

buried beside him. One must have faith, but haunting me is the endless journey, faster than the speed of light, of the soul into infinity.

(There is still much speculation about whether Alan Clark converted to Catholicism just before he died; he was an unexpectedly religious man, who often mentions God in the *Diaries*.)

His book ends on a high note, with Clark writing of his October 1982 visit to the Falklands, which he describes as “the most memorable and invigorating experience of my entire Parliamentary career.” Such moments of unadulterated delight were all too rare in a career full of cares (usually self-inflicted), conspiracies (usually unsuccessful), and compromise (usual). Yet, when he was out of Parliament between 1995 and 1997, all he could think about was how to get back in. By then, he had long since given up any idea of *doing* anything; he just wanted one more go at playing the “game.”

Derek Turner is the editor of *Right Now!*, published in London.

## Frankly, My Dear . . .

by J.O. Tate

**The Wind Done Gone**  
by Alice Randall  
New York: Houghton Mifflin;  
208 pp., \$22.00

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The publication of *Gone With the Wind* in 1936 was a major event in publishing—if not literary—history, compounded by the overblown movie of 1939 and by worldwide sales that continue to this day. Margaret Mitchell was overwhelmed by the reaction, which was complex and multifold. The novel was read by people on both sides in the Spanish Civil War, and Mitchell received all sorts of letters showing she had struck a nerve. One German thought that she had intuited his experience of World War I and the economic slump that followed, and a French town wanted to make her a citizen. The resistance to *Gone With the Wind* seems to have come mostly from the Nazi Party, the Communist Party, and American liberals—a sug-

gestive convergence. Faulkner’s *Absalom, Absalom!*, perhaps the greatest novel ever written by an American, was passed over for the Pulitzer Prize, swamped by the massive phenomenon of GWTW. Dissenters *did* object to the novel on racial and historical grounds: the stereotyping of blacks and the “Southern” rendering of Reconstruction.

The whole matter is of considerable interest, embracing as it does the problematics of writing and representation as well as controversial episodes in American history; still, we must admit that it is limited by the passing of the years. There comes a point when Scarlett O’Hara (or “Scarla O’Horror,” as she is referred to in John Kennedy Toole’s *A Confederacy of Dunces*) seems as quaint as Becky Sharp, on whom she was modeled. Been there, done that—though I must concede that I have met four women who were, or are, obsessed with Scarlett O’Hara. Three of them thought she was a great “female role model,” which shows some of the depth of the book’s insidious perversity. The poison in the heart of Scarlett O’Hara remains a challenge for some, giving us insight into the obsessive contamination inherent in this massive narrative about obsession.

Cashing in on GWTW is big business, that’s for sure. Acting in the spirit of Scarlett O’Hara—if not of Margaret Mitchell—the Mitchell estate authorized the inert *Scarlett* by Alexandra Ripley in 1991 and has since had trouble arranging a sequel to that sequel. This year, Mitchell’s heirs went to court to block the publication of Alice Randall’s *The Wind Done Gone* on the grounds that it was an invasion of copyright; they lost when the judge upheld the publishers’ claim that the book is a parody—“The Unauthorized Parody,” as the dust jacket blares. That may be slick lawyering, but *The Wind Done Gone* is no parody. It is rather a rip-off and a revision, and a feeble and mechanical one at that.

Now, there’s nothing wrong with a parody, if indeed *The Wind Done Gone* were one. And the tradition of revision is

indeed the “inadvertent epic” that Leslie Fiedler has brilliantly claimed to be the core of the American tradition of sado-masochistic, racially inflamed melodrama, from *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* to *The Clansman* to GWTW to *Roots*. Though there was much of mawkishness, there was no parodistic sense in that progression—quite the opposite, since a sense of humor would have ruined all the hokey solemnity and seriousness. Revision requires strength, imagination, and conviction, none of which are to be found in *The Wind Done Gone*.

Alice Randall’s little squib is fatally dependent on the monumental model that it affects to invert. The bookette is the diary of Cynara, the mulatto half-sister of Scarlett (“Other”), by Mr. O’Hara out of Mammy. Cynara is the mistress of “R” (guess who!), the Dreamy Gentleman (guess again) is gay, and Cynara goes with a black senator to Washington. The diary form, obviously adopted to avoid the work of creating a narrative, is disastrous to the novel; and though this book can be downed in one sitting, there is no reason to do so, the revisionary work having been done so many times—and better—by authors black and white. Miss Randall was laboring not only in the shadow of Faulkner but of Robert Penn Warren (*Band of Angels*), not to mention Margaret Walker Alexander (*Jubilee*), Frank Yerby, and so on. And the recent film *Adanggaman* by Roger Gnoan M’Bala, portraying blacks enslaved by blacks in 17th-century Africa, is a powerful and provocative treatment of a subject that has been dealt with all too gingerly.

It makes sense that our history should be reinterpreted fictionally. But if GWTW is “offensive,” then revision of that offense will require more than Alice Randall has given. If *Gone With the Wind* is a still a “problem,” our nation must be in better shape than I had dared to hope.

J.O. Tate is a professor of English at Dowling College on Long Island.

## MOVING?

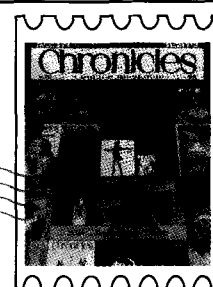
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by Samuel Francis

### Enemies Within and Above

Within a few hours of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon last September, it had become commonplace for even high-ranking government officials and elected leaders to say publicly that Americans would just have to get used to fewer constitutional liberties and personal freedoms than they have traditionally enjoyed. Of course, that was hardly news, though it may have been the first time such leaders actually admitted that our freedoms are dwindling. Americans have been losing their liberties for several generations now and, for the most part, seem entirely content to do so. By the end of the week of September 11, some callers to radio talk shows were saying, quite literally, that they were willing to give up “all our constitutional rights” if only the government could keep them safe from terrorists.

The government seemed ready to oblige. Plans to expand wiretapping and surveillance powers were perhaps understandable, and bans on carrying scissors and razor blades on domestic air flights were not infringements of constitutional rights in any case, but some proposals went well beyond reasonable security measures. A week after the attacks, the *Washington Times* carried a front-page but none-too-accurate story headlined, “Wartime presidential powers supersede liberties,” which argued that the President’s declaration of a national emergency gave him authority to “impose censorship and martial law.” It also misquoted the U.S. Constitution and garbled American history on the suspension of *habeas corpus*. “In ‘cases of rebellion or invasion [when] the public safety may require it,’ the Constitution permits a president to suspend the right of *habeas corpus*—as Lincoln did during the Civil War,” the story reported.

In fact, the Constitution (in Article I, section 9) does permit the suspension of *habeas corpus*, but says nothing about permitting the president to do so. The suspension power occurs in the article that deals with the legislative branch, and the whole point about Lincoln’s suspension of *habeas corpus* is that Chief Justice Roger Taney held in a famous ruling (*ex parte Merryman*) that only the Congress,

not the president, had the power to suspend it. Taney cited precedents from both previous American presidents and jurists as well as Blackstone and the example of British monarchs. Nevertheless, Congress, under Radical Republican control, upheld Lincoln, who proceeded to lock up pretty much anyone he wanted as long as he wanted. As late as 1946, however, the Court overruled a presidential suspension of *habeas corpus* in Hawaii that lacked statutory authority.

Regardless of what emergency powers the president really has, the seeming eagerness with which Americans of all ranks and degrees were willing to surrender their freedoms was alarming enough for some civil libertarians to start squeaking in protest. The zeal to smother freedom also contrasted strongly with the silence about the massive immigration into the United States that made the terrorist attacks possible. In the week after the attacks, the FBI nabbed some 75 foreign nationals, mainly on immigration violations, who were suspected of having something to do with the massacres. The terrorist hijackers themselves—the “cowards” as various public leaders kept calling them (this from a nation that routinely drops bombs from 30,000 feet and pushes buttons on guided missiles hundreds of miles away)—were all foreigners who had entered the country more or less legally and had managed to function quite normally within the Arabic-Muslim subculture that has emerged in the United States as a result of immigration. Yet at no time did public leaders—who did not hesitate to inform us that the Constitution was essentially expendable—suggest that immigration should be restricted or that some immigrants and aliens already here should be kicked out.

Indeed, the ruling class not only never even mentioned immigration and its consequences as possible threats to national security, but it persistently insinuated that, for all the dangers of foreign terrorism, the threats of “racism” and intolerance were even more dangerous. The morning after the attacks, America Online posted a greeting that instructed its users to guard themselves against “intolerance” and celebrate diversity, and the graphic showed a young black man reading smilingly from a large book to

several young white people, male and female. (Only whites harbor “racism,” you know, and only blacks are able to cure them of it.) Whatever the dangers of global terrorism, the real enemies remained “racism” and the white people who practice it. In the next few days, news stories about “hate crimes” against Arab-Americans, Muslims, and even Sikhs competed with stories about the attacks themselves and their consequences. Both the president and the attorney general went out of their way to denounce such crimes and warn against any displays of intolerance against Arabs and Muslims, and President Bush even traipsed out to a local mosque, where he unbosomed various banalities about tolerance and stupidly remarked, of a religion that boasts of its warriors and its devotion to *jihad*, “Islam is peace.”

Of course, attacks on Arabs and Muslims were as irrational and ugly as they were illegal, but, like much of the overreaction involving intensified security measures, the overindulgence in the rhetoric of tolerance may point to purposes other than controlling mass hysteria against aliens. What Americans were essentially being told by their leaders and the ruling class in general was that the American public identity was no longer defined by the Constitution or the liberties it protects but by immigration itself and the kind of country that refuses to restrict it. We can get along without the Constitution if we have to, but we cannot halt or restrict immigration without ceasing to be the country we are and want to be, the kind of country (the ruling class likes to pretend) that we always have been. As Angela Kelley, deputy director of the National Immigration Forum, remarked (in a statement that confirmed her genius for regurgitating clichés):

We’re a nation of immigrants. You couldn’t try to solve the problem by attacking all immigrants without really attacking America at its core, and then you’re giving the terrorists what they want.

Immigration and our willingness to accept it—not the Constitution and certainly not the historic identity of the nation—is now the “core” of America.