

The Slothful

by Dabney Stuart

You have seen the whales expire on our beaches:
they faintly heave, and flibber about the blowhole
as if sighing for an ocean without oil.
So a culture might quiver as it vanishes.

We long for nothing but our own inertia.
The sougning often mistaken for a grove
of trees waving is the sound we make when we move.
You should not look forward to our departure.

The famous trough we are supposed to feed from
exists only in your mind. It's been enough
since we began to displace the holograph
of your will with our solid kingdom come.

The Vengeful

We deem it meet and orthodox
to store our hearts in Reynolds wrap,
to hunt the cow, to milk the fox,
to think of anger as a map.

The end of life is commonplace;
we stack our weapons in the hall.
We dress for love as outer space.
Our saint is Simon Wiesenthal.

We sleep awake, we dance The Torque,
Our eyes are serpents under glass.
Our password is the three-tined fork.
The future is what comes to pass.

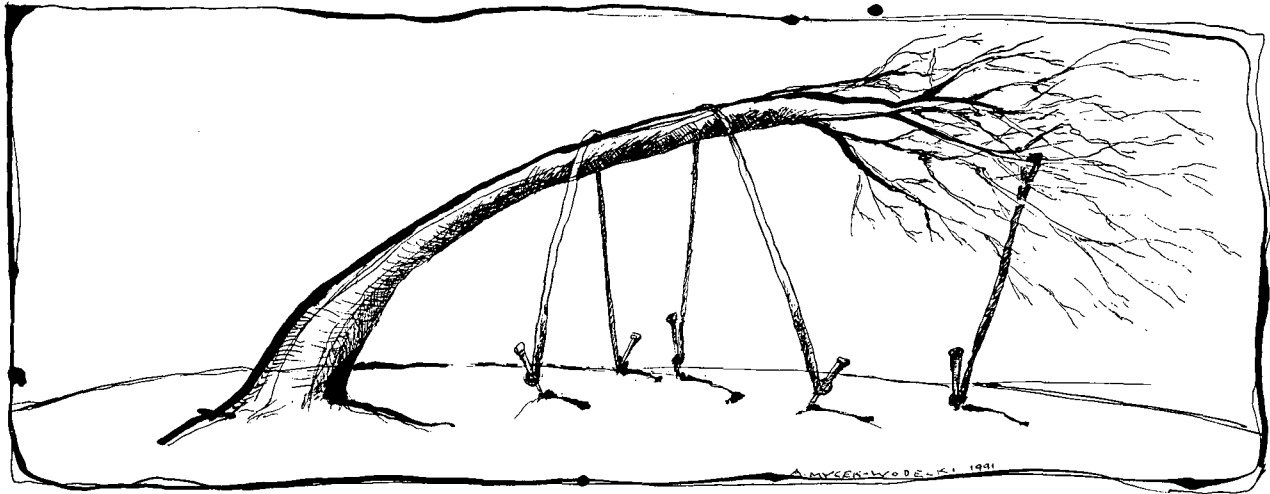
The Decadent

We have been here long enough to learn
there is nothing new under the sun.
We no longer seek even surcease
from boredom, or read Ecclesiastes.

If we feel the faintest insinuation
of desire, as a breeze
hints itself into summer grass,
we imagine what it would be like
to do this, or that, and the glimmer dies.

If regret stirs with its seasoned irk,
or something crawls, or swims, or flies,
we are at peace with such simulation.
We have had it all, and that suffices.

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Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Beautiful Losers

The Failure of American Conservatism

by Samuel Francis

When T.S. Eliot said that there are no lost causes because there are no won causes, he probably was not thinking of American conservatism. Nearly sixty years after the New Deal, the American right is no closer to challenging its fundamental premises and machinery than when Old Rubberlegs first started priming the pump and scheming to take the United States into a war that turned out to be a social and political revolution. American conservatism, in other words, is a failure, and all the think tanks, magazines, direct mail barons, inaugural balls, and campaign buttons cannot disguise or alter that. Virtually every cause to which conservatives have attached themselves for the past three generations has been lost, and the tide of political and cultural battle is not likely to turn anytime soon.

Not only has the American right lost on such fundamental issues as the fusion of state and economy, the size and scope of government, the globalist course of American foreign policy, the transformation of the Constitution into a meaningless document that serves the special interests of whatever faction can grab it for a while, and the replacement of what is generally called "traditional morality" by a dominant ethic of instant gratification, but also the mainstream of those who today are pleased to call themselves conservatives has come to accept at least the premises and often the full-blown agenda of the left. The movement that came to be known in the 1970's as "neoconservatism," largely Northeastern, urban, and academic in its orientation, is now the defining core of the "permissible" right—that is, what a dominant left-liberal cultural and political elite

recognizes and accepts as the right boundary of public discourse.

It remains legally possible (barely) to express sentiments and ideas that are further to the right, but if an elite enjoys cultural hegemony, as the left does, it has no real reason to outlaw its opponents, and indeed encouraging their participation in the debate fosters the illusion of "pluralism" and serves to legitimize the main leftward trend of the debate. Those outside the permissible boundaries of discourse are simply "derationalized" and ignored—as anti-Semites, racists, authoritarians, crackpots, crooks, and other kinds of illicit and irrational fringe elements not in harmonic convergence with the *Zeitgeist* and therefore on the wrong side of history. That is where the *de facto* alliance of left and neoconservative right has succeeded in relegating those such as journalist Patrick J. Buchanan who dissent from their common core of shared premises and who seriously and repeatedly challenge their hegemony.

Neoconservatism today is usually called simply "conservatism," though it is sometimes known under other labels as well: Fred Barnes' "Big Government conservatism"; HUD Secretary Jack Kemp's "progressive conservatism"; Representative Newt Gingrich's "opportunity conservatism"; Paul Weyrich's "cultural conservatism"; or, most recently, "The New Paradigm," in the phrase coined by White House aide James Pinkerton. Despite the variations among these formulas, all of them envision a far larger and more active central state than the "Old Republicanism" embraced by most conservatives prior to the 1970's, a state that makes it its business to envision a particular arrangement of institutions and beliefs and to design governmental machinery to create them. In the case of "neoconservatism," the principal goal is

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