newt Gingrich and Jack Kemp, whose main contribution to conservatism was to cripple and corrupt it. If the defeat, humiliation, and disasters that the pseudo-conservatives of the GOP have brought upon their own party and movement result in their disappearance from American political life, that is an outcome every serious conservative can only welcome. If it accomplishes nothing else, it would at least clear the way for the emergence of a real movement that at last could confront the left, in both parties, on the real evil it has inflicted on the nation and its people instead of sniping at and snickering over the insipid crimes and misdemeanors in which we have been forced to wallow.©

[CHRONICLES, June, 1999]

*Principalities and Powers*

*Samuel Francis*

*Overwhelming Politics*

It took only a few days, after the rout of the Republicans in their battle to drive Bill Clinton from office, for the leaders of the Beltway Right to decide that the war was over and the only thing left to do was announce surrender. Four days after the Senate "acquitted" the president of the two charges on which he had been impeached, the grand marshall of the Beltway Right himself, Paul Weyrich, seemed ready to limp toward Appomattox. In a letter privately circulated to friends and allies, Mr. Weyrich declared that the political conservatism he has led since the 1970s has all been a failure and the premises on which it was founded are now (if they had not always been) wrong. The news that Mr. Weyrich had given up was in fact somewhat exaggerated, but that was the conclusion to which the left and not a few on the right immediately leapt, and frankly there was not very much in Mr. Weyrich's letter to contradict it.

Paul Weyrich, of course, was a major founder and leader of the "New Right" of the 1970s, a movement that sought to differentiate itself from the "Old Right" by devising a populist political strategy, invoking explicit moral and religious issues, shunning or at least de-emphasizing philosophical rigor and sophistication, and insisting that political victory was not only

possible but also necessary and sufficient for the achievement of conservative goals. Under Mr. Weyrich's direction or with his collaboration, the New Right actually did accomplish a good deal more, on a practical political level and for a brief time, than the right associated with Robert Taft, Barry Goldwater, and the "conservative intellectual movement" had in previous decades. Yet the 15 minutes of fame the New Right enjoyed came to an end rather more quickly than most of its apostles expected and certainly sooner than they wanted.

The main problem with the New Right, as with most political movements that bark their contempt for serious thought, was its intellectual shallowness. I distinctly recall in the late 1970s talking to a young lady closely associated with the New Right who had recently returned from her first visit to the Philadelphia Society, at that time one of the more intellectually interesting organizations of the Old Right. She told me she had enjoyed the visit and meeting the nice people there, but she didn't understand the point of "sitting around talking about whether Edmund Burke would have agreed with Thomas Aquinas and that sort of stuff."

No, indeed, the New Right had no time for such idle froth as Burke and Aquinas. Its leaders were made of sterner stuff than the limp-wristed eggheads who were always gushing quotes from dead Greek philosophers. There were congressional and presidential elections to win, policies to implement, and legislation to pass, and, as one prominent New Right leader announced publicly soon afterwards, "there'll be time enough for reading books when we're all in jail."

One result of the New Right's contempt for intellectualism, of course, was that neither its leaders nor its followers ever thought through enough of the slogans and truisms they spouted to understand that they often were implicitly jettisoning or undercutting other ideas of the right or that their own pronouncements might soon become obstacles to fulfilling other, longer-term goals and political and cultural objectives of the right. The other result, arising from the first, was that the whole New Right movement was rather quickly captured by the neo-conservatives in so far as the latter wished to absorb it. Lacking the intellectual foundations for perceiving, let alone resisting, the far less radical ideas of neo-conservatism and scornful of anyone who suggested laying such foundations, the New Right by the mid 1980s had ceased to exist as a distinctive political movement. In 1984, when Irving Kristol's manifesto of neo-conservatism, Reflections of a Neo-Conservative, was published, it was Mr. Weyrich himself who, reviewing it favorably in the Heritage Foundation's Policy Review, hailed the book as "a vital moral force in America" and crowed that several passages "come closer to a general statement of what some in the New Right strain of conservatism believe than anything else in popular print." If there was any one broker of the marriage of the New Right with neo-conservatism, it was Mr. Weyrich himself.

Today, after 15 years of neo-conservative dominance of almost the whole of the American right, Mr. Weyrich bellies up to the bar

of the right to inform us that the war is over and "we" lost. The reason "we" lost, he tells us in his February letter, "is that politics itself has failed. And politics has failed because of the collapse of the culture. The culture we are living in becomes an ever-wider sewer. In truth, I think we are caught up in a cultural collapse of historic proportions, a collapse so great that it simply overwhelms politics."

Whether "we" have lost or not, however, Mr. Weyrich is in large part correct in what he says about the relationship of culture and politics, and indeed no magazine has drummed that message more than Chronicles and its editors and writers. Though I am far from being the only or even the principal person who has said it, I have dwelled on it repeatedly in my own writings in this and other publications. In 1991, I wrote in this magazine that "in the absence of a significant cultural base," conservative political efforts "were bound to fail." Two years later, speaking at Pat Buchanan's American Cause meeting, in remarks later published in Chronicles, I said, "The inadequacy of the political power of the right in America in the absence of cultural power is perfectly illustrated in the cases of the Nixon, Reagan, and Bush administrations.... Nor does there seem to be much prospect that the Republican Party as it is now constituted will offer any serious challenge to that cultural dominance [of the left], or that the tame neo-conservative intelligentsia that serves as the GOP's ideological vanguard will do so."

I do not quote these passages to prove that I was right while Mr. Weyrich was wrong (in fact, Mr. Weyrich was talking about the importance of "cultural conservatism" in the late 1980s) but mainly to show that the failure of the right he now laments and acknowledges was predictable years before it actually occurred or became obvious to others. Perhaps (indeed probably) Mr. Weyrich himself saw or was beginning to see that some time before he wrote his letter last February, but most others did not, and many still don't. Indeed, some conservatives even continue to imagine that their "movement" has actually won. As Paul Gottfried has written, if this is "victory," I really don't want to see what defeat is like.

I have no disagreement with Mr. Weyrich, then, in his conclusion that the right has lost and that it lost because it failed to find or create an adequate cultural base for political success. I would perhaps go further than he and suggest that the reason it has failed to do so is that (partly through Mr. Weyrich's help) the right fell under the control of neo-conservatism, and neo-conservatism has never been willing to break with the dominant culture definitively or to ally itself without reservation to the authentic American culture that the super-culture dominates and seeks to destroy. Hence, any suggestion of cultural and political radicalism by the Old Right or the New toward the goals of uprooting the dominant culture has been greeted by the neo-conservatives as "extremist," "reactionary,"



"racist," "anti-Semitic," or "anti-American." That is how they greeted Chronicles itself, as well as Pat Buchanan in the 1980s and '90s. That is how they also greeted their own colleague Fr. Richard John Neuhaus and the symposium his magazine First Things published in 1996 on the "end of democracy"; and, not surprisingly, that is how they greeted Mr. Weyrich's letter last February.

Thus, Wall Street Journal neo-con columnist Paul Gigot, in a column entitled "New Right Now Sounds Like Old Left," calls Mr. Weyrich's letter "anti-American" for suggesting that American culture is corrupt and for "blaming America first." When neo-cons talk about "America," what they mean is the soft managerial regime that has evolved since the New Deal, what the late Murray Rothbard called the "warfare-welfare state," and when they compare people on the right to the "Old Left" (the same charge was made against Chronicles and later Pat Buchanan), they mean the right is as anti-American as George McGovern and Ramsey Clark. While they may dislike or have some reservations about the exact contours and content of the next metamorphosis of the managerial state into the New World Order, neo-conservatives generally have much more of a problem with radicals of the right working to reverse the direction of history than with forces of the left pushing history "forward."

Mr. Weyrich, however, appears to think that political conservatism has failed not because it has neglected the authentic

American culture but because that culture itself is corrupt or has withered. He now asserts that "I do not believe that a majority of Americans actually shares our values" and that "if there really were a moral majority out there, Bill Clinton would have been driven out of office months ago." But of course, the failure to dump Clinton proves very little, and there are several other reasons why it occurred. Mr. Weyrich himself acknowledges one -- "the lack of political will on the part of Republicans" -- but there are others too: the inability of the "moral majority" (if that's the right term for it) to mobilize its political will in a society where national political expression has become largely a monopoly of the dominant culture; the fact that many Americans, while not approving of Mr. Clinton's sex life, yet believe he has been a good president who has kept the economy strong and the nation out of war; and lastly, the failure of the self-proclaimed opposition to Mr. Clinton -- the conservative movement itself -- to persuade most Americans that the president should be dumped.

Two reflections emerge from considering Mr. Weyrich's lamentations about the Waterloo of the right. In the first place, almost every complaint he lodges against what he thinks is the moral wreckage of American society, the "ever-wider sewer" in which he seems to think most Americans are wallowing, is in fact a complaint against the dominant culture. "Even now," he writes, entirely truthfully,

for the first time in their lives, people have to be afraid of what they say. This has never been true in the history of our country. Yet

today, if you say the "wrong thing," you suddenly have legal problems, political problems, you might even lose your job or be expelled from college. Certain topics are forbidden. You can't approach the truth about a lot of different subjects. If you do, you are immediately branded as "racist," "sexist," "homophobic," "insensitive," or "judgmental."

But as correct as this passage is, it is still a complaint against the dominant culture, not the traditional one. People get fired for expressing forbidden thoughts in universities, corporations, TV networks, and newspapers, but not at locally owned and operated farms, schools, and businesses. Mr. Weyrich quite simply does not cite a single instance or a single pattern of instances to support his claim that "Americans have adopted in large measure the MTV culture that we so valiantly opposed just a few years ago."

Secondly, one should also reflect that among the alternative reasons, suggested above, for the failure to dump Clinton, the most important have to do simply with the failure of the political right. The "majority," whether moral or not, never does much of anything; elites -- minorities -- always rule, and this is as true of organized conservatism as of organized socialism and communism.

The elite of organized conservatism in the United States for the last 20 years has been the neo-conservative-dominated "conservative movement," in which Mr. Weyrich and his New Rightists were captains, and when he complains that "Americans have adopted the MTV culture" and ceased to be moral, one has to suspect that the problem is not that the majority of Americans have ceased to be moral but rather that the majority just doesn't

pay much attention to Paul Weyrich and the "movement" he helped create. The majority has paid little attention to the "movement"'s insistence that it was Ronald Reagan, not Bill Clinton, who fixed the economy and destroyed communism so that we no longer have to go to war against it; the majority has paid little attention to the concoction of conspiracy theories, pornographic speculations, and thinly masked partisan gloating that has characterized the clumsy conservative crusade against Mr. Clinton; and the majority has displayed very little interest in submitting to the political leadership of the "conservative movement" or anyone associated with it. The majority, to put it quite bluntly, pays no attention whatsoever to organized conservatism, and they do not do so for a very good reason: The kind of conservatism that has come to prevail in the United States over the last generation -- neo-conservatives and their unemployable children and in-laws, the Beltway Right, and the flying squadrons of semi-literate "New Right" bumpkins -- has virtually nothing to say worth paying attention to.

If the campaign to dump Bill Clinton is a flop, that's too bad, but the nation will survive it. What the nation cannot survive is a politics without a right, at least an opposition of the right but, one would hope, also a right that is able to become the dominant force in national politics and culture. Mr. Weyrich is correct that today the nation doesn't have a right of that kind and that the one it does have is a total and absolute dud. He's

not correct that the absence or failure of the right is the fault of the American majority or proof of the collapse of the real American culture; it's the fault of the right itself and, to put it bluntly again, of the course on which the organized right has been traveling for the last decade. It was Mr. Weyrich himself who helped place it on that course. If he has now learned how to redirect it onto a different and more fruitful one, he will have something useful to tell us in the future.■

[CHRONICLES, August, 1999]

*Principalities and Powers*

*Samuel Francis*

*I Was a Teen-Age Werewolf*

"When I think back on all the crap I learned in high school...", Paul Simon mused in a popular song some years ago. Simon, of course, was in high school long before multiculturalism, Afrocentrism, Outcome-Based Education, bilingual education, Heather Has 17 Mommies, Holocaust Studies, and assorted therapeutic group gropes and mass seances in "counselling" displaced the deathless vapidities about history, life, and literature that typically spill from the lips of school teachers in all ages and nations. But no matter what sort of crap Simon endured in his high school and no matter what sort of poisons the minds and spirits of teenagers today, it is as nothing compared to the offal the American news media regularly inject into grown-ups and anyone else who pays attention to them.

The mass murders of some 12 students at Littleton, Colorado's Columbine High School on April 20 was the occasion for the construction of a veritable mountain of journalistic chicken doodle by almost every major newspaper and news service in the world. The blood had not stopped flowing nor the corpses flopped under the coroners' carving knives before the ace reporters and investigative journalists had the whole gory mess all figured out and ready to serve hot and piping to a gape-jawed public. As it

turned out, almost everything they reported was wrong -- some of it almost certainly deliberately wrong -- and not only wrong, but a carefully crafted wrongness that pointed in the exact opposite direction of the truth about Littleton and a lot of other things in the United States that it is important for some people to hide.

The two teen-age killers, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, an Associated Press story told us on April 21, the very day after the massacre, were "said to be part of an outcast group with right-wing overtones called the Trenchcoat Mafia." "Students said the group was fascinated with World War II and the Nazis and noted that Tuesday [April 20] was Adolf Hitler's birthday," it continued. The same day, yet another AP story, written by yet another reporter, described the "Trenchcoat Mafia" as a group that "hated blacks, Hispanics, Jews and athletes." A student named Aaron Cohn, repeatedly quoted in several stories, claimed the "Mafia" "often made anti-Semitic comments" and was himself the apparent source of the story that the killers had called the black student they murdered by a racial epithet, while other students said the group or the killers themselves wore "Nazi crosses" and "'made generally derogatory remarks' about Hispanics and blacks." "They talked about Hitler and wore clothes with German insignia," gasped The New York Times on April 23. "They hated jocks, admired Nazis and scorned normalcy.... They were white supremacists...." The Washington Post bubbled the same day.

And so it went for the next week or so, with proponents of more gun control, more voodoo education, more hate crime laws, and more federal manipulation of schools, law enforcement, and

families flapping their wings and their jaws overtime, intent on squeezing every possible ounce of political advantage from what the press at once dubbed "the worst attack on a school in American history." Even that wasn't true. In 1927, a school board member named Andrew Kehos in Michigan planted several dynamite bombs under the local schoolhouse and blew it to splinters, killing himself and 45 other people, including 38 students. Whether Mr. Kehos was also reported to have "right-wing overtones" and to be a "white supremacist" is not known, but that atrocity committed by a lunatic, like most others in civilized countries, was soon forgotten.

The Littleton massacre wasn't forgotten, at least not for several weeks after it happened, and it soon became clear that the media were trying to use it in almost exactly the same way they had exploited the Oklahoma City bombing of April 19, 1995. They were setting a Reichstag Fire, creating a vast and elaborate lie that sought to pin the blame for the Littleton massacre on "the right."

But the Littleton Lie -- that the massacre was the work of "white supremacists" or a group "with right-wing overtones" -- couldn't last, because it was just so contrary to facts that soon began to emerge from the carnage, and in any case the Lie was largely irrelevant to the main political usage of the massacre, more gun control. Yet the major media kept the Littleton incident on their front pages for at least two weeks after it occurred; it



was only when the facts did emerge that they lost interest in it and the story began to follow Mr. Kehos and his dynamite bombs into that subcontinent of oblivion reserved for inconvenient facts and truths. The facts, you see, not only gave the lie to the Littleton Lie but pointed to a truth the news media didn't want to bring up.

One glimpse of reality began to creep onto the national screen when the contents of Eric Harris' website were released. Those contents had been reported to the local police by an alarmed parent more than a year before young Master Harris tripped over the edge on April 20, but the cops had ignored them. As soon as the massacre occurred, however, America On Line shut down the Harris website, and no one got a gander at what was on it until the New York Times, to its credit, reported at least some of the contents on May 1.

The Times found the following passage, written by Harris, "intriguing": "You know what I hate?" Harris "repeatedly asked readers of the site," the Times reported. "One of the answers he gave was, "RACISM!" "He wrote that people who are biased against 'blacks, Asians, Mexicans or people from any other country or race besides white-American' should 'have their arms ripped off' and be burned." "'Don't let me catch you making fun of someone just because they are of a different color,' he wrote." Young Master Harris, it turns out, hated many things besides "RACISM," among them fans of "Star Wars," people who mispronounce words, liars,

country music, freedom of expression, opponents of the death penalty, and smokers. But "RACISM," so far from being a creed to which he subscribed, was definitely on the enemies' list.

As for Dylan Klebold, it soon developed that he was himself of Jewish background and that his grandfather had been a prominent Jewish philanthropist in Ohio. Young Master Klebold was in fact reported to have taken part in a Passover seder only shortly before the massacre. Whatever motivated him to splatter the school house with the brains of his pals, it probably wasn't the admiration for Hitler and the Nazis that the press had attributed to him and his colleague, nor did Eric Harris's website reveal any sympathy for Hitler or for "racism" or indeed for any "right wing overtones" except perhaps his enthusiasm for capital punishment.

But what finally and definitely exposed the fantasies, speculations, unexamined assumptions, and outright lies the news media had concocted and inflicted on us for the last two weeks was an interview in the New York Times on April 30, 1999 with several students at the high school who had actually known the killers. What they had to say should have ended the professional careers of several of the con artists who pass themselves off as "reporters" and whose misreporting had already fabricated myths and legends about the Littleton killings that will probably never die completely.

The infamous "Trenchcoat Mafia" that was supposedly behind the bloodshed, said 16-year-old Devon Adams, consisted last year

of about 15 or 20 people who wore black trench coats as a kind of clique uniform. They played cards together and hung out and smoked together. "That's all it was," and anyway, more than half of them had graduated last year and the group barely existed anymore. Harris and Klebold weren't even part of it, he told the Times.

Well, but what about the racism, the sympathy for Hitler, the obsession with World War II? Meg Hains, 17, said, "I am black/white mixed. And when the media is coming up with this thing that Dylan and Eric were racist, they weren't. They were my friends. They were very nice to me, both of them. I don't get this whole racial thing that people are coming up with." Miss Hains, you can see, has a lot to learn, and no doubt a good deal of the remainder of her learning experience will be devoted to "getting" the "whole racial thing" with which her elders are so obsessed. Devon Adams acknowledged that Harris and Klebold did use "racial slurs," but "I don't think it meant that they were racist." "What about the Nazi stuff?" the Times insisted. Meg Hains replied, "'That is the biggest load of [expletive] I've ever heard. They never wore swastikas around their arm. Never. Not in this entire year that I've known them. No." Devon Adams said, "They're not Nazis. They didn't worship Nazis." They read books about Nazis because they were studying World War II history in school, he said. The report that they shouted "Heil Hitler" when bowling was also untrue, said Dustin Thurman, 18.

In short, when the press told the public that Harris and Klebold were "white supremacists," "right-wingers," "racists," "neo-Nazis," etc., they lied. Journalists assumed, probably because unconsciously they have come to believe their own propaganda line, that all mass violence is the work of the "right," a catch-all term that can include anyone from Elizabeth Dole to the Aryan Nations. If it's the assassination of a president, the bombing of a federal building, or the mass murder of high school students by wigged-out teenagers full of pubescent resentment, plugged-up hormones, and the mental and moral garbage regularly served them by their schools, their televisions, their movies, their music, their books, their government, and their newspapers, then it has to be because "the right" is on the march.

And of course, this myth is useful for discrediting anyone who really is on "the right" when he questions the quack nostrums and increased state power the left demands as a "solution" to the "crisis."

What, then, did cause the massacre at Littleton? The simple answer is "human nature," the propensity that all human beings have to explode, as Mr. Kehos exploded back in 1927 and as lots of other people do in one way or another every now and then. But of course, not everybody does explode. Why did Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold do so?

The question is still probably unanswerable, but one story that popped up in the Washington Post is suggestive. A woman who

was a friend of the Klebold family recalls how Dylan used to play with her daughters and remembers telling his mother that in her house she had only girl toys while in your house, you have only "boy toys." "Boy toys," replied Mrs. Klebold, "but no toy guns."

Dylan Klebold's father is said to be "a liberal who favors gun control," yet another Associated Press story reported several days after the killings. His mother worked in a community program that helped "disabled students gain access to education." When Dylan and Eric broke into a car and got caught, they were placed in an "anger management" program, and the police who ran the program praised them for their conduct. As for Mark Manes, the pal of Eric and Dylan who sold them the semi-automatic pistol they used in the shootings, his mother is a member of Handgun Control, Inc., the country's largest gun control lobby organization. "She has been against guns forever," Manes'lawyer told the New York Times, "Mark grew up in a house where no weapons were present." Much the same seems to have been true of Eric Harris, who was an enthusiastic fan of Bill Clinton's bombing of Serbia. "I hope we do go to war," he told a classmate. "I'll be the first one there." That's exactly why Harris tried to enlist in the Marines a few days before the blow-up at school. Maybe it wasn't Marilyn Manson that lit his fuse so much as it was the Weekly Standard or the Wall Street Journal editorial page.

The dirty little truth the American propoganda machine won't tell us directly, the secret that has to be pried out from between

the lines of the machine's unreliable newspapers and thinly disguised politicization, is that all three of these young men grew up in the make-believe world concocted by liberalism, a fantastic place where race and gender mean nothing, where violence and crime don't exist and guns have no function and no meaning, even as toys; where wars against "ethnic nationalists" for "humanitarian goals" are morally imperative but owning a handgun to protect your home and family ought to be a crime; where war is only one more goody-good community project like getting disabled students access to education; where people who adhere to "RACISM!" deserve to have their arms ripped off and be burned, and human beings, including healthy young men whose genes and glands and brains drive them to aggression and conflict, are simply blank slates to be shaped and twisted and scribbled over by "anger management" programs and all the therapeutic witchcraft that Hillary Clinton and her friends really believe in. It was not Adolf Hitler or Marilyn Manson or guns or the "right" that made Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold pop their corks last April but liberalism itself and all the illusions liberalism conjures up to mask the truths about human beings and human society it refuses to face. That's a secret the news media can't expose, partly because those who run them can't even recognize it and partly because, if they ever did, the whole system constructed on the lies that liberalism has built would crumble apart. ■

[CHRONICLES, September, 1999]

*Principalities and Powers*

*Samuel Francis*

*Appealing to Prurient Interests*

In 1857 the House of Lords engaged in a rather heated debate on the subject of a bill sponsored by an organization calling itself by the frank but nonetheless quaint name of the "Society for the Suppression of Vice." The intent of the bill was to control, through legal penalties, the publication and sale of "obscene publications," and despite the high Victorian setting of the debate, enactment of the bill was by no means assured. "Brougham was dubious; Lord Wensleydale considered the common law adequate as it stood," wrote historian W.L. Burn of the discussion among the peers. But the highlight of the controversy arrived when the 85-year-old Tory, Lord Lyndhurst, rose to oppose the bill and read out "a long list of works ranging from the classics to Restoration plays which might be deemed obscene." Lyndhurst's tactic both shocked and infuriated Lord Campbell, the prim Liberal peer who was the principal spokesman for the bill and who promptly denounced Lyndhurst's "zeal for these filthy publications" and upbraided him for defending the supposed right to engage in "free trade in obscenity." Lyndhurst then rose again to respond that his many years of recounting risqué anecdotes about his own ancestors had quite jaded his sensibilities to the kind of immorality Lord Campbell was condemning. In the event, for all

the controversy and all the confrontation of aristocratic wit with bourgeois moralism, the Obscene Publications Act became law, and what we now know as "Victorianism" acquired one more legal support from the British government.

The debate in the Lords is of interest because it is one of the early occasions of a controversy that has continued down to our own time, and as the exchange between Lyndhurst and Campbell suggests, the terms of the controversy have not changed and have never been settled. Lyndhurst's list of classics goes to the heart of the perennial debate over pornography and obscenity, and every time the issue is argued, those opposed to censorship produce a similar list. How do we know what is and what is not "obscene"? How do we know we are not silencing an Aristophanes, a Rabelais, or a Joyce? On the Lyndhurst side of the aisle is the obvious truth that many of those most zealous to crush obscenity care absolutely nothing for serious literature and art anyway, that to such paragons of virtue and civilization entire libraries are little more than depositories of "filthy publications" and they would be just as happy to consign Aristophanes, Rabelais, and Joyce to the fire as to shut down the local peep shows and massage parlors.

Yet, on the other side is what should be the equally obvious truth that the state has every right to regulate and discipline the private moral life of its citizens. Morally proper behavior is fundamental to the elementary cohesion of human society, not to speak of the higher levels of civilization that most people would like to sustain, and the systematic assault on morality, taste,



beauty, and decency that pornography perpetrates is a perfectly appropriate target of public coercion. Opponents are probably right: Sometimes, if you have strict laws against obscenity, you might in error silence a Shakespeare. But by the same argument, if you have laws against murder, you might sometimes hang an innocent man. Mistakes happen, but as long as procedures exist to control and avoid them, they do not invalidate the legitimacy of the principle. (The argument is probably stronger with regard to the death penalty. Most innocent men are pretty helpless when wrongfully convicted; Shakespeares can usually take care of themselves.)

This summer the U.S. House of Representatives again took up the debate over obscenity, only this time it was not about sex in books but violence in movies. Rep. Henry Hyde, fresh from the failed crusade to topple Bill Clinton, came up with a measure to save America's children from Hollywood. The occasion of the Hyde proposal, of course, was the massacre in Littleton, Colorado two months before and the inane compulsion that lawmakers of both parties experienced to "do something" to prevent more Littletons in the future. The favorite such "something" was gun control, but the Republicans quickly managed to fumble that issue and allow the Democrats to upstage and out-manuever them. Mr. Hyde's measure in large part was driven by the need felt by many Republicans that if the Democrats were going to "do" gun control, the Republicans must "do" something else, and what Republicans should "do" was attack

Hollywood, a whipping boy as popular with the Stupid Party as gun owners are with the Evil. The relevance of outlawing, controlling, or censoring movies, videos, and other media for the purpose of preventing future Littletons was never clear. The whole measure was driven, not by any serious desire to avoid such bloodlettings, but by what Republicans were smart enough to recognize as the political necessity that they "do something" but were too dumb and cowardly to resist by exposing as merely a deliberately concocted device to attack private firearm ownership.

Moreover, the language Mr. Hyde drafted and submitted was as full of holes as such legislation always is. His bill sought to prevent minors under 17 from buying materials containing "obscene violence," defined as "the kind of violence that appeals to the prurient, morbid or shameful interest of children without social redeeming value for children." Of course, almost every word in the definition -- "prurient," "morbid," "shameful," "redeeming," and "value," not to mention "violence" itself -- is up for grabs.

Like almost all legislation that tries to define and outlaw "obscenity," whether sexual or violent, Mr. Hyde's definition contained terms that were themselves open to interpretation and debate and would only have led to an infinitely regressing argument over what was or was not subject to the law.

The Hyde language was clearly derived from the most recent legally operative definition of "obscenity" offered by the heavy lifters over at the Supreme Court in the Miller decision of 1973.

After several rulings in the 1950s on the issue of "obscenity," the case of Miller v. California finally seems to have settled the matter for at least the last generation. In that decision, Chief Justice Burger's definition of "obscenity" is that material may be obscene if

(a) the average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find that the work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest; (b) the work depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by the applicable state law; and (c) the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.

The Hyde language is merely an adaptation of the Burger definition applied to violence rather than sex -- although Burger explicitly and repeatedly insisted that "obscenity" referred only to sexual conduct.

The Hyde adaptation is therefore suspect on its face, since violence, even when as brutal as Oliver Stone or Steven Spielberg can make it, still isn't sex (except when it becomes sado-masochism) and simply does not have the implications for personal, family, community, and general societal cohesion that sexuality does. Even so, it may also be noted that the Burger definition, like so much of what the second-rate minds of the courts try to do, is largely useless even for controlling real sexual obscenity.

In the first place, the definition is simply too long and cumbersome, is couched in too many qualifications, and again relies on undefined and unclear terms. In addition, the knee-bend

to "community standards," while seemingly a recognition that healthy backwaters like Montana and Alabama may retain the right to control their own public morals, in fact guarantees that the centers of the world pornography industry in Los Angeles and New York may operate without fear and inundate the rest of the country with their products. The "community standards" of the megalopolis are hardly such as to encourage moral uplift of any caliber.

Mr. Hyde seems at least to have spared us the cant and mendacity of the Burger court's "community standards," but his definition was no more useful, even if we grant that his purported purpose of protecting minors from harmful depictions of violence was desirable or that depictions of violence can be harmful at all. It is unquestionable that Hollywood and the mainstream media now regularly crank out the most disgusting and repellent depictions of violence and that immersion in such films by young people is almost certainly unhealthy. What is not clear is whether a harmful level of immersion in these kinds of films is sufficiently common as to constitute a problem of any kind or that the harmful effects of the films reach to matters of public concern -- e.g., the committing of crimes or the destabilization or corruption of society. Since Mr. Hyde and his Republican colleagues were far more concerned to perpetuate the illusion that Republicans were just as "sensitive" to Littleton as the Democrats and just as committed to "doing something," there was no time for any congressional inquiry on the subject. There may be

sociological or criminological literature on it, but because there were no hearings, such materials never made it into the public eye.

Nevertheless, there is no question that conservatives in general are entirely fed up with Hollywood and most of its works.

Sometimes they are justified in this feeling and sometimes not. Every time one hears conservatives discussing movies, one is invariably struck by the illiteracy and banality of their judgments. Mr. Hyde himself was not helpful in this respect. Asked by the Wall Street Journal about which current films he might consider "too violent," the lawmaker at once mentioned Mel Gibson's "Payback" and "The Matrix." He also continued that "I'd say that any movie that has more than 50 killings is pushing the envelope." That, of course, pushes just about any war movie made in the last 50 or 60 years -- "Sergeant York," "Sands of Iwo Jima," "Spartacus," "Braveheart," "Gettysburg," etc. -- well outside the envelope.

The problem with Mr. Hyde's attempt to enforce public morals is not, however, that doing so is impossible or undesirable -- as I noted above, it is both possible and desirable -- nor is the problem only that the real motivation of the Hyde legislation was its transparently cynical but nonetheless fatuous political purpose. The deeper problem with what Mr. Hyde and conservatives in general are trying to do in their efforts to use the power of the law to enforce public morals is simply that today there is

virtually no public morality to enforce.

Say what you will about Oliver Stone, Madonna, and MTV, the brute fact is that ever since the 1960s sexuality and violence of a level never before permitted have permeated our popular culture.

The paperback novels on sale at any Walden's or B. Dalton's contain language and behavior that would have been universally banned in the 1950s or before. Mainstream movies today -- not just Stone's or Quentin Tarentino's or John Woo's -- routinely portray murders, tortures, maimings, lethal explosions, mass deaths, and catastrophes, as well as rape, sexual intercourse, sexual jokes, nudity, perversion, and assorted jabber about sex organs and bodily functions, on a scale and in a detail never before permitted. I rehearse these facts not out of any prudish dudgeon -- like Lord Lyndhurst, my own sensibilities are far too jaded by exposure to contemporary popular culture to be very concerned about this kind of immorality -- but merely to emphasize that any conventional legislative enforcement of public morals today is all but impossible.

The legitimate purpose of legislating against obscenity is not to restore or create a moral consensus where none exists. The legitimate purpose is merely to protect an existing consensus against threats from the handful of deviants who violate it or want to subvert it. In 1857, when Lords Lyndhurst and Campbell debated, both gentlemen and most other gentlemen in their civilization on both sides of the Atlantic shared such a

consensus, and for a century or so afterward, enforcement of a public morality that was widely known, understood, and shared remained possible. Lawmakers no more had to worry excessively over the implications of a legal definition of "obscenity" or what terms like "prurient," "morbid," "shameful," or "redeeming" really meant than the Framers of the U.S. Constitution had to explain what "cruel and unusual punishment" or "free exercise" of religion meant. Everyone knew what these terms meant; if they didn't know, they were not part of the common civilization, so their ignorance didn't much matter.

Today conservative efforts to enforce morality through the state, like those of Mr. Hyde, suffer from the flaw that we live in a society that has become a moral vacuum and has ceased to be part of a common civilization. This is why courts and lawmakers have so much trouble defining "obscenity" at all. The common understandings of morals (not to mention of language itself) have all but vanished. The long shadow of that fate was perhaps beginning to stretch itself when Lord Lyndhurst read out his list of classics that may or may not have been deemed obscene, but in 1857 Western men still generally knew what the term meant and what the moral beliefs they were trying to protect were. Today, we can no longer protect morality through law because no one -- including most lawmakers -- any longer knows what morality is or should be.

Mr. Hyde may or may not have known what he wanted to

accomplish with his proposal, but whether he did or not, what his ill-considered measure would probably have done had it passed (aside from encouraging Hollywood to produce movies that only children would want to watch) was impose a fake moral code that virtually no one else in the society had thought about, endorsed, practiced, or expressed any desire to accept. He might well have pushed the movies he claimed to dislike out of the envelope, but the "morality" he and his colleagues in the Stupid Party wanted to cram into the nation's moral vacuum would have been neither a real morality nor even an imitation worth having.■



[CHRONICLES, October, 1999]

*Principalities and Powers*

*Samuel Francis*

*What A Swell Party This Is*

The last presidential election of the millennium is still more than a year away, but already by last summer rumblings of discontent with the plastic dashboard figurines who are the leading candidates of the two major plastic dashboard political parties were audible. As has not been uncommon in this decade, the rumblings first attracted national notice when Pat Buchanan, in the course of his third campaign for the presidency, emitted a few rumbles himself about the possibility of leaving the Republican Party to which he has been attached for most of his life. Throughout the 1990s, Mr. Buchanan has been among the first voices to define issues and point future political directions at times when most in his party and the (snicker) "conservative movement" have merely squeaked and squealed in dismayed terror at his maverick positions. His dissent on the Persian Gulf war in 1990-91 pointed toward the far larger and more generalized opposition to the recent Balkan war, and his support for economic nationalism contributed to an increased skepticism of the "global economy" and free trade dogmas among congressmen in both parties in the last few years. When Pat started rumbling about leaving the GOP smack in the middle of his own campaign for its nomination, therefore, wise pundits were well-advised to pay

attention.

But in the event Mr. Buchanan soon distanced himself from his own remarks. On "Meet the Press" a few days after his reported threat of defection, he confirmed that "if the Republican Party walks away from life [i.e., a pro-life, anti-abortion position], it walks away from me." He might leave the party or refuse to endorse its ticket, but he gave no firm indication that he would start a new party or accept the nomination of one, and he did say that by the time the Republicans picked their ticket next year, it would probably be too late to start a new party anyway.

Nevertheless, the word had been spoken, and soon speculation about a third party was commonplace. Columnist Robert Novak insisted even after Mr. Buchanan's demurrals on "Meet the Press" that he might actually bolt the GOP and run as an independent, while The New York Times a few days later carried a major front-page story recounting in some detail how Mr. Buchanan wasn't the only Republican thinking of what he had called "a stampede for the Metroliner" out of the party.

In fact, the prospect of a "third party" of the right has been discussed in virtually every presidential election in my own memory and probably well beyond. Indeed, the very term "third party" is rather grotesquely inaccurate if taken literally. In addition to such perennials as the Communist Party USA and its cheap imitations in various World-Peace-and-Save-the-Silverfish crusades of the left, there are various vehicles on the right, in one form or another, that have become institutionalized despite their marginal political impact -- the Libertarian Party, the U.S.

Taxpayers Party, and of course the Reform Party, which has actually proved itself capable of electing Jesse Ventura to the governorship of Minnesota. In other words, whatever happens to the Republicans or the Democrats (speaking of cheap imitations of the communists), a new party built on their wreckage would not be a "third" but a fifth or sixth party at least.

But of course that's not what is meant when people talk about a "third party." What they mean is a political party with a real chance of winning national elections, and today, with the possible exception of the Reform Party, there is no such animal. The Reform Party might be able to win a national election only because of the strong and distinctive personalities of its leaders, the indefatigable Ross Perot and the refreshingly unconventional Mr. Ventura, probably the only political candidate in human history who has openly discussed his youthful visit to a house of ill repute and been elected anyway. Third parties have historically been successful in American history only because of their leaders -- William Jennings Bryan and George Wallace come quickly to mind -- or because the rest of the political establishment was so fractured that even mediocrities like Abraham Lincoln could creep into the White House while everyone else was fighting. When the personalities of the leaders fade and the establishment fractures are patched up, third parties usually dwindle and begin to vanish.

Yet despite the interminable jabber about a new party, there is more reason in this election cycle than ever to take it

seriously. Not only Mr. Buchanan but also New Hampshire Sen. Bob Smith, almost as firmly on the right as the former commentator and an actual elected office-holder, spoke openly about bolting the Republicans, and what he had to say about it represented precisely the feelings and thoughts of thousands, if not millions, of others Americans who have supported the GOP in recent years. "Right now we have one political party in America," the senator told the Times a couple of weeks before he actually did leave the Republicans. "It's run by moderate Democrats and moderate Republicans, and conservatives are stuck. If you talk to conservative activists there's a lot of frustration. I have no desire to see the demise of the party. But I'm not going to see our views compromised."

Among the views that rank-and-file Republicans believe have already been compromised if not entirely abandoned by the party and its leadership the Times itself mentioned not only abortion but also "taxes, gun control, military spending and gay rights." Yet that's only the icing on the cake. How about the party's support of statehood for Puerto Rico, a brainchild of the now forgotten Newt Gingrich and his "Republican revolutionaries" intended to "lure" the Hispanic vote into the party; the abandonment of efforts to abolish affirmative action (last year, the Republican House actually defeated a bill that would have abolished federal affirmative action mandates for educational institutions); and the total sell-out of the immigration issue,

not only with respect to reform of existing legal immigration procedures but also of any serious attempt to control illegal immigration. As for gun control, the implosion of the congressional Republicans on this issue in the aftermath of the Littleton shootings last spring helped undermine the support of one of the key constituencies that gave the party a congressional majority in 1994. It was a Democrat, John Dingell of Michigan, who caused the collapse of the gun control package pushed by the Clinton White House and swallowed whole by the Republican leadership in both houses.

The Republicans no longer even pretend to be interested in such matters as reducing the size and scope of the power of the federal leviathan or abolishing federal programs and departments, let alone reversing the damage to the Constitution inflicted by a generation of Supreme Court justices (the most dangerous of whom - Earl Warren, William O. Brennan, Harry Blackmun, Sandra day O'Connor, Anthony Kennedy, et al. -- were all appointed by Republican presidents). On the major issues of the era -- globalist foreign policy and recklessly aggressive military adventurism, free trade, the erosion of national sovereignty, and the Third-Worldization of America -- the Republican Party is virtually indistinguishable from the party of Bill Clinton. As for Mr. Clinton himself, he and the assorted crooks, crackpots, perverts, and outright traitors that inhabit his administration have now managed to bamboozle and defeat the Republicans no fewer

than four times -- in the presidential elections of 1992 and 1996, the congressional elections of 1998, and the impeachment boondoggle of 1999. How many times does a political party get to strike out before it is hooted off the field by its own fans?

"The disenchantment" of conservative Republicans with their own party, reported the Times last summer, "is so intense that more and more conservatives on the front lines are openly discussing whether to bolt from the party," and they have every reason to bolt. A party that not only fails to represent the beliefs of its own members and supporters but also repeatedly proves itself unable to win in confrontations with its major political opponents neither deserves to win nor, in the long run, will be able to survive.

There are, however, two compelling reasons why a new party does not already exist and may have trouble coming into existence.

In the first place, any new party that is at all successful in attracting voters will quickly have its appeal emulated or stolen by one of the existing mainstream parties. In the second place, so say critics of the idea of a new party, any new party of the right in the United States today would probably be merely the grassroots of the existing Republican Party minus its incompetent and dishonest leadership. What's the point of founding a party when all you would be doing is simply changing the name of the Republican Party and kicking out the leaders? And if you can do the latter, you don't even need to do the former anyway.

The first reason, the problem of emulation by the existing parties, is exactly what happened to the American Independent Party of George Wallace in 1968. Wallace's crusading rhetoric against "forced busing" and similar federal efforts at racial and social engineering was emulated by Richard Nixon at somewhat lower decibels, and since the Republicans had a better chance than Wallace of winning the election, Nixon was able to walk off with votes that otherwise might well have made the Alabama governor and his new party a permanent fixture of the national political landscape. No sooner had Nixon won the election, of course, than he and his Justice Department started instituting affirmative action.

Any third party that is successful enough to instigate emulation by an old party has to be prepared to meet this threat. It has to be able to articulate its own message in such a distinctive way that the older parties cannot emulate it without at the same time undermining and jeopardizing the support of their own constituencies. In 1968, the Democrats could not emulate Wallace because they had become increasingly dependent on the black vote; the Republicans could emulate him because they had virtually no black support and could expect to win (and did win) by mobilizing the working and middle class white voters who felt directly threatened by busing and other forms of forced integration.

The other objection to a new party of the right, that it

would be merely the Republican Party under a new name, may well be true, although the vast support that George W. Bush appears to enjoy within the party suggests that it's not only the GOP leadership that needs to be purged. One of the major problems with the GOP in the last couple of decades is that its members and activists have actually had a taste of political victory and liked it so much that they now want little else. Local patronage, federal jobs and appointments, government subsidies, privileged visits to the White House, favors from local congressmen that would not be possible if the party were not in the majority, and the sheer pleasure of thumping your chest in front of your friends and neighbors about winning elections and clambering into office all contribute to enticing rank-and-file Republicans into forgetting the issues and voters that put them into office in the first place. It is probably rank-and-filers such as these, at least as much as the less than stalwart postures of such leaders as Newt Gingrich and Bob Dole, that pressures the party as a whole into defecting from its own principles and platform. If a new party does come into existence, its founders should have no illusion that it is or can be merely the Republican Party under a new name. Not only the present leadership of the GOP but also a sizeable number of its membership needs to be kicked out, and many Americans who now vote for the Democrats or the Reform Party or who don't bother to vote at all would need to be brought in. Unless a new party is able and willing to do both, it won't be



worth starting.

Finally, the most common, though not the most compelling, argument against a new party is that a new party just won't be able to win and that if it doesn't, it will only enable the Democrats to win. It is not particularly compelling for at least two reasons. First, the difference between the Republicans and the Democrats, as suggested above, is not so large as to make a hell of a lot of difference to the nation anyway, and as long as the right wing of the party lets itself be gulled by its leaders into swallowing this appeal to fear, the leaders themselves will have nothing to fear from any revolt within their own ranks. It is actually an argument intended to quell any serious discussion of an alternative direction for the party. And second, those who advance this argument actually rather miss the whole point about a new party.

That point is that a new party should not expect to win, at least not for several years or election cycles, because the purpose of founding a new party is not so much to win (if winning is what you want, join the Democrats) but rather to sustain a certain set of ideas and principles that the other parties have abandoned or, in Sen. Smith's words, compromised. It is not just a matter of waving the torch, but of keeping the torch alight at a time when the established parties show no interest at all in doing so. If waving the torch is all that a new party is interested in doing, it won't survive and certainly won't flourish. But if it

can bear the torch in a way that illuminates and leads the people and the nation it seeks to persuade, then it will almost inevitably displace at least one of the older parties and will probably influence the direction of the other. The issue today is not whether the Republican Party survives or not. The disenchantment with the Republican Party is now so intense that at the end of this millennium or in the first years of the next one it will almost certainly begin to evaporate. The issue now is what kind of party will replace it and whether those who want it to be born will be able to wave the right torch in a way that the nation will see and want to follow.■

[CHRONICLES, November, 1999]

*Principalities and Powers*

*Samuel Francis*

*John-John Is My Co-Pilot*

Aside from the non-resignation and non-ruin of President Clinton and the non-campaign for the Republican presidential nomination, the biggest non-event of 1999 was undoubtedly the non-survival last summer of John F. Kennedy, Jr., who, true to the traditions of his family, managed to seize international headlines when his own recklessness and incompetence led to disaster -- this time not only for other people, which historically has been the major accomplishment of the Kennedy clan, but also for himself. His death was indeed a sad occasion. Gifted with fame, looks, and legend, if not with any discernible talent, John-John was best known to the American public as the small boy who was made to salute his father's funeral cortege on that bare and bitter day in 1963. But that, indeed, was the extent of the young man's achievement. Being dubbed by People magazine "The Sexiest Man Alive" and founding a frothy gossip sheet for fashionable Manhattan coffee tables would, for any serious person, be not so much achievements as embarrassments; but for John-John they were the pinnacles of his grown-up vocation. His death was sad because in himself he seems to have been entirely harmless, much like any other victim of a plane accident, but not because of any significant future that his mind or character had promised.

National mourning of the death of an attractive celebrity who happened to be the son of a former president would have been entirely appropriate, but the propaganda organs of the Ruling Class were unable to leave it at that. From the moment of John-John's disappearance off the Massachusetts coast, the establishment press set off such a howl of grief and so protracted a yelp of pain that one would have thought that Pearl Harbor, the Alamo, and the Holocaust Memorial Museum had all suddenly been vaporized in a nuclear attack by white supremacists from Idaho. The Washington Post ran a banner headline about Kennedy's plane crash the day after it happened, and staff writer Michael Grunwald at once set the tone and pace of what would quickly become a national mania. "John F. Kennedy, Jr., the dashing celebrity who represents the best-known link to his father's Camelot era, is missing at sea," Mr. Grunwald moaned in what passes at the Post for a news story, and Kennedy's apparent death was "another startling blow for the star-crossed family that has become America's version of political royalty."

And so it went in newspapers and news shows all over the world for a solid week and more. Not since the murder of Gianni Versace had a death in the United States brought so much lachrymose foam to the jowls of the chattering class, and not since the death of Princess Diana in Paris had the mob that pays attention to the mewlings of the chattering class had a chance to wallow and cavort in so much manufactured grief. That the mass mourning for John-John was manufactured is incontestable. For all his cosmetic prettiness and personal harmlessness, the young

Kennedy was simply not much of an object of popular affection or even interest. Spontaneous mass grief for the deaths of Elvis and Jimmy Stewart, even of Diana herself, makes sense. For John-John, it just doesn't.

There were many reasons why the death of yet another Kennedy represented a swell opportunity to manufacture yet another mythical hero, not the least being the sheer volume of sales that the fabrication engendered. But there was also a political purpose, which was to formulate yet again the mythology of Camelot as the incarnation of what America is supposed to be but has never been able to become because the vast right-wing conspiracy of assassins that murdered John and Bobby keeps shooting anyone who might make it reality. The latest death of a Kennedy was thus the occasion not only for inventing another hero as fake as the one that crawled out of PT-109 during World War II but also for pouring the old myth into a new bottle from which the mass mind of the New America will be able to swig its fill of cultural and political fantasy.

One of the more interesting, if rather bizarre, reformulations of the Kennedy legend popped up in a long essay on "The Kennedy Myths" in the Wall Street Journal of July 29 by Norman Podhoretz. Mr. Podhoretz, the retired editor of Commentary magazine, one of the founders and chief articulators of "neo-conservatism," and now in his old age the pater familias of a vast spawn of talentless dimwits even less gifted than the Kennedy

family, showed little interest in the death of young Mr. Kennedy but a good deal in the image of his father and his political legacy. As is not uncommon with neo-conservatives of any generation, Mr. Podhoretz mainly managed to distort and miss the real point of that legacy, though not so much from thick-headedness perhaps as from a desire to repackage the Kennedy legend in a way that will be useful to neo-conservative political purposes today and in the future.

It was the main burden of Mr. Podhoretz' argument to claim that, while John Kennedy and his politics seemed to Mr. Podhoretz in his radical phase during the early 1960s to be a betrayal of and an obstacle to serious social and political change, they seem now, in the maturity of Mr. Podhoretz's wisdom as a neo-conservative sage, to be not especially liberal at all. "Indeed," Mr. Podhoretz wrote, "shocking as it may sound on first hearing, the policies advocated by John F. Kennedy made him more a precursor of Ronald Reagan than of his two younger brothers" -- i.e., the brutal and swaggering Bobby and the oafish Ted.

It is indeed shocking at first hearing, but Mr. Podhoretz makes a reasonably good case for this claim. Like Reagan, Kennedy campaigned in 1960 on promises of a tax cut, an arms build-up, and a committed antagonism to communism. In Mr. Podhoretz's view, it was not John Sr. who sired the leftism that now struts up and down the cultural and political power centers of the country but his brothers. "So little did Ted's views have in common with those of

JFK that it was as though Sir Lancelot had returned from his quest for the Holy Grail and revealed that he had renounced Christianity and become a pagan."

But the resemblance between Kennedy and Reagan is largely superficial, due in part to the fact that most political figures since Kennedy, whatever their professed beliefs and parties, have been influenced by his political style and strategy and in part to the fact that most politicians who did get elected president during the cold war generally won by campaigning on much the same platform -- that they would cut taxes, maintain military power and security, and smack down the Russkies if they stepped out of line.

Moreover, Mr. Podhoretz's claim that the Kennedy myth "wildly exaggerated the liberalism of its leader" is perhaps intended to reformulate the image of Kennedy himself as an icon useful for neo-conservatives -- more useful than Reagan, who is today largely forgotten outside the conservative cheerleader squad. But whatever Mr. Podhoretz's purpose is making this claim, he is simply wrong, and wrong in a way that suggests that he has totally failed to understand some of the major contours of American political culture today and how John Kennedy helped shape them.

It's true the Kennedy administration accomplished little in the way of legislation, federal programs, or foreign policy achievements and that most of what was accomplished politically in the early 1960s was the work of the Johnson administration after Kennedy's death. In that sense you can't blame the liberalism of

the Great Society on Kennedy, though that's a bit like saying you can't blame Lenin for the crimes of Stalin. Lenin may not have committed the same crimes, but he had no objection to doing so and would have done so had he felt the inclination or possessed the power. There is virtually nothing the Johnson administration ever did in domestic or foreign policy that John Kennedy would not have wanted to claim for his own administration.

But the deeper sense in which Mr. Podhoretz is wrong about the non-liberalism of the Kennedy era is that he misses the major impact that Kennedy did leave behind him. If he accomplished nothing else, John Kennedy -- or at least the spin artists, cosmeticians, hair stylists, speech writers, ghost writers, and just plain con-men whom the Kennedys have always employed -- effected a profound and enduring change in the popular culture of American politics. He did so in part by his (so I'm told) authentically charming personality and wit, in part by the social and intellectual sophistication he affected, and in part by the informality he artfully synthesized with the silly and ponderous sonorities that he habitually unbosomed in his oratory. The change Kennedy effected consisted at bottom in the popularization of utopianism as a serious premise of American politics, and the carefully crafted Superman image of war hero, athlete, patrician, historian, intellectual, statesman, Catholic, and family man that he projected was designed to legitimize and normalize the utopianism he preached. The image communicated that the utopia he



demanded and into which he sought to dragoon the nation was neither unattractive (JFK's personal charm) nor unpatriotic (war hero) nor unmanly (athlete) nor achieved at the expense of American institutions (family and faith) nor unlettered (intellectual, historian, Harvard graduate) nor low-class (patrician) but rather one fully in harness with American tradition, aspirations, and good taste. Kennedy, in short, manipulated the imagery of conservatism to legitimize utopianism.

That is why the Arthurian Camelot, a manly and martial utopia, was such an appropriate metaphor for the kind of utopian vision that Kennedy and his crew wanted to project.

It is precisely because he was successful in doing so that the virus of utopianism soon came to shape the Great Society as well as the New Left (to whom Kennedy remained a martyr) and has now infected the bloodstream of American political culture to the point that it is all but impossible for any American politician to succeed unless he too endorses or at least genuflects to it. Lyndon Johnson's drippy and pedestrian political rhetoric simply took for granted the legitimacy and desirability of the grand utopian designs that Kennedy had unleashed. Reagan himself regurgitated much the same vision in his rhetorical indulgences of the "City on a Hill," an image of millennialist utopianism directly derived from a gnostic New England Puritanism, and the neo-conservatism that has by now all but displaced the pre-Kennedy conservatism of Robert Taft, Joe McCarthy, and the young Barry

Goldwater has also absorbed it to the degree that most of its younger exponents are not even aware that utopianism and conservatism are not compatible. Today all politicians are supposed to see "visions," a term unmistakably connected to utopianism, and to intone neat slogans that encapsulate those visions. One of the few American politicians who did not seem to share this common utopian orthodoxy was George Bush Sr., whose distaste for the "vision thing" betrayed his own, quite healthy view of politics as mere administration. Unfortunately, it was a view of politics that Mr. Bush was more likely to have acquired through his own cultural illiteracy and dull sensibilities than because of any serious reflections about the nature of political man and the constraints of the human condition.

Whatever Mr. Podhoretz's purposes in trying to assimilate Reagan to Kennedy (much as Kennedy sought to assimilate his own utopianism to the imagery of conservatism and tradition), they can achieve no good result. Most of what is wrong with American politics today derives precisely from the monopolization of political dialogue by one species of utopianism or another, and all of them derive directly and most immediately from John F. Kennedy. Kennedy's utopianism was equivalent to a refusal to govern the nation in accordance with the rules and limits of conventional politics and is closely related to his whole family's refusal to govern themselves or others by the same rules and limits that constrain everyone else -- a refusal that may help

explain, more than any conspiracy theory, why so many Kennedys keep getting shot or driving off bridges or killing themselves and their wives by flying planes they are not qualified to fly in conditions even experienced pilots would refuse to fly in.

Their utopianism, in other words, derives from the same impulse that generates the delusion that because they are Kennedys, they can do whatever they please, and whatever costs accumulate can always be paid by somebody else. As long as the Kennedys confine the consequences of their impulses to themselves and their families, no great harm is done beyond what is visited upon those incautious enough to risk their own lives by associating with them, but their injection of the utopian virus into the assumptions and habits of American political culture has only contributed to the corruption of the nation's politics and rendered its citizens more vulnerable to the fraudulence and dangers that invariably accompany the enthronement of political fantasy. Thanks largely to them and the propaganda organs that sustain their false legend, the entire nation is now permanently embarked on a flight into a utopian haze no less impenetrable than the one John-John encountered last summer, guided by pilots no more competent than he was and no less indifferent to the dangers they invite.■