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Speaker Michael Martin

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EDITORIAL

The Rise and Fall of Speaker Martin

Michael Martin's abandonment of the Speakership of the House of Commons has not produced an excess of sorrow and lamentations even in the West of Scotland. Therefore Archbishop Mario Conti's ringing defence of him in a letter to *The Herald* (20 May), for both

Certainly, the Archbishop will be aware of Michael Martin's symbolic importance. As the first Catholic to be Speaker since the Reformation, he has already earned a place in the record books. But instead of symbolising a new democratic age of openness, he



Speaker Michael Martin with under fire Prime Minister, Gordon Brown.

his human and political qualities, is noteworthy. The Archbishop commended his approachability and friendliness and argued that the manner in which he had been driven from office had deepened the crisis of politics.

This could be seen as a generous defence of a loyal son of the Church who had fallen on political hard times or as a somewhat myopic verdict on someone who failed to perform the chief role of the Speaker which is to uphold the independence of Parliament against the Executive.

became the symbol of an *ancien regime* which failed to realise that the practices of the political elite were likely to cause outrage in society if revealed.

He should be congratulated for ignoring the tradition of wearing knee breeches and silk stockings and for putting aside the traditional wig. But he allowed Parliament to become a rubber stamp for a governing majority which has taken away more liberties than any peacetime government has ever done. He forgot that the Speakership is about defending the freedom of Parliament, most notably

when he allowed the police to search the parliamentary office of the Conservative frontbencher Damian Green without a warrant. He even tried to have his most pestilential media detractor Quentin Letts banned from the Commons.

Instead of being non-partisan, he all too often appeared to be Labour's man. And there is evidence that Scottish Labour MPs found it easier to catch the Speaker's eye in debates than many of their English and Welsh colleagues. He failed to transcend his West of Scotland origins where loyalty to partisan causes has become part of the tribal DNA for a large segment of the population.

Fittingly it was with Gordon Brown that he discussed his fate and not with parliamentary elders. At his installation in 2000 convention was broken when he succeeded another Labour Speaker. This was Betty Boothroyd, just as working-class as Martin and the first woman Speaker. By the end of her Speakership her gender and origins had been forgotten because she had upheld the dignity and effectiveness of the Commons so well. To argue, as Lord George Foulkes has done that Martin was the victim of 'snobbery and sectarian prejudice' is laughable. If a Catholic MP like Ann Widdecombe is seen as the best person to defend Parliament's independence in these authoritarian times, then

I cannot think of anyone who would vote against her on sectarian grounds, perhaps not even in Ulster.

On June 21 Speaker Martin will retire with one of the most lucrative pensions in the public sector, worth up to £2 million, £79 000 a year. By comparison, the average private sector worker retires on just £1 700 a year. Labour MPs made much of the pension which banker Fred Goodwin will enjoy courtesy of the tax-payer. Perhaps they and Archbishop Conti might ponder that, for a man always keen to invoke his Clydeside roots, taking such a pension in what are desperate times for many ordinary people, is a rather insensitive gesture.

Enjoying a pension which is three times the average wage will not help the Labour party in the herculean task of staving off a by-election defeat in Glasgow North-East, a seat the party might not so long ago have expected to hold until hell froze over. If nobody in the institutional church takes a stand on the Speaker's pension pot, just what does it say about the vitality of Catholic social principles? If Mr Martin recognised that he has failed to live up to the expectations placed in him as Speaker, he could choose to make do with the pension for thirty years of service as an MP, hardly a modest sum. Then perhaps fewer people will decry him when he proceeds to take up a seat in the House of Lords.

Shame and Disillusionment

Truly we live in turbulent times, certainly not merely interesting ones. All - or most - of the things we have come to rely upon are in a state of flux and some of corruption too. We are left as powerless observers in a state of disillusionment and wondering what further shocks await us.

In the banking scandal Scotland, to its shame, has led the way. People who entrusted those banks bearing the name of Scotland with their modest savings or even ventured to buy some shares have been left with almost worthless tokens. They only continue to exist thanks to massive payments by the Westminster Government. Meanwhile the voracious Glasgow law graduate who controlled one of the banks seems to have vanished to enjoy his plunder.

Still more widespread in creating disenchantment have been the revelations in the Daily Telegraph on the abuses by, it seems, virtually all the members of the House of Commons of the payments they receive, ostensibly to enable them to have homes in both their constituencies and London. So far only a few Scots MPs have been exposed, a conspicuous exception being the previous Lib-Dem leader Sir "Ming" Campbell. Understandably the London-

based Telegraph has concentrated on MPs with English seats.

The recently held European Parliament elections on 4 June remind us of the unpublished expenses, over and above their massive salaries and the practice of being paid simply for signing in, of those

*We face uncertainty in
the institutions by which
we are governed.*

who are now seeking re-election. The failure to hold the European Commission to account for their finances suggests the Commissioners do not want to put their own remuneration at risk.

We face uncertainty in the institutions by which we are governed. The minority Government of Scotland avowedly seeks independence which would mean the break-up of a Kingdom which holds itself to be United. The UK has already transferred large portions of its sovereignty to the European

Community. A future Scottish independent state has pledged to seek membership of this Community.

The national church faces a possible breakaway movement, based on disagreement as to the nature of the authority of the Bible. This is on top of all the practical issues at home and abroad which have been drawn to its attention during the run up to the General Assembly.

Meanwhile the Roman Catholic Church in the British Isles is confronted by the belated acknowledgment of abuse of children by church personnel in Ireland. A state inquiry headed by a judge has taken nine years and 2250 pages to cover the subject. Yet no-one is to be prosecuted. Another report of abuses in the largest diocese, Dublin, is on the way.

It is hardly surprising that young people are no longer seeking to become priests or nuns and seminaries and convents are having to close. Few countries had the number of state sponsored but church managed institutions as Ireland. But such is the influence of Ireland throughout the English-speaking Catholic world that the ensuing shame and disillusionment are felt far beyond its shores.

David Hume and the Catholic Church

Deeply rooted as he was in the Scottish Enlightenment, it is sometimes assumed that David Hume developed his philosophy with almost complete originality and little reference to pre-Reformation philosophers other than Classical Roman authors such as Cicero, upon whom the Hume modelled his written style.

However, upon reading Professor John Haldane's 'Editorial Introduction: Hume On Mind And Causality' (*Journal of Scottish Philosophy*, March 2007) one is struck by the parallels he identifies between sections of Hume's writings and the scholastic philosophy of the thirteenth and fourteenth century, parallels that bring into question Hume's access to medieval philosophy and theology.

On 11 April 2011 the world will be celebrating the Tercentenary of David Hume's birth and Edinburgh, in particular, will be holding a conference of the Hume Society (<http://www.humesociety.org/>). In Ernest Campbell Mossner's *The Life of David Hume* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1954) and Roderick Graham's more recent *The Great Infidel* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2004) the details of Hume's complex life are brilliantly and reliably unravelled.

Hume (originally 'Home') was born on 26 April 1711 at his father's tenement apartments on the south side of Edinburgh's Lawnmarket. His father was an advocate related to the Earl of Home; his mother, a daughter of Sir David Falconer, President of the College of Justice. The child was baptised on the day of his birth into the Church of Scotland and brought up mainly at Ninewells, the family estate in Berwickshire, where he was educated, perhaps partly at the local Chirside school but also by private tutors. Home read the Classical authors voraciously and in later life he changed his name to 'Hume' to make it more accessible to the English.

He matriculated at Edinburgh University in February 1723 and left two years later, without taking his degree.

Because of the cost of graduation, this was often the custom. For the following eight years he studied privately, preparing to become a lawyer by attending the Court of Session.

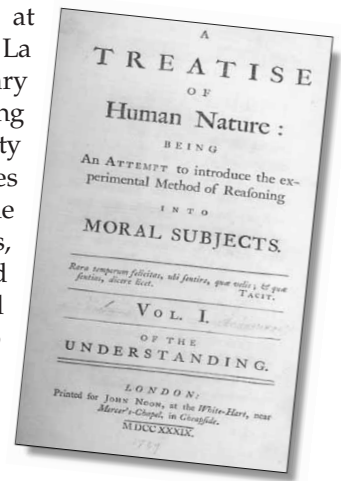
In spite of the iconoclasm of the Reformation in Scotland, the scholastic philosophers and commentaries on their works continued to be available either at the Edinburgh University Library or in the Advocates Library. Advocates still consulted scholastic texts because, while the ecclesiastical consistorial courts (in which bishops passed judgement) were replaced by commissary courts after the Reformation, Canon Law (along with Roman Law, absorbed mainly from Holland) continued to be a yardstick for the Scottish courts, unless it openly conflicted with the tenets of the new Reformed religion.

In 1580, Clement Little, the Edinburgh advocate and commissary, died and left his books to the kirk and town of Edinburgh. Four years later these volumes were given to the Principal of the recently-founded Tounis College, so forming the nucleus of what would become Edinburgh University Library. Most of Little's 276 books were theological, including works by St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventura, Duns Scotus, Johann von Eck, William Ockham, Peter Lombard and Juan de Torquemada.

Although the Faculty of Advocates probably predates the formation of the College of Justice in 1532, the Advocates Library itself was formally inaugurated only in 1689. However, it also contained many early works on Canon Law (some 312 published up to 1800) and David Hume, as Keeper of the Advocates' Library from 1751 to 1763, would have access to the best collection of books in Scotland which would later form the basis for the National Library of Scotland.

However, as well as libraries in Scotland or in England, Hume had access to some of the best Continental libraries. While researching and writing at Reims in 1734, Hume was able to consult the magnificent library of the local Jesuit

College, which contained 5,000 volumes, among them Newton, Descartes, Albert Magnus and Duns Scotus. The following year Hume moved to a house two kilometres from the Collège royal des Jésuites at La Flèche in Anjou, a property made available by the Jesuits to their guests. There he continued to work on his *Treatise of Human Nature*, planning the future course of his philosophical researches, perhaps mindful that the philosopher René Descartes (1606-4) had been educated at the Jesuit school. After two years of researching at the copious La Flèche library and disputing the possibility of miracles with the Jesuit fathers, Hume had completed the first two books of his *Treatise* and decided to move to London to make preparations for publication.



A list of some of Hume's own Edinburgh library has been reconstructed by David F. Norton and Mary J. Norton in *David Hume Library* (Edinburgh Bibliographical Society in association with The National Library of Scotland, 1996). Hume's books eventually came into the possession of David Baron Hume, his nephew and the Professor of Criminal Law at Edinburgh. Among the volumes were standard works such as Dante's *L'Inferno* and *La Divina Commedia* (a masterpiece heavily reliant on Aquinas) and Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516).

However, while Hume may have read the medieval philosophers if only to dispute their conclusions, in intellectual and philosophical terms Hume, brought up in an atmosphere of strict Calvinism, was no friend of the Catholic faith per se. In his *Treatise of Human Nature*, for example, he describes Catholicism as 'that strange superstition' whose

followers were the most zealous sect in the world. In his essay *Of the Standard of Taste* (1757) Hume expresses his profound disapproval of what he sees as Roman Catholic sectarianism - 'It is essential to the Roman Catholic religion to inspire a violent hatred of every other worship, and to represent all pagans, mahometans, and heretics as the objects of divine wrath and vengeance. Such sentiments, though they are in reality very blameable, are considered as virtues by the zealots of that communion...'

In his *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* Hume condemns what he sees as the theatrical liturgy of the Roman Catholic religion. He writes scathingly that 'The devotees of that superstition usually plead in excuse for the mummeries [pretentious or hypocritical ceremonies], with which they are upbraided, that they feel the good effect of those external motions, and postures, and actions, in enlivening their devotion and quickening their fervour, which otherwise would decay, if directed entirely to distant and immaterial objects. We shadow out the objects of our faith, say they, in sensible types and images, and render them more present to us by the immediate presence of these types, than it is possible for us to do, merely by an intellectual view and contemplation.'

Hume was highly critical of the belief in Miracles, common not just to Catholicism, but to other Christian denominations: 'Because a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature, the proof against it is as complete as any can be from experience. Why must all men die; why must lead fall; why must fire consume wood and be extinguished by water? Answer: because they are agreeable to the laws of nature. If someone told me that he saw a dead man restored to life I would have to ask whether this person is deceiving or whether he is deceived. Both are miracles. If his falsehood would be more miraculous than the event he relates, only then could he pretend to persuade me in belief.' In 1761 Hume's works were placed on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (List of Prohibited Books), a list of publications banned by the Catholic Church until 14 June 1966, when the 'Index' was abolished by Pope Paul VI. In spite of Hume's rejection of

what he refers to the 'mummeries' of Roman Catholicism, he seems unwittingly to have drifted towards the Catholic Church in rather strange circumstances.

In 1748 Hume had accompanied his relative, General James St Clair (at that time the owner of Rosslyn Chapel and Castle) on a secret military mission to Vienna and Turin. Two years before St Clair and Hume had already endured the embarrassment of an abortive attempt to invade Canada and an equally clumsy attempt to conduct a campaign in France, a result of Hume's leisurely life as a military commander being his increase in girth through good eating and the development of a passion for cards.

Later, while accompanying General St Clair on a secret diplomatic mission to Turin a trick was played on the by now portly but ever amorously-inclined Hume. He was deceived into believing that he might successfully woo a beautiful Countess to whom he had taken a fancy. The philosopher, whose sedentary military career had led to an increase in girth, attempted to woo the Countess but was, after some initial dalliance, scornfully rejected.

This unhappiness in love led Hume to develop a violent fever and a raging delirium. In his nightmare he talked wildly about the Devil, Hell and Damnation. He even tried (unsuccessfully) to drown himself in a nearby well, and then immediately began to make preparations to commit suicide (in the Roman way) by falling on a sword.

Alarmed by this illness, Hume's companions sent for Catholic priests and Hume was hastily given Extreme Unction by the Jesuit fathers. Hume eventually recovered and in later life he dismissed his 'conversion', putting it down to his delirious state - 'I did not know

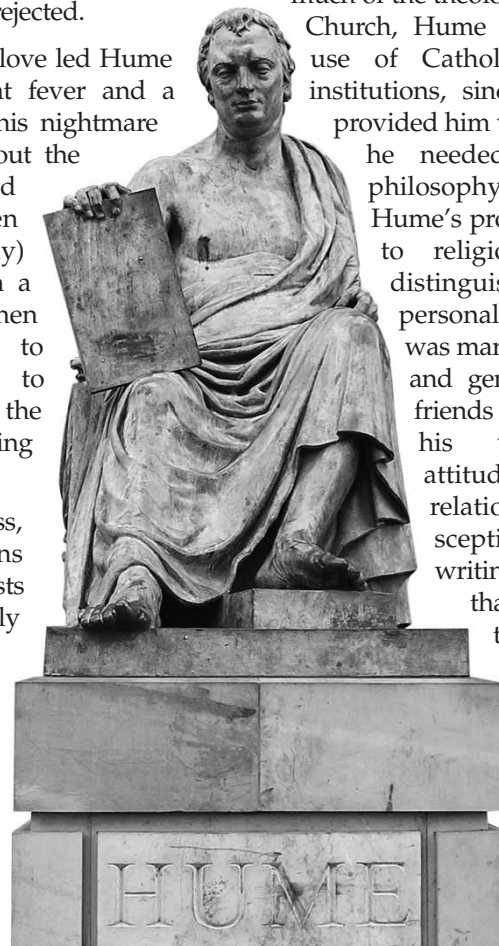
what I said, or they [the priests] did to me'. However, his acquaintances were not entirely convinced by his disavowals.

In December 1763, while serving as Secretary at the British Embassy in Paris, Hume visited the Scots College several times to revise the text of his 'History of England' in the light of the fourteen volumes of King James VII Memoirs, written in the King's own handwriting. Hume later expressed his gratitude for Principal John Gordon's help in cross-checking Hume's writings against the Royal Memoirs.

Hume once asked Fr Gordon if he had anything he wanted him to send to London in the diplomatic bag. Fr Gordon replied that he had none, except a Papal Bull to create a Scots bishop. Hume gleefully indicated that he would be delighted to oblige. Fr Gordon could not believe him but Hume repeated that there was nothing he wanted better than to send the Bull. Accordingly, Hume forwarded it to the Secretary of State, the irony of which delighted him.

In spite of his misgivings and even antipathy to many of the rituals and much of the theology of the Catholic Church, Hume repeatedly made use of Catholic authors and institutions, since they so often provided him with the resources he needed to bring his philosophy to fruition. Hume's professional attitude to religion has to be distinguished from his personal morality which was marked by generosity and geniality. His many friends saw the irony of his very Christian attitude to personal relationships and the scepticism of his writings, none more so

than his close friend, the young and bewitching Nancy Ord, and her provocative graffiti chalked on the wall of his New Town home - 'Saint David Street.'



JOHN COONEY

Ireland's Blasphemy Folly

In the 1960s reformers such as Roy Jenkins and Tony Benn were campaigning to remove the offence of blasphemy from the statute book at Westminster, which more recently has happened in a United Kingdom where the Anglican supremacy in England and Presbyterianism in Scotland no longer held traditional sway as pillars of society.

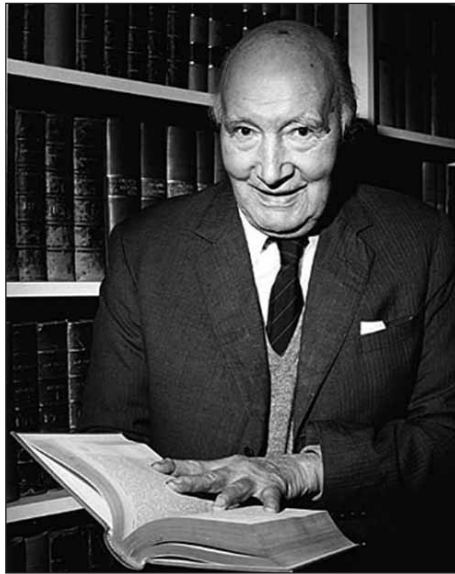
Indeed, as far back as 1949, the famous judge, Lord Denning, noted that the reason for the law of blasphemy in Britain was because it was "once thought that a denial of Christ was liable to shake the fabric of society, which itself was founded on the Christian religion."

However, even sixty years ago, Lord Denning also observed that "there is no such danger to society now and the offence of blasphemy is a dead letter."

Lord Denning's "dead letter", as far as Britain was concerned, has remained alive but unwell in the Constitution of Ireland, enacted in 1937 by Eamon de Valera with more than a little zealous help by a Holy Ghost priest and future Archbishop of Dublin, John Charles McQuaid. Article 40. 6.1 (i) recognises the rightful liberty of expression, subject to public order and morality, specifically stating that "the publication or utterance of blasphemous, seditious, or indecent matter is an offence which shall be punishable in accordance with law."

This clause appeared to be, de facto, a dead letter, in the Ireland of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s when 'a moral civil war' divided Irish society over issues relating to contraception, abortion and divorce. The crusaders for a pluralist Ireland such as Garret FitzGerald eventually won against the rearguard Catholic Right holding out for a Catholic confessional State.

Now suddenly, in the midst of the most serious economic crisis ever faced by the Irish State - and at a time when the public has lost faith in the ability of the Cowen Government to get it out of the black hole dug by Bertie Ahern's Celtic Tiger economy - a Don Quixote figure in the guise of Minister for Justice, Dermot Ahern, has been inspired to resurrect this 'dead letter.'



Lord Denning.

'Don Dermot of Dundalk' says his intention is to remove the possibility of prison sentences for a maximum seven years and private prosecutions for the crime of blasphemous libel currently provided for in Irish law by the 1961 Defamation Act. The only credible alternative to this move, he argues, is a blasphemy referendum which he considers, in the current circumstances, to be "a costly and unwarranted diversion."

Dermot's Solemn Declaration on Blasphemy as a crime worthy of a fine of up to 100,000 euro has created public and media outrage. Conspiracy theories abound that he is playing the cute-hoor game of distracting attention away from Fianna Fail's disastrous handling of the economy.

Irish Catholic, Protestant and Islamic leaders are mystified by his move and profess that they neither sought nor were consulted on the proposed legislation. Catholic Right commentators are equally baffled.

While memories have dimmed of the draconian censorship laws which operated in Ireland until the late 1960s and beyond. Memories are fresh of the Fatwa issued by outraged Muslims against Salman Rushdie's 'Satanic Verses' and even more recently of the Islamic

protests against a Danish magazine's cartoon of the Prophet Mohammad.

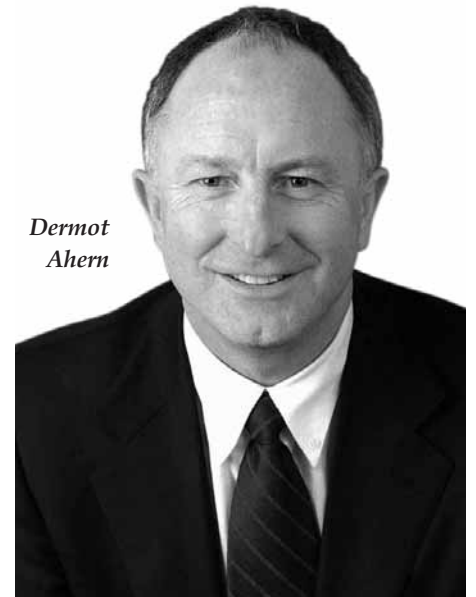
Other cases are being recalled, such as the upholding by the Pakistani Supreme Court that the only fit punishment for blasphemy is death; in Afghanistan, a journalist was sentenced to death for distributing an article critical of the status of women within Islamic societies;

Such atrocities committed 'In the Name of God', make Ahern's crime of 'blasphemous libel' not only a political blunder, but, even worse, a foolish and potentially disastrous one socially.

Not only has Ahern made a laughing-stock of Ireland in Western civilisation, he has made himself a figure of ridicule.

Dermot also exposed himself to the grave charge of sanctimonious cant with his plea that to ignore wilfully the enforcing in law of the Constitutional offence of blasphemy is to undermine the Constitution.

When will Irish politicians waken up to the reality that the country needs a new Constitution to reflect today's Ireland - and stop playing dangerous games with "dead letters"? This is no laughing matter. Ireland needs to bury the ghosts from the era of De Valera and McQuaid.



Dermot Ahern

REV IAN FRASER

Market Speculation and World Order

Part 2

It is a horror story that, before the 2008 crash, the status of high flyers on the Stock Exchange was estimated not even by millions in salaries, but by the extent of bonuses. All human beings have the inalienable status of being made in the image and likeness of God and being loved by God. What weird estimate of human worth would replace that with the extent of a bonus? It is as if a parable of Jesus had never been absorbed. He spoke of a wealthy proprietor who got such a good yield of crops that his needs were met in full. He proposed, instead of using this as a basis for supplying the needs of the poor of the earth, to build extra barns to house surplus stock for his own benefit, anticipating a leisured life. What he had overlooked is that he might die at any time and have to account to God for the use of his entrusted life.

The rewards for life at this level are not being objectively measured. They belong to a consortium who estimate their own worth and never seem satisfied, wealthy Oliver Twists. In the Book of Ecclesiasticus chapter 38 the question is asked 'who sustains the fabric of the earth' i.e. brings the world forward safely from one day to another. People such as the above do not feature. Basic workers 'give solidity to the created world.' It is time that an objective measure of worth is applied to the contributions of high-flyers whose guide to rewards is merely 'what the market will stand.'

Czech and Russian communists, Che Guevara and colleagues hoped for the emergence, from all the struggles, of a 'new man' - human beings with integrity of life and unselfish commitment. It is a way which it is hard to get people to take. Jimmy Carter knew it in 1980. He warned that there would be a comeuppance for careless and short-sighted living - the U.S.A. needed to take a 'narrow way' of self-discipline. Ronald Reagan, the Great Communicator who will be known in history as the Great Conman, countered, telling people that they could eat their cake and have it. They took the easy way; and found that they

were left with large cake-deficits.

Deregulation was treated as if it were a kind of oil to let markets move more easily by freeing up human initiative. It also freed up greed and exploitation! For their own good human beings, especially those in power, need constraints and oversight on the part of the community they were meant to serve. They have to be helped to be trustworthy.

In all this there are still attempts to justify an economy in which rewards are wildly and wilfully unequal.

I have never heard any repudiation by



John Hutton, when Business Secretary, of remarks he made in addressing Progress, the Blairite think-tank on the eve of the 2008 budget: 'Rather than questioning whether huge salaries are morally justified, we should celebrate that people can be enormously successful in this country'. He urged 'We must be enthusiastic about financial success Any progressive party worth its name must enthusiastically advocate empowering people to climb without limits, free from any barrier holding them back'. What he commended was a law of the jungle, blatant self-interest with justice ignored: and an equally blatant ignoring of Jesus' 'Love God and your neighbour as *yourself*'.

Peter Mandelson pulled an old chestnut out of the bag speaking of 'the politics of envy'. What is wrong is not that people grab too much for themselves but that those who are thus robbed of their just share are being grudging and mean-spirited about it! This would turn upside-down Jesus' 'You cannot serve

God and Mammon' - the deprived are made out to be serving Mammon by complaining! It is time that some people grew up in the real world.

'No bonuses for failure' has become a watch-word. Why should there be bonuses at all for people who are already well-paid (or overpaid) for jobs they took on? When were roadmen who constructed good roads, mothers who reared families well, given extra for doing so?

The skewing of society by such sin has to be repudiated. Disciplined living can be rich in concern for others if we choose what St. Paul called 'a more excellent way. Here is a concrete example:

Early in its life, the Iona community realised that, for it to be a genuine faith community, it needed a discipline to keep it on track and make members accountable to one another - as a help to being accountable to God for the way they lived life. The fivefold rule was:

1. Daily Prayer and Bible-Reading.
2. Sharing and accounting for the use of our money.
3. Planning and accounting for the use of our time.
4. Action for justice and peace in society.
5. Meeting and accounting to each other.

Number 2, the economic discipline, reminds us that all we can offer in life consists of personal gifts and energies with which we are endowed, and we should not make large claims for exercising them: 'Bread for each day' should be enough. If we grab too much for ourselves we take away from others a fair share of what God provides for all. In doing so, we would give encouragement to other people to live by distorted values.

Number 2 makes us ready to take relatively poorly paid jobs when called to do so. It provides a check on reality that we report regularly to fellow members.

Regulation, accountability play a creative part in responsible living.

Polly Toynbee, whose stance is secularist, has pointed to the need to 'flush out tax avoidance and evasion, to close down tax havens, to appoint honest non-executives to company boardrooms and institute a regime built on public trust.' These would be features in a move towards what I would call 'righteous living' i.e. expressing right relationships, right dealings, a world put right side up. I wonder if she was fully aware that she resorted to theological

language: 'Brown may be today's saviour, but only by cleansing the City of greed and restoring trust will he find redemption.' Secularists, atheists, agnostics can open our eyes to theological insights. When they identify gods and godly - features which they find incredible, it may be that they alert us to idols which we had mistaken for God. The unconverted may convert the converted, opening their eyes to truth.

** See 4 volumes of 'Love in Practice'.
Publisher: Orbis

PATRICK REILLY

Robert Frost: The Poet as Philosopher

Before we can know what is good or bad for the human being, we must first know who and what he is. This question of identity is at the heart of this fine new study of Robert Frost*. Peter Stanlis brilliantly argues that we cannot fully appreciate Frost's poetry without understanding the dualistic philosophy upon which it is grounded. The Universe is really a duoverse - a duality, not a unity - and what we are most aware of in life is division, permanent, contrarities: spirit and matter, justice and mercy, rights and duties, and 'endless other things in pairs ordained to everlasting opposition.' This keen awareness of the unalterable two-endedness of things underlay Frost's fierce opposition to any monistic attempt, materialist and idealist alike, to reduce the world to a simplistic, beggarising unity. The materialists who declared that all is matter, that thought is merely a secretion like bile - the idealists who countered that all is thought and who, in the words of Yeats' Plato, 'thought nature but a spume that plays upon a ghostly paradigm of things' - both were mistaken, and, in deceiving themselves, they lead us all astray. In a world of imperfection, 'nothing gold can stay.' Frost knew this, but it was a truth that Emerson, that confidence man of optimism, could not bring himself to acknowledge. Idealism like this could only end in shipwreck. The perils of materialism are equally evident. The Physicist I.I. Rabi, explaining how the nuclear bomb had come to be used, said 'We thought of human beings as matter.' Exclusively matter. So, too, in the death camps, human beings were treated as the lowest form of matter, excrement to be voided in das Arschlock der Welt (the arsehole

of the world). Frost rejected monism of any kind: as Christ is both man and God, so man is both matter and spirit. Frost declared for dualism and he did so in a world that had largely surrendered to monism.

He said that the reader of a poem must 'take it right between the eyes just as it is.' The plural is significant. The reader has two eyes and he must use both. In Homer, Odysseus escapes death at the hands of a one-eyed giant, the Cyclops Polyphemus. It is a triumph for two eyes over one and Odysseus is the two-eyed man par excellence. Today's monists are the heirs of Polyphemus, the Cyclops' children, victims of single vision, or, to change the metaphor, what Lessing in *Nathan der Weise*, calls die Tyranei des einen Rings - the bondage of the single ring. Joyce, with unerring insight, chose the Cyclops to represent the Citizen, the nationalist zealot in Ulysses, to alert us to the fact that the one-eyed man sees only a partial truth. Emerson and T.H. Huxley may be giants, but they look only through one eye. Frost, by contrast, calls for a saving bifocalism, because, unless we see twice, we see false. Seeing double is our sole defence against the siren seduction of the monistic mirage.

Never has this gift of a blessed bifocalism been more essential than in our age of gulags and gasovens, of a science that can simultaneously bring such enormous benefits to our lives and confer the power to reduce the planet to dead ash - it is Huxley who seems the irresponsible dreamer now. An Emerson might reply that we are too intelligent, too virtuous, ever to allow this to happen, but then one remembers how the last great

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It is confirmed that the opinions and ideas expressed by all our Contributors are their own and not accepted as those of Open House.

Pelagian, H.G. Wells, Darwin's disciple, died cursing man's stupidity, which he might just as easily have called man's sin. It was Frost's achievement to insist that only a recognition of the dualism at the heart of all things, man included, can defend us against the perils of monism. We are in the Cyclops' cave and we shall need both eyes to escape.

Frost had a number of illustrious predecessors who also insisted that we are not one but two and who proclaimed the need to speak twice and to see double: Pico della Mirandola in his Oration on the Dignity of Man; Sir Thomas Browne affirming man as 'that great and true Amphibian, whose nature is disposed to live, not only like other creatures in divers elements, but in divided and distinguished worlds'; Alexander Pope describing man as 'Created half to rise and half to fall; Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all.' And there is Pascal, perhaps the greatest of the double speakers, the champion of the two-eyed men: 'Is it not clear as day that man's condition is dual?who cannot see that unless we realise the duality of human nature we remain invincibly ignorant of the truth about ourselves?' There are, he insists, 'two equally constant truths.' Significantly, a key section of the *Pensées* is entitled 'Contradictions.' Melville makes the same assertion in a way that brooks no dissent: 'the tortoise is both black and bright.' He will not allow us to say the one without saying the other; the tortoise, emblematic of life, is double and anyone who says otherwise is wrong. Without contraries, says Blake, there is no progression. Frost's is a more basic position: without contraries there is no existence. Many will feel exasperated at what may seem a failure to be decisive: stop dithering, come off the fence, a thing is either this or it is that. But the great double speakers would have us exchange the shackles of either-or for the largesse of both-and: man is at once matter and spirit. To ignore either is to mutilate him.

Among the best chapters in the book are those in which Stanlis demolishes the charge that Frost was the Foe of Science. 'Frost's creative evolution did not reject Darwin's theory; rather, it supplied a supplementary exposition of how man continued to evolve throughout history, beyond biology.' More than ever we urgently need such an exposition today. For one thing is surely undeniable: with the emergence of man the continuity of

species, indeed of nature itself, has been irreparably broken. Man's 'art' (his philosophy, religion, science, law, politics and all the rest) has become his nature and is the key factor in shaping and determining his evolution - 'beyond



Robert Frost 1874 - 1963

biology.' Man makes history as well as being made by it, as the more enlightened Marxists now recognise. So, too, with evolution. If climate change is indeed happening, and happening as a direct consequence of avoidable human actions, this in itself is evidence that man doesn't simply adapt to his environment, as all other creatures do, but is proactive, sometimes - and again the dualism is inescapable - for ill as well as for good. The world changed and the dinosaurs couldn't. Goodbye dinosaurs. But man changes the world and he may easily change it to his own detriment or even destruction. This is why Frost could savage 'the fatal credulity of progress prophets'; the fact that a cannibal has acquired a microwave is not in itself an unqualified proof of progress.

Not science but scientism - the overweeningly arrogant presumption that science is the sole accredited path to truth - provoked Frost's opposition. It ought not to need saying that men like Sophocles, Dante, Milton, Shakespeare, Goethe, Dostoyevsky, Frost himself, have something uniquely, indispensably valuable to tell us about the kind of world

we live in and the kind of beings we are, that they are not simply entertainers to whom we turn to while away the hours when we are not seriously, i.e. scientifically, employed. Frost insisted that science is only one of the humanities and should be assigned its place as such, honourable but not monopolistic, in any proper system of education. He was aware of the nemesis of an excessively partisan, rationalistic education, as was Darwin himself when he mourned his loss of delight, as he aged, in reading Shakespeare, Milton and the other great English poets: 'I have almost lost any taste for pictures or music.' What does it profit a man if he gains the scientific world and loses his soul? Not everything that counts can be counted and not everything that can be counted counts. John Stuart Mill tells us in his Autobiography that only the discovery of Wordsworth's poetry rescued him from the suicidal depression induced by the petri-dish educational experiment to which his father had subjected him from childhood onwards. Science, as much as religion, has its fanatics and fundamentalists, equally assured that they alone possess the key to salvation, and it was these that Frost opposed. Any true education must be for the whole person, not for some stunted abortion, some mutilated abbreviation. Science must regain the humility to concede that it has only a part, however important, to play in the education of the individual and of society. Frost disdained 'teachers' like Dickens' Mr McChoakumchild, filling his little pitchers up to the brim with facts while blithely ignoring values; such teachers are, in Weber's phrase, specialists without spirit. Technicians can safely be left to construct machines, teachers have the far more important task of forming persons. This was the idea of education that Frost championed, the kind of teacher he himself was. In a bullying, dictatorial science he rightly saw a threat to these ideals. Politics, he declared is or should be a branch of ethics, not of science. Many today are coming to believe that science itself must become a branch of ethics if there is to be any realistic hope of human survival. What is the kind of education fit for a human being? To answer that we must first decide who the human being truly is.

*Peter J. Stanlis - **Robert Frost: The Poet as Philosopher** (ISI Books, Wilmington, Delaware, USA 2007)

PAUL AND ANNA FITZPATRICK

What Price Ethical Fashion?

Part 1. The rise of ethical fashion

Primark, the 'value' High Street clothing chain, announced profits of £233m for the year to September 2008, an increase of 17% on the previous year, thereby illustrating the continued market for cheaper clothing in the current recession¹. Primark may have transformed the way in which millions buy their clothes, but in a survey for *The Times*, it was also voted the worst offender in failing to address social and environmental issues². Primark scored poorly, too, in an ethical audit produced in 2006 by *Labour behind the Label*, based

Primark is not the only culprit of course. *War on Want's Report Fashion Victims II*, published in December 2008, showed that garment workers making clothes in Bangladesh for Primark, Tesco and Asda earned a basic monthly wage for a 48-hour week, before overtime, of between £13.97 and £24.37, with an average of £19.16, even though the cost of living had increased substantially, and a living wage was £44.82. The culture of fast fashion changes, and the aggressive buying practices of UK retailers, puts extreme pressure on suppliers, and

industry which remains one of the most lucrative in the world.

Meanwhile, the ethical fashion movement has become more prominent. To counteract the dominance of the major retailers, in November 2008 the Ethical Fashion Forum showcased its own annual awards, to reward people and organisations who have made advances in tackling poverty, healing the environment and changing consumer attitudes. The label *From Somewhere* was proclaimed Fashion Designer of the Year and also won the environmental award for reusing fabrics which would otherwise be thrown away. *From Somewhere* began in 1997 by customizing knitwear and using prison coats and old kilts to create a successful range of women's wear. They use unsold and damaged knitwear, off-cuts and leftovers⁶. By using fabric castoffs, they particularly address the problem of waste in the production of clothes.

A different aspect of ethical fashion can be found in the work of *People Tree*, who produce the full range of clothing for both men and women. Their commitment to support the efforts of their producer partners towards economic independence and control over their own environment requires them to pay their artisan workers at higher rates than those of the conventional garment sector. The company aims to protect the environment and to use natural resources sustainably throughout the whole process of making and trading, and to promote dialogue and understanding between themselves and their producers⁷. Practically this means that they work closely with the suppliers of their garments, and this close relationship ensures communication channels up and down the supply chain are kept open. The transparency of the supply chain is central to ensuring that exploitation is avoided, and the invisibility of the worker to the wearer is thereby reduced. Herein lies a difference from many High



Garment workers pay a high price to produce cheap clothes for the UK high street. Factories in Bangladesh produce clothes for retailers like Primark, Asda, or Tesco, and garment workers working there struggle to survive on extremely low pay, suffering poor working conditions, arduous hours and a complete lack of trade union representation in the factories.

on such measures as wages, freedom of association for factory workers and the procedures for monitoring work conditions. 'There are serious reasons to question whether Primark will be prepared to make the changes to its cheap, fast fashion business model that may be required to really ensure workers are paid a living wage³. In general terms, our clothes are getting cheaper, they follow fashion more rapidly and we are buying more and more of them⁴. How should we respond to these trends?

hence workers, to produce more garments in less time: *War on Want* found that Bangladeshi workers worked up to 80 hours a week and most worked 10 to 14 hours a day, six days a week, well in excess of the official standard working week⁵. It is estimated that about 90 percent of Britain's clothing is produced in Asia, Central America, Eastern Europe and several African countries. Inhumane working conditions, low wages and environmental degradation are widespread in a globalised garment

Street retailers who subcontract much of their work, resulting in situations where child labour is used yet the companies can plead ignorance and blame the subcontractors.

A third approach to ethical fashion highlights the importance of campaign work with industry trade associations, government agencies, non-governmental organizations and socially responsible investment groups. *The Environmental Justice Foundation* is a registered charity established in 2000 to empower people who suffer most from environmental abuses to find peaceful ways of preventing them. It provides advocacy training to individuals and grassroots organisations in the global south, to enable them to document and expose problems, and to create long term solutions to environmental abuses through international campaigns. Such work has produced some successes, notably in the recent decision of Wal-Mart to cease sourcing cotton from Uzbekistan, in an effort to persuade the Uzbek government to end the use of forced child labour in cotton harvesting⁸.

the Franciscan habit or the dog collar, for example, or the traditional idea of 'the Sunday best', as well as the mini-skirt, the hoodie or the Mohican haircut. Clothing is also closely associated with perceptions of bodily beauty, itself highly dependent on variable cultural attitudes. Fashion can be regarded as a form of social control or of therapy, as much as of (self-)discipline: in contemporary western societies, the following of fashion is frequently linked with disciplinary regimes of dieting, exercise, and even cosmetic surgery, as well as, more mundanely, the social activity of shopping to find the 'right' clothes. The pursuit of fashion, like consumerism more generally, has arguably become a kind of spiritual practice, a form of disciplined asceticism and self-control, terms which resonate deeply within the Christian tradition of moral formation.

'Ethical fashion' is equally an elastic term. 'Ethical' here carries the same force as in the phrase 'ethical finance' as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary, namely 'pertaining to, or characterized by, investment in

environmental impact of clothes production. The first of these is therefore concerned with working conditions, the health and safety of workers, pay, the possibility of trade union involvement, the speed of production and all the concerns which fall under the heading of 'fairtrade'. The latter addresses concerns about sustainability, (including waste and recycling), both in the nature of the materials used and how they are used.

Ethical fashion thus implies a particular range of moral principles, the basis of which is frequently not made explicit. However, granted such a concern, and if the Christian community is also guided by its moral principles in its approach to consumption, may we not expect some overlap between the two approaches: could the Christian tradition then have anything to offer the ethical consumer? Even churchgoers are reflective consumers of fashion. Indeed, they probably spend more time in shops than in church! In their choices of where to shop and what to wear they too operate within a globalised market environment and express themselves through their clothes, whether these are conventional, traditional, respectable, glamorous, High Street, retro, vintage or second hand. The implications of this will be explored further in Part II.



Activists and police raid a sweatshop in New Delhi where 14 boys were embroidering women's garments, illustrating the widespread problem of child labour in the country. The children were as young as 10 and said they had never been given promised wages for working up to 15 hours a day

'Fashion' is a somewhat elastic term. It refers not only to the work of high profile designers, typified by *Vogue* magazine, whose creations are publicized by celebrities and displayed on catwalks, but also to the clothes and accessories which we all wear. Individuals and societies have always used clothes and other body adornments (hair styles, piercing, tattoos) as forms of nonverbal communication, a particular language of signs, symbols and iconography, to express their identity or to indicate their group affiliations or their status. Think of

enterprises whose activities do not offend against the moral principles of the investor⁹. 'Ethical fashion' therefore involves wearing clothes and buying products which do not offend against the moral principles of the wearer/buyer. But which moral principles are involved? While the 'fashion' dimension raises the same sorts of issues as fashion in general, the 'ethical' dimension typically addresses two broad areas of concern: one regarding the treatment of the people involved in the production of clothes and the other concerned with the

¹ Primark is a subsidiary of Associated British Foods, which also owns such brands as Kingsmill Bread, Ryvita and Twinings Tea.

² *The Times* 29 October 2008

³ *Let's Clean Up Fashion Labour Behind the Label* Norwich 2006 p63-4

⁴ Cambridge University's Institute for Manufacturing has produced a report *Well Dressed* on the future supply of clothing and textiles to the UK, available at <http://www.ifm.eng.cam.ac.uk/sustainability/projects/>

⁵ *Fashion Victims II War on Want* 2008

⁶ See www.fromsomewhere.co.uk

⁷ See www.peopletree.co.uk

⁸ See www.ejfoundation.org

⁹ See the entry 'ethical finance' in the OED, Online version, accessed 19 Mar 09. This usage is attested only since 1980.

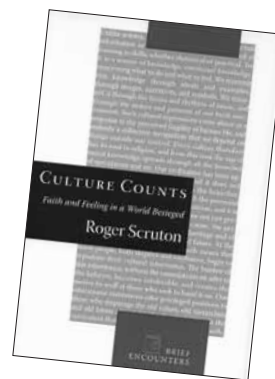
Book Reviews

JAMES MCGARRY

Culture Counts

Faith and Feeling in a World Besieged

by Roger Scruton, Encounter Books, New York



What is culture? Why should we preserve it, and how?

These are enormous questions which might be treated academically, at great length, and with sonority which might well discourage the reader. Happily, that is not the approach of Roger Scruton. He seeks to express his knowledge and opinions simply and briefly, with limpid clarity, and this makes his work eminently readable, so much so, that the reader quickly realises that he or she is enjoying pausing to reflect, turning back a page or more, to be sure that the meaning has been appreciated.

“Culture” is treated with distinct emphases by anthropologists, ethnologists, and sociologists: they agree only that the experiences and values described are shared by a social group, and that “Culture” reflects the human need for membership of a community. Roger Scruton defines culture as inheritance which may not be shared by every member of a community, that it is a creation and a creator of elites. He does not mean to suggest exclusiveness, nor that culture has nothing to do with membership, and with the social need to define and seek to conserve a shared way of life. Although an elite product, its meaning lies in emotions and aspirations that are common to all. The culture of a civilization is the art and literature which gives it a consciousness of itself, and so defines its vision of the world.

As soon as a writer claims that some things inherited deserve to be honoured and others forgotten, he is exercising judgement. His critics challenge him, using the word *subjective*, implying either that objective judgement is possible, which it is not, or that judgement is impossible, or, at least, personal and insignificant. Scruton refutes this approach, but he does not enter into arguments about the meaning of words such as *aesthetics*. To make his case he chooses a surprising example, namely,

laughter. All rational beings laugh: the joke is a universal reality. Laughter is a collective condition, but there are rules. Some jokes are considered to be in bad taste, some things are “not funny”. This shows that judgement is part of laughter, so he concludes that if it is true of laughter, then it is true of everything.

What should be honoured? A cloud of scepticism has gathered in the past hundred years, which has culminated in claims that, for instance, reality TV is as good as Shakespeare, and techno-rock



Author, Roger Scruton

the equal of Brahms. What should be honoured are masterpieces which stimulate us to reflection about the world, about other people, and ourselves. One purpose of this acknowledgement is to give guidance to education: masterpieces illustrate values we wish to retain, and to pass on to the next generation.

Are the values of our culture more important in education than the facts taught in our schools? Roger Scruton certainly thinks so and presents the case. He considers it a modern superstition that the purpose of education is to benefit those who receive it. On the contrary, the pupils are a benefit to knowledge

because in time they will pass on knowledge to future generations. True Teachers are knowledge-centred not child-centred. The foolish notion that the content of the curriculum should be “relevant” to the children results, over time, in all the difficult aspects of knowledge being excised in favour of matters relevant to the uneducated. These matters will quickly become irrelevant and worthless.

Knowledge is of two types, *knowing that* and *knowing how*. Gilbert Ryle is quoted “I know that the earth goes round the sun, and I know how to ride a bicycle”. Knowing what to do includes the idea of purpose, which in turn brings in the vital issue of knowing what to feel, which is inseparable from religion. This traditional cultural role is now virtually eliminated from our society, and disastrously so from our schools. Matthew Arnold’s summing up of the meaning of culture, “the best that has been thought and said” has been displaced or forgotten. Clearly, children should be helped to read and write and count, so that they become competent in the world.

Inevitably, cultural values accompany this teaching and learning, and the great works of literature are the best way to pass on understanding of human nature, and with it, emotional appreciation and judgement, all of which combine to give experience of what to feel in the spiritual, not formally religious, aspects of being human.

Roger Scruton confidently draws attention to the fact that what underlies all the works of art and Western thought is the legacy of Judaeo-Christian monotheism with its spirit of inquiry, the quest for the meaning of life. Inquiry requires judgement and establishes the role of the critic, whose assessments reflect deep knowledge which results in praise of the intrinsic human values in the world in which we live. These

aesthetic judgements have nothing to do with price. He counters scepticism by arguing that these intrinsic values emerge from reasonable critique. He rejects *cultural repudiation*, so prevalent in this time of multiculturalism, and is dismissive of Foucault's offering of "discourse" as a means of explaining the history of human society. Where rational criticism is discouraged it is replaced by sentimentality: a society without criticism loses its memory, and its wish to defend and perpetuate its values, and is on the road to oblivion.

Does it matter to the ordinary person that culture remains the possession of an elite? Culture repudiation leads people to

believe that the elite stand above the mass of people, in a posture of alienation; Scruton says the opposite. A culture perpetuates the memory of a form of social membership and exalts it into something natural, unchangeable, and serene. Repudiation of culture results in elevation of modernity, novelty, transience, sentimentality, artificiality, and contrivance. Worse by far is the new censorship, which is justified by the paradox of *absolutist relativism*, a new orthodoxy from which dissent will not be tolerated. In academic departments truths, meanings, facts and values are now regarded as negotiable, but firmly excluded are the opinions of those who

believe in old authorities and objective truths. Scruton's central thesis is that the relativist tendency to praise novelty and modernity for their own sakes is an attack on permanence, an assault on the idea that anything has an inherent value. The thin crust of normality on which human life is conducted, with mutual respect supporting a genial equilibrium can easily be broken, and the underlying sea of instincts can rise in a show of violence, and produce some of the worst moments of human conflict. No institution, no doctrine, no art, has ever been able to prevent atrocities once the crust of normal life has been broken. Herein lies the vital role of culture.

DAN BAIRD

Left at the Altar:

How the Democrats Lost the Catholics and the Catholics Can Save the Democrats by Michael Sean Winters.

Basic Books, New York 2008. £15.99 (Amazon: from £1.41).

During Franklin Delano Roosevelt's 1936 bid to be re-elected President, he was attacked by Father Charles Coughlin, the populist "Radio Priest", as anti-God. A broadcast in reply by Monsignor John Ryan - a respected moral theologian and the foremost American Catholic spokesman for social reform - commended Roosevelt for introducing "more fundamental legislation for labour and for social justice than any other President in American history" and urged his re-election. Roosevelt received huge support in urban areas from Catholics, Jews and African Americans and in 1937 Ryan became the first Catholic priest to deliver the benediction at a presidential inauguration. Michael Sean Winters observes that "The New Deal coalition had taken definite shape and Catholics were in the front rank."

Winters is an American journalist, a former political speechwriter, and a blogger for the Jesuit journal *America*. In *Left at the Altar*, he traces how the overwhelming Catholic support for the Democrats in 1936 declined in the postwar period until, in the 2004 Presidential Election, Catholic Senator John Kerry actually lost the Catholic vote. It is a fascinating story.

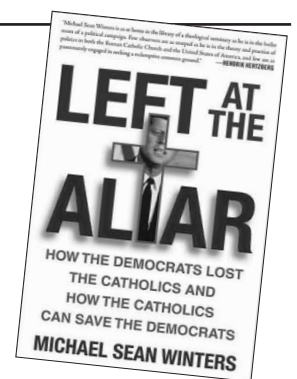
Although Catholic immigrants had been drawn to the Democratic Party - more open to them than "the staid, self-satisfied Republicans" - anti-Catholic prejudice did exist within it. Tension became overt in, for instance, liberal opposition to the Catholic Legion of Decency's attempts to influence Hollywood films and over legal restrictions on birth control in states where Catholics were influential. There were differences among Catholics over these issues, as there were over the response to Communism, civil rights and the morality of the war in Vietnam. Many Catholic bishops were committed supporters of the civil rights movement and when President Kennedy escalated the war in Vietnam, he was supported by all shades of Catholic opinion.

As doubts about the war increased, however, Democrat and Catholic Left opposition to the war grew. The few bishops who spoke out on the war spoke in support of the US Administration, most memorably Cardinal Spellman, whose "Total victory means peace" was described by Professor J. M. Cameron as "sub-Christian Catholicism". But Spellman expressed accurately the views of the Catholic working-class and when, in 1972, antiwar candidate Senator

George McGovern became the Democratic Presidential candidate, many ethnic Catholics - disgusted by what they saw as "the Left's antimilitary and anti-American excesses" - deserted the Party.

However, it was abortion that divided the Catholic Left from the non-Catholic Left, and in an excellent chapter Winters explains that "Abortion was the iceberg against which the New Deal coalition of Catholics and liberals crashed and sank." He charts the debate over legalisation through the 1960s and 1970s to *Roe v. Wade* - the Supreme Court's 1973 ruling that overturned all state and federal laws outlawing and restricting abortion - and subsequent Catholic responses. Many Catholic voters were alienated from the Party and a number of previously pro-life Democrats, pressured by secular liberals - including women's organisations now backed by *Roe* - changed their position. The ensuing "culture wars" have poisoned political debate in America, with the Democrats being presented as a secular party in a churchgoing country, something the Republicans have exploited.

Catholic Democrats - like Edward Kennedy, Nancy Pelosi and John Kerry -



who describe themselves as “pro-choice” argue that they are personally anti-abortion but have no right, as legislators, to attempt to impose their views on a society where the right to abortion is now guaranteed and where the great majority of citizens - including numbers of Catholics - see abortion as morally permissible, at least in some situations. Winters well describes the debates around that position, which are now further embittered by the view of some US bishops that Catholic pro-choice politicians should not present themselves for Communion.

Left at the Altar was published before the

election of Barack Obama, who in fact won the majority of Catholic votes, assisted in an exceptional year by the twin disasters of a financial collapse and George W. Bush’s record. He was supported by groups like Catholics United who argue that, since the controversy over Roe is achieving nothing, pro-life and pro-choice Democrats should unite around Obama’s plans for abortion reduction in the context of universal health care and improved assistance for America’s poor.

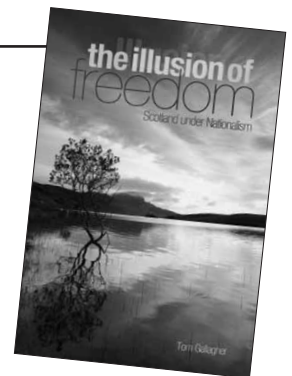
In an informative, well-written and intelligent book, Michael Sean Winters supports this programme. He urges the

Catholic Left to adopt the late Archbishop Joseph Bernardin’s “seamless garment” approach to life issues: to work against abortion, capital punishment and war. He argues, too, that Catholic Democrats are particularly well-placed to work with America’s growing - and electorally important - Latino population. “Here”, he writes, “the Democrats can find the secrets of electoral success that Franklin Roosevelt and Monsignor John Ryan discerned in crafting the New Deal: traditional American liberalism married to Catholic social teachings, creating policies that are morally upright and politically successful.”

BOOK NOTICE

The Illusion of Freedom: *Scotland Under Nationalism*

by Tom Gallagher. Hurst & Co, London, publication date, 24 September 2009, Paperback, Price £12.99, ISBN 1850659966



This will be Tom Gallagher’s tenth single-authored book. He has written extensively about how to harness nationalism’s potential and control its disruptive aspects in different parts of Europe in a 30-year career spent teaching politics at the University of Bradford. He campaigned over many years for Scotland to acquire a devolved Parliament and is a critic of the EU’s centralizing plans. His most recent book is entitled *Romania and the EU: How the Weak Conquered the Strong Manchester University Press (2009)* Gallagher maintains that Alex Salmond is making the biggest challenge to the Unity of

Britain in its 300-year history. The Scottish National Party wants Scotland to embrace independence. The Author argues that if the Union is demolished, change will not happen. Scotland will continue to be run by all the usual groups. Gallagher also maintains that the SNP has no worthwhile plans for reviving Scotland’s struggling economy and for solving the awful social problems in Scotland’s towns and cities.


Professor Gallagher maintains that the SNP is not committed to real independence but is a *super-unionist* party since the SNP is a strong supporter

of the European Union’s plans for a post-national Europe based on federalist rule from Brussels. It supports radical forms of multi-culturalism which will downgrade individual citizenship. Gallagher maintains that if the SNP wins it will strengthen authoritarian government in Scotland and result in greater rule from Brussels than we have already.

Scotland needs to work closely with England, Wales and Ireland as in the past to achieve prosperity in the future.

A Question

A poem by
Peter Granger Banyard, SJ.



Why are we webbed with spoken words?
Must we always translate to sound
the light, the scent, the taste, the feel of things?
Let the mallard’s colours be,
the bluebells in the wood,
the sweet Spring breeze that softly strokes the face.
Learn the lesson from silent swifts and swallows
that weave arcs and curves
all invisible in the May time air.

Film Review

IAN D. WILLOCK

Angels and Demons

This film should have a special dimension of interest for readers of this periodical in as much as it purports to take place in Rome at the time of the election of a new Pope. However the Vatican did not welcome it and refused the use of St. Peter's, the Sistine Chapel, and four city churches which the producers wished to use, apparently on the grounds that they (apart from the Chapel) would have been the scene of murders and explosions and would have attracted visitors for the wrong reasons.

So excluded from the sacred sites in which the writer Dan Brown had set his novel of the same name, the producers seem to have felt liberated from any obligation to remain faithful to the processes for the election of a Pope. These were exhaustively revised by John Paul II as recently as 1996 in the Apostolic Constitution *Universi Pontifici Regis* and of course first used in the election of Pope Benedict. There is a Cardinal called the Camerlengo among whose duties it is to declare the papacy to be vacant and with a handful of others to take urgent decisions in the absence of a Pope. The film-makers wished to give a part to Crieff's most famous son, Ewan McGregor. So they appointed him the Camerlengo, though no Cardinal, and he floats about both in the Conclave and outside it. His Scottish accent is presumably indistinguishable from an Irish one to the American film-makers and he brushes that aside by some muttered reference to his involvement with the IRA! Much more significant however was the decision to build in turn the Roman sites, from which the film-makers were shut out, in Culver City, California, on a car park. So one is only seeing slices of famous buildings which can be burnt or blown up as the plot demands then swept away and replaced by another imitation of Christian Rome, which will be

interspersed with some genuine Roman buildings viewed from the streets outside.

Now the time is overdue to attempt an account of the plot of the film. If one said it was about the conflict between religion and science that would sound both topical and fascinating. The trouble is almost all the development of the plot is on the religious side which is certainly much more colourful, especially the scarlet cardinals like some exotic tropical birds. We are admitted for a few minutes to the CERN experiment in Geneva to stand for all current science. (Richard Dawkins, break your heart). But dipping back into scientific history a secret society had made its appearance called the Illuminati, who resent the killing of four scientists by the Church in the 18th century for following Galileo, who of course in the 17th century was allowed to develop his astronomical ideas as long as he did not talk to the simple laity about them. The present-day Illuminati are believed to be taking their revenge by kidnapping four cardinals who are *papabili*. The two and a quarter hours of the film is largely devoted to deducing with the help of books in the Vatican Library which four Roman churches, representing fire, air, light and water, each is being held in and rescuing him before it is too late.

Finally a couple of practical recommendations. The noise level composed of constant music of Wagnerian proportions, explosions, fires and quarrels, is so intense that people should take cotton wool for their ears. If anyone is prompted by the film to find out the reality of *The Election of a Pope* he or she can discover it in the excellent CTS pamphlet of that name by Fr. Charles Burns, who though of the Diocese of Paisley, has spent his life as a priest in Rome.



Scots actor Ewan McGregor as the Camerlengo.



Ayelet Zurer and Tom Hanks in a scene from *Angels and Demons*.



Tom Hanks (left) with director, Ron Howard.

YOUR LETTERS

Dear Editors...



Dear Editors,

I just need to write and thank you for the editorial in May's edition. Your criticisms of the closure of Scotus reflect the important issues at stake for the Catholic Church in Scotland. The 'lack of vision' and 'accountability' you express are, I believe, key to any progress. I understand that the Catholic Church in Norway, which has only a small Catholic population, has recently opened its own seminary in conjunction with the local university. By comparison, the Church in Scotland appears to be running scared, afraid to take on challenges it faces.

Thanks again for such accurate assessment of the situation.

Mary Glen, Airdrie.

Dear Editors

Re your May editorial: The question aimed at me by Archbishop Winning during one of our fatuous meetings 30 years ago about the training of priests was: *Do you want me to go against the Pope?*

As a member of staff at Cardross (Seminary) I had taken part in fruitless discussions with our colleagues in Drygrange (Seminary) about the possibility of a National Seminary in Scotland. Cardross and Drygrange had a very different ethos and Mgr John Barry, Rector at Drygrange, was quite rightly determined to defend what was largely his creation. Glasgow - Edinburgh rivalry did not help. I might add that we had suggested a "neutral" venue - Dunblane or Stirling - and we cast envious eyes on Craigmackhart, the Edinburgh Catholic teacher training campus.

Come our September meeting with the Governors of Cardross, who were the bishops of the Western Province, the only item on the agenda was a report on the way forward. *Did we discuss this* asked the Archbishop. *I don't remember* said Bishop McGill. Bishop Thompson who had transferred his students to Drygrange said nothing. If I had had the courage of my convictions I would have left at that point.

When the Archbishop later informed us that we would abandon Cardross I suggested we might look at the use of the various large and empty parish houses in the city centre. I had been in contact for reasons of Industrial Chaplaincy with the staff of Strathclyde University who were quite taken with the thought of a ministry / theology Faculty, an idea which would have allowed us to build something from scratch rather than try to meld into an already existing and traditional Faculty as in Glasgow University.

The Scottish bishops had returned from an *ad limina* visit which followed that of the Dutch Bishops who had been taken to task for their apparently outrageous idea that seminaries had passed their sell-by date. Hence the Archbishop's reaction - plus his subsequent comment about which we had been unaware: *Anyway we have already acquired a building in Newlands!* The opportunity to look at priestly formation was then lost. If it had ever been there.

We go back to the old cliché: the right question is more important than the right answer. If the question is: *where do we put the seminary?* then possibly Rome is the only answer. Would *how do we train priests* not be a better question and one which would open up a range of options?

Frank Kennedy

St Michael's, Parkhead, Glasgow.

Dear Editors,

Interesting as Austin MacCawley's article was (Open House Issue 193), once again we have a veiled attack on Pius XI's conduct during World War 11 in the phrase "that does not excuse the silence of the Vatican".

I suppose once such ideas enter into the public consciousness, like the so called 'Bermuda Triangle', despite any amount of rational refutation they persist. It is interesting that the calumny against Pius XI started with a work of fiction, Rolf Hochhuth's play 'The Deputy'.

Obviously there was good money in peddling this idea, as many joined in afterwards including of course John Cornwall with his book 'Hitler's Pope'

which showed a photograph of Eugenio Pacelli striding from a diplomatic function in Germany, without making it clear of course that the photograph was taken before the Nazi's came to power. But why spoil a good story with facts.

For those readers of 'Open House' who might want to redress the imbalance of opinion against this fine Pope two recent books will I am sure prove worthwhile reading. Although one is a reprint and the other relatively new, they both have one thing in common. The earlier book "Before the Dawn" was written by Eugenio Zolli who had been the chief rabbi in Rome during the war years. The book is essentially about his spiritual journey towards Catholicism but as readers will have noticed he took the Pope's Christian name as his own baptismal name. However, much detail is given in this book about the war years and the persecution of the Jews in Rome. The second book was written by Rabbi David G. Dalin and entitled "The Myth of Hitler's Pope". Rabbi Dalin asserts that Pius XI's interventions, where he judged they would be efficacious, saved the lives of hundreds of thousands of Jews.

With his years of diplomatic service in Germany the Pope knew, better than most, the forces he was dealing with and he knew the depth of the wickedness and brutality of the Nazis. Many Catholic clergymen had been under attack by the Nazi's before the war, attacks which increased as the war went on. The Pope obviously judged that his public interventions would have been counterproductive.

I do hope that Benedict XVI persists with his plans to proceed with the process of canonisation of Pius XI but no doubt the same people who avoid travelling in the 'Bermuda Triangle' will protest.

James Scanlan.

Dear Editor,

I completely agree with Ian Willock's review of 'In the Loop'. My wife and I went to see it last Saturday. Buoyed up by all the hype, we were expecting a side-splitting, uproarious comedy, but all the film could raise in us was an occasional chuckle. As we came out of the Cinema, we told each other how disappointed we were and our overall verdict was that it was pretty feeble. We have not been recommending it to our friends but telling them not to bother.

I enjoyed the recent issue of Open House and was intrigued by the hard hitting editorial.

Best Wishes

Joe Fitzpatrick
Ilkley, West Yorks.

Dear Editor,

Many thanks for the 'Open House' which I read from cover to cover. I am keeping fairly well considering my hearing and my walking are terrible! Roll on my ninetieth birthday!

One comment on something in the latest Open House with which I disagree. J.V. Isaacs in his otherwise excellent "Reflective Rant" - a great title - says 'we have built a consumer society and a service economy which demands that we spend, spend, spend'. Consumers (i.e. that's every single one of us!) do not demand a spending economy. They want one in which the things they have to buy - for necessity or pleasure - are available at reasonable prices reflecting their source and their cost. The merit of our new consumer society is that for the first time in history consumers are able to speak up and express - through such bodies as the S.C.C., C.A.B. and many more - their arguments on the reasonability of the charges they are forced to pay - and the pressures put on them to pay these. 'Consumerism' includes such costs as health, education, housing, etc., without which provision we would be a pretty poor lot!

Joan Macintosh, Auchterarder.

CHRISTIAN SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

'Money and Morality; The Banking Crisis'

by John McFall MP

(Chairman of the House of Commons
Treasury Committee)

on

Saturday 27th June at 11 am

in

St Peter's Church Hall,
Partick, Glasgow.

(Travel; Buses to Dumbarton Road or Subway
to Kelvin Hall)

Robert McLaughlan Book Club

JAMES McGARRY

Will talk on the Book

'Culture Counts'

by Rodger Scruton

on Tuesday 23rd June 2009

in Western Club, Glasgow.

at 7.15 pm.

Entry; £6.00 Refreshments at 6.45 pm

Confirm place by emailing

Armstrj567@aol.com or Phone 0141 427 2222.

A Review of the book is in this Month's
Issue of Open House, See page 11.

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