

Old What's-His-Name

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

This month I vow not to write one word of disparagement against the man whom Paula Corbin Jones has accused of what we moderns call "sexual harassment." Up until the recent past this alleged transgression constituted a "morals charge." Yet now that the feminists have clothed all contact between the sexes with what is best described as generalized neurosis we, perforce, apply the overworked term "sexual harassment" to allegations that Mrs. Jones was subjected to: (1) false imprisonment, (2) indecent exposure, (3) assault and battery, (4) intimidation, and (5) potential rape. Reactionary that I am, I do believe that those prefeminist legal conceptions more vividly convey the ordeal that Mrs. Jones suffered in a Little Rock hotel at the hands of a powerful politician whose name I shall not even mention in this column.

His wife, Hillary, has in *Vanity Fair* questioned the Christian bona fides of her husband's critics ("I find it impossible to believe that people who call themselves Christians could engage in such behavior.") I, as a sedulous student of her husband's theological observations, see precisely what she means. Recently, in noting to ABC News his disrelish for abortion, he, Hillary's husband—whose name shall not pass my lips here—added the stern quali-

cation that it is not "self-evident from the Bible that all abortions are murder." Nor is there anything in the Bible enjoining us to speak ill of this grievously maligned man. So all true Christians better cut it out. They could go to hell.

As for Paula Corbin Jones's sexual allegations against this president—whom I shall not name—I agree with the White House. It is all exploitation of a famous figure. President Eisenhower was hounded by similar charges ceaselessly. So were Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter. President Nixon had a whole team of lawyers on the lookout for his "bimbo eruptions." Of course, the accursed Nixon never called them bimbos as does

Hillary's enlightened friend, Betsey Wright. Nixon called them "babes," "skirts," and, when in the Southwest, "*muchachas*."

One of the reasons that I do not want to mention the name of the powerful politician who is married to the aggrieved Hillary is that he is trying very hard to be a good person. As he told ABC News, he is a man who has "sinned as a child of God, who has sought forgiveness, searched for redemption and is struggling to grow and to find the guidance of God in this job." Anything I might say against a fellow entailed in such a mighty struggle for the heart and mind of the Almighty could get me in hot water for eternity.

Besides there are so many other interesting stories being reported.

Last month the British press was again alive with "More Arkansas Scandals." That is how the venerable *Economist* of London put it in a front-page headline. The *Economist* has discovered a man whose dealings in the 1980s with the Arkansas investment banking firm of Lasater & Co. cost him his fortune and three attempts on his life, so he says. The *Economist* seems to believe him, as does London's *Sunday Telegraph*, which published a similar story.

Both publications take the man, Dennis Patrick, very seriously. The owner of Lasater & Co., according to the *Sunday Telegraph*, "was the biggest contributor to the Arkansas campaign funds of" a powerful politician



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whose name I shall not mention. Both publications say the two men were very friendly, but Dan Lasater, the owner of Lasater & Co., was sentenced to two-and-a-half years in prison for drug distribution. His friend, the powerful politician, pardoned him in 1990. During Mr. Lasater's troubles and throughout the 1980s Patsy Thomasson was his "deputy and confidante," according to the *Sunday Telegraph*. Moreover, says the paper, "as executive vice-president of the firm, she was in charge of operations, and was viewed by the rest of the staff as the main liaison between Lasater & Co. and the Little Rock political establishment." Now Ms. Thomasson is director of administration at the White House.

"Over the next few weeks," the *Sunday Telegraph* predicts, "the activities of Lasater—and, by association, Thomasson—are likely to come under close scrutiny in Washington. Senator Alphonse D'Amato, the ranking Republican on the Senate Banking Committee, intends to investigate the cozy way in which underwriting business for \$660 million in state bonds was steered to Lasater & Co. Among the many questions being examined is whether there were kickbacks" to the political campaigns of a powerful politician and, as to his name, my lips are sealed. I will say this: There are certainly a lot more scandals surrounding this White House than, say, Gerald Ford's. □

along ethnic, sexual, and racial lines, did not put me in mind of the University of Heidelberg or any place Socrates had ever been. Let's face it, American universities today are what high schools once were, except that those high schools never endangered one's life or sanity.

A friend now studying at Columbia has grown particularly interested in Shakespeare. To continue his studies of the bard he will have to take courses taught from a "Marxist-feminist" perspective. Teaching the creator of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* from a Marxist-feminist perspective is equivalent to preparing northern Italian cuisine from a Lucrezia Borgian perspective. It spoils a good thing. University endowments, tuitions, and subsidies have never been more opulent. And what is the loot spent on? Quack studies, campus psychiatrists, New Age counselors, and administrators for every sort of problem child. Legitimate profs and serious students get short shrift.

So what will my commencement address amount to when Columbia's grateful university community turns to me for wisdom and uplift? Those students engaged in the study of science and perhaps the more exacting aspects of business and physical education have probably learned some useful stuff. They have wasted only a year or two. I shall confirm to the rest what they undoubtedly already know: to wit, they have just wasted four years, perhaps more. Yet I shall reassure them that learning is not nearly so tedious as their profs have made it and that youth need not be as harrowing. If they are typical Americans they have many years of youth ahead of them. These can be years of gaiety and learning. It is not too late to become educated. I am told that intellectual curiosity is frequently heightened by four years of exposure to multiculturalism and political correctness. Graduates leave universities wondering what history, literature, and philosophy are all about.

My advice to graduates is get on with it! Read, write, make money at some productive non-criminal endeavor. Oh yes, and keep life simple. Bombarded as they are with a myriad of exigent entertainments, nights-on-the-town, noble causes, personal-growth therapies, our youth lead more hectic lives than a United States congressman. Cultivate your minds and have a fling at what the sourpuss sophisticates call "family values." Life is rarely as miserable as college. □

The Meaning of Life

'T is that palmy time of year when venerable blowhards are invited to campus to deliver what I believe are called commencement addresses. As to what is being commenced, no sensible person can say for sure. Is it adulthood? For many Americans adulthood does not begin until faraway into middle age, if ever. Think of our president, his simpering wife, many members of Congress—all are eternal kids. In Washington about the only notables whom we readily associate with adulthood are Supreme Court justices, who are supposed to be old and bewhiskered. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor is no kid, nor does she jog wearing T-shirts of political or metaphysical significance. In fact, no member of the Supreme Court has ever been seen running down the street in his undershorts with a baseball cap on.

At any rate, the notion of commencement from college into adulthood is an old-fashioned idea—touching but obsolete. Actually, college is obsolete. College, as envisaged by those who founded higher education here and in Europe, was a place where superior young minds were to gain a foundation in learning that would allow them to think and to lead. Unfortunately, sometime after the Second World War, growing numbers of colleges came under the control of empire-builders.

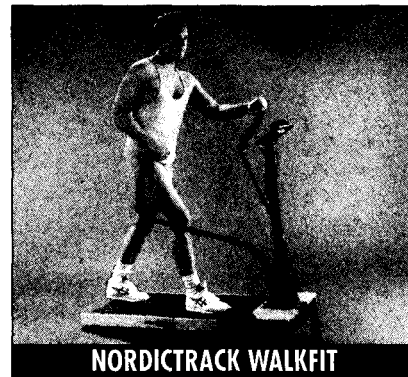
Massaging the citizenry's almost superstitious belief in the benignity of

education, these wheeler-dealers cadged billions from state treasuries and from wealthy benefactors to transform many fine colleges into useless universities. The country already had plenty of graduate students coming from established universities; natural growth would have assured more Ph.D.s commensurate with a growing country's needs. Transforming Slippery Rock State College into the University of Slippery Rock with campuses in Bologna and Ulan Bator was nonsense. Then the wheeler-dealers began expanding their sham universities. Departments were opened in studies that had never been studies before and still are not studies, for example Afro-American departments, women's studies departments. Have business schools opened Departments of Sexual Commerce and Breast Feeding? Give them time.

The consequence of all this exploitation of a noble idea is that higher education now has no definition. Moreover superior minds are lost in the mob of bored mediocrities and faculty zanies who swarm over these campuses. They are very depressing places for those who admire learning and robust, uninhibited thought. I visited Columbia University the other day and thought I was in a slum. I was. And the angry posters announcing rape counseling, seminars for ontological bliss, and various councils of war convened for students divided

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E-Mail Evolution

by Tom Bethell

From my window I have been marveling at the miracle of spring, and on my computer I have been following an e-mail discussion of evolution. As to the wonders of nature, we take these things far too much for granted. With hardly a murmur of dissent, people who should know better seem to accept that life in all its profusion and complexity emerged from the random collision of particles of matter. Darwin somehow proved it, didn't he?

Living cells are so complex that we don't begin to know how to make them in our highest-tech labs. Yet we are led to believe that the necessary parts assembled themselves, and further, that billions of these cells somehow came together to form sentient beings, with the power of reproduction, and without the intervention of any antecedent intelligence or designer.

There has long been a resistance movement to this ideology, an opposition that has been scattered and disorganized. But now the computer revolution has had the unexpected effect of permitting this opposition to get together electronically; to compare notes, argue, and talk things over.

I have long believed that the dogma of evolution would one day encounter a more serious opposition, and I have been on the lookout for signs of that day. The Internet discussion persuades me that it may be coming close. What was missing from the earlier challenges was scientific literacy. Lord knows, the people from the Institute for Creation Research had plenty of good will, and made many good points, but their arguments were often footnoted to the Bible, and their nature walks had a way of turning into prayer meetings. The

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Darwinian Citadel could afford to smile indulgently. Let them cite Genesis and recite their prayers; no need to stir the masses from their slumbers if they weren't causing trouble. Admittedly, John Maddox, the editor of *Nature*, recently noted that "it may not be long before the practice of religion must be regarded as anti-science," and Oxford's Richard Dawkins has long wanted to throw cold water in the faces of the faithful. But most evolutionists have seen merit in preserving the peace.

The new generation of critics of evolution are going to cause more trouble. The discussion group has about a hundred members now, assembled over the past year by Phillip E. Johnson, a professor of law at U.C. Berkeley. "I can't give you a breakdown," he told me, "but the majority are science or philosophy professors or graduate students, with the rest mostly enthusiastic amateurs. A few are in mainstream evolutionary science, and their identities are known only to me." All are free to participate by sending messages that are reflected back to everyone else, but most are "lurkers," who receive but don't send. Most of the participants apparently do not believe in evolution.

Among the regular contributors are Michael Behe, an associate professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University; Paul Nelson, a Ph.D. candidate in philosophy at the University of Chicago; Jonathan Wells, a Ph.D. candidate in the department of molecular and cell biology at Berkeley; and Kurt Wise, a student of Stephen Jay Gould's at Harvard, who now teaches at a small college in Tennessee. Nelson (with co-authors) and Behe are writing books, which promise to be of outstanding quality. Another member of the group, Walter Remine, has recently published *The Biotic Message*, and together with

Phillip Johnson's own *Darwin on Trial*, all these works should help persuade the intelligent layman that there is a great deal more to anti-evolutionism than Bible-Belt intransigence. Most members of the group would seem to be young, or relatively so. But the most important point is that they argue against the reigning dogma intelligently, and with facts, not faith. Nonetheless, some (perhaps many) members of the group, notably Kurt Wise, are also explicit creationists.

Logically, of course, if creatures did not evolve then they must have been created, presumably by a higher power that is invisible to us. The sharp horns of this dilemma account for the emotional potency of the issue. Either all organisms had parents (the theory of evolution in four words), or some did not. If the latter, how did they get here? If you reject evolution, or find it terribly implausible, then you are unavoidably faced with an alternative that some find desirable, others unpalatable.

Evolutionism is perhaps the most jealously guarded dogma of the American public philosophy. Any sign of serious resistance to it has encountered fierce hostility in the past, and it will not be abandoned without a tremendous fight. The gold standard could go (glad to be rid of that!), Saigon abandoned, the Constitution itself slyly junked. But Darwinism will be defended to the bitter end.

The great problem with the theory of evolution is that it is supported by very little evidence. A decade ago, Colin Patterson of the British Museum of Natural History said he knew of none at all. More recently, the chairman of the department of ichthyology at the American Museum of Natural History in