



The root cause of the obscenity of today's so-called "art" is the fools who pay the ridiculous prices for works by such people as Andres Serrano (January/February 2002). If these aficionados refused to pay the prices asked for this art, there would be no Serranos.

Bill Kelly
Dundas, Minnesota

I believe one of the reasons that colleges, in particular, go for so much terrible art and architecture ("The Rise and Fall of Anti-Social Architecture," by Philip Langdon, January/February 2002) is that they have inordinate amounts of money to throw around. This avant garde architectural binge is a public display of that. Tuition is simply much too high.

James Kelly
Feasterville, Pennsylvania

Karl Zinsmeister's treatment of contemporary art ("BIRD'S EYE," January/February 2002) can only be considered a rant. Beauty is relative. And what exactly does he mean by "honest reality"? Artists are not con men and cannot convince others to accept their art. Mr. Zinsmeister should take a closer look at Modern and contemporary art.

Martin Kuchar
Toronto, Canada

Thank you very much for your coverage of the art world (January/February 2002). It's high time the truth was spoken about

what passes for art these days. Those of us who practice the crafts of traditional art appreciate the support we get from magazines like yours.

Ralph Deuschle
President, Sonoran Arts League
Scottsdale, Arizona

Karl Zinsmeister (BIRD'S EYE, December 2001) did not go far enough in urging Israel to abandon its settlements, which provoke the Arab world, are illegal, and will inspire terrorists as long as they are in place. Abandoning the settlements does not mean sacrificing security. The Israeli Army can operate in the occupied territories as long as it wants. The U.S. did not settle in Germany, or Japan, or Afghanistan, but our military stayed as long as it needed to. We must stop indulging ethnic politics with respect to Israel.

Robert Browning
Arlington, Virginia

Adam Wolfson achieves an incredible mix of muddle-headed thinking and name calling in his screed against genetic engineering ("Does Genetic Engineering Endanger Human Freedom?" October/November 2001). Since it appears that most of his article consists of name-calling masquerading as argument, it is hard to know what to say in response.

Let me simply suggest that when the term eugenics is invoked in this kind of writing it had best be invoked with far more care than Mr. Wolfson sees fit to

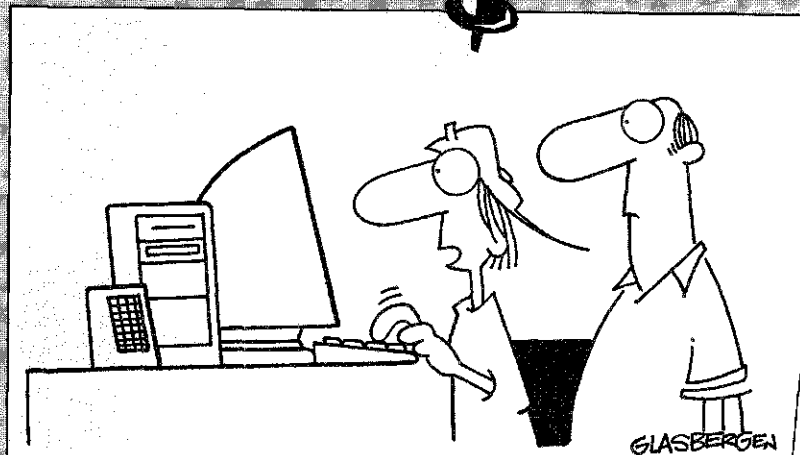
proffer. Eugenics historically has meant coercion and murder in the name of race improvement—not a public policy that I would favor. But, the term is also used to refer to efforts to improve individual health. The term might even be used to describe efforts to improve one's own abilities, or those of one's children. I would argue that it is at least possible to make a moral case for this form of "eugenics."

Everyday parents in America use genetic information to end pregnancies that will lead to dead, dying, or severely disabled infants. Many individuals would use genetics to avoid having a child with juvenile diabetes or cystic fibrosis or Canavan's disease if they could do so using gamete selection, gene therapy, or genetic testing.

The only argument Mr. Wolfson can muster concerning such behavior is that these are informed choices defended by liberals. This kind of cant has no place in the emerging discussion of how to apply genetic knowledge, or whether to set limits on what parents and doctors can or cannot do.

The core moral ground for applying genetic knowledge to human beings is that such application must either prevent terrible suffering and premature death or enhance the interests and well-being of individuals. Mr. Wolfson has failed utterly to show why genetic engineering cannot do both.

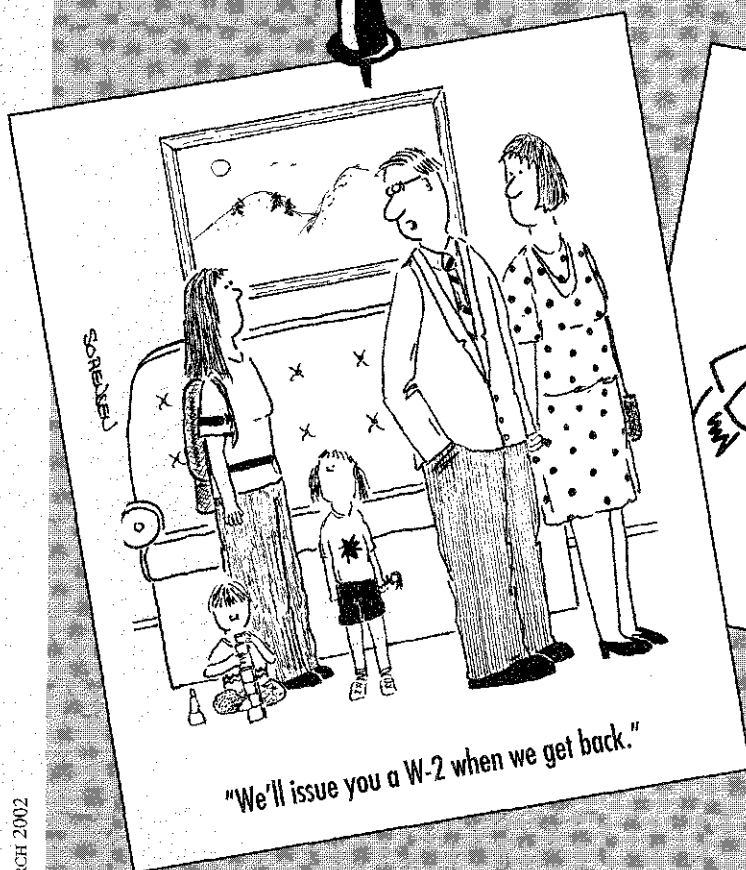
Arthur L. Caplan
Center for Bioethics
University of Pennsylvania



"My term paper has hypertext links, full-screen video clips, animated fonts, and awesome 3D special effects. Now all I need is a topic."



"Wait a minute—this can't be me. I'm a much younger woman."



"We'll issue you a W-2 when we get back."

