

people while Bob Krueger's wants to empower government. Bob Krueger's plan consists of price controls, which will create health-care shortages. Mrs. Hutchison urged moving toward allowing individuals to carry their health plans—including medical IRAs—with them rather than having them tied to employers. The key mechanism she cited to achieve this "portability" and cover low-income workers is the Heritage Foundation's refundable-tax-credit proposal. Tested in battle, Hillary Clinton's big gun didn't fire.

Fifth, *Republicans do not need to follow the Democrats in balkanizing the electorate.* Democrats, who hoped Hispanics could be seduced into dependency and therefore political dependability, were shamed by a Hutchison campaign that asked for Hispanics' votes on the basis of their being Americans. Mrs. Hutchison campaigned throughout Texas for a 2 per cent limitation on the growth of government spending, using the slogan, "Government runs a deficit because it spends too much, not because it taxes too lit-

tle." She won South Texas 60 to 40 and may have carried the Hispanic vote.

Last, *don't underestimate the importance of organization and party building.* Karl Rove, Kay Hutchison's lead strategist, points out that the Democrats ran their most expensive and intensive get-out-the-vote effort—and so did the Republicans. In the last days, the Republicans made 1.4 million phone calls and 2.4 million mailings to get their voters to the polls. An unprecedented effort of local activists led to over 230 of 254 counties being organized. In Smith County, for example, local activists A. W. "Dub" Riter and Gene Shull organized 600 community leaders, made 10,000 phone calls, walked the 12 best precincts, and raised \$43,000.

Bill Clinton should not panic over short-term poll results. These numbers change daily. Democrats in the House or Senate up for re-election in 1994, however, should look closely at the Hutchison campaign. There is real cause for panic. □

## The Politics of Homosexuality

# THE CLOSET STRAIGHT

When Andrew Sullivan pleads for gay marriage, has he thought about what marriage is?

HADLEY ARKES

JOHN Courtney Murray once observed that the atheist and the theist essentially agree in their understanding of the problem: The atheist does not mean to reject the existence of God, only in Staten Island; he means to reject God universally, as a necessary truth. He accepts the same framework of reference, and he makes the same move to a transcendent standard of judgment. In a thoughtful, extended essay, "Andrew Sullivan, the young, gay editor of *The New Republic*, has made a comparable concession for the advocate of "gay rights" [*"The Politics of Homosexuality," New Republic*, May 10]. For Sullivan has put into place, as the very

ground and framework of his argument, a structure of understanding that must call into question any claims for the homosexual life as a rival good.

"The Politics of Homosexuality" confirms, at length, what anyone who has been with Andrew Sullivan can grasp within five minutes: he regards his erotic life as the center of his being, but he also conveys the most powerful need to seek that erotic fulfillment within a framework of domesticity, of the normal and the *natural*. The most persisting thread of anguish in the essay is the pain of awareness and reconciliation in his own family, with the recurring memory of his father weep-

ing when Andrew declared, as he says, his sexuality. Sullivan reserves some of his most stinging words for the producers of a "queer" politics, aimed at "cultural subversion." That brand of politics would simply confirm the strangeness of homosexuals, and deepen the separation from their families. Ironically, says Sullivan, "queer" politics "broke off dialogue with the heterosexual families whose cooperation is needed in every generation, if gay children are to be accorded a modicum of dignity and hope."

The delicacy barely conceals that "cooperation is needed in every generation" precisely because "homosexual families" cannot produce "gay children." Gay children must come into being through the only kind of family that nature knows. Those who wish to preserve, say, a Jewish people, know that Jews need to reproduce and raise their children as Jews. But what would be the comparable path of obligation for the person who is committed to the preservation of a "gay community"? Sullivan is convinced that there is something in our biology or chemistry that "determines" our sexuality, and in that case, the tendency to gay sex may be passed along to the next generation, as readily as temperament and allergies. The person who wishes to preserve, for the next generation, a gay community may be tempted then to render the ultimate service: For the good of the cause, he may cross the line and enter another domain of sex. But in crossing that line, he makes a decisive concession: implicitly, but unmistakably, he is compelled to acknowledge that homosexuality cannot even pretend to stand on the same plane as the way of life it would displace. We do not really find two kinds of "families" carrying out transactions with one another. But rather, we come to recognize again the primacy of "sexuality" in the strictest sense, the only sexuality that can produce "another generation."

It is evidently important to Sullivan to insist that homosexuality is rooted in "nature," that it is determined for many people by something in their makeup quite beyond their control. He would wish to draw to his side a cer-

*Mr. Arkes is the Edward Ney Professor of Jurisprudence and American Institutions at Amherst College. His most recent book is Beyond the Constitution.*

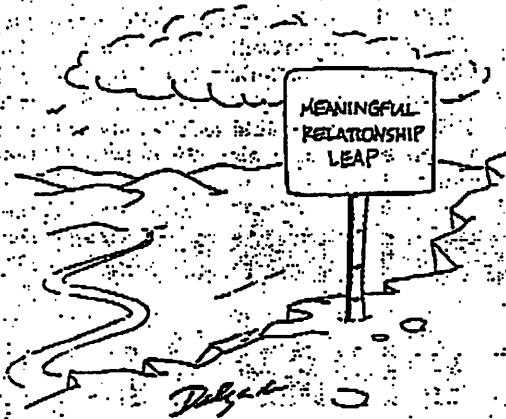
tain strand of natural law to suggest that anything so rooted in nature cannot be wrong. And yet, he falls there into an ancient mistake. As the great expounders of natural law explained, we do not make our way to the "natural" simply by generalizing upon the mixed record of our species: by that reckoning, incest and genocide would be in accord with natural law, since they seem to form an intractable part of the human experience. And even if we could show, say, that some of us carried a gene for "arson," that would not settle the moral question on arson. We might not be as quick to blame the bearers of these genes, but we would expect them to exert more self-control, and we would hardly waive our moral reservations about arson.

In a passage of searing candor, Sullivan acknowledges that discrimination has not affected gays with the same kinds of deprivations that have been visited upon blacks. "[G]ay men and lesbians suffer no discernible communal economic deprivation and already operate at the highest levels of society." But when they call to their aid the levers of the law, they cultivate the sense of themselves as vulnerable and weak, in need of protection, and they perpetuate, among gays, the tendencies to self-doubt. They suggest that the things most needful to gays are in the hands of other people to confer. In the sweep of his own conviction, Sullivan would soar past those demands altogether. He would stop demanding laws, which confer, upon straight people, the franchise of confirming, or discounting, the worth of gays.

### Love and Marriage

EXCEPT for one, notable thing. What Andrew Sullivan wants, most of all, is marriage. And he wants it for reasons that could not have been stated more powerfully by any heterosexual who had been raised, as Sullivan was, in the Catholic tradition and schooled in political philosophy. "[T]he apex of emotional life," says Sullivan, "is found in the marital bond." The erotic interest may seek out copulation, but the fulfillment of eros depends on the integrity of a bond woven of sentiment and confirmed by law. Marriage is more than a private

contract; it is "the highest public recognition of our personal integrity." Its equivalent will not be supplied by a string of sensual nights, accumulated over many years of "living together." The very existence of marriage "premises the core of our emotional development. It is the architectonic institution that frames our emotional life." No one could doubt for a moment as much as any of the "guys" in the Damon Runyon stories; the man who wrote those lines is headed, irresistibly, for marriage: What he craves—homosexual marriage—would indeed require the approval conferred by law. It would also require a benediction conferred by straight people, who would have to consent to that vast, new modeling of our laws. That project will not



be undertaken readily, and it may not be undertaken at all. Still, there is something, rooted in the nature of Andrew Sullivan, that must needs marriage.

But as Mona Charen pointed out, in an encounter with Sullivan at the National Review Institute conference this winter (NR, March 29), it is not marriage that domesticates men; it is women. Left to themselves, these forked creatures follow a way of life that George Gilder once recounted in its precise, chilling measures: bachelors were 22 times more likely than married men to be committed to hospitals for mental disease (and 10 times more likely to suffer chronic diseases of all kinds). Single men had nearly double the mortality rate of married men and 3 times the mortality rate of single women. Divorced men were 3 times more likely than divorced women to commit suicide or die by murder, and they were 6 times more likely to die of heart disease.

We have ample reason by now to doubt that the bipeds described in these figures are likely to be tamed to a sudden civility if they are merely arranged, in sets of two or three, in the same house. I had the chance to see my own younger son, settled with three of his closest friends in a townhouse in Georgetown during his college years. The labors of the kitchen and the household were divided with a concern for domestic order, and the abrasions of living together were softened by the ties of friendship. And yet, no one entering that house could doubt for a moment that he was in a camp occupied for a while by young males, with their hormones flowing. This is not to deny, of course, that men may truly love men, or commit themselves to a life of steady friendship. But many of us have continued to wonder just why any of these relations would be enhanced in any way by adding to them the ingredients of penetration—or marriage. The purpose of this alliance, after all, could not be the generation of children, and a marriage would not be needed then as the stable framework for welcoming and sheltering children. For gays, the ceremony of marriage could have the function of proclaiming to the world an exclusive love, a special dedication, which comes

along with a solemn promise to forgo all other, competing loves. In short, it would draw its power from the romance of monogamy. But is that the vision that drives the movement for "gay rights"? An excruciating yearning for monogamy?

That may indeed be Andrew Sullivan's own yearning, but his position is already marking him as a curious figure in the camp of gay activists. When Sullivan commends the ideal of marriage for gays, he would seem to be pleading merely for the inclusion of gay "couples" in an institution that is indeed confined to pairs, of adults, in monogamous unions. But that is not exactly the vision of gay sex.

For many activists and connoisseurs, Sullivan would represent a rather wimpish, constricted view of the world they would open to themselves through sexual liberation. After all, the permissions for this new sexual freedom have been cast to that amorphous formula of "sexual orienta-

tion. The demand of gay rights is that we should recede from casting moral judgments on the way that people find their pleasure in engagements they regard as "sexual." In its strange abstraction, "sexual orientation" could take in sex with animals or the steamier versions of sado-masochism. The devotees of S&M were much in evidence during the recent march in Washington, but we may put aside for a moment these interests, to consider others which are even more exotic yet. There is, for example, the North American Man-Boy Love Association, a contingent of gay activists who identify themselves, unashamedly, as pedophiles. They insist that nothing in their "sexual orientation" should disqualify them to work as professional counselors, say, in the schools of New York; and to counsel young boys. And since they respect themselves, they will not hold back from commending their own way of life to their young charges. If there is to be gay marriage, would it be confined then only to adults? And if men are inclined to a life of multiple partners, why should marriage be confined to two persons? Why indeed should the notion of gay marriage be scaled down to fit the notions held by Andrew Sullivan?

**Sullivan's Dilemma**

**T**HE SOURCES of anguish run even deeper here than Sullivan may suspect, for his dilemma may be crystallized in this way: If he would preserve the traditional understanding of marriage and monogamy, he would not speak for much of a constituency among gays. But if the notion of "marriage" were enlarged and redefined—if it could take in a plurality of people and shifting combinations—it could hardly be the kind of marriage that Sullivan devoutly wishes as "the apex of emotional life" and "the highest public recognition of our personal integrity."

In traditional marriage, the understanding of monogamy was originally tied to the "natural teleology" of the body—to the recognition that only two people, no more and no fewer, can generate children. To that understanding of a union, or a "marriage," the alliance of two men would offer such an implausible want of resemblance that it would appear almost as a mocking burlesque. It would be rather like

confounding, as Lincoln used to say, a "horse chestnut" and a "chestnut horse." The mockery would be avoided if the notion of marriage could be opened, or broadened, to accommodate the varieties of sexual experience. The most notable accommodation would be the acceptance of several partners, and the change could be readily reckoned precisely because it would hardly be novel: the proposal for gay marriage would compel us to look again—to look anew with eyes unclouded by prejudice—to the ancient appeal of polygamy. After all, there would be an Equal Protection problem now: we could scarcely confine this new "marital" arrangement only to members of one gender. But then, once the arrangement is opened simply to "consenting adults," on what ground would we object to the mature couplings of aunts and nephews, or even fathers and daughters—couplings that show a remarkable persistence in our own age, even against the barriers of law and sentiment that have been cast up over centuries? All kinds of questions, once placed in a merciful repose, may reasonably be opened again. They become live issues once we are willing to ponder that simple question: Why should marriage be confined, after all, to couples, and to pairs drawn from different sexes?

That question, if it comes to be treated as open and problematic, will not readily be closed, or not at least on the terms that Andrew Sullivan seeks. The melancholy news then is this: We cannot deliver to him what he wants without introducing, into our laws, notions that must surely undercut the rationale and the justification for marriage. The marriage that he wants, he cannot practicably have; but in seeking it, he runs the risk of weakening even further the opinion that sustains marriage as "the architectonic institution that frames our emotional life."

But for marriage so understood, Sullivan does not seem to command a large following, or even a substantial interest, among gays. New York City must surely contain one of the largest concentrations of accomplished, successful gay men. Since March, New York has allowed the registering of "domestic partners," and by the 1st of June, 822 couples had come forth to register. By the unofficial estimate of people in the bureau, those couples

have been just about evenly distributed between gays and lesbians. Four hundred gay couples would not be a trivial number, but in a city like New York, it does rather suggest that the craving for this public recognition may not be widely diffused. If all of the couples registered under the new law were collected in Yankee Stadium, they would hardly be noticeable in the crowd. Their numbers would not exactly suggest that there is a strong political constituency out there for gay marriage.

**Unintended Consequence**

**I**N MAKING then his own, heartfelt case for marriage, Andrew Sullivan is swept well past the interests and enthusiasms that mark most other people who now make up the "gay community." And he may earnestly put this question to himself: In the sweep of his own convictions, in the sentiment that draws him, powerfully, to marriage, has he not in fact swept past, and discarded, the rationales that sustain the homosexual life?

What comes through the writing, finally, is a man who finds his eros in domesticity, who will find pleasure in driving his own children to their soccer games on Saturday mornings. He will explain again to his friends that we must "cooperate" with heterosexual families; that if we would protect gay children we must raise them, and even produce them. There may be winks all around, and the sense that he is doing something for "the cause." But as Andrew Sullivan appreciates, "queer" politics always seeks to take "shame-abandonment to a thrilling conclusion." And what could be more exquisite and subtle than this reversal upon a reversal? A man lives a highly visible public life as a homosexual, but he enters a marriage, which is taken as a kind of charade, and he is content to abet the jest with knowing glances. But the secret that dare not speak its name is that he really is, after all, a domesticated man, settled in his marriage. As a writer and a man, Andrew Sullivan is committed to an understanding of political life that finds its ground in nature. And he takes, as the core of our civic life, marriage and the laws that sustain marriage. For all of that, we here, composed, as we are, of eros and of dust, love him.