century American culture wars and the reasons for those conflicts. In its effort to provide a fair-minded, thoughtful analysis of the best intellectual works on both sides of the culture war divide, Hartman's *A War for the Soul of America* is unsurpassed.

Response to Daniel Williams

doi:10.1017/S175504831600064X

Andrew Hartman
Illinois State University

I am honored that Daniel Williams reviews my book so favorably. It is truly gratifying when the author of the best political history of the Christian Right (*God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right*) and now the best history of the pro-life movement (*Defenders of the Unborn*) calls my book "a superb work of insightful historical analysis."

The only substantial complaint Williams levels against my book is to take issue with my concluding argument that the logic of the culture wars is largely exhausted. I admit that my conclusion is intentionally provocative. I also admit that as an historian, not a prophet, I am on thin ice making such a claim. Moreover, I concur with Williams that some of the issues that defined the culture wars during their heyday in the 1980s and 1990s, such as the struggles over racial justice and abortion, are far from settled. But all that notwithstanding, let me defend my conclusion a bit.

Although I do not repeat the mistake made by so many observers over the last 30 years — by asserting that the Christian Right is dead — I do think the Christian Right is currently in a "Lost Cause" phase. Instead of arguing that their own particular religious identity represents the nation — which is how they framed the debate in the 1980s and 1990s — religious conservatives have conceded defeat. They now seek autonomous zones, such as the state of Indiana (a cause that also, ultimately, failed), where they can express their cultural identities free from government compulsion. Many conservative Christians continue to believe that homosexuality is an abomination in the eyes of God and a threat to national values. But they are less likely to make that argument politically in the ways that they did during the AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) crisis of the 1980s. Instead, their main tactic is to assert their "religious liberty" to discriminate based on sexuality.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S175504831600064X Published online by Cambridge University Press

Another example of how the culture wars are over — or, at least, radically different — is found in the politics of higher education. The culture wars that dominated discussions of higher education in the 1980s and 1990s had enduring historical significance. Shouting matches about academia reverberated beyond the ivory tower to lay bare a crisis of national faith. Was America a good nation? Could the nation be good — could its people be free — without foundations? Were such foundations best provided by a classic liberal education in the humanities, which Matthew Arnold described as "the best that has been thought and said"? Was the "best" philosophy and literature synonymous with the canon of Western Civilization? Or was the Western canon racist and sexist? Was the "best" even a valid category? How, exactly, should Americans think?

Debates over these abstract questions rocked the nation's institutions of higher education during the heyday of the culture wars. But in our current age of neoliberalism, Americans are not asked to think about such questions at all.

Neoliberalism, which prioritizes economic utility over a commitment to the public good and is so pervasive that it is touted by politicians ranging from right-wingers like Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker to liberals like President Obama, is fine with revised canons. Neoliberalism is fine with more inclusive, multicultural understandings of the world — a position at the left edges of the culture wars during the 1980s and 1990s. But neoliberalism is not fine with public money going to support something so seemingly useless as the humanities. In the age of neoliberalism, people who call themselves conservatives, often the most ardent supporters of the humanities in the 1980s and 1990s, have abandoned their traditionalist defense of the Western canon in favor of no canon at all. Capitalism, in this way and many more, is swamping the culture wars.

Response to Andrew Hartman

doi:10.1017/S1755048316000638

Daniel K. Williams
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I am grateful to Andrew Hartman for his thoughtful and generous review of *Defenders of the Unborn*. The review accurately captures the central argument of my book and its contribution to the field. As Hartman

https://doi.org/10.1017/S175504831600064X Published online by Cambridge University Press