Top editors at the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM) are circling the wagons against a rising storm of collegial criticism. The complaints focus on a Sept. 18, anti-research editorial written by Executive Editor Marcia Angell, M.D., a pathologist, and a defense of the Journal’s editorial procedures that she and her boss, Editor-in-chief Jerome P. Kassirer, M.D., wrote several weeks later (Nov. 13). At a NEJM Editorial Board meeting on Dec. 1, Kassirer gave their critics no quarter.

An excerpt from the minutes can be found on page 4.

Kassirer, who is an internist, declined PROBE’s request for comment on the issues.

The fracas was generated by an ethical odd couple: research editor Angell and research basher Sidney Wolfe, M.D., an internist, of Public Citizen’s Health Research Group, a Washington, D.C., activist organization. In September, the NEJM published a Public Citizen’s attack on placebo-controlled clinical trials in the Third World. Angell’s supportive editorial was published with it. Some HIV-infected pregnant women in these studies are being given low doses of the anti-AIDS drug AZT, in an effort to protect their babies from infection. The other women in the studies get dummy medication (placebos). Wolfe and Angell denounce the trials as unethical throwbacks to the Tuskegee Syphilis Study. They aver that the only ethical approach would be to give all the control women a long and costly course of AZT, a regimen previously shown to be effective in Americans (PROBE, June, July, Oct.).

Varmus Protests

Research scientists, led by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) director, oncologist Harold Varmus, M.D., were enraged by Angell’s published position. Varmus “lobbied vehemently for the opportunity to publish a defense of the government-sponsored studies,” Kassirer told his fellow editors at the continued on page 3

Hopes for an early scientific answer to whether low doses of AZT will reduce HIV transmission from mothers to their infants have been dashed — for the moment.

But the trials, backed by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), under Sec. Donna Shalala, are continuing, despite harsh criticism by health activists and a top editor of the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM) (see adjacent story, and sidebars on pp. 3-5).

Clinical researchers here and abroad are pleased that efforts to derail the studies thus far have failed. Infectious disease expert Neal A. Halsey, M.D., of the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, said late last month by phone that he and his colleagues are “grateful” to the fed for making “the right decision.”

“They have stood up to the inappropriate criticism, based on unscientific thinking,” he said.

Thai Studies Advance

The hope for an early resolution focused on a major ongoing study in Thailand, sponsored by the Thai University Hospital and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta. Earlier, a small study of 182 women sponsored by the Thai Red Cross — the very first to be reported — yielded disappointing findings: no difference in infant infectivity between mothers treated with a low-dose, short regimen (two weeks) of AZT and control mothers given placebos.

In both groups, the infection rate was 9%, according to CDC infectious disease specialist Phillip Nieburg, M.D. He said the preliminary findings were reported at an AIDS meeting in the Philippines.

For unknown reasons, Nieburg added by phone, the infant infection rates in both arms of the study were much lower than the 25% previously reported for untreated mothers in the U.S. and elsewhere. Thus, he and other experts noted, if the Thai control women had been given the long, costly ($1,000) U.S. standard AZT treatment, so that there was no untreated control
Follow-up

Contest Hype Endures; Abortion Shifts Seen

The publicity machine for the Westinghouse Science Talent Search (STS) rolls on, even as doubts have been raised about the contest’s future (PROBE, Nov., Jan.). The New York Times says, in a recent story based on a Westinghouse press release, that the annual awards have been “a prestigious ticket to college and even to Nobel Prizes for generations of students. . . .” (Jan. 13, B3).

PROBE readers may recall, however, that our November report, based on data from the Washington, D.C. company that runs the contest, found that no first-placed winner has ever won a Nobel Prize. Of the five STS finalists who have won Nobel Prizes, the most recent was a finalist in 1955, who won his Nobel Prize in 1981 — some 17 years ago!

In Pittsburgh, meanwhile, the Westinghouse Foundation, which has supported the STS since 1944, is going out of business. It’s pledged to support the contest at the current rate of $650,000 per year (the student prizes are $205,000), through the year 2000, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reported (Dec 16). The Westinghouse Corp., which bought, and has now become the CBS Corp., will drop the STS, the P-G said.

A new sponsor is being sought.

####

Varmus on Alternative Care. We reported last month that NIH chief Harold Varmus, M.D., who is a very political official, has only once commented negatively, on the record, about his agency’s Office of Alternative Medicine (OAM) and its adherents. We published that quote — from a commencement speech to medical school graduates — but it ended up strung out to a jump page. It’s worth repeating, compactly, here.

Varmus said there are two cultures, and added:

“Our has been the scientific record of accomplishment. But the other one is acquiring enormous public support — even getting the credit for many preventive, behavioral, and low-tech methods that mainstream medical science introduced and validated.”

####

Abortion Advances. The annual January anniversary of the Supreme Court’s Roe v. Wade decision is stock-taking time for all sides in the abortion conflict. This year, for the first time in a long while, there were some noteworthy changes.

The Republican National Committee (RNC), meeting just before the anniversary, voted not to make opposition to “partial birth abortion” — a late second- and third-trimester procedure — a litmus test for Republican congressional candidates who seek RNC funding. A candidate will be able to get money without denouncing the rarely-used abortion procedure. The GOP thus is backing away from the hard line pro-life position. Cooler heads pointed out that adherence to it could destroy the Republicans’ current congressional majorities — and cost them the presidency in 2000.

Old Saw Repeated

The New York Times, meanwhile, ran a two-part, Page one series on the Roe anniversary and a Times Magazine piece, which deplored the mortal hazards that face doctors who perform abortions; it deplored, too, the lack of training programs and of young ob-gyns willing to do the procedure. The first of the two daily Times pieces (Jan. 16) restated the same old saw about how abortion is America’s most divisive issue since the Civil War. But the second article, next day, broke new ground for the Times — and signaled some important changes.

In interviews conducted at urban abortion clinics, reporter Tamar Lewin found that many patients didn’t know what Roe v. Wade was! But, these women couldn’t conceive of a situation in which abortion services were not readily available. Abortion has become a fact of life in big cities, although it’s still unavailable in rural areas, particularly in the South and the Midwest.

Equally important, the Times discovered, abortion has shifted from a political to a moral issue — of individual choice — in many Americans’ minds. Somewhat fewer Americans approve of it now than they did several years ago — although it still has majority support. But it is now seen more and more as a matter of individual moral judgment, not a call to the ramparts.

Ambivalence Acknowledged

It is perhaps in this context that the Times allowed its reporter to report a fact that previously, in the 15 years we’ve been watching, they’ve carefully avoided: that many women who get abortions consider themselves Pro-Life, and even feel the procedure is murder. This of course has long been the case, as we reported exclusively in the 1980s and early ’90s, in a story the Times declined to publish. Now, however, they’re willing to report:

Almost every abortion-clinic counselor can tell stories of patients who say that they have always opposed abortion but that their own situation is different, or men who bring their pregnant wives or teenage daughters to the same clinics that they long have spoken out against.

D.D., a 26-year-old Boston woman, said that she sometimes had to argue her pro-choice position with her boyfriend in the past, but that his view changed when

continued on page 8
Infectious disease specialists working on overseas AZT studies to prevent mother-to-infant AIDS transmission were infuriated by the *New England Journal*’s dismissive attitude. Study coordinator Neal A. Halsey, M.D., of Johns Hopkins, said by phone that a Nov. 13 *NEJM* editorial by J. Kassirer and M. Angell justifying their right to publish their individual opinions on the AZT trials “is an embarrassment to the scientific community.”

A colleague added, off the record, that the *NEJM*’s erratic stance — they have published other, similar, placebo-controlled foreign studies that would be unethical in the U.S. — represents “an unbelievable loss of face” for the *Journal*. He said he was “amazed” by what the editors are doing, and said he suspects they have withheld publication of letters criticizing their stance because they were “scathing.”

Some critical letters have been printed elsewhere. Thirty-nine researchers from around the world signed a letter in *The Lancet* (Nov. 22) that criticized Angell’s insistence that in randomized clinical trials abroad the control group must be given the best available treatment, rather than a placebo.

“If her arguments are accepted,” the 39 signers, most of whom were from the Third World, said, “then the implications for medical research on the health problems of poor countries are profound. Many cheap interventions that have been shown to reduce mortality and morbidity...”

***Fracas...***

*continued from page 1*

Dec. 1 meeting. This request was honored; Varnum’s piece appeared in the Oct. 2 *NEJM*.

The *Journal* chiefs’ disregard for the crucial AIDS research prompted two *NEJM* board members to resign: AIDS virologist David Ho, M.D., head of the Aaron Diamond Research Institute in Manhattan, quit at once. Pediatric AIDS specialist Catherine Wilfert, M.D., of Duke University, in Durham, N.C., resigned as of year’s end. She waited, so that she could attend the Dec. 1 Editorial Board meeting to protest the publication’s anti-research stance and the chief editors’ high-handed practices: Neither she nor Ho had been asked for their views on Angell’s piece, albeit both are internationally known AIDS experts.

According to the minutes, Wilfert came to argue that:

> The Editorial Board should play a more active role in determining editorial policy of the *NEJM*. Specifically, she called for a procedural change which would require editors to consult members of the Editorial Board before publishing controversial editorials.

> The editors, she said, are often out of their depth when dealing with fields outside their own expertise, and should call upon the ‘collective expertise’ of the Editorial Board for their opinions about potentially controversial material before it is published. She noted that the *Journal*’s ‘one-sided’ view of the government-funded [AIDS] trials could have disastrous consequences for all HIV studies outside the U.S. She also noted that Wolfe and [his co-author, family practitioner Peter] Lurie [M.D.,] had publicized their criticisms of the U.S.-funded studies months before their *Journal* article appeared — a clear violation, she said, of the *Ingelfinger* Rule.

That rule says the *Journal* will not publish research reports that have been partly or wholly published elsewhere.

Kassirer rejected Wilfert’s criticism and her proposed editorial changes. There is no indication in the minutes that he acknowledges that either substantive or procedural errors were made.

A discussion followed. The minutes indicate that Angell remained silent. The minutes say:

> Members of the Board discussed the issues. Many expressed admiration for Dr. Wilfert for showing up at the meeting to make her stand. Some voiced confusion about why, exactly, she was resigning from the Board. Dr. Steven Schroeder was particularly supportive of Dr. Wilfert’s position, suggesting that the editors solicit the Board’s ‘friendly criticism’ before publishing controversial editorials. Dr. David Hillis dissented, noting that while he disagreed with Dr. Angell’s opinion, he had no problem with the editorial process.

> Dr. Wilfert ended the discussion by reiterating her position. She then left the meeting.

Angell, meanwhile, had already lashed back at her critics in a *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ) op-ed piece (Oct. 28), in which she continued to argue that the Third World AIDS studies are comparable to Tuskegee. In it, black American men with syphilis were examined periodically, but were not treated, even when penicillin, which is effective against syphilis, became available.

Angell said that now, as then, the unavailability of a useful treatment, such as penicillin or AZT, in the community at large does not justify withholding it from human subjects who are under researchers’ care:

> “The misfortunates of the larger population do not justify exposing people in [the researchers’] care to preventative risks.”

**Angell Not Persuaded**

Angell acknowledges that Third World women in the studies, unlike black men at Tuskegee, are getting treatments that “may be of great benefit” — both to them, and to others who follow, provided the low-dose AZT works. But this fails to persuade her the AZT studies are ethical. While she offers no scientific or logical objection in her op-ed piece, she argues from the Tuskegee analogy that the means are not justified by the ends...
Fracas... continued from previous page

of improved knowledge.

Our view, opposed to Angell's, is this: Take 100 women walking into a prenatal clinic in a Third World country. If untreated, 25 might be expected to infect their babies, based on previous findings. If the low, unproven AZT dose is half as effective as the proven high dose — which cuts infections to 8% in the U.S. — then the infection rate in the treated mothers will be 16%. Eight mothers will bear uninfected babies who otherwise wouldn't have. That's a prospect for real and significant benefit for the experimental subjects. Thus, the means immediately benefits women/children, as do the ends — validation of an affordable, low-dose regimen.)

Ho Resigns

AIDS researchers challenge Angell on both scientific and ethical grounds. David Ho told Time (Sept. 29) that the comparison of the AIDS studies to Tuskegee is "inflammatory and unfair." He added:

"Insisting on the infeasible in the name of ethical purity is counterproductive in the struggle to stop this deadly virus."

Many researchers have written letters of protest to the Journal, colleagues say. Despite the matter's urgency, more than four months after Wolfe's and Angell's objections were published on Sept. 18, the Journal has not published any of the letters. Journal sources have said the usual gap between an article and critical letters about it is about eight months. But the Journal also has well-publicized procedures to publish urgent material much more rapidly.

Kassirer and Angell seem not to think the research community's defense of the ongoing AIDS studies is an urgently pressing matter.

Probe's View

Our quarrel with Drs. Kassirer and Angell is not with their editorial procedures, which are their business and those of the Journal's owners, the Massachusetts Medical Society. We do think they are being disingenuous, naive — or unduly modest — when they insist, as they recently have, that the editors write and sign express only their own opinions, and not the Journal's. Their titles, and hence their published words carry enormous cachet inside and outside of medicine. They embody the Journal's authority even when they claim to speak only for themselves.

The far more important issue is Editor-in-chief Kassirer's failure to grapple with — or, better, disagree with — Angell's attack on a vital, urgently needed AIDS research program. Hundreds of Third World infants contract AIDS from their mothers each day! Almost all will die. Yet, as indicated by the NEJM Editorial Board minutes, excerpted below, Kassirer is dodging this issue. He shouldn't. Shattuck Street shouldn't be an ivory tower!

Yet, it's still business as usual there. How else interpret the Journal's long delay in publishing at least some of the many angry letters submitted by researchers, denouncing the Wolfe-Angell attack on the drug trials. It usually takes six to eight months for letters to see print in the Journal, and Kassirer seems unwilling to push up publication of these communiques.

As for Angell: Her position makes no scientific or ethical sense to us. Her willingness to censure her colleagues — the researchers in the labs and clinics, here and abroad — is shocking. It suggests she might be more comfortable hosting a TV medical talk show than she is serving as Executive Editor of what long has been the world's best regarded medical research journal.

— D.R.Z.

NEJM Editor Stands Pat

The following excerpt is from the minutes of the December 1, 1997 meeting of the New England Journal of Medicine Editorial Board:

Dr. [Jerome] Kassirer [Editor-in-chief] opened the meeting shortly before 9 a.m. and ... remarked on changes in the Editorial Board. Dr. David Ho resigned ... in protest over an editorial by [Executive Editor Dr. Marcia] Angell about the ethics of some federally funded studies in the Third World, and Catherine Wilfert's resignation over the same issue will become effective at the end of December. ... Dr. Kassirer reviewed the events leading up to the resignations ... Briefly, the Journal published a group of articles on Sept. 18 that included a letter to the editor by Drs. Sidney Wolfe and Peter Lurie, and an editorial by Dr. Angell, both of which criticized the U.S. government for sponsoring placebo-controlled HIV studies in the Third World. Later that week, Dr. Wilfert wrote to Dr. Kassirer, expressing dismay that [they] ... had been published with no opposing viewpoint represented, and without consulting the Editorial Board. ... In the meantime ... a copy of Dr. Angell's editorial reached NIH Director Harold Varmus, who lobbied vehemently for the opportunity to publish a defense of the government-sponsored studies. The Journal published [it] ... on October 2. ... Dr. Kassirer yielded the floor to Dr. Wilfert, who argued that the Editorial Board should play a more active role in determining editorial policy of the NEJM. Specifically, she called for a procedural change which would require editors to consult members of the Editorial Board before publishing controversial editorials. The editors, she said, are often out of their depth when dealing with fields outside their own expertise, and should call upon the 'collective expertise' of the Editorial Board for their opinions about potentially controversial material before it is published. She noted that the Journal's one-sided view of the government-funded trials could have disastrous consequences for all HIV studies outside the U.S. She also noted that Wolfe and Lurie had publicized their criticisms of the U.S.-funded studies months before their Journal article appeared — a clear violation, she said, of the Ingelfinger Rule.

Dr. Kassirer distilled from Dr. Wilfert's criticisms continued on following page
Trials...
continued from page 1

...a group, then the clinical researchers would have concluded — quite erroneously — that the low-dose regimen works equally well, and therefore should be accepted as the standard care throughout the Third World.

Recruitment is Complete

One small study, of course, would not be conclusive, which is why interest focused next on the larger Thai University Hospital study, co-sponsored by CDC, of roughly 200 low-dose AZT mothers and 200 no-dose control mothers. This study has completed its patient enrollment.

All the babies have been born, Nieburg told PROBE. But since AIDS can’t be reliably diagnosed in infants using standard tests until 6-8 weeks post partum, the data are not complete. The investigators have not broken the code to learn which women got AZT and which didn’t.

React...
continued from page 3

could never have been properly evaluated . . . [or] widely accepted..."

They cite oral rehydration for diarrhea, vitamin A supplementation for children, and “syndromic treatment” of sexually transmitted diseases.

Another correspondent, in the same Lancet issue, claims Protocol 076, the U.S. standard of care advocated by Wolfe and Angell, would be “unfeasible and unethical” in Africa, since it requires bottle-feeding, which is hard to get, and dangerous for babies in places where clean water for formula often can’t be found.

Halsey and three Johns Hopkins colleagues published a rebuttal in the British Medical Journal (Oct. 18) saying Angell’s “medical and ethical imperialism” would “prevent developed countries from collaborating with developing countries to identify practical and affordable health interventions.”

One U.S. scientist claimed to be worried that Angell is cherry-picking the letters of protest reaching the NEJM, in an effort to publish some that support her views. In response, PROBE has learned, some researchers are considering an effort to collect and publish critical missives that the NEJM doesn’t run.

Andrew Weil Is Called A ‘Snake Oil’ Salesman

The last time we spoke to former New England Journal editor Arthur Relman, M.D., a lawsuit filed against him by an alternative care provider had just been quashed. Relman was relieved.

We asked him then if he would speak out again against health fraud and quacks. He said he might be more cautious in the future, but, if need be, he still would speak his mind. For this reason, we’re pleased to note that when the writer of a New York Times Magazine cover article on alternative health guru Andrew Weil, M.D. — who apparently has no recognized medical specialty — called internist Relman to ask about Weil, the ex-editor replied:

“Throughout history people have wanted to believe that there are easy, natural ways to defeat disease, and there have always been people like Andrew Weil who peddle a variety of snake oil...”

The Weil piece by Times Mag first-timer Larissa MacFarquhar was refreshingly skeptical for a newspaper that is becoming more and more attentive to alternativists.
Scientists’ Book Deconstructs

By Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont

We have been surprised and distressed by the intellectual trends in certain precincts of American academia. Vast sectors of the humanities and the social sciences seem to have adopted a philosophy that we will call, for lack of a better term, “postmodernism”: an intellectual current characterized by the more-or-less explicit rejection of the rationalist tradition of the Enlightenment; by theoretical discourses disconnected from any empirical test; and by a cognitive and cultural relativism that treats science as nothing more than a “narration,” or “myth,” or a social construction among many others.

To react to this phenomenon, one of us (Sokal) decided to try an unorthodox experiment: Submit to a fashionable American cultural-studies journal, Social Text, a parody of the type of work that we’ve seen proliferate, and see whether they would publish it.

Article Was Published

The article was accepted and published — and in a special issue of that journal devoted to refuting scientists’ criticisms of postmodernism! For the editors of Social Text, it was hard to imagine a more radical way of shooting themselves in the foot.

The hoax was immediately revealed by Sokal himself, provoking a firestorm of reaction in both popular and academic publications. Many young (and not-so-young) researchers in the humanities and social sciences wrote, sometimes very movingly, to thank him and to express their rejection of the postmodernist and relativist tendencies dominating large parts of their disciplines.

Emperor Is Naked

One student, who had financed his own studies, felt that he had spent his money to acquire the clothes of an emperor who, as in the fable, is naked. Another student wrote that he and his colleagues were thrilled, but asked that his sentiments be held in confidence because he wanted to help change his discipline — which he could do only after obtaining a permanent job.

The parody was constructed around quotations from eminent French and American intellectuals concerning the alleged philosophical and social implications of mathematics and the natural sciences. The quoted passages are absurd or meaningless, but they are nonetheless authentic. In fact, Sokal’s only contribution was to provide a “glue” (whose “logic” is admittedly whimsical) relating these quotations to each other. And among the cited authors one finds a veritable pantheon of contemporary “French Theory”: Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida, Félix Guattari, Luce Irigaray, Jacques Lacan, Bruno Latour, Jean-François Lyotard, Michel Serres, and Paul Virilio.

Since the quotations in the parody were rather brief, Sokal subsequently assembled a series of longer texts to illustrate these authors’ handling of the natural sciences, and he circulated these texts among his colleagues. Their reaction was a mixture of hilarity and disbelief: They could hardly conceive that anyone could write the nonsense on the page in front of them. At the same time, several non-scientist readers suggested that one should explain, in lay terms, exactly why the cited passages are absurd.

Dishonesty Seen

The goal of this book is to make a limited but, we hope, original contribution toward the critique of the admittedly vague Zeitgeist that we have called “postmodernism.” We make no claim to analyze postmodernist thought in general; our aim is rather to call attention to a relatively little-known aspect, which nevertheless reaches the level of intellectual dishonesty, namely the repeated abuse of concepts and terminology coming from mathematics and physics.

More generally, we shall analyze certain confusions of thought that are frequent in postmodernist writings and which bear on either the content or the philosophy of the natural sciences.

‘Abuse’ Defined

To be precise, the word “abuse” here denotes one or more of the following characteristics:

1) Holding forth at length on scientific theories about which one has, at best, an exceedingly hazy idea. The most common tactic is to use scientific (or pseudoscientific) terminology without bothering much about what the words actually mean.

2) Importing concepts from the natural sciences into the...
Anti-Science Postmodernism

humanities or social sciences without giving the slightest conceptual or empirical justification. A biologist who wanted to apply, in his or her research, elementary notions of topology, set theory, or differential geometry would be asked to give some explanation. A vague analogy would not be taken very seriously by his or her colleagues. Here, by contrast, one learns from Lacan that the structure of the neurotic subject is exactly the torus (it is reality itself!); from Julia Kristeva one learns that poetic language can be theorized in terms of the cardinality of the continuum; and from Jean Baudrillard one discovers that modern war takes place in a non-Euclidean space.

3) Showing off a superficial erudition by shamelessly throwing around technical terms in a context where they are completely irrelevant. The goal is, no doubt, to impress and especially to intimidate the non-scientist reader. These authors speak with a self-assurance that far outstrips their competence. They imagine, perhaps, that they can exploit the prestige of the natural sciences to give their own discourse a veneer of rigor. Moreover, they seem assured that no one will notice their abuse of scientific concepts. No one

with colleagues in South Korea, have found it difficult to converse or reach agreements with officials from the North.

New interlocutors, however, may facilitate this dialogue: Plans for the DMZ’s preservation are now in the hands of Korean-American scientists, particularly entomologist Ke Chung Kim, Ph.D., of Penn State’s Center for BioDiversity Research, in University Park, Pa. He reported recently in Science (Oct. 10) that the DMZ preserve now is more needed than ever, because of the loss of much of South Korea’s wildlife outside the Zone. A recent survey of South Korea, which he designed, found that development has eliminated or endangered 14% of the bird species, 29% of the mammals, 48% of the reptiles.

New Uses Foreseen

Now, Kim said in a phone interview, the only source of biological stock to repopulate South Korea, and equally if not more-severely depopulated areas in the North, is the DMZ. It is not just a conservation gem, worth saving in its own right, but a unique resource for the rest of the peninsula.

Kim has assumed a leadership role in creating a Korean Peace Bioservices System, and has been in touch with professional colleagues in both the North and South. He hopes to bring them together at a conference in the U.S. later this year.

# # #

We’ve visited the DMZ with crane conservationist George Archibald, Ph.D., of Baraboo, Wisc. It’s a place of awesome beauty between opposing cannons, and we’re hopeful that it, like other battlefields that have long been off limits to civilians, can be set aside for wildlife, future generations. —D.R.Z.
Follow-up...
continued from page 2

she got pregnant.

'He was anti-abortion until it happened to him,' she said, adding that he... had brought her to the clinic.

This is precisely what we discovered more than a decade ago, and published in our pilot issue in June, 1989.

If other newspapers and TV were to follow the Times' lead, and report this story in their catchment areas, it would further de-politicize the abortion debate. This could save the lives of some abortion providers, who now feel hunted by Pro-Life crazies, like last month's Birmingham, Ala. clinic bombers.

(Stirving, as always, for "balance," on Jan. 21, the Times front-paged a propagandistic story about "Rock for Life," a band that raises money for Pro Life with rock and roll concerts.)

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Diagnoses Compared

PROBE's pre-arrest literary diagnosis of the Unabomber, based on his "manifesto": paranoid with idee fixe; very obsessed, very dangerous (Feb. '96).

Forensic psychiatrist Sally C. Johnson, M.D.'s clinical diagnosis, last month, based on a week's interviews with Theodore Kaczynski: paranoid schizophrenia.

The abiding fact in the Unabomber case is that the FBI long ago had more than enough clues to identify and arrest him, without need for his family to have turned him in.

Now that it is squarely on the record that both sides—Pro Choice and Pro Life—get abortions, how many more years will it take for a Times editorialist to ask the obvious question: "So what's the big deal?"

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