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### Sociobiology, etc.

Carson Holloway's *The Right Darwin? Evolution, Religion, and the Future of Democracy*\* is published by Spence Publishing. Peter Augustine Lawler's *Stuck with Virtue: The American Individual and Our Biotechnological Future*\* is published by ISI Books. Wendell Berry's *Life is a Miracle: An Essay against Modern Superstition*\* (Counterpoint, 2000) is a wise and moving rebuke of the follies resident in E. O. Wilson's *Consilience*\*, one of the more thoroughgoing statements of the possibilities of sociobiology. Another helpful critic of the reductionist hubris of sociobiology is philosopher Mary Midgley (interviewed on Volume 51 concerning her book *Science and Poetry*\*). Steve Talbot and his colleagues at The Nature Institute have offered some helpful criticisms of the reductionist mistake typical in sociobiology; their articles are available at [www.netfuture.org](http://www.netfuture.org), search for the subject "Mechanistic and reductionistic science." Carl Degler's *In Search of Human Nature: The Decline and Revival of Darwinism in American Social Thought*\* (Oxford, 1991) traces the history of the Darwinian influence in social sciences. The book is summarized and reviewed by Phillip E. Johnson in "Domesticating Darwin" (*First Things*, May 1993, [www.firstthings.com/ftissues/ft9305/reviews/johnson.html](http://www.firstthings.com/ftissues/ft9305/reviews/johnson.html)). For a helpful survey of the ideas of (and feuds among) sociobiologists, see Tom Bethell's "Against Sociobiology" in the January 2001 issue of *First Things* (online at [www.firstthings.com/ftissues/ft0101/articles/bethell.html](http://www.firstthings.com/ftissues/ft0101/articles/bethell.html)). Nancy Pearcey's review of Peter Singer's book, *A Darwinian Left: Politics, Evolution, and Cooperation*\* (*First Things*, October 2000, [www.firstthings.com/ftissues/ft0010/reviews/pearcey.html](http://www.firstthings.com/ftissues/ft0010/reviews/pearcey.html)), critiques Singer's effort to bolster a progressive political agenda by appealing to the ramifications of Darwinian thought.

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### The Da Vinci Code

Ben Witherington, III's *The Gospel Code*\* is published by InterVarsity Press. Witherington also recommends Darrell Bock's *Breaking the Da Vinci Code*\* (Nelson, 2004). Also worthy of note are Amy Welborn's *De-Coding Da Vinci*\* (*Our Sunday Visitor*, 2004) and *The Da Vinci Hoax*\* (Ignatius, 2004), by Carl E. Olson and Sandra Miesel. Miesel

### On this issue

- 1 Introduction
- 2 **Carson Holloway**, on why sociobiology and evolutionary psychology are inadequate bases for sustaining political ideals
- 3 **Peter Augustine Lawler**, on why we are more than "individuals" narrowly defined
- 4 **Hadley Arkes**, on the difference, in law, between evidence from social scientific data and moral truths
- 5 **Ben Witherington, III**, on why *The Da Vinci Code*'s implausible account of history seems credible to many people
- 6 **Christopher Shannon**, on Ivan Illich (*Medical Nemesis*) and the loss of belief in the possibility that suffering can be meaningful
- 7 **Roger Lundin**, on how nature and experience replaced revelation as a source of authority (and why they fail to serve as such)
- 8 **Roger Lundin**, on the necessity of humility in the writing of biographies

wrote an early article about the book in *Crisis* (online at [www.crisismagazine.com/september2003/feature1.htm](http://www.crisismagazine.com/september2003/feature1.htm)), which is a useful summary of the book's many problems. See also [www.christianitytoday.com/history/newsletter/2003/nov7.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/newsletter/2003/nov7.html) which features an essay by Collin Hansen originally written for the online newsletter of Christian History and Biography; and [www.leaderu.com/focus/davincicode.html](http://www.leaderu.com/focus/davincicode.html), where a review is featured along with other useful links. Ben Witherington also recommends J. N. D. Kelly's *Early Christian Doctrines*\* (Harper & Row, 1958); and Jaroslav Pelikan's *The Christian Tradition*\* (5 volumes, Chicago, 1971-1989). These books help explain how basic Christian beliefs were actually formed, in contrast to the comically inadequate picture in the Da Vinci Code. The first volume of Pelikan's set is especially helpful in explaining what Gnosticism really taught. Note also Pelikan's recent book *Credo: Historical and Theological Guide to Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*\* (Yale, 2003).

### Other Books Mentioned

Hadley Arkes's essay is published in *The Meaning of Marriage: Family, State, Market, and Morals*\* (Spence, 2006); Roger Lundin's *From Nature to Experience: The American Search for Cultural Authority*\* is published by Rowman & Littlefield (2005).



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