

adding, "It was an advantage when there was one common discipline and every nation studied the doings of two states. Now, they learn how to mend motor cars."

Of all the differences between the old college and the new, the most obvious is the absence of Jesus Christ from the presuppositions that underlie academic life. Thomas Arnold, the emblematic English schoolmaster, saw his purpose as the cure of souls. His aim was not an institution in which Christianity was the subject of the curriculum, but one in which Christianity was the context for learning. Where Christ cannot be named, theology cannot be taught, and philosophy, which leads the intellect into that borderland beyond which lie answers that can only be given by God, becomes rationalistic, then relativistic, and ultimately damaging.

These were the forces that undid collegiate learning. The colleges changed because the culture changed, and the culture changed because the colleges changed. The attempt to discover causal priority is unrewarding. But the only way to have another kind of culture is to have another kind of college. Book clubs may help, and the Church itself may carry in its sacred rhetoric memories of the great tradition, but what is required is a seminary for the reawakening of another kind of culture, another kind of college, one in which God is honored as the source of truth and students are made citizens of the great civilization that began in Sinai and Athens. Such colleges must inevitably, for the time being, be countercultural in the sense in which the 1960's revolutionaries, then already a kind of incipient establishment, merely pretended to be. These new colleges will be located at the periphery of cosmopolitan postmodernity.

They will be staffed by men and women who see themselves as missionaries of the great tradition, and who will bear gladly the modest hardships of such missions. Wherever they are found—and sometimes they are within the walls of the regnant culture's universities—these are the unlikely monastics of the 21st century, keeping alight the flame of learning amidst the bright darkness of the secular city. They are responsible not only for maintaining the great tradition but for enlarging it by incorporating the literature of the greatest intellectual event of modernity: the Catholic revival begun in the mid-19th century by Newman, Migne, and Leo XIII, which produced such rare spirits as Eliot, Flannery O'Connor, Maritain, Étienne Gilson, Allen Tate, Maurice Baring, G.K. Chesterton, Evelyn Waugh, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Walker Percy—the list goes on.

To hope that these colleges, if they are loyal to Christ and to Vergil, will be enthusiastically nurtured by the culture of our age is an illusion. Their secondary purposes are the first items in the list of parents' goals: Getting along, knowing others from diverse backgrounds, problem solving, and the rest. But this commonality of purpose makes the countercultural college a marginal member of the American collegiate enterprise. They—*we*—will do well to live quietly, thereby escaping (at least for the time being) the toils of compulsory diversity and toleration. And if their real purpose—the reading of the great tradition in the light of Christ—becomes obvious and the colleges must forego the approval of the citizens of the secular city, these little commonwealths will still enjoy the approval of that more significant political culture: the City of God.

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How Metaphors Are Made

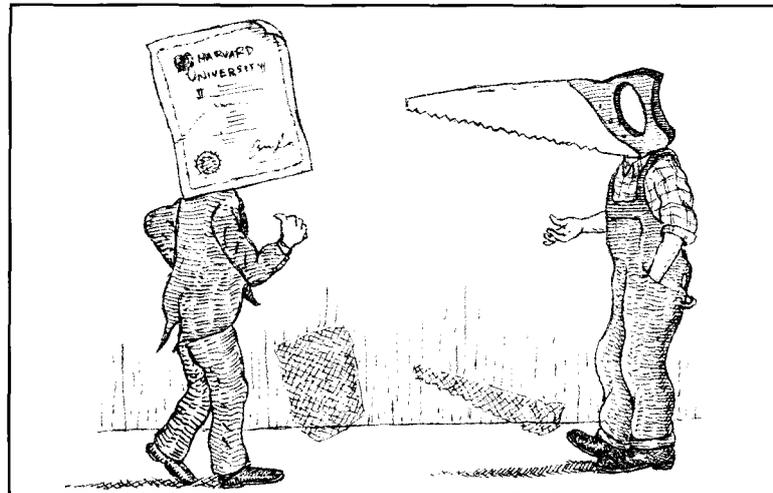
by Gail White

In Turkey I was given a silk cocoon:
a small white oval, a hummingbird's egg in thread.
Inside it the silkworm rattled like a bean
(naturally I assumed the thing was dead).
It came home in my jewelry box. Weeks later,
going to bed, I found a white moth perched
on the white cocoon, a resurrection myth
indeed. Now what to do with it? I searched
the reference books. It seemed the silkworm fed
on mulberry leaves. Here in the moss-hung South
starvation seemed assured. Nevertheless,
I put the white thing out in the night's wet mouth
for what slim chance it had. By morning, both
cocoon and moth were gone. Perhaps a nest
was richer for the silk. For bats or owls
perhaps cocoons are easy to digest.
But now imagination was at work
and soon a host of things—poetry, love,
Russia, geometry, the Aztecs, even
the universe itself as seen by God—
could be regarded in a single light:
surprising silkmoths, thrown to an alien night.

Going the Distance

How Homeschoolers Will Change College

by Mary Pride



Homeschooling parents are all too aware of the hazards they face in signing up a beloved child for four years at Ivy U, Good Old State U, or even Used-to-be Christian College. Even if the institution in question does not hand out condoms like candy during orientation week and does not require courses that indoctrinate students in beliefs contrary to their faith, such aberrations could pop up at any time. Plus, there's the "Roommate from Hell" problem. All this sexual activity, drug use, and whatnot has to occur somewhere on campus, and most parents would probably just as soon that it was not happening in their child's dorm room.

I have been pondering the college problem very seriously. After all, what is the point of homeschooling our kids for years just to pay for the privilege of having them intellectually or physically harassed or seduced?

My suggestion: *eliminate, skip, or sidestep the first two years of college.*

Those years on campus are the most fraught with politically correct shibboleths and usually the least educationally worthwhile. Increasingly, they resemble the last two years of high school—or even the last few years of grade school.

Meanwhile, more and more homeschooled students are graduating from high school at age 17, 16, 15, or even younger. At home, it just does not take as long to whiz through the requirements for high-school graduation. So what do we end up with? Students who are ready for college *academically* but who may not be ready *emotionally* for the college atmosphere of sex, drugs, and anticulturalism. Here are some alternatives.

Mary Pride is the publisher of Practical Homeschooling and editor of The Big Book of Home Learning, now in its fourth edition. She and her husband, Bill, have nine homeschooled children.

Apprenticeship. There used to be a lot of noise in the homeschool community about the value of apprenticeship as opposed to a college degree. Right or wrong, however, most personnel directors believe that a college diploma is valuable, not for the sake of the education, but because it proves that a potential worker has the ability to stick to a long and arduous task dictated by authority. (So they have told me, anyway.) Even if a homeschool graduate finds a business willing to train him, he may end up trapped in that same company forever, as other companies continue to enforce hiring policies that require a college degree.

Entrepreneurship. Starting your own business immediately upon graduation from high school is an increasing trend, among the Web-minded in particular (for example, my oldest son, Ted). We all know that Bill Gates ditched Harvard to start Microsoft, so this particular road-less-traveled is becoming more socially acceptable. It also makes a certain amount of economic sense, provided the graduate in question has an actual money-making skill or idea. Why pay \$100,000 or more to provide your child with computer-programming classes in the hope that he might get hired for an entry-level job, when he can make \$100,000 during the same period, teach himself more computer languages and programming tricks than the college can, and build an excellent portfolio?

In our case, there are additional factors. Ted has physical problems that keep him largely bedridden, so attending a campus facility would be out of the question. The amount of time he spends sitting up could either be spent taking courses or building his business. He has chosen to be an entrepreneur, and so far, he is doing quite well.

Still, most parents and students will incline toward that coveted college sheepskin. What college-compatible alternatives are homeschoolers exploring?