

not really to act on private Americans' charitable concern for other human beings, they will bring it to a halt.

Republicans have long dominated presidential elections, but now that the Democrats have captured Washington, there is bound to be some reexamination of this notion. Indeed the current in-fighting seems to suggest that the scapegoat will be the true conservative wing of the party, especially the religious right, and that there will be a move toward the "center." The so-called moderates will attempt, as they did at the 1992 Republican Convention, to get rid of the anti-abortion plank of the platform. If they succeed, it will mean that the Republican Party will have been reduced for the foreseeable future to a minority party.

What the moderates seem to have forgotten is that *Roe v. Wade* brought fundamentalist and evangelical Christians into the political process, often for the first time. Ronald Reagan's support of them on the abortion issue and on many others made them one of the Republican Party's strongest blocs of support. It is clear that Bush was elected because he was seen, albeit illegitimately, as a successor to Reagan's views. Pat Robertson recently said that 50 percent of born-again Christians eligible to vote went for Clinton. Of course, the economy was an issue, but it was not just that. At the Baptist Temple it was clear that these people, who in all likelihood voted for Reagan, were completely alienated from the Republican Party. Indeed, in my conversations before the election I met with no one who was a strong supporter of Bush, only people who did not want to vote for Clinton or Perot. The reason for this lack of support was that George Bush never understood "the vision thing." The Scriptures say that for want of a vision the people will perish. It

is clear that a political party will perish, too.

After we had all assembled outside, candidate Gritz, along with several ministers and even more obscure presidential candidates, set fire to the U.N. flag. While it was burning, we all sang "God Save America" and offered up a prayer for our nation. I hope that what symbolically went up in smoke that day was not the grand vision of the failed Reagan Revolution, perhaps the last attempt to return this country to a set of principles that are recognizably American.

William L. Isley, Jr., writes from Carmel.

Letter From Philadelphia

by James L. Sauer

Women's History Month



April is the cruelest month, according to Mr. Eliot. But I believe March is crueller. For March is Women's History Month, and from out of every crevice and dark hole, like Orcs scurrying from J.R.R. Tolkien's Minas Morgul, come she-things swinging their war-axes, craving blood and ideological battle. Behold, the wrath of Mordor.

Feminism is no longer an option; in this, the Fourth Age of Middle Earth, it is a mandatory torture. It is in our textbooks, in our libraries, in our media, in our churches, in our businesses. We all

must suffer through it. And now, unfortunately, we must pass through a secular Feast of the Feminist Obsession on a yearly basis. We must intone our solidarity; worry about the statistical anomaly of the 70 cents each woman makes to each man's dollar; and strike our breasts (not theirs) and repent of the sins of patriarchy and male oppression.

Ladies' History Month is important to the gals. Somehow, they have developed this incredible inferiority complex and think recounting the exploits of various females of the species for one month will even things up against the patriarchal prigs who have dominated human history. Men, after all, have had this incredible habit of working, inventing, writing, battling, composing, building, destroying, and otherwise shaping the facades of society from time immemorial.

Women, on the other hand, have traditionally been responsible only for bringing human beings into existence and nurturing all that is good at the family hearth, not important things like having careers as sewage treatment specialists. But the Ma and Pa Cleaver era is over, and new gods have conquered old. Yaweh must move over for the goddess within, while New Order Womyn make their covenant with death, as Isaiah says: "You burn with lust among the oaks . . . and you sacrifice your children in the ravines . . . you uncovered your bed, you climbed into it and opened it wide . . . you descended to the grave itself."

The liberal churches long ago gave in to the demand for a Gender Inclusive Divinity. They pray to the Ground of Being and worship the Sacred It. This is a malady of modernism that only recently has affected the more conservative branches of Christendom: Catholicism and Evangelicalism. Yet even as we

LIBERAL ARTS

A LIBERAL EDUCATION

Faculty and officials at the University of Iowa have protested a new requirement that they warn students before showing sexually graphic material in class, reported the *New York Times* last December. The Iowa Board of Regents had imposed the requirement after a landmark gay film, "Taxi to the Bathroom," shown in a September 1991 German class led to complaints by students, parents, alumni, and legislators.

When a teaching assistant in the art department subsequently showed a local artist's eight-minute video depicting men engaging in oral sex, the Regents responded by ordering the University of Iowa, Iowa State University, and the University of Northern Iowa to establish policies to protect students. While the Regents' president, Marvin Berenstein, called the University of Iowa policy nothing more than a courtesy to students, the teaching assistant attributed it to "an atmosphere of homophobia."

write, the Fell Darkness is Rising: Black Riders, like circuit preachers from the Pit, straddling side-saddle, preach the New Gospel of Unisex Deity. A Catholic bishop in the Northeast announces a new gender-inclusive liturgy, while Evangelical organizations dedicated to removing the last remnants of male headship in church and family gain ground. Human egalitarianism has replaced the *summum bonum* of the Gloria Dei, and religious colleges press on toward the New Order by adopting inclusive language guidelines. Says one: "For many persons, both male and female, Jesus' address of God as 'my/our Father' has a meaning which transcends the otherwise limiting male image. For others, the designation of God as 'Father' has such distinct masculine dimensions that the more inclusive designation of God as 'parent' expresses their understanding of God's care more appropriately." Meanwhile, one of the lesbians in residence at our institution passes out a local homosexual newsrag, informing us of AIDS and lesbian safe-sex practices. Where feminism is, can sodomy be far behind?

One local art display commemorating Women's History Month last year consisted of the following "works of art": "Transference"—two man-shaped targets set behind broken windowpanes; "Magic Isn't Always an Illusion," depicting a brightly colored collection of perversely ornamented children's toys—blocks with nails through them, a little doll chopped up and put in a metal box; "Addicted to Pain" continues the broken window and chopped-up doll motif; "It's all in her head II" contains a dim shadow-figure impaling a woman—all overlaid with chains, wire mesh, and a little figurine hanging by the neck. Delightful, isn't it? But there's more. "I Can't Wake Up" displays a woman being crushed under some strange device of torture—yellow, black, and blood-red images are overlaid with torn lace. Nails are driven into the creature's heart while Nazgûl-like Shades lurk behind. In "Has Anyone Seen This Child" is a hint of incest, a montage that provokes despair as one sees the repeated picture and note of a child saying: "I am a good little girl worthy of love. I am not responsible for the bad things that happened. I am telling the truth." Yes, it is powerful feminist art, but it is also sick. Broken-brained. It's all in her head and she can't wake up. It is womanhood turned into itself; a cancer of the uterus, imaginative

hysteria, a snake pit.

Compared to this, Tolkien's utterly masculine literary dreams seem almost delicate and feminine: his touching displays of friendship, loyalty; of Sam Gamgee holding Frodo Baggins' hand (nothing hobbit-erotic here); of domestic life and self-sacrifice, of duty and Elvish beauty. Nor does the modern woman-mind reflect those three Tolkien images of the feminine: Galadriel, Elven queen, awesome incarnation of otherworldliness; Eowyn of Rohan, Rider of the Mark, a brave Joan of Arc figure who slays the King of the Ringwraiths but is herself conquered by the love of Faramir, a Warrior; the Entwives, creatures who love the domestic. "For the Entwives desired order, and plenty, and peace (by which they meant that things should remain where they had set them). So the Entwives made gardens to live in. But [the] Ents went on wandering."

Modern feminism expresses something more tangibly sad: the almost physical emanation of the female mind ripped apart by a dark vision. Orc thinking. Anger. Hatred. Loathing of Nature. Necromancy. Revulsion at natural order. Lesbianism. Disgust at the maternal. Rape. Madness. Night. Dismembered babies. Emptiness. As Ben Browne points out in *Kiss of Eve—Kiss of Death*, "The affinity of the feminist spirit for death . . . is almost uncanny. . . . Feminism, as intoned and acted out in the culture of the Western World, is the bearer of a hostile spirit inherently inimical to the spirit of life."

Feminists are not happy people. But happiness is possible, as Tolkien has shown, in romance. Only the fairy-tale world can reconstruct mental order and imaginative peace. In this sterile modern world, like a dream sent from the Dark Lord, men and women are trapped in Two Towers, separated from each other and in need of a holy, and terrible, adventure called family life. Feminism is a spell, a bane, a curse. Women are like queens who have come under its poison sway. Men need to be heroes and fight back, to lead, to woo. Dragons die when knights appear. The War of the Sexes awaits the return of the King. The battle of the marriage bed awaits the Fellowship of the Ring.

James L. Sauer is a college library director in the Philadelphia area. He celebrates a Fellowship of the Ring with his Entwife Paula and their six Entings.

The Last Gold Coin of the Romanovs

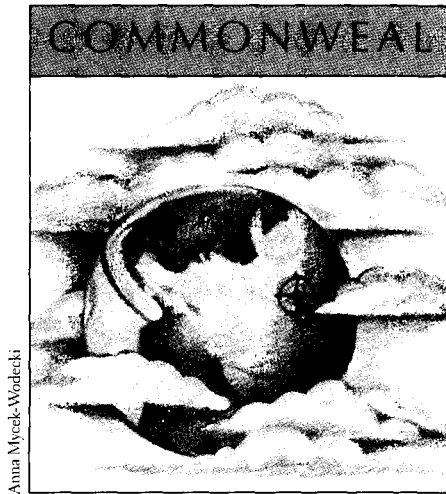


The 1897-1911
"Czar Nicholas II" Gold
5 Roubles of Imperial Russia

Only \$145

As the last gold coin of the Romanov dynasty, which ruled the Russian Empire for over 300 years, this 1897-1911 "Nicholas II" gold 5 Roubles is a real collectors item. The portrait of the ill-fated Czar and the double-headed eagle of the royal crest display superb minting artistry. After the 1917 Revolution, countless millions were destroyed in melts — today the survivors are elegant remnants of Imperial Russia. Each hand-selected coin contains 4.3 grams of .900 fine gold and is guaranteed to grade extra fine to almost uncirculated. You might expect to pay more for a gold classic in such excellent quality, but while supplies last you may order up to ten coins at the following prices: 1 coin, \$145 (Order #10846). 3 coins, \$395 (save \$10). 5 coins, \$650 (save \$30). 10 coins, \$1,275 (save \$100). **To order by credit card, call toll-free 1-800-451-4463 at any time.** Or send a check or money order to: International Coins & Currency, Inc., 11 E. State St., Box 218, Dept. 2871, Montpelier, VT 05601. Add \$2 for postage. Certificate of authenticity included. **Satisfaction guaranteed:** you may return your order within 30 days of receipt for a prompt no-questions-asked refund.

Serving collectors for 19 years 2947



The Third Side in the Culture War

by Frederick Turner

I want to talk to people who have been shaken out of themselves by art, who have heard a piece of Mozart's *Magic Flute* reach out and grab them by the heart, who have seen the grave look on Flora's face as she steps out of Botticelli's *Primavera* the way the gods always do, lit by a light too powerful to be quite shown, to those who have heard a line of Shakespeare so that it rang again and again in their ears—"Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul / Of the wide world dreaming on things to come."

All great art leads beyond anything we have ever known, and this is as true now as it has ever been. It is culture communing with itself and generating a new spring, just like the flowers of Botticelli's painting pouring out of the mouth of April; it's the prophetic soul of the wide world. It's like great religious rituals, or like the awful majesty of the state, but in a playful, conditional, subjunctive mood; it's not authoritarian but infinitely vulnerable; all you have to do is to stop listening or watching or reading and it goes away, not like the authorities of the church or the state, who will come and clamp your head and stick matchsticks between your eyelids to make sure

you are properly reeducated.

The heroic modernists—Picasso, Joyce, Stravinsky—all knew this; but their successors today—and alas, those who oppose them, too—have forgotten. I want to talk about the two sides in the art wars and propose a third side, which isn't a side at all but the real opening to the future. Real art cannot be politically correct, whether the correction comes from the right or the left. Art is the continuing revelation of the divine plan, but it is a divine plan that is making it up as it goes along, the divine plan of a live, not a dead, god; and it is a revelation that dribbles out in the uncertain fits and starts of human inspiration.

The disgusting Whitney show recently in New York is disgusting not because it is obscene but because it is boring; it is immoral not because it shows things normally hidden—everybody already knows what genitals look like—but because it is an expression of a ruthless linear authority as cruel, stupid, and repressive as any totalitarian government censor. Botticelli painted naked ladies and gents, and Shakespeare has his Cornwall gouge out the eyes of Gloucester on stage and step on them, and Sophocles makes a tragic hero of a man who goes to bed with his mother; these scenes are not obscene, because they are held within a greater conception of the meaning of human life. Modernism has lost its noble and idealistic vision of that meaning; and postmodernism makes a virtue of not having such a conception at all, which is very convenient for the tribe of venal and unintellectual mediocrities who now infest the arts and for whom a really artistic view of the world would be so cognitively dissonant, so tragic, and so full of feeling that it would destroy their world. In other words, I attack the postmodern arts scene not for its excess of intellectuality, but for its wretched failure of intellect; I blame it not for being shocking, but for not being shocking enough.

We see now a postmodernist artistic establishment that is really at heart a village atheist's tract. It is a naive rejection of morality as authoritarian that fails to reckon with the brutal authority of all the human addictions, to power, to sex, to our various civilized drugs, to the seductions of victimhood and self-excuse,

to the violence and automatism and bestial appetite of the human body that go along with its divine sensitivity and power and capacity for joy. It is a credulous and unthinking commitment to the theory of the social construction of reality, that is, that human beings, and the world itself, are simply artifacts of the texts that include them, texts written by dead white European males—and that the solution to the problem is simply to replace those texts with texts written by alive colored Third World females or gays—both types of texts being underwritten by the coercive power of the state. It is an ignorant rejection of scientific truth and of the objective pursuit of knowledge through inquiry and experiment. It is a throwing aside of all the ancient human crafts and genres of art, those marvelous techniques of melody and drawing and meter and storytelling that are the same all over the world from one culture to another, on the given grounds that they are Western or patriarchal impositions—when really it is because the new so-called artists are too lazy and untalented and incurious and justifiably insecure to learn them. It is the expression of a social theory—that of Stalin, to be precise—that has been as thoroughly discredited by historical atrocity as the ideas of Hitler and that the rest of the world has rejected against great odds. It is the expression of a physical theory of the universe as linear, deterministic, running down into greater and greater disorder, in which value cannot be created but only appropriated from others and at best shared out by the enlightened brahmins of bureaucratic government.

But we must pay attention to how we got to this place. The ideas of Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, and Wittgenstein, which have been recycled endlessly by their epigones Foucault, Derrida, and Lacan and then by still less original artistic followers of the followers, were originally grand and bold intellectual achievements. Even if they were wrong in their answers, they asked marvelous questions. What is the relationship between economic value and other kinds of value, like truth, beauty, goodness? How should one choose between different coherent moral systems, and is there a warrant for living a moral life without being