

who were incarcerated in a local dog pound. In Charleston, South Carolina, the Rev. Henry Scott announced in mid-sermon that he was immediately quitting the pulpit because a Vassar

College "witch" had put a spell on him fourteen years ago. A Vassar College spokesman notified the venerable *New York Post* that "It is not the policy of Vassar College to confirm or deny the

existence of witchcraft." Finally, Mr. Merle Cave of Paso Robles, California, when asked to comment on the death of his brother, Verne, who choked to death on his own eyeball after a female

drinking partner recklessly placed it in his mouth, observed: "An eye for an eye is one thing, but two for nothing is something else." That says it all!

—RET

CORRESPONDENCE

Hazing Gilder

George Gilder on the right is easily the paranoid equivalent of any quasi-intellectual specimen on the left. That he is a current member of the conservative hagiology and regularly appears in such publications as *The American Spectator* is indicative of the regrettable impotency of the traditional right. His attempt to reconcile capitalism with the ethics of altruism in *Wealth and Poverty* was an excellent demonstration of moral poltroonery typical of conservatives. (Though in fairness perhaps he simply doesn't know that socialists are much better at denying self-interest than are capitalists and his religious beliefs probably make him confused.)

His recent *TAS* article, "The Bioengineering Womb" (May 1986), taken from *Men and Marriage*, revised from *Sexual Suicide*, may have had as many as five sentences that were true. I vaguely remember seeing on "The Tonight Show" several years ago an author of a book about American sexual mores or something assert that the country was going to hell because of rampant oral sex. He had the misfortune to be sitting next to alleged comedian George Carlin, who saw easy meat. The very straitlaced author was ridiculed mercilessly, the audience truly guffawed, and Johnny Carson's polite but incredulous questioning made the scene even more ludicrous and embarrassing. Could that book have been *Sexual Suicide*, and was that poor cretin George Gilder? I think it was. Such minds as this deserve recognition.

—Roderick L. Miller
Victor, New York

Who is George Kinder-Kirche-Kuche Gilder trying to impress? This scourge of the women's movement remains deeply committed to barefootedness and pregnancy; but now he calls for a "real feminist movement," and in what is perhaps a quixotic attempt to woo a few converts away from the unreal one, he proceeds to borrow from some of the most febrile of radical-feminist fantasies. The occasion of these hallucinations is an attack on the U.S. Marine Corps.

"When you want to create a solidaristic group of male killers," writes Gilder, "you kill the woman in them." Right, George, you yank them right out

of touch with the gentle, nurturing androgyne that lurks in all of us. How do you do this? Well, you cause loud men in Smokey-the-Bear hats to subject the feminine principle to a torrent of abuse: "Virtually every sentence, every description, every lesson embodies this sexual duality, and the female anatomy provides a rich field of metaphor for every degradation." Now, the first clause of this sentence is self-evidently inane hyperbole. But I have to agree with George that for drill instructors the female anatomy is a rich source of metaphor; but so is the male anatomy, and that of numerous animals—hell, the whole language is a "rich field" for D.I.'s, many of whom are virtual Joyces of invective. (Some, I might add, show a more minimalist, Beckettian appreciation for the absurdities of life and language, like the drill instructor who kept a maladjusted private in my platoon digging all day in the Parris Island sand, having told the private he could stop as soon as he'd dug half a hole.)

Further, writes Gilder, "Pornographic movies around military centers reek with attacks on women . . ." Pornography available around such "centers" (bases?) is no different from pornography available in most big cities: a very low percentage of it is violent. But Gilder may be buying into the curious hermeneutic method practiced by Andrea Dworkin and other feminist apostles of censorship, who somehow discern expressions of male "violence" even in the wholesome and solitary poses assumed by Miss April.

Gilder claims, "One of the favorite stories told on return to base from liberty is of the violent abuse of a whore." Sure, a certain amount of sexual bragging goes on around a barracks; but from my three years in the Marine Corps I can't recall a single boastfest that featured rape and torture (though perhaps Gilder means "violent" in the highly figurative Dworkinian sense).

The weirdest of Gilder's assertions is that graduates of boot camp "end up . . . gladly and voluntarily making large financial gifts to the instructors." *Huh?* I don't recall handing over my first paycheck to Staff Sergeant Mike-sell as a little thank-you for twelve weeks of physical torment and black humor at my expense. Perhaps Gilder

lavished such a token on his drill instructor. Or could it be that George has about as much experience of military life as he has a chance of leading a new feminist movement?

—Michael Stanford
Charlottesville, Virginia

George Gilder replies:

Hey, you guys, give me a break. Since I went to Parris Island in 1958, when the Marines still made maggots into men and the Drill Instructors were all General Patton clones (only younger), yet to be mushed out by Dr. Spock, and after 12 weeks of beatings at their hands, with relentless rant of punts and cussies, and orders to yell "I am so pissed off I could say 'peachfuzz'" at the top of my lungs as I jogged circles around the marching platoon in the 100-degree heat, I have to admit I became a liberal Republican wimp, in love with Joan Baez, and agape at the splendor of John V. Lindsay, but I got over it. Now I lie around on the couch fantasizing I am James Webb and grouching about the feminization of Marine Corps training.

As to these letters, I have changed a bit since 1958, but I did not become a biologist. I can only say the palette of the bioengineer becomes more potent every year and many surprises—good and bad—can be expected. My speculations in this short chapter were intended not to expound the details of the science (I refer the curious to Dr. Leon Kass), but to contemplate the implications of Margaret Mead's only hope to overcome what Steven Goldberg proved to be "the inevitability of patriarchy." I am not paranoid on these points. I spend most of my time these days writing about technology and regard its prospects as overwhelmingly favorable in nearly every domain. But although I would like to see several clones first made of Tom Bethell, Bill Tucker, and other writers in the last issue of *TAS*, I still believe some cautionary reflections—and perhaps careful ad hoc prohibitions—are in order relating to any technology that might lead in the course of time to the creation, on any single continent, of multiple genetic copies of Bob Tyrrell.

As for Roderick Miller's very intriguing observations, Gee Whiz, he can rest assured I wouldn't even think

about anything so shockingly ickypoo as oral sex. Unless both partners keep their mouths tightly closed, kissing can lead to perilous exchanges of precious bodily fluids and should be banned outside of marriage. As a conservative, I am also too "regrettably impotent" to make "The Continuing Crisis," let alone the Johnny Carson show. Miller must have mistaken me for Truman Capote. It often happens.

As for my moral poltroonery, I do not deny the importance of self-interest; I merely maintain that it is ubiquitous and thus fails to explain anything interesting about the heroic achievements of capitalism, which depend on imaginatively serving others in the marketplace. Selfishness leads to demands for unearned benefits and thus—as by an invisible hand—to socialism, which is the fundamental economic evil in the world. Therefore I do not believe it is either desirable or necessary to begin my celebration of the morality of capitalism by rejecting the Judeo-Christian values that have been upheld by most capitalists in almost every capitalist economy. Although I have the greatest respect for Ayn Rand and other libertarian thinkers who seem to have influenced Miller, I believe they erred seriously in accepting the claims of socialists that they either care about others or help them.

False Niebuhr

Despite Ernest W. Lefever's warning against the sin of selectivity in recounting the life and thought of Reinhold Niebuhr, one must turn the charge back against Lefever in his confident identification of Niebuhr with the neoconservative movement. His review of the new Niebuhr biography by Richard Fox, and the new Niebuhr anthology edited by Robert McAfee Brown (*TAS*, April 1986), is too obviously one-sided in its characterization of Niebuhr's political loyalties and ideas.

According to Lefever, "one must distinguish the essential Niebuhr from the socialist-pacifist Niebuhr of the 1920s and also from the failing and confused Niebuhr of the mid- and late-1960s." If we do so, Lefever claims, Niebuhr's record "adds up to a profile of a thoughtful neoconservative, a

(continued on page 49)

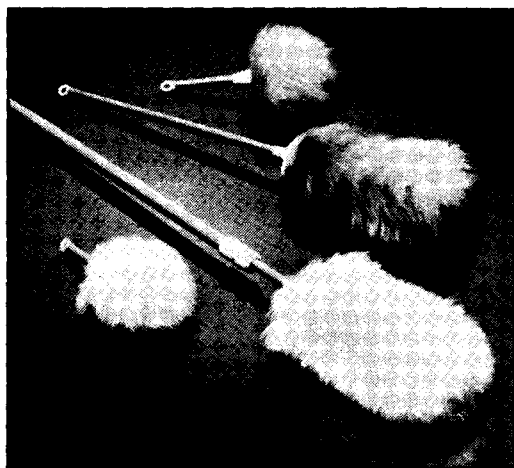
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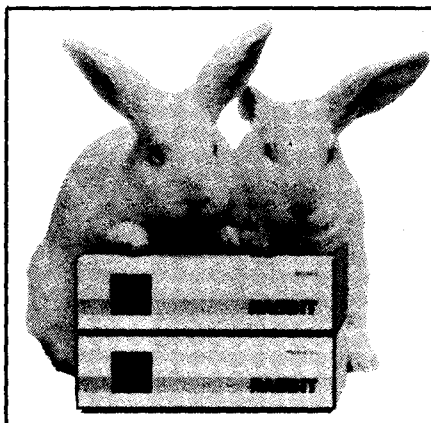


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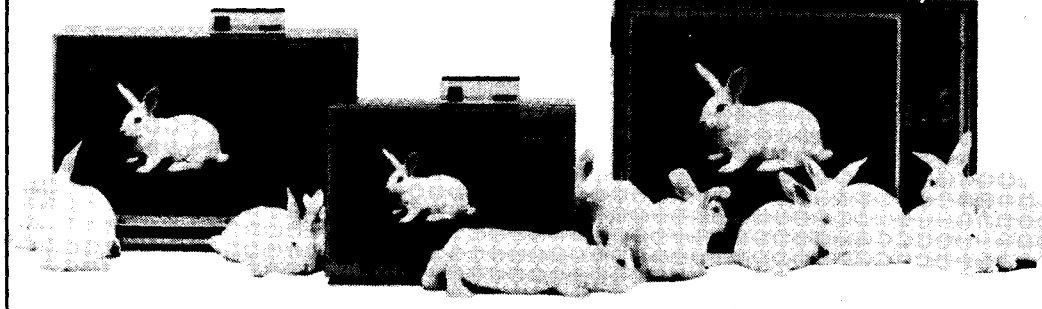


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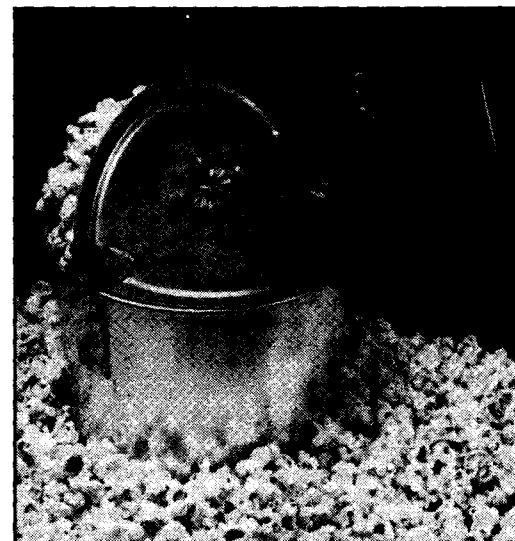
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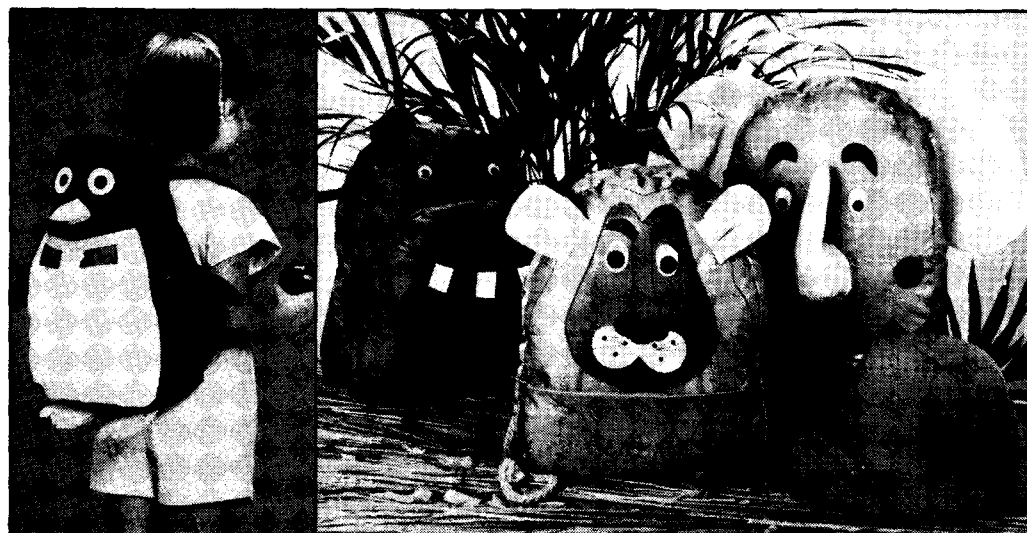
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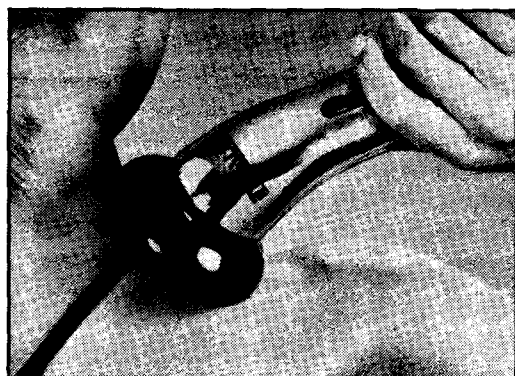
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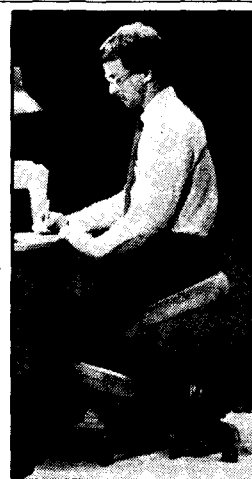
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EDITORIALS



THE GOOD BOOK

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

For all those Americans fashionably aggrieved by the Republic's shortcomings, I believe I have found someone who has suffered even more at the hands and feet of his government. His name is Armando Valladares, and for the twenty-two years prior to his release in 1982 he was repeatedly tortured and brutalized in Cuban prisons. All is revealed in Valladares's recently published memoirs, *Against All Hope*.¹

The beatings and humiliations that he suffered, the temporary paralysis, pellagra, scurvy, and emphysema, would have ended had he agreed to attend political indoctrination courses and to don the blue uniform that Cuba's Communists issue to common criminals. Valladares, however, knew that he had never committed a common crime. All that he had done was inform fellow workers at Havana's Postal Savings Bank of his opposition to Castro's Marxism during the early days of the regime; and soon the

twenty-three-year-old poet was being stripped, battered, and forced through the agonies of Cuban prison camps that Vladimir Bukovsky believes actually go beyond those that he experienced during his dozen or more years in the Soviet Gulag.

Twenty-two years of the kind of sadistic abuse that Valladares suffered has made him very forthright in his contempt for Fidel Castro's regime, and perhaps this is why he is now depicted as "controversial" by such luminaries of the shanty intelligentsia as Alexander Cockburn, who in the *Nation* charges Valladares with having been a policeman before Fidel rescued Cuba from perdition. Now whether the author of *Against All Hope* was a twenty-three-year-old policeman—Cockburn, typically, offers no evidence—or bureaucrat, butcher or baker, is irrelevant. The point is that Armando Valladares has done for Cuba what Solzhenitsyn did for the Soviet Union. He has illuminated the astounding cruelty of totalitarian regimes that torture political opponents day in and day out from a bestial lust apparently unique to totalitarian dictators and the kind of degenerates who are known to us as "serial murderers." Think of it, had Fidel not become

Cuba's head of state he might have one day been arrested for having waylaid little boys and girls, tortured them to death, and left them in shallow graves. That is the kind of sadism Valladares has chronicled.

Now living in Madrid, Valladares is becoming a renowned figure in the growing ranks of civilized minds opposed to the abuse of human rights that characterizes the world's Communist regimes. Notably absent from this movement are the moral hams of America's community of concerned *artistes*. In fact, Americans are almost wholly absent from the list of intellectuals whom Valladares credits for securing his release. Most of those who rallied to his support are European or Latin American. Neither Tom Hayden nor Jane Fonda, Kurt Vonnegut nor E. L. Doctorow is mentioned.

The explanation for their absence I believe is the growing insularity of so many American intellectuals, particularly those of easy celebrity. Lost in their infantile alarums over the sodomy laws of Georgia, the treatment of laboratory rats in medical research, discourtesies shown a Vonnegut novel in some Podunk settlement where no

one would read Vonnegut anyway, the American intelligentsia are increasingly oblivious to the extraordinary cruelty perpetrated in the non-democratic world. And our intelligentsia's insularity grows not only because of their childish absorptions but also because of their curious squeamishness. In their art they can portray the utmost ghastliness, but the brutality of real life makes them squirm. Beamingly they acknowledge Castro but not his prisons and his firing squads. They esteem Yasir Arafat but overlook his terrorists. They write deliciously of murders and sexual perversions, but avert their eyes from the innocent blood congealing on the floor of the Rome airport. For years American intellectuals have been enraptured by the criminal mind, but the reality of suffering victim escapes their prissy consciences.

Excruciating cruelty is the theme and the gravamen of Valladares's book. The suffering continues. Valladares writes: "Today, at this very moment, hundreds of political prisoners are naked, sleeping on the floors of cells. . . . They never see the light of day. . . . They are denied medical care and visits." Cuba's dictator wills it. □

¹*Against All Hope: The Prison Memoirs of Armando Valladares.* Alfred A. Knopf, \$18.95.

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post column syndicated by King Features.



WHY WILL?

Moods change even in the most placid of times, and now as a chorus of weissenheimers fall upon the illustrious person of George F. Will—author, columnist, and TV notable—he must recognize that a mood has changed. Perhaps he does. After all, he once earned a Ph.D., he taught politics at three great universities, and he was an aide to a United States senator. Will has read history, seen it being made, and commented intelligently on it. He must realize that he is now the victim of a change of mood.

Yet possibly he does not. In the *New York Review of Books*, *Village Voice*, the "Doonesbury" comic strip, and other organs of the shanty intelligent-

sia, Will is being rudely depreciated. Even the bourgeois *Wall Street Journal* sneers at his career. As he must recognize, that respectful congeniality once accorded him in the media is evaporating. Does he understand why?

Until recently he was acclaimed a sage by liberals and conservatives alike. Indeed, his place and persona on the national stage were incomparable. As no other commentator in the land, he had acquired The Hush: The Hush of respect from sophisticates, The Hush of respect for his learning and eloquence, The Hush over his moderation and humanity. His was a singular persona interlarded with elements of the austere prof, the ideologue, the *homme*