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# CURRENT WISDOM

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## Cat Lovers Against the Bomb

What happens when one stops reading newspapers and changing the kitty litter:

CAT LOVERS AGAINST THE BOMB is an informal network of cat-loving peace activists and their companions. A core group first met in Lincoln, Nebraska, in November 1982, inspired by a Cat Lovers Against the Bomb button from England. Since that time, the group has become widely scattered. Anyone who owns a CLAB calendar can be considered as part of the Cat Lovers Against the Bomb network. The creation of the 1984 Cat Lovers Against the Bomb wall calendar was a project the group initiated to further the work of Nebraskans for Peace. The calendar has continued to be published, with the help of New Society Publishers, and CLAB's share of the profits is still donated to Nebraskans for Peace. A Cat Lovers Against the Bomb mug is now available for cat lovers. For information, contact Nebraskans for Peace.

[Calendar 1990]

## New York Times

Proof that a common thief can be an instrument of simple justice or that time wounds all heels, in this case Professor Doktor Slavin:

It was at noon on Sunday, Aug. 5, that Dr. Slavin parked his car near Park Avenue and 54th Street so that he could view the exhibition of "Matisse in Morocco" at the Museum of Modern Art.

The exhibit, he said, "relates to the whole question of European attitudes towards North Africans," and that question was central to the book and the articles Dr. Slavin had nearly finished writing about the Rif War in Morocco—an uprising against Spanish colonial rule in the 1920s.

"I went to put the catalogue in the trunk and as soon as I opened it, I knew," Dr. Slavin said. Gone were a multitude of lecture notes, an article he said he was about to send to a journal "that had been through eight or nine drafts," and had hundreds of pages of his book, all stored on 3½-inch floppy disks. Gone too was the computer's hard disk drive.

"I was hit with a sense of dread," Dr. Slavin said. . . . "The main thing that I feel is that society has been transferring income from the poor to the rich for a long time, and with a vengeance for the last decade," he said, "and this is in some way revenge."

"I've got to face that this is just stuff. I'm still here. My brain and my creativity are still here. But there are people who have been cast away by the rest of us. I really feel they are simply playing by the rules of the game, rules they didn't make."

Is he being too magnanimous?

[August 22, 1990]

## Vanity Fair

John Cardinal O'Connor as rendered by the irenic and enlightened Leslie Bennetts:

O'Connor is not only a fanatic, in the sense that any religious zealot unquestioningly committed to a rigid set of beliefs is a fanatic; he is the most effective and therefore the most dangerous kind of fanatic—warm, personable, humorous, eminently reasonable in conversation, and extremely skillful at manipulating both ecclesiastical and secular power structures and the media that interpret them for the masses. Like all zealots, he is so obsessed with his chosen ideology that he refuses to deal with the world as it really is, apparently believing that if he holds his ground it will be magically transmogrified into the world as he wishes it could be. Those convinced that God is on their side and everyone else had better get with the program are always dangerous. . . .

[August 1990]

## Kansas City Star

Another feminist prodigy amok in a philosophical orgasm:

As a firm advocate of sexual freedom and equality, I am outraged at the response and lack of response from equal rights advocates concerning the Iraqi release of hostages in the Mideast crisis. Having stood up to male chauvinism the majority of my life, I find it disgusting that the American women hostages would allow Mr. Hussein to equate them with children and force them to leave his country on the same boat, apparently unworthy of being considered valuable hostages.

I am further appalled at my so-called sisters for not standing up for equality and demanding they be held side by side with American males as hostage bait.

This ignorant flight for self-preservation has set back the women's movement at least 50 years, and has undermined our credibility in the eyes of our sisters in oppressed Third World countries like Iraq.

—Becky Ekiss  
Gladstone, MO

[September 4, 1990]

## New Yorker

Old Maids of America, unite, and sell that goat cheese:

On a recent Wednesday morning, the feminist goat-cheese maker Anne Topham left her farm, in Ridgeway, Wisconsin, and, bringing with her a little cooler that contained samples of her three varieties of wholesome, bright, fresh chèvre—the boulot, the chèvre provençal in olive oil, and the pepper chèvre—came to Manhattan to enter her cheeses in the highly competitive ripened- and unripened-goat's milk divisions of the American Cheese Society's annual judging. . . . "There's a natural connection between goat cheese and the women's movement," Topham says.

[August 6, 1990]

## New York Times Book Review

Whilst reviewing Ms. Susan Rubin Suleiman's latest tome, Professor Perry Meisel deposits still more evidence that as long as the American system of higher education is in place there is no reason for maintaining a system of state insane asylums:

It is something of a commonplace to observe that the conjunction of three trends of thought over the last two decades—feminism, psychoanalysis, and deconstruction—has produced a powerful style of American academic criticism that cannot be ignored. . . .

What Ms. Suleiman is saying at any given time, however, is hard to summarize; her prose reflects the kind of fluid feminist poetics for which she argues thematically. Feminist criticism, it appears, like feminist fiction, must be a kind of writing that refuses the straightforwardness of male writing, including its armory of values such as clarity, concision, and pointedness, all of which can be interpreted as masquerades for the male lust for power, replicating the structure of male sexual pleasure.

[August 5, 1990]

## Nation

The peaceful sough of an editorial mind blissfully remote from reality and a sense of shame:

New York is a city about money and death, the two things that America has mastered in this century.

[October 1, 1990]

## New Republic

The theory of historical inevitability taken to extremes, thence—understandably—to the bartender:

There are quite a few young revolutionaries around Washington these days. To a child of the '60s like myself, they look counter-cultural enough, but of course there's a twist. They are not American but Eastern European. Talking with one scruffy Czech dissident at a party, I was overcome by the spirit of ex-student solidarity and mentioned that I'd marched in protests against the Vietnam War. "I think you should have won that war," he said in halting English. I wasn't quite ready for this, and mumbled something about how, well, it was complicated, you had to have been here. "Yes, but Communists are bad. And they are very hard to get rid of." I excused myself to get a stiff drink.

What I wish I had told my Czech friend is this: communism's collapse makes America's involvement in the Vietnam War look more foolish, not less. That's because communism will eventually collapse in Vietnam too.

[September 10 & 17, 1990]

## Nation

In case you thought that everyone in the Republic was acting adult when faced by the rapacity of Generalissimo Saddam Hussein:

The uses of President Bush's uncontrolled military buildup in the Persian Gulf were chillingly manifest in his pep talk to a joint session of Congress. He arrived wearing his popularity like a cowl. Sounding much like a boarding-school dean addressing students on their return from summer vacation, Bush giggled and grimaced, and warned his charges of the consequences of disobedience. House majority leader Richard Gephardt then demonstrated what passes for "bipartisanship" in foreign policy these days—surrender to the lies and deceptions of conspicuous imperial intervention.

[October 1, 1990]

## Mother Jones

The scientific mind as it exists among readers of an illustrious journal of the New Age:

## Gifts

Penis poster (23" x 35") depicts 12 animal penises (man to whale). Scientific novelty. Send \$10 postpaid to: Poster G, PO Box 673, Bloomington, IN 47402.

[August 1990]

## New York Times

Fighting words from *Times* columnist Anna Quindlen, another of America's two-fisted viragos:

Barbara Ferraro and Patricia Hussey are no longer nuns. They did not leave the convent as so many others did, finding fulfillment within the smaller circle of marriage and motherhood. These two spent years finding reasons to stay: to serve the poor, to fight for social justice. They resigned from Sisters of Notre Dame in 1988, four years after a full-page advertisement appeared in the *New York Times* under this headline:

A DIVERSITY OF OPINIONS REGARDING ABORTION EXISTS AMONG COMMITTED CATHOLICS.

Ninety-seven people signed it.

Barbara Ferraro and Patricia Hussey were two of them.

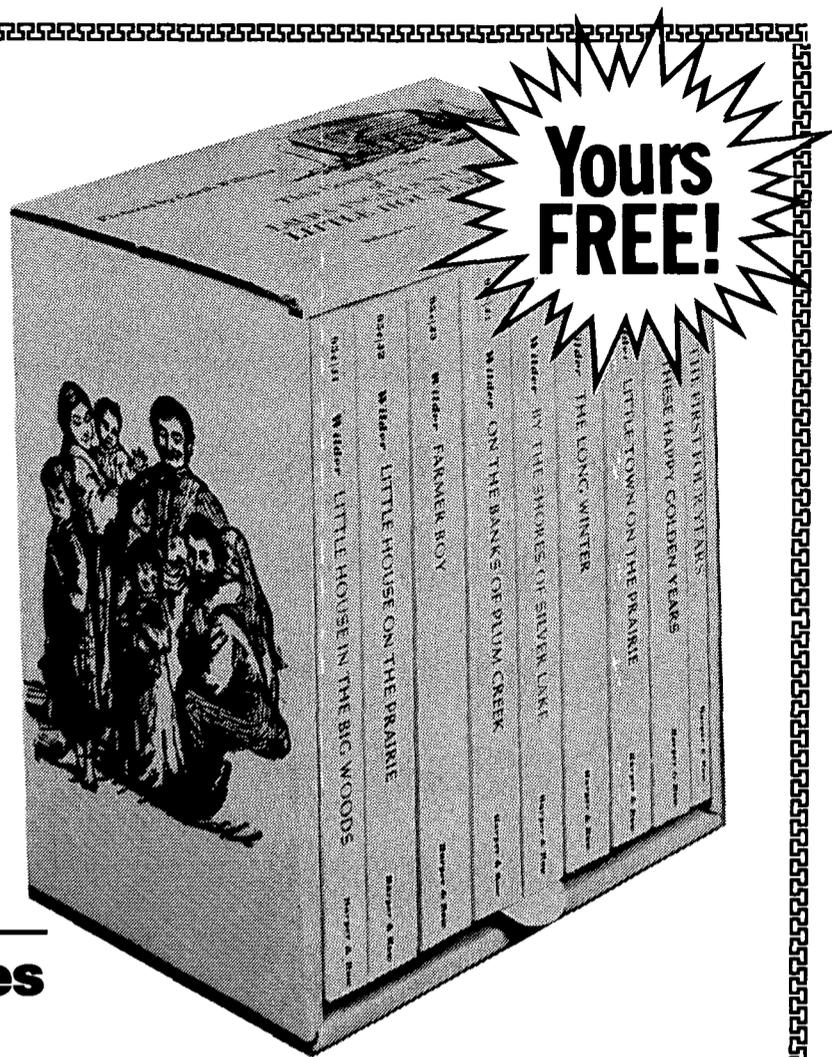
They have written a book about what happened after that day, and what their lives were like before it. It is called *No Turning Back*, and it is sure to be seen as an attack on the church. . . . "The Vatican's version of Catholicism is a culture of oppression," they write, "a church that is only about itself." Those are harsh words. These are harsh times. And faced with harsh laws of the church and of state, women like these will continue to speak, no matter what the consequences.

Barbara Ferraro and Patricia Hussey shouldn't have been nuns in the first place. They should have been priests.

[September 16, 1990]

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