



"I'm sorry, you can't stay here... unless you're coming to do household work for Zoe Baird..."

## Taking sides:

### Should the United States forcibly return Haitian refugees to Haiti?



DAVID BROOKS  
Columnist

On Dec. 21, 1992, 380 Haitians drowned during the sinking of the freighter *Vierge Miracle*, which was bound for the coast of Florida. This terrible accident was just one factor that contributed to President Clinton's wise decision to continue the policy of repatriating Haitian refugees.

During the presidential campaign, Clinton criticized President Bush's policy of repatriating refugees. Clinton suggested that if he were elected, he would allow refugees to freely enter the United States.

Even before his inauguration, Clinton realized the pitfalls inherent in such a free-entry policy. According to Pentagon reports, reconnaissance flights over Haiti showed more than a thousand boats being built.

Pentagon estimates stated that up to 100,000 Haitians might be planning to flee to America around the time of the inauguration.

The possible effects of such an exodus could be catastrophic. The medical and welfare services required would far exceed the resources available to state and local governments. To relate an idea of the scale of the possible influx, *Newsweek* stated that "the Pentagon is preparing to give aid on the scale demanded by Hurricane Andrew."

Faced with the prospect of such a migration, Clinton made the smart decision. He broadcast a radio message stating that his administration would continue the policy of repatriation. Clinton asked Haitians not to leave their country, and he promised to speed up the processing of asylum claims.

This policy is the best of both worlds. Haitians who really are suffering from political repression can be identified more quickly, while the United States can avoid the massive economic and social upheaval that would result from a policy of open acceptance.

Last week, the *Houston Chronicle* stated that Haitians were staying in Haiti in response to Clinton's radio message. Refugees in the water mean several things: deaths from unsafe boats, economic strain for governments and social upheaval along the Gulf Coast.

We need to continue the policy of repatriation. Last week, the State Department said that former President Bush and President Clinton worked "hand in glove" while formulating the current policy.

When an outgoing Republican president and an incoming Democratic president agree on a policy, it's a safe bet that the policy is in the best interest of the country as a whole. The frightening response of the Haitian people to the mere suggestion that we might drop the repatriation policy sheds light on the probable result.

If we change to a policy of free acceptance, we will create social, political and economic chaos.

Brooks is a senior economics major.

"The present King of Great Britain...has endeavored to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws of Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither." -*The Declaration of Independence*; July 4, 1776.

Bill Clinton's presidency promises at least one big change: lies with syntax. On January 14th, President Clinton embraced the Bush administration's policy of forcibly returning Haitians attempting to immigrate to the United States - a practice referred to by Clinton during the campaign as a "cruel policy of returning...refugees to a brutal dictatorship without an asylum hearing."

Clinton betrayed the trust of Haitians who hoped to flee Haiti's repressive junta, which, according to Amnesty International, has murdered over 1,500 Haitians. The United States, as a signatory of the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, is bound by international law to render protection to refugees, including the right to apply for asylum.

Clinton claims that he merely wants to save lives. Is intercepting Haitians on the high seas, destroying their boats and returning them to Haiti without asylum hearings merely incidental to saving their lives? It is not necessary to return refugees to Haiti in order to save their lives. In fact, returning the refugees could very well expose Haitians to the danger of a "brutal dictatorship," to use Clinton's words.

The United States, which accounted for over 70 percent of Haiti's exports and 50 percent of its imports, is largely responsible for the influx of Haitians into the United States. The embargo, which destroyed 144,000 jobs out of a total employment of 252,000, exacerbates the almost inhumane economic conditions in Haiti. The embargo has failed to bring democracy to Haiti and has further eroded social, economic and environmental conditions.

The embargo should be lifted immediately in conjunction with the deployment of human rights monitors. This will stem the flow of economic and political refugees.

The opposing argument that immigrants come to America to get on welfare is completely fallacious. Economist Julian Simon wrote that every study estimating the tax contributions of immigrants at all levels of government show that "tax payments vastly exceed the cost of the services used, by a factor of . . . five, 10, or more." Studies show that in the long run, immigrants give much more than they take.

Haitian immigrants, rarely on welfare, are law-abiding and hard working. They bring to America a strong belief in education. Immigrants raise not only their standard of living, but those of the receiving community.

Let the Haitians come to America, for our good and theirs.

Dickerson is a sophomore economics major.

## Reality 101: the 'other' education

### Not all of life's lessons are learned in the classroom

You can learn the most amazing things in college. In a government class at junior college, like a scene from the movie "Dead Poet's Society," my teacher suggested an education beyond the scope of the everyday college experience.

I should have known to expect more than the regular lesson when the professor walked into class with his ponytail bouncing and dropped his books on the floor. As he sat Indian style - not behind, but on top of his desk - his big toes were working to free themselves from his sandals. Strangest of all was this man's smile, wide and unabashed, as if he knew something the rest of us didn't.

Given his appearance and his "thirty-something" looks, most students agreed that the '60s must have been good to this man. Like, very good, dude. We wondered what kind of semester was in store from this guru. The homework assigned on the first day gave a strong clue. We were to write an essay on Arlo Guthrie.

"Who was he?" we asked. "What significant role did he play in American government?" The guru wouldn't answer. He did say the words, "Alice's restaurant." But that was the last he would say on the matter until the next class when we were to return with an essay on this man whose name we had never heard.

We also were to define the word "koan." No hints, no trouble. Just look it up in the dictionary. "In Zen, a nonsense question asked of a student to force him, through contemplation of it, to a greater awareness of reality."

Like wow, man. This class was going to be quite a trip. The rest of the semester was spent discussing the finer points of, well, anything. Any topic, he said, was fair game for class discussion. From the living earth to Roy G. Biv, our class pondered the questions of the universe, and occasionally, American government.

Despite - in fact, probably because of - this professor's unorthodox methods, I was surprised to find that I actually learned something. As much as I tried to scoff at his teachings, I caught myself watching things a little more closely. I began to consider motives rather than actions. I began watching people and learning from professors before



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Columnist

they even spoke. I found that I had climbed down from that peak just a little enlightened.

Coming to a major world class university like Texas A&M (Whoop!), many students anticipate a quality education to fall into their laps. Like a syllabus and a few textbooks, some students expect to pay their fees and go home a better person.

Granted, the endless nights of studying will render your commercial skills more marketable. And your social skills will benefit from daily observance of classroom etiquette. Don't sleep when someone's talking to you. And if you must, don't drool or snore.

But education has much more to offer than facts and figures. You can learn so much just by looking and listening a little closer to things which too often go unnoticed.

Texas A&M has so many opportunities where students can forget formulas for a while and learn a different kind of lesson. Get out of class and find the lessons that others never notice.

The University Center Galleries offer a new perspective on subjects ranging from the routine to the exotic. Touring exhibits let you observe the deepest thoughts of the artist, displaying how others perceive their little corner of your world.

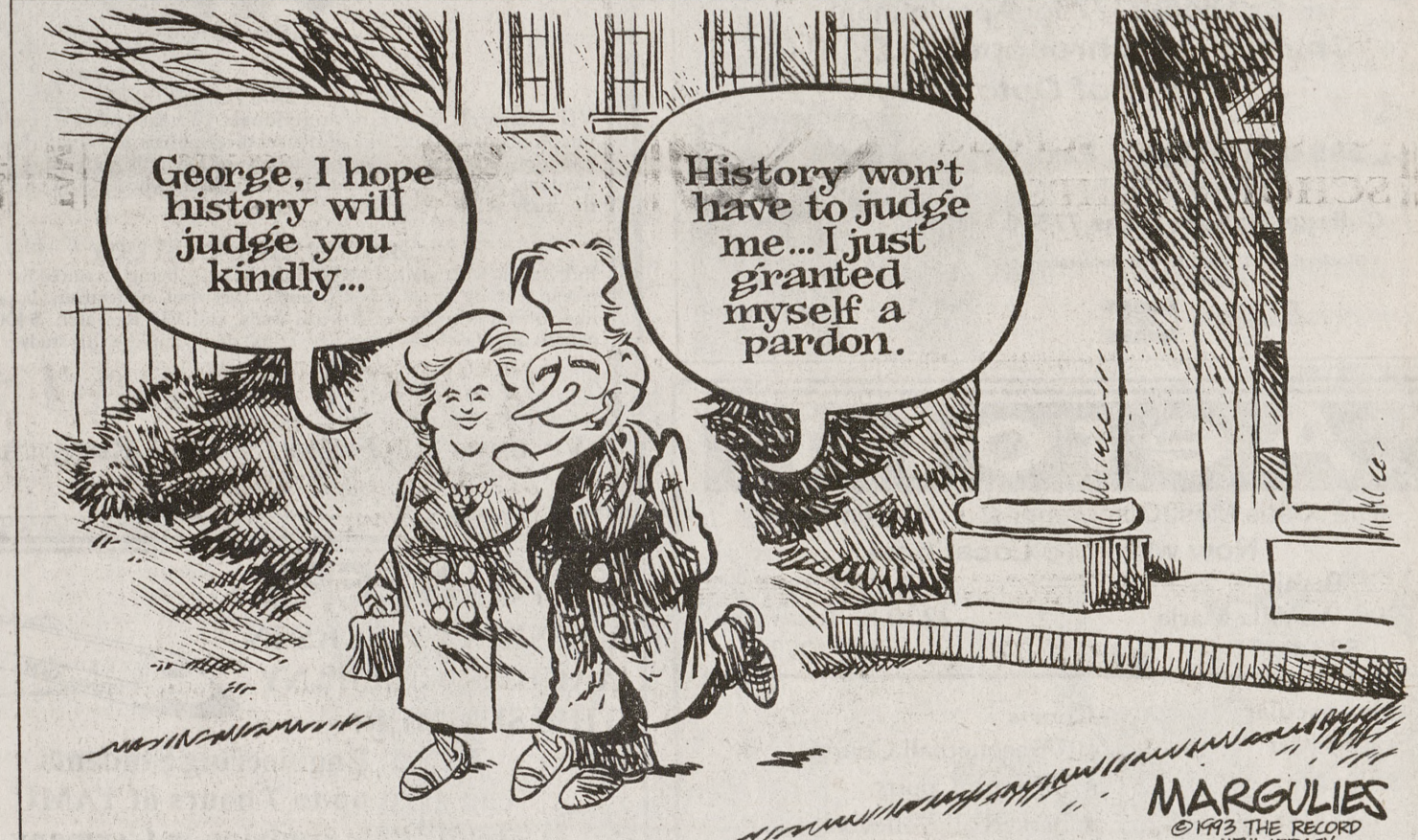
Take a walk by the Menos sculpture, the towering wave of stainless steel standing near the Blocker building. One of the most recent additions to the University's art collection, the Menos excites a wide range of reactions from Aggies.

Some have expressed their pleasure at the inspiring flow of design and the delicate balance between light and shadow. Still others have expressed their disgust at the zillion dollars spent to buy the wiry mass of mindlessness. What do you think about it? Have you ever seen it?

Does it matter what you think? Not really. Your grades probably won't improve if you watch a silent film. You're not guaranteed a better job if you can spot a Monet.

Learning to look for a lesson in everything probably won't change the world. But it might change your world. What you think isn't as important as the fact that you think - about everything. And not just when the professor is droning on and on. Make sure yours isn't another brilliant mind ruined by higher education.

Vasquez is a senior journalism major.



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### Pro-choice argument contains hypocrisy

I have a few comments in response to Matt Dickerson's column regarding anti-abortion logic. First of all, not all "anti-abortionists" support legislation allowing abortion in the case of rape or incest. Secondly, the favoritism for the woman over the fetus given a situation in which either the woman or the fetus must perish does not suggest that the fetus lacks human rights. If such an unusual situation were to occur, it would be a matter of self-defense. Lastly, if abortions were to become illegal, I along with many other pro-life advocates would support sanctions against women who have them and the doctors who perform them. The focus of the pro-life movement is currently to ban abortions, not to create sanctions for what is now a perfectly legal procedure.

The ones with the flawed logic are the self-proclaimed "pro-choice" advocates who do not support third-trimester abortions. I have talked with

many. What is the difference between a five-month-old fetus and an eight-month-old unborn child? Viability is the response I hear so often. They argue that if the fetus can survive outside the womb, then an abortion is wrong. The viability of a human being is irrelevant. How many of us are truly viable? We are all dependent on others for survival in one way or another.

Stephanie Fuller  
Class of '93

### Abortion based on morality, not legality

I am writing in response to Matt Dickerson's Friday column about inconsistencies in the anti-abortion position. I believe abortion is murder because it is the purposeful taking of an innocent human life. However, I use the term "murder" as a moral term and not a legal one. Just as one might correctly say that the guards of Auschwitz murdered thousands of Jews although their behavior was legal under the prior

system in Germany and was, therefore, not murder in any legal sense.

As far as the cases of rape, incest and danger to the mother go, I must admit that many of my fellow pro-lifers have tried to mainstream their ideas at the expense of their consistency. Using a definition of abortion as the purposeful killing of the fetus, I believe abortion should not be allowed under any circumstances. In the case of danger to the mother, I believe the mother should be allowed to have the baby removed regardless of its stage of development, but then doctors should attempt to save its life. Although some of the fetuses (in this highly unusual case) would die anyway, this is totally different than their willful destruction.

Authorities would not have to investigate miscarriages any more than they currently investigate any personal injury as a case of attempted suicide. Although you say these are logical conclusions, they don't logically follow at all.

Just as there are inconsistencies within certain elements of the pro-life movement, the pro-choice movement has its own fair share. With the legal term "health" defined so broadly, many states allow abortions for any reason up to the point of labor. However, they consider the same action a few hours later infanticide. Is there really something magical about a trip down the birth canal?

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