

# Sacred values before pluralism

The February 22 issue of *Gateway* devoted a good bit of space to the quality of life and morality. Morality may be defined as the relation between a human act and man's ultimate end. Since morality is a strict relation of dependence upon the ultimate end of man, there can be as many moral systems as man envisions his ultimate good. They are traditionally classified as the virtuous (honest), the useful (utilitarian) and the pleasurable (hedonistic). Accordingly, the moral norm of human acts consists in their aptitude at leading man to that end. In order to determine the morality of a human act empirically, one must study its object, end, and circumstances, as well as the three elements which constitute the sources of morality.

The question of abortion is laden with emotion; abortionists and anti-abortionists tend to get equally shrill and vituperative which makes most people reluctant to be identified with either group. This does not vitiate the merit of their argument. May I suggest that we discuss the

## Real people politics

Mike Ekelund, keep up the good work in representing the real people. I applaud your stand on abortion and the fact that the Students' Union has no right to make a judgement on this issue.

People like C. Graydon, who see the right for abortions as a form of human liberties, are defining human liberties as "what is convenient for me." People with such selfish attitudes deserve only to be ignored, as whatever they may have to say will only be in their own self interest, not for the benefit of you or me or society.

It was cavemen who had the courage to face the potential of the human race and to try and fulfill it who helped bring mankind to its present level. Others who prefer to turn their backs on humanity to the point that they are willing to condemn others to death obviously have found no worth in their own existence.

Colette Bielech

## Critic's criticism of criticism criticized

Rosaleen Moran's letter in the Feb. 22 *Gateway* shows clearly that Ms. Moran is capable of writing even more poorly, in both content and form, than she did in her review of Eli Mandel's poetry reading. The letter, ostensibly Ms. Moran's defence of her article in the face of critical letters written by Jessica Singer and Marni Stanley, features a petty and vindictive attack directed at Miss Stanley's English and logic. Ms. Moran wonders "if it is worth while (sic) replying to a letter such as the one from Ms. Stanley in which she" makes six errors (kindly enumerated by Ms. Moran) in English and logic. (Of these, it should be mentioned, two are likely the fault of *Gateway* hieroglyphic readers and two are not errors at all.) Ms. Moran, without having mentioned Miss Stanley's criticism, concludes that "Ms. Stanley's abilities to judge the merits of Mandel's poetry, or (Ms. Moran's) own article, are clearly

question of life in a larger context such as war, capital punishment, and euthanasia. Should we eliminate people (under sterile medical conditions, of course) who appear to be useless to society and impede our quest for pleasure such as the aged, the infirm, the welfare recipient, and the Ottawa Liberal? Do we have the right to

terminate the life of another human being, or should we regard all life (no matter its worth to society) as sacred and inalienable even if it is old and allegedly useless, or in the womb and as yet unevaluated?

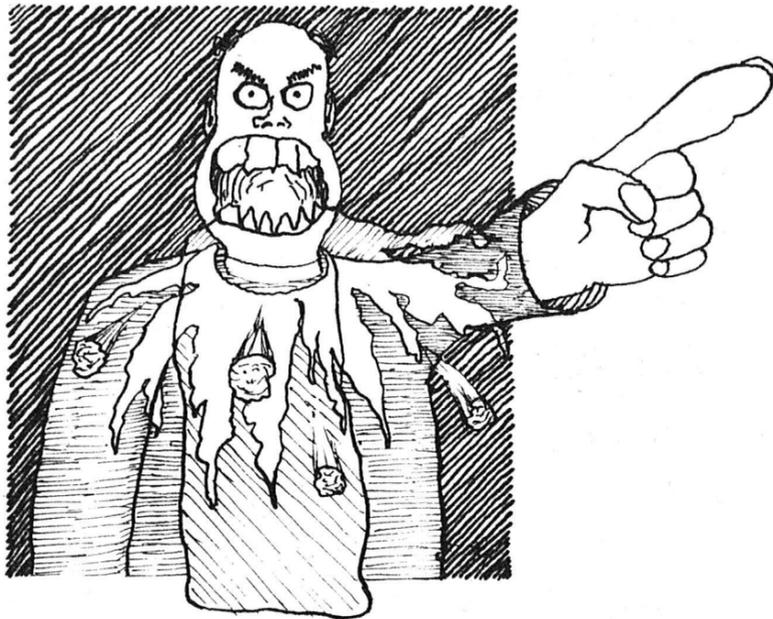
The Christian, basing morality on Gospel values, sees life as sacred and God as the ultimate end. The conflict arises

between the Christian and others who hold comparable values on the one hand, and the person who does not share these values. In the past number of centuries the Christian might have been intolerant of divergent values; today we see the pro-abortionist impose on the Christian the value that another's life should not impede the useful and the

pleasurable. Is there a solution in a pluralist society? While there is a place for pluralism, there are unresolved differences. An appeal to pluralism cannot justify any every whim, e.g., society continue to consider something immoral in spite of the individual's appeal to a utilitarian morality.

I would submit that progress as far as we have for the integrity and dignity of other human beings. I admit, however, that Christians have not always been that good! When we impose our views by violently beating the opposition to a pulp we are achieving nothing.

John C. Van Damme



## Debate premises questioned

I would like to join the outraged crowd who have recently seen fit to comment on the abortion issue. The original question — i.e. the comparative rights of a woman to the control of her body and a child to its life — I feel is partially worded. It presupposes an embryo to be a human being complete with rights and freedoms. It presupposes the woman's interest to be solely selfish. Neither premise has been proven; neither can be assumed true and therefore the question is invalid.

The woman who wishes or has an abortion cannot be classified as a nymphomaniac out for a good time and looking to shirk the consequences or as wishing to 'have her cake and eat it too.' It is a traumatic experience for all concerned, the woman, and, if he's still around, her lover, have most probably thought seriously and deeply

about the step. Chances are the issues involved are more than self-interest: children are an expensive proposition and often the mother of an unplanned child will therefore be unable to care for it correctly. Is it just to sentence both mother and child to such a dismal future? In other cases, the thought of a child is sincerely abhorred, and though granted its much-vaunted "right to live" by our glorious crusaders, the baby will still be unwanted: our adoption system is backed up for years, thus the mother must reluctantly keep her child. Will its life, in such circumstances, be so wonderful? It is not always fair to the future child to force the mother to carry the foetus to term and so eventually dump it into a world which doesn't want it.

As to contraceptives: anti-abortionists must grant that their effectiveness is not 100%, thus a

woman's choice is not "always made well before" either the conception of abortion." Abstinence is a solution which discounts human nature, especially when one considers that even after marriage many couples don't immediately want children.

Finally, why must society dictate to the individual on an issue so personal? Does the "right to life" not also include the living? Inherent to that right is freedom. That freedom is necessary in this issue because lack of it can severely jeopardize the happiness of both mother and child. If you are against abortion, well and good: if you ever need one, exercise your opinion, and don't have one, but allow those who disagree to also exercise their freedom in the same situation.

Carolyn Seitz  
Arts I

demonstrated by her letter, and needs (sic) no further comment from (Ms. Moran)."

Ms. Moran's claim is ludicrous. Nothing could be more wrong. A person's ability to read and write does not necessarily bear any relation to his ability to listen and think. It is for this reason that someone who is truly illiterate could conceivably have attended Dr. Mandel's reading and accurately judged its merits. Further, poor form does not nullify content. It is for this reason that the works

of authors such as Melville, Dreiser, Faulkner, and (dare I say?) Cooper continue to be read at the university level — perhaps none of these authors could pass freshman English, but each cogently and perspicuously expresses important ideas. Ms. Moran's attack is but a variation of the *argumentum ad hominem*: it is itself an error in logic.

Perhaps Ms. Moran would better understand the injustice of her attack if the tables were turned—that is, if Ms. Moran's letter were itself examined for the

presence of minute grammatical errors and illogic. A search of this kind proves fruitful: Ms. Moran's letter includes no fewer than *eighteen* such errors. By Ms. Moran's reasoning, her own letter and her own article are invalid.

But they are not (or if they are, it is not for this reason). Nor is the cogency of Miss Stanley's criticism destroyed by her English, which is quite comprehensible, and illogicalities, which are occasional.

## Mistakes everywhere, even here

As Miss Stanley is illiterate today and feeling most out of sorts about it, I volunteered to represent her in this delightful correspondence. I don't intend to defend her, after all 'Ms Moran is an honorable woman,' but I'm sure the Wife of Bath would drop her hose to hear that Chaucer is not concerned with the in-

dividual and Isaac Singer worked so hard for that Nobel Prize just to have it denied him in the *Gateway*. As I was saying over tea the other day — we Arts students do so love to chat, having Milfred Campbell to look up to and all — and a vague recollection came to me about a Canadian poet who came and

read to us and it seemed such a small thing to provoke such long letters. Still, a voice kept saying in my ear as I read, "There is a point, there is a point." I soon shut him up.

Your most obedient servant,  
Oscar Bunbury  
Arts II

## Unborn

I oppose abortion because I have concluded, on the basis of the available information, that an unborn child is a person, a little baby person, but a person nonetheless.

Therefore, no "social circumstances" are sufficient to permit abortion. The decision to have an abortion may be difficult and traumatic for the mother, but our compassion for her cannot blind us to our duty. And our duty is to provide citizens with the equal protection of the law.

The phrase "the right to life" would be funny if the issue were not so gravely serious. The womb is not the graveyard for living people, not for the unborn.

If in fact the fetus is a person, there can be no question of a right to choose, no room for abuse thereof, when it is demonstrated otherwise can there be any argument for "choice": a position which supports abortion without addressing this issue is a position which cannot respect. The question, of course, is not when life begins (even the sperm and egg are alive), but when *human* life begins — otherwise, the decision would never have begun at all.

John S.  
Grad S.

I believe that Ms. Moran's review was, as Miss Stanley expressed it, "a travesty of critical writing," and I agree with the many objections thereto by the letters of Jessica Singer and Miss Stanley. I wonder how Ms. Moran presumes to review a poetry reading for much of which she was not present. It may be that Ms. Moran that Dr. Mandel spoke of 'solely Jewish comedians' for (I estimate) less than five minutes out of fifty. Also, the significance of the suicide was not clear until near the end of the reading—long after Ms. Moran had left.

Ms. Moran apparently does not know either of these important facts when she wrote her article and her letter. If she perhaps she would not have found it necessary to defend her review as she did. As I stand, however, I believe Ms. Moran owes Miss Stanley an apology.

Ken Gra...