knowledge of this. Second, the *Didache* (*The Teaching of the Apostles*), the oldest noncanonical Christian text, which likely predates one or two of the Gospels, specifically prohibits both contraception and abortion. Rodney Stark in his *The Rise of Christianity* (Princeton University Press, 1996) convincingly proposes that this prohibition stimulated Christianity's growth by protecting the well-being of women, because as Professor Riddle points out, surgical abortion had very high mortality, and so too would many of the anti-fertility and abortifacient potions administered (though Riddle would contest this point).

Professor Riddle's follows with other unscholarly and prejudicial attacks upon the Catholic Church in later chapters. These are too numerous to list, but one is worthy of discussion. In Chapter 10 (The Middle Ages) he writes, "(o)n the one hand, the church and secular law increasingly are protecting the life of the fetus and even the right to be conceived unencumbered by any artificial controls: on the other hand, individual women had problems, some medical, some personal, that persons of compassion wanted to address." This pronouncement could have been written for a Planned Parenthood brochure and reflects a complete misunderstanding of Catholic teaching. Natural Family Planning (NFP), an effective and acceptable (to the Church) means of regulating births permits women to have their physiology respected rather than treated as a disease or curse with potions and harmful procedures, which is what true people of compassion would wish. This revelation, in fact, led me to my own conversion to Catholicism from secular humanism.

Contraception and Abortion from the Ancient World to the Renaissance presents a comprehensive review of the evidence for contraceptives and abortifacients in past cultures, and even our own. His careful reading of the many sources cataloging the knowledge of the various treatments that have been employed is commendable and has resulted in an authoritative reference. However, his own philosophical beliefs clearly tainted the analysis of his data and his anti-Catholic bigotry prevented him from fully studying how the gradual development of Christian teaching and its incorporation into the secular life of the Middle Ages did bring about the loss of the knowledge of these ancient treatments. It remains for a less prejudiced scholar with a more thorough knowledge of Christian doctrine, medical history, and philosophy to help us understand how this knowledge of contraception and abortifacient techniques was lost and why it has returned with such a vengeance.

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Traina, Cristina L. H. *Feminist Ethics and Natural Law: The End of the Anathemas.* Moral Traditions and Moral Arguments Series. Georgetown University Press, Washington, DC, 1999.

The author's University of Chicago doctoral dissertation served as the foundation for this James Gustafson-inspired, William Schweiker-directed, and James Keenan-encouraged volume on what happens when liberal feminism meets revisionist natural law theory. Traina is, in a word, attempting to justify what she calls "a theological naturalism modified by contemporary hermeneutics" (p. 12). A thirty-page bibliography and an eighteen-page index are definite plusses. The notes at the end of each of the book's nine chapters are substantive.

How does the author understand "feminism"? She gives a broad definition: "A practical and intellectual dedication to the discovery and uprooting of ideologies, relationships, and institutions that thwart women's flourishing and to the creation of new ideologies, relationships, and institutions that promote it" (p. 25).

If that is what feminism is, then what is feminism "for," what is its ultimate purpose? In the final chapter, we get the answer: "to promote women's integral flourishing including their fully reflective moral agency" (p. 315).

Traina's argument in a nutshell: contemporary feminism is currently in a deconstruc-

tionist funk and can profit from a correctly employed and properly revised (her expression for it is "critically retrieved") natural law theory. In the course of her investigation, Traina discusses the natural law views of some theological heavyweights: St. Thomas Aquinas, Josef Fuchs, Richard McCormick, and Gustavo Gutiérrez. While Traina finds none of them perfect (Aquinas' *Summa* "contains more misogynistic claims than we would care to count" [p. 10]), each has elements embedded in his thought which can be employed in the service of providing contemporary feminism with much needed philosophical, theological bulk.

The late Father McCormick's proportionalism, for example, is extolled as a "perceptible step toward the transformation—or perhaps even the dissolution— of moral norms" (p. 215). Since truth, according to Traina, is best pursued in community, it is probably not too much of a stretch to say that she regards Gutiérrez as the best of the lot (p. 290 and especially p. 299).

While the book is largely theoretical, it does contain some elements of interest to those who deal with issues of bioethics. Most notable is Traina's relatively lengthy analysis and critique of *Donum vitae,* the 1987 document of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith—Traina mistakenly refers to it as an "encyclical" (p. 326)—on the use and abuse of the new reproductive technologies. This is found in the book's last chapter where the author attempts to provide her readers with two examples of natural law feminism in action. The second example she gives and treats somewhat more briefly is that of breast feeding.

In addition, Traina refers on occasion to other hot-button items such as contraception, abortion, and homosexuality. Her conclusions on their moral acceptability is fairly redolent of standard liberalism (liberal feminism). Here, for example, is Traina on abortion: "The most persistent and trenchant feminist criticism of natural law ethics, both traditional and revisionist, resembles this complaint: that the natural law objections to abortion value abstract or potential human life over the lives of particular, pregnant women and, often, their families" (p. 303).

Much as she admires Father McCormick's revisionist approach to moral issues, Traina is obviously irked that the Jesuit moralist, in her words, "clearly persists in seeing homogenital relationships as falling short of a *moral* ideal. Mandate has not given way to invitation" (p. 216).

Feminist Ethics and Natural Law is not an easy read. Its author is much enamored of a feminist vocabulary that will prove at times mystifying to the uninitiated. This notwithstanding, the attempt to marry, if I might phrase it thus, two viewpoints often considered antagonistic is to be commended. Is it my imagination that whenever a decision has to be made between the two, Traina consistently sides with feminism over even revisionist natural law theory? In this sense, then, we find her curiously uncritical of the one and suspiciously hypercritical of the other.

Since bioethics is not a major element of the volume and ethical issues are subordinated to ideological considerations, the volume will probably not prove to be a high priority to those who work exclusively with those disciplines. For those interested in feminist thought, on the one hand or natural law theory on the other, Traina's book might well prove helpful. It will prove especially helpful for feminists who would like to acquire a working knowledge of the thought of thinkers such as Fuchs, McCormick, and Gutiérrez. It will prove helpful for those who might like to learn more about the aims (and, yes, the misses, too) of contemporary feminist ethics.

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