

CANDIRU AGAIN

Not This August 1993

Published infrequently by John Foyster, PO Box 3086, Grenfell Street, Adelaide SA 5000, for the Fantasy Amateur Press Association.

Missed Opportunities (One of...)

Fred Lerner's mid-life crisis analysis in the May **Lofgeomost** is responsible for this piece - though not wholly responsible, since if I hadn't just read Dennis Overbye's **Lonely Hearts of the Cosmos** I would not be setting out along this path.

In no sense did I hasten to buy **Lonely Hearts of the Cosmos**, but when it was remaindered I picked it up. But even then I didn't hurry to read it. And when I did read it, it took me back twenty years to a career I didn't pursue. (And I still think I did the right thing.)

At the end of the 1960s the world of cosmology was an interesting place: as just one example, Stephen Hawking's papers were beginning to flood the journals. In Melbourne I was completing a degree and moving into postgraduate studies, and wondering what sort of career to follow - in those days university graduates could contemplate a career. **Lonely Hearts of the Cosmos** describes the kinds of things which, as a graduate student, I was looking into (and, of course, a great deal more). In the final year of my undergraduate degree I had to investigate one contemporary paper, and it happened to be a paper exploring the kinds of ways the universe exploded into being - referred to in **LHOTC** in a sort of way as the pancake theory of Zeldovich (page 155).

I write 'sort of way' because Overbye talks about the idea as relating to galaxy formation, whereas the more general notion was of the way the universe appeared (i.e. that the Big Bang need not have been symmetrical in space: a symmetrical explosion would have produced a ball, whereas an asymmetric explosion might have produced a pancake or a cigar, depending on the nature of the asymmetry - after all, the Big Bang was not symmetrical in time, so an assumption that it was symmetrical with respect to space is pretty arbitrary).

As something to do when my graduate studies began, my supervisor and I began to play around with the equations in the paper, and I had soon shuffled them into the kind of shape which suggests that whether or not the universe started off 'symmetrically' it would pretty soon settle down into that state. This had already been done by Charles Misner (a brilliant man not mentioned in **LHOTC**, probably because he was a mathematician rather than a physicist).

As a next step I solved the equations which had been thus shuffled to allow a computer solution in some simple cases which tracked the early history of the universe (making assumptions about what the dominant influence was at the particular time - e.g. at the beginning, if the universe was not symmetrical then that asymmetry was the dominant influence). My supervisor and I wrote two papers covering the simplest cases where two influences (e.g. anisotropy (to give asymmetry a fancy name) and energy) were present; these equations describe the evolution of the universe as though it were two fluids. So much for the first couple of months of my graduate study. The papers weren't very interesting to anyone, and were eventually published in Australian mathematical journals. (I also solved the same equations for the case of three co-existing fluids, but the solution was sufficiently complicated - it would take one whole page to write it down, and would therefore be very unlikely to be set correctly if published - and sufficiently uninteresting that I never bothered to try to get it published.)

I spent the next eighteen months noodling around moving between theoretical stuff and more practical mathematics (by which I mean trying to solve equations relating to particular kinds of black hole) without really settling down in one satisfying direction (making it hard to describe what my thesis topic was going to be). I did publish a couple more papers pointing out errors in other people's papers (cases in which they had failed to give complete solutions). I could do this partly because of the 'theoretical stuff'. In my doodlings I quickly found that I had to keep track of where I was in the possible kinds of space-time.

I need to say with some show of precision what I mean by this last phrase. In general, when people write about the complexity of space-time they refer to the different kinds of curved space-time which one finds in our universe (i.e. kinds of space-time in which the three space-like and one time-like dimension are linked). But Einstein's general relativity is not limited to space-times in which there are four dimensions in this particular pattern (one time-like and three space-like). (I refer here only to the macro-dimensions, and so exclude fancier models such as Kaluza-Klein theories.)

In the next section I therefore want to avoid the time-like associations of the word 'before' and will therefore write (very occasionally) 'causally prior' to refer to events occurring in a particular relationship in general space-times.

To try to make clear what this means, consider Stephen Hawking's description of the beginning of the universe as being like tracking back along a meridian of longitude until you reach the North Pole. You can't go further north because there is no further north, and in that sense asking about what happened 'before' the universe started is nonsensical. But this resolution is, of course, partly a matter of choice of coordinate systems. I'm therefore using 'causally prior' to stand for something like what people are trying to get at when they ask what happened before the universe began.

I now return to my doodlings. As I've indicated above, I needed to keep track of where I was in the morass of available space-times, and so I had put together a little

diagram which showed how the various kinds of space-time were linked, and what circumstances led to being in one kind or another. Let me give a concrete example. One of the papers I challenged was by a couple of Japanese who seemed to have solved a particular problem (probably trivial - I no longer recall what it was). The only problem, as I was able to show fairly easily, was that to solve the problem they had at one point assumed that the space-time family in which they were working was at one point one in which there were basically three time-like dimensions and one space-like dimension. The problem was certainly solvable if you took that approach, but the assumption is a fairly large one.

By the middle of 1972 I was feeling decidedly dissatisfied with my progress. It was clear that the hot centres of investigation were in England and the USA, and we in Australia only got the real news about developments very late in the day. In addition, I guess I wasn't keen on two other developments in general relativity. One was the increasing use of computers to do numerical approximations to solutions of Einstein's equations, which seemed to me impure. The second was the growing association between general relativity and high energy physics. That was not a direction I was interested in (for heaven's sake, head down that path and you might wind up writing in a fanzine about what a nice chap Edward Teller is to work for - which is what Greg Benford has recently done). So when an opportunity for a job came up I took it (after some consultations with the Dean of mathematics).

I didn't regret the change, and never have. But there was an aftermath. The diagram I used to keep track of where one is in general space-time proved to be useful to other graduate students at my old university, and then to others overseas. Eventually, it was the centrepiece in a joint paper in the **Journal of Mathematical Physics** in 1981, some ten years after I first used it. The diagram essentially classifies the kinds of space-time described by a very general tensor (the Weyl square tensor) in Einstein's general relativity.

I sometimes wish that I had pursued that other career. For example, I believe that it is more useful to think of the beginning of the universe as simply the point at which 'our' space-time (the one you could describe as 3S-T) emerged out of the more general forms of space-time. Causally prior to that point in space-time lies a whole system of differently-differentiated space-times (this sounds a bit politically correct, doesn't it? Sorry), and I think that the formulations of general relativity theory existing twenty years ago (in particular the formulation of Roger Penrose and Ezra Newman) would allow some exploration of these forms of space-time which are outside our own universe. Just one example: suppose that, as the Hebrew Bible has it, it all began when god said 'let there be light' - this could suggest as one area for investigation a space-time in which the four underlying dimensions are all light-like (certainly covered in Einstein's theory). Nah - it all sounds like science fiction to me.

Ronald Reagan fostered the spread of AIDS

Although a full analysis of the impact of the great stupor of the 1980s will have to await later writers, we can make some beginning. A couple of nights ago, flicking across the local television channels, I came upon someone declaring that Ronald

Reagan was a very smart man. Not surprisingly, the declarer proved to be one of the great intellectual turkeys of our time - Edward de Bono, who is so thick that he actually boasts of having advised IBM.

But it got me thinking about what impact RR has had.

On the one hand RR gave ignorance and stupidity a higher profile - and therefore more credibility - than they had previously had. On the other, forms of greed even more crass than one would have thought possible acquired respectability on a world-wide basis (and are reflected now, for example, in the economic restructuring of the former Soviet Union).

But what about Ronnie and AIDS?

Just this week - as I write - **The New Yorker** has published a piece by the novelist Harold Brodkey in which he announces that he has AIDS. Admitting that one has AIDS is now a matter requiring considerable PR skills since the press regards it as a matter of such interest (though maybe not if the sufferer is a right-wing conservative...). AIDS has so high a profile in part because of the kind of people who acquire it (or rather, who acquire it in Western society). Other diseases, which kill many more people each year and which are much more manageable (for example, malaria) don't get anything like the press AIDS does.

A good deal of the publicity is centred around the extent to which medical scientists are able to make progress towards finding ways of dealing with this particular virus.

There are three particular ways in which I think RR has contributed to the problem. Firstly, only people who are stupid/ignorant/uneducated like Ronnie would believe that a complex scientific problem can be solved quickly by throwing shovels of money at it. Secondly, only such people could ignore established and effective procedures for managing outbreaks of contagious disease. Thirdly, only such people would devote large amounts of energy to inventing alternative explanations for their (collective) condition.

We can take these in reverse order.

Alternative explanations for AIDS are widespread in Africa (where the density is quite high). The essential deduction of these alternative theories is that condoms and other such preventative approaches are unnecessary. It is not surprising that similar theories are popular in parts of North America which favour alternative explanations of everything. (Despite my remarks about Isaac Asimov's writing in the previous issue, I wouldn't want it to be thought that I don't admire his remorseless rationalism. But whether during the 1980s he was trying to hold back a ceaseless tide of irrationalism remains to be seen - there's no sign of retreat as yet.) Although Michael Medved's **Hollywood Vs. America** is not one of the greatest books of our time, Medved does make an interesting point about the attitude of the Californian image-makers. In his section on the anti-religious movies, Medved notes (e.g. pages 85-87) that criticism of religion is restricted to 'established' religion, pointing out that

any number of alternative faiths appear to be protected from such criticism, and indeed may well be advocated: 'I think it's really important to open up people's minds to the idea of past lives. etc etc' (Jon Voight, *re Eternity*) Thus, Medved points out, criticism of the conventional is accompanied by distinct and strong advocacy of the decidedly loopy. (I'm not suggesting that this pattern of behaviour is new, but that in the case of AIDS, and whether in North America or elsewhere, there are large consequences since people die because they reject rationalism.)

Let's turn now to the second point. Ignoring the consequences of sexual behaviour is a long-time human weakness, and the attitude towards AIDS is only a part of this. In William Ober's admirable **Boswell's Clap and Other Essays** the title essay documents Boswell's persistent acquaintance with gonorrhoea. Boswell was not only several times infected, but he generously shared this infection with his lady friends. Failing to use a condom was, in Boswell's case, usually a consequence of being drunk. Use of a condom has been a central component of the campaign against AIDS in Australia (as elsewhere), but it is no longer clear that this is an effective strategy. (Actually we must have known this all along, since the continuing existence of gonorrhoea and syphilis are testimony to the failure of human beings to look after themselves and their sexual partners in this way.)

In the March-April 1993 edition of **The Sciences** the recent work of a gay anthropologist is reported in summary. His study involved dealings with gays in toilets and similar places in Europe in recent years, and suggests that invitations for unprotected sex are generally accepted: he, the anthropologist, had to insist on the use of a condom. We are not obliged to look at such matters wholly abstractly. Roger Weddall would not be dead if he had insisted on the use of a condom. My own brother would not now be dying of AIDS if he had insisted on using a condom. It is hard to believe that promiscuous homosexuals (like my brother, for example) would have AIDS had they always practised what is termed 'safe sex'. (In general, of course, 'safe sex' is not what is currently being advised for particular communities, but what has been sensible since before Boswell's time.)

But this is not the only way in which the gay community has talked in one way and (in the case of at least a significant minority) acted in another. When HIV was first beginning to be identified (and Randy Shilts documents this reasonably well) the medical profession wanted to take quite strong measures to contain the problem early. But efforts to close the bath-houses in San Francisco and New York were strongly rejected. (In the 19th century, when medicos were beginning to understand the transmission of disease, social control was a little easier.) It is easy to see the social reasons for this. Male homosexuals had been persecuted for years and here, having achieved some freedom, many of them were asked to retreat. If we take the trouble to try to understand how such people felt, then we are also obliged to recognise that in insisting upon their right to continue a way of life in the face of 'conventional wisdom' about the spread of disease, they also fostered a particular health hazard. In rejecting a particular and negative social view of gay behaviour, the gay community also had to reject the conventional scientific wisdom on disease control. It is almost as though the gay community believed, in a Stalinist/Lysenkoist

way, that a political agenda could shape biology. Only politically acceptable solutions were medically acceptable.

Such a conclusion can be reached as a result of a substantial rejection of scientific thought (well documented in the US community) or a profound lack of ability to grasp its basics.

And this leads back to the first point. A society which believes in quick fixes will not be able to comprehend the complexity of the real world. Ronnie believed in just such a simple world. His economics made no sense (and have almost wrecked the world's system), and his politics held back political developments for more than a decade. It's little wonder that his profound ignorance of rational thinking should have bled over onto every aspect of life in the world - including the spread of AIDS.

Mailing Comments

Since the purpose of this edition was to try to squeeze in some timely mailing comments, I ought to attempt at least a couple of pages! The May 1993 mailing, having arrived on July 9, quite literally only gives me a day or two to prepare comments, but it is an opportunity I want to take.

Private Enterprise Rabbit
David Bratman

I guess I'm a book collector of the 'reading-only' variety. When I recently bought the missing volume in the Lanny Budd series which I had been seeking for some years, the one I found was a first US edition, and therefore somewhat more expensive than the cheap British reprints I was used to. But this one **was** the first I had ever seen! As might be guessed, two weeks after buying the first edition ... but is there a member of FAPA to whom this **hasn't** happened?

Obviously your remarks on Asimov's essay on stupidity fit in quite well with some of my remarks above. I didn't know that Otto Friedrich had published any books, so I'll keep an eye open: thank you. Your notes on Hugo ballot-counting are depressing. I may, long ago, once or twice have nominated or voted, but I'm afraid I have always had little interest in such things.

Lofgeomost
Fred Lerner

Unfortunately you almost alone are responsible for this fanzine, Fred, so I expect you to take it on the chin. I suppose I could reflect a little on whether I feel there have been missed opportunities in my own life other than the one described at the beginning of **Candiru Again**. The answer must be that there have been several. But I suspect that I have controlled this tendency somewhat by changing jobs (which I do every four to five years). This at least gives me whole new perspectives on what is going on in the world. One way in which my life matches yours is that I have never set much store on the friendships established at school or university. I occasionally run into such people from my past, but there aren't any regrets on my part.

Of the books you mention in **Topics** I have read only the book by the Panshins, and the only one which interests me much is the one by Deborah Tannen. Thanks for the tip.

***brg* & The Metaphysical Review 18**

Bruce Gillespie

We really do have trouble with mailing comments - troubles which are likely to get worse rather than better. Will modern improvements finally mean that Australians can no longer take part in paper-based

apas like FAPA? Do we have to go onto the Internet?

Your long piece about Roger tells us (as always) a good deal about BRG, but also about the history of Melbourne Fandom (as seen from Carlton and Melbourne University).

The Travel and Leisure edition of **TMR** appeals because of the range of writers, I guess. but I wonder how many FAPA members will pick up on the intricate detail in Yvonne's report? Will you, in fairness, report to FAPA on the cataclysms which followed the circulation of a draft? Even more terrifying to contemplate, should I publish **my** report of the same event?

Jenny's report, though welcomed after all this time, may be confusing to some readers in that it is somewhat allusion-ridden. But I enjoyed it, especially being reminded about the Ovomaltine, a substance I still feel the need for.

Tom Disch's short piece was an interesting contrast, since it was reflective, rather than simply reportorial. While it was pleasant to see John Bangsund's pieces again, the emphasis has to be upon 'again'.

Disinformation 43 & Derogatory Reference 74

Arthur Hlavaty

While you do present some sort of argument in favour of a government, it isn't clear in your argument that the 'worse evils' you describe aren't

generated by the political power which is intended to correct them. For example, is it clear that the governments in the former Yugoslavia (whether you want to describe them as armed bands or otherwise) are in the business of combating worse evils?

And isn't your assumption that schools should 'have made everyone equal' a peculiar one? Why should schools be the mechanism by which equality is achieved in a society? (And what do you mean by equal, for that matter?)

I share your general positive attitude towards Neil Postman's books. **Amusing Ourselves to Death** and **Conscientious Objections** both seemed very useful analyses to me, and **Technopoly** continues that pattern.

Bens Beat 29
Ben Indick

The **only** book you refer to that I have read in Cynthia Ozick's **The Messiah of Stockholm**. I do agree that she is a very fine writer: have you read any of her non-fiction?

Licks 9
Rob Hansen

Your paragraphs on the TAFF Wars are interesting, but don't go far enough in explaining to an outsider why Bergeron's association with the Beck Business was so strong (one link seems weak).

But the remarks in response to Brian's original piece do trip some levers over here, in particular the question of short deadlines and negligent promotion in fan funds. There's a fund called FFANZ which moves 'fans' between ~~Melbourne~~ Australia and New Zealand. 'Negligent promotion' is almost too weak a phrase for the way it has been handled from the Australian end. And now there seems to be a similar trend in DUFF.

When Roger Weddall died DUFF was left without an Australian administrator. Although this was never (so far as I can make out) publicised in written form in Australia until after the voting period was completed. Phil Ware was 'appointed' as DUFF administrator. A recent edition of the Australian newszine **Thyme** has given some details of nominating periods and the like, but has not published Phil Ware's address. Indeed, so far as I know, the only place Phil Ware's address has thus far been published in fanzines in recent years was in some brief remarks about Roger Weddall in a US fanzine. This appears to be deliberate neglect, and it is hard to see a beginning of an unsavoury practice of keeping DUFF safely within the hands of a lucky few. Bruce Gillespie, as someone closely associated with Phil Ware, might like to comment on this.

Horizons 208/212
Harry Warner

Does 'You might also have pointed out to Harry that whether or not use of a drug has been criminalised is a purely legal distinction' mean anything? Can you give an example of an entity which has been criminalised by anything other than a legal distinction?

As for geographical movement, I thought that one feature of Bach's life was that he did actually move around quite a bit, given the general circumstances of life in that period. And of course the impact of events on individuals and on groups isn't quite the same thing.

Fapamentary 34
Brian Brown

While I'm not entirely clear from your comments to Janice Gelb what exactly and completely is implied in the phrase 'term limitation', I don't have even the difficulties you have with the idea. If the purpose of a democratic form of government is that any citizen can get into government, surely one proof that the system works approximately as proclaimed is that those who are elected do so for a limited time. There are many examples of persons being re-elected to office in circumstances very different from the basic ideas of democracy. What I identifying as a factor is the definite and unquestioned surrendering of power by those who hold it. Without that I would have thought any notion of democracy was weak.

(Next and last, one page of newspaper extracts and one page from a recent Atlantic. No prize for guessing why I have included them. Apologies to the neglected.)

Big Mac slur turns the Salvos to pulp

By BOB MILLINGTON

The Salvation Army has recalled all 60,000 copies of its newspaper, the 'War Cry'.

The revised edition that will be given away in return for a donation through the pubs and clubs of Australia tomorrow evening will be cleansed of the description of the world's most famous hamburger as a limp rissole in a squashed bun.

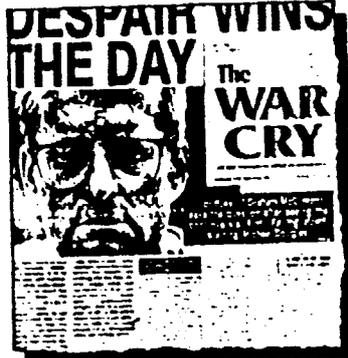
The front page of volume 112, number 29 still leads with a homily revolving around the Michael Douglas movie 'Falling Down'. However, all mentions of McDonald's have disappeared.

The Salvation Army was not answering its phones late yesterday afternoon. But sources said the recall of the Monday 5 July paper, which was sent to more than 400 distribution centres, seemed to be based on a desire not to antagonise the American-based fast-foodery, a generous and consistent contributor to Salvo funds.

The original story, written by Captain Graeme McClimont, begins spiritedly: "The kids next door love McDonald's. Whenever a birthday is to be celebrated, with customary childish enthusiasm, which can be heard five houses down the avenue, it's 'let's go to McDonald's, mum'."

"I must confess to not having visited this institution for the last five years, not necessarily because I don't like hamburgers but more because, in my opinion, the succulent beef steak, crisp lettuce and crusty roll depicted on the menu above the counter are nothing like the limp rissole, soggy salad and squashed bun that I am expected to consume with gastronomic delight."

If that was the start of Cap's Mac's heresy, he appears to have compounded it further down the page.



Stop the press: 'The War Cry' before pragmatism prevailed.

'Falling Down', he points out, is the story of middle-class folk seeing their long-established verities vanish, struggling to come to terms with a new era and blasting aside any party-poopers who stand in their way.

Commented Captain McClimont: "No doubt (Michael Douglas's) observation is correct, yet what troubles me about this solution is that it's like trying to recreate McDonald's with another name when what is really required is another alternative."

"There is a clear alternative but, like Luigi's fish and chip joint (a shop opposite Cap'n Mac's home which makes the most fantastic hamburgers at a fraction of the Big Mac price), it is obscured by the size of McDonald's advertising hoarding and by the elegant facade of a church held culturally captive to the illusive dream of health, wealth and happiness."

The new edition, printed on 9 July, omits any mention of food, McDonald's, advertising, money, gifts, conflicts of interest, petty-mindedness or General William Booth, the Salvo's founder.

It makes you wonder what the general would have thought about it all.



Dr Krongold: did not disclose the terms of the takeover.

By LISA KEARNS
The Dandenong-based Capital Carpets Industries Group has been sold into a joint venture with the world's largest carpet maker, Shaw Industries Inc. of the United States, as part of a rationalisation of the industry.
Capital Carpet's chairman, Dr Henry Krongold, also announced the company's acquisition of the Australian wool carpets leader, Invicta Group Industries.
The move will complement Capital Carpet's leading brands, Redbook and Minister, 80 per cent of which are made from synthetic fibres, mainly nylon. Dr Krongold

Defending Garry McDonald's talent

from Trevor Farrant

Your Item Apology to Garry McDonald ('The Age', 3/7), included my name as if I were a party to it. I was not a party to this apology. You refer to "comments from ... Trevor Farrant" — but what you don't say is that those comments were heavily edited by you.

Your writer, Mark Lawrence, handled the story with integrity. But then your lawyers moved in and cut out everything but my remarks about Garry. You promoted the result as "the true story" and "what really happened", knowing it was neither.

I didn't say Garry "had lost his talent". What crap. The last performance of his that I saw — our rehearsal show — was brave and exhilarating.

I could have called in the lawyers, too, after some of the things said about me. But people like Garry and me operate in the media, we often get our laughs at the expense of others — and I believe that if you serve it up you have to cop it too. As Norman said: "If you can't stand the heat, stay out of the spin-drier."

Let me nail one other furphy. Many stories portrayed me as some kind of Svengali, without whose influence Garry was inarticulate and helpless. More crap. Garry McDonald invented Norman Gunston, Bill Harding was his original (and best) writer. All I did was service their creation.

Trevor Farrant,
Westbourne Park, SA.

The social-science evidence is in: though it may benefit the adults involved, the dissolution of intact two-parent families is harmful to large numbers of children. Moreover, the author argues, family diversity in the form of increasing numbers of single-parent and stepparent families does not strengthen the social fabric but, rather, dramatically weakens and undermines society

DAN QUAYLE WAS RIGHT

BY BARBARA DAFOE WHITEHEAD

DIVORCE AND OUT-OF-WEDLOCK CHILDBIRTH ARE TRANSFORMING THE LIVES of American children. In the postwar generation more than 80 percent of children grew up in a family with two biological parents who were married to each other. By 1980 only 50 percent could expect to spend their entire childhood in an intact family. If current trends continue, less than half of all children born today will live continuously with their own mother and father throughout childhood. Most American children will spend several years in a single-mother family. Some will eventually live in stepparent families, but because step-

families are more likely to break up than intact (by which I mean two-biological-parent) families, an increasing number of children will experience family breakup two or even three times during childhood.

According to a growing body of social-scientific evidence, children in families disrupted by divorce and out-of-wedlock birth do worse than children in intact families on several measures of well-being. Children in single-parent families are six times as likely to be poor. They are also likely to stay poor longer. Twenty-two percent of children in one-parent families will experience poverty during childhood for seven years or more, as compared with only two percent of children in two-parent families. A 1988 survey by the National Center for Health Statistics found that children in single-parent families are two to three times as likely as children in two-parent families to have emotional and behavioral problems. They are also more likely to drop out of high school, to get pregnant as teenagers, to abuse drugs, and to be in trouble with the law. Compared with children in intact families, children from disrupted families are at a much higher risk for physical or sexual abuse.

Contrary to popular belief, many children do not "bounce back" after divorce or remarriage. Difficulties that are associated with family breakup often persist into adulthood. Children who grow up in single-parent or stepparent families are less successful as adults, particularly in the two domains of life—love and work—that are most essential to happiness. Needless to say, not all

children experience such negative effects. However, research shows that many children from disrupted families have a harder time achieving intimacy in a relationship, forming a stable marriage, or even holding a steady job.

Despite this growing body of evidence, it is nearly impossible to discuss changes in family structure without provoking angry protest. Many people see the discussion as no more than an attack on struggling single mothers and their children: Why blame single mothers when they are doing the very best they can? After all, the decision to end a marriage or a relationship is wrenching, and few parents are indifferent to the painful burden this decision imposes on their children. Many take the perilous step toward single parenthood as a last resort, after their best efforts to hold a marriage together have failed. Consequently, it can seem particularly cruel and unfeeling to remind parents of the hardships their children might suffer as a result of family breakup. Other people believe that the dramatic changes in family structure, though regrettable, are impossible to reverse. Family breakup is an inevitable feature of American life, and anyone who thinks otherwise is indulging in nostalgia or trying to turn back the clock. Since these new family forms are here to stay, the reasoning goes, we must accord respect to single parents, not criticize them. Typical is the view expressed by a Brooklyn woman in a recent letter to *The New York Times*: "Let's stop moralizing or blaming single parents