

the HUMAN LIFE REVIEW



SUMMER 2013

Featured in this issue:

William Murchison on Life: Staring Us in the Face
Eric Metaxas on The War on the Unborn
Anne Conlon on *HLR's* Unparalleled Archive
Laura Echevarria on Planned Parenthood Kills "Choice"

BOOKNOTES

Mark S. Latkovic on *Proof of Heaven* by Eben Alexander, MD
Daniel J. Blackman on *Modern Moral Problems* by Msgr William Smith

Ellen Wilson Fielding on . . . The Loss of Childhood Innocence
Caitlin Smith Gilson on . . . Abortion's Denial of Contingency
John Burger on Pope Benedict's Pro-life Legacy
Leslie Fain on The Business of Engaging in Sex
William F. Buckley Jr. on Letter from a Friend (1980)

Also in this issue:

Richard Hurlzeler • Donald DeMarco • James Mumford
George Weigel • Kevin D. Williamson • Wesley J. Smith

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. . . we don't edit the *Review* in a thematic fashion, but as I read the final proofs for this issue, it struck me that playing through its pages was a recurrent theme of childhood betrayal. Abortion, of course, is the primal betrayal, snuffing out not only individual lives but family trees, and even, in a sense, as Caitlin Smith Gilson argues in her debut essay here, the author of life himself. "[A]bortion's pogrom against contingency," she writes, "has in praxis destroyed man's access to the divine . . ." ("The Grand Refusal: Abortion's Pogrom Against Contingency," p. 48). Hers is an intellectually challenging argument with rich rewards for the attentive reader; we are pleased to welcome Dr. Gilson, who chairs the philosophy department at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio, to these pages.

Our senior editor Ellen Wilson Fielding has the snuffing out of childhood innocence on her mind ("Seeking Sanctuary" p. 39), and free-lance writer Leslie Fain, in her first original article for us, reports on how this loss of innocence is affecting the mating behavior of young women ("Why Do It for Free?," page 67).

Another senior editor, William Murchison, focuses on the images of little ones, insisting that the preciousness of every human life can be apprehended by serious engagement with photographs of children ("Life: Staring Us in the Face," page 7). Mr. Murchison has a new book coming out in September, *The Cost of Liberty: The Life of John Dickinson*—who has been described as "the most underrated of all the Founders" (ISI Books).

Other contributors to this issue also have books either recently out or soon to be published. Eric Metaxas ("The War on the Unborn," page 13)—who shares our Great Defender of Life award this year with his wife Susanne—is the author of *7 Men and the Secrets of Their Greatness* (Thomas Nelson). *What's a Person to Do: Everyday Decisions That Matter* by Mark S. Latkovic ("Booknotes," page 81) will be published September 1 (Our Sunday Visitor). And Dr. Gilson's *The Philosophical Question of Christ* (Bloomsbury Academic) will appear early next year. Clarke D. Forsythe, who has contributed much work to the *Review* over the years (but not to this issue) also has a new book out, *Abuse of Discretion: The Inside Story of Roe v. Wade* (Encounter Books), which we plan to review in our Fall issue.

As always, thanks are in order: to *Standpoint* magazine for permission to reprint James Mumford's "The Flawed Logic of Our Abortion Laws" (page 99); to the *Denver Catholic Register* for George Weigel's "Tribulation Compounded by Blasphemy" (page 103); and to *National Review*, for Kevin D. Williamson's "Abortion After Texas" (page 105).

And special thanks to William Murchison and Richard Hurzeler ("Drop by Drop," page 95), for sharing their delight in their grandchildren with *Review* readers.

ANNE CONLON
MANAGING EDITOR



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Founding Editors

J.P. McFadden

Faith Abbott McFadden

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INTRODUCTION

“**H**ow could a country founded on, at the very least, a rhetorical commitment to the ‘certain unalienable rights’ of its people (a commitment enhanced and augmented by the subsequent abolition of slavery) produce Kermit Gosnell?” asks senior editor William Murchison as we open this issue. It’s a question that, by and large, the American public avoids answering. It is remarkable how quickly the horrors of “Dr.” Gosnell (who was sentenced to life in prison in May) have receded in the public sphere; we remarked on a similar arc during and after the Supreme Court case on partial-birth abortion. At first, many people were horrified—we don’t do that *here* do we?—but soon enough the awakened awareness of the violence of infanticide and “partial-birth” abortion became buried under the dulled acceptance of the predominant cultural message: Abortion is a necessary “choice” for women. And people, I think, avert their eyes because they are afraid of the implications of the truth. As Murchison writes, while “what captivated and duly horrified the public was, shall we say, Gosnell’s devotion to the task of *completing* an abortion,” (emphasis mine) what happened at the clinic “over and over; life and death a constant blur,” was really the “abortion dispensation” carried to its “logical conclusion.” Exactly. Even NARAL made statements about Gosnell’s “atrocities,” and yet only seconds, only inches, separate the breathing babies butchered by him and the millions of children aborted in the womb. Murchison offers his own opinion as to why, despite Gosnell, America’s view of abortion remains steady. But, as you will read in “Life: Staring Us in the Face,” he has a suggestion, a beautiful one, for healing our abortion blindness: really *looking* at our children.

Our next article is a first-time contribution from one of this year’s Great Defender of Life awardees: Eric Metaxas. The author of the bestselling books *Bonhoeffer* and *Amazing Grace*, Eric shares the honor with his wife Susanne, who heads the Midtown Pregnancy Support Center in New York. Metaxas gives us a thoughtful report from the front of “The War on the Unborn,” alerting us to the realities we need to fight (such as that “for the black community, abortion verges on genocide”) and also exhorting us to remember to “love the sinner while hating the sin.” Pro-abortion people, he writes “hear our condemnation of abortion as a condemnation of themselves. That’s why our love for them cannot be an afterthought”

By the end of 2013, we will have completed 39 years of continual publishing. As our faithful readers know, we have amassed quite a valuable archive, and it is from that archive that our managing editor, Anne Conlon, has produced two excellent volumes: *The Debate Since Roe: Making the Case Against Abortion* (2010) and our more recent title, *The Reach of Roe: Eugenics, Euthanasia, and other Assaults*

on the Dignity of Human Life (2012). Last May, Ms. Conlon and Professor George McKenna, whose articles are featured in both volumes, gave a book-talk and signing at the offices at *First Things*. We reprint here Ms. Conlon's remarks in full; "An Unparalleled Archive" is an engaging and informative look at the history of the *Human Life Review*, from its founding by my late father James P. McFadden.

J.P. founded *HLR* as an "anti-abortion" journal, but, as Laura Echevarria reports in "From 'Pro-Choice' to ...?" on page 27, the movement began organizing under the "pro-life" name after 1973. The pro-abortion side's response was to create the "pro-choice" term—but now, she writes, abortion-giant Planned Parenthood is "attempting to cast a wider net" by abandoning "pro-choice" altogether. Echevarria, formerly director of media relations and a spokesperson for National Right to Life, has a keen understanding of how Planned Parenthood has been able to frame their message to manipulate the so-called "mushy middle" on abortion. And she urges pro-lifers to step up to the plate: "We have truth on our side, and the pro-abortion movement continues to ignore facts in favor of sensationalism and lies." Although the major media often give "the pro-abortion movement a pass . . . the Internet, social media, and alternative news outlets have the potential to transform the debate."

Senior editor Ellen Wilson Fielding's luminous essay, "Seeking Sanctuary" (page 39) begins by reflecting on our time's "onslaughts against the innocence of our young children"—some aggressive (the coarsening of the culture) and some defensive, as in warning children at a young age about sexual predators. And then she asks what effects 40 years of legalized abortion have had. It is, paradoxically, at once a profoundly disturbing and uplifting essay. Fielding has a great talent for being both realistic about the awful dangers we face as humans and yet also hopeful about the resilience of the good to be found in the human condition. "The instinct to trust in the woman's nurturing qualities is to that extent still sound, despite the battleground that the womb has become and the myth of perfect freedom to do and to be whatever we wish."

We next welcome a newcomer, Caitlin Smith Gilson, who contributes a richly beautiful and rigorous philosophical treatise, "The Grand Refusal: Abortion's Pogrom Against Contingency." Gilson writes about modern Western society's deconstruction of the soul, which has led to a loss in the "principle of intentionality," a loss of man's relatedness to the world. Our "moral collapse began in the metaphysical collapse, which is itself founded on an epistemological collapse"—and how can we defend human life if we accept that all knowledge and values are relative? This is very much in harmony with what follows on page 59, "The Pro-Life Legacy of Pope Benedict XVI," by contributor John Burger. As Burger shows, Benedict, through his roles as prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (when he was Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger) and as Pope Benedict XVI, insisted on the "reality of objective truth" and the compatibility of reason and faith. The Pope Emeritus proclaims, as did his predecessor John Paul II, the inviolability of human life, and assert that these principles are not strictly truths of faith but are "inscribed

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in human nature itself, accessible to reason and thus common to all humanity.”

As if to demonstrate how far astray we have gone in Western civilization, our next piece, “Why Do It for Free?” is a startling report by Leslie Fain about college girls who “are now hiring themselves out for dates and/or relationships to cover tuition or rent or earn extra money.” Fain examines, for example, Seeking Arrangements.com, one of several websites where wealthy men look for attractive women. In a frightening parallel to Fielding’s article, Fain looks at “emerging adults” and the effects that mainstream American culture has had on them. (Most shocking is, I would say, the lack of shame; one woman describes such relationships as “built on trust.”)

In our “Booknotes” section, Mark S. Latkovic reviews *Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon’s Journey into the Afterlife*, and newcomer to our pages Daniel J. Blackman reviews the late Msgr. William Smith’s *Modern Moral Problems*. Our “From the Archives” entry is a “Letter from a Friend,” from 1980, that friend being the late William F. Buckley Jr., founder and editor of *National Review* magazine, where my late father began his career. Buckley begins by saying he had “nothing whatever to do with the *Human Life Review*.” True; and yet without his blessing (being my father’s boss at the time) the *Review* would not have been created. Mr. Buckley was a generous supporter of J.P.’s efforts.

* * * * *

Our appendices section begins with two original pieces; the first is Richard Hurzeler’s reflection about his grandson Sam, pictured on page 96. Next, contributor Donald DeMarco imagines an “interview” between God and Satan. *Appendix C* is a frank look at the “flawed logic” of abortion laws in Britain by James Mumford, reprinted from the British magazine *Standpoint*; “D” is a trenchant column from Catholic theologian George Weigel on President Obama’s shameful speech at a Planned Parenthood gala; “E” is a terrific column by *National Review*’s Kevin D. Williamson on “Abortion after Texas” and “G” is an online post from contributor Wesley J. Smith on a tragic tale of euthanasia in Belgium.

Finally, we are introducing some new sections: In *Appendix F* we reprint the “blog” posts from our website by William Murchison—we have new blogs weekly on our site, so please do visit and read them at www.humanlifereview.com. And, as you will notice, we begin this issue with our first Letters section—which we hope and trust will grow. And, as always, we hope you will share our delight at Nick Downes’ captivating cartoons.

MARIA McFADDEN MAFFUCCI
EDITOR

LETTERS

I hadn't yet read the recent [Winter 2013] HLR so I selected Matthew Hennessey's article and his wife Ursula's comments in the Appendix section. I appreciated the statistical review because I am very skeptical of numbers that I read and I think that he did a very good job of reviewing the numbers and predicting the possible future results. Ursula's article is one of the more moving pieces you have published.

I always looked forward to my Down patients as a pediatrician and when I switched to pediatric radiology I probably had more opportunity to see such patients since we examined everyone in the hospital. They are so special and it was why Ursula's story was so touching. I really think that the good Lord allowed for trisomy 21 individuals because most of us have a hard time believing in angels. My wife and I had our two boys when we were 37 and 41. We never considered the possibility of prenatal testing but until Matthew's article I didn't realize that most didn't . . .

. . . A good segment of the medical community never encounters [abortion] professionally because of their specialties. Their opinions may very well reflect the rest of the culture's views and be split just like the general public. As an Air pediatrician in Wiesbaden, Germany from 1960 to 1963, two and a half of us had to care for 125 deliveries a month, which is probably close to 5,000 infants. My Catholic faith may have helped me through some difficult situations but it certainly was not a requirement for me to offer my best effort on their behalf in the days when Intensive care facilities were not developed to today's standards. I understand that many are turned off by religion and do not think that it requires a strong religious faith to appreciate a newborn infant. In my experience, the smaller the infant the more precious. The preivable infants who lasted for a few hours were perfect in every way except they were not old enough to survive . . .

—*Dr. Robin Williamson*
San Juan Capistrano, Ca.

* * * * *

Judith Shulevitz's "Older Parenthood Upending Society" [Spring 2013] surprised me on many grounds. Take biology. The possibility that fertility drugs in an older body can affect the offspring was news to me. It's a risk that is never touted but made immediate sense the moment I thought about it. Likewise, I was also surprised to learn that as a man ages, sperm quality declines with possibly deleterious health effects on any conceived child.

Another matter: Who isn't mindful of the cold, actuarial reality that older parents will die when their children are young, not older, adults. The fact that this sometimes

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has powerful negative effects on the young adult children of older parents surprised me. But what surprised me even more is that Ms. Shulevitz doesn't mention a related consequence of this actuarial reality: The grandchildren of older parents are likely to have a foreshortened experience of grandparents during the major part of their early lives. In fact, it might be worse in some cases. If older parents' offspring likewise become older parents, it is possible that their children's lives will be without any meaningful experience of grandparents.

Having loving grandparents is an enriching experience in ways known and unknown. Here's what we know: Grandparents, if they are young enough, reasonably healthy, and still independent, can give grandchildren a sense of deeper connection; after all, there are more people to be connected to—a powerful gift. And who can calculate the value for the child of an enlarged circle of people who help make him or her feel deeply valued, treasured and, yes, loved? Grandparents do this. The really loving ones simply can't help themselves.

Shulevitz touches on the fact that our reproductive technologies linked to couples' desire and interest for husband and wife to be reasonably well-settled in their careers before having children will likely change the nature of family life. I would welcome more articles exploring this growing likelihood.

—*Nona Aguilar*
New York City

We welcome letters to the editor. If published, letters may be edited for space. Please write to us at *Human Life Review*, 353 Lexington Avenue, Suite 802, New York, NY 10016. Or email the *Review's* managing editor, Anne Conlon, at anne@humanlifereview.com

Life: Staring Us in the Face

William Murchison

I sit looking at a photo—e-mailed to me for Father’s Day—offering for inspection and admiration none other than . . . my grandchildren. I wish you could look at it, too—this pair of wonderful kids: open, earnest, smiling; Brody, going on six years old, with his arm draped around Margo’s shoulder. At the age of three, Margo wears large pink spectacles intended to correct a crossed-eye condition. She beams. She radiates.

You ask what all this, sweet as it might be, has to do with the Kermit Gosnell trial and, more acutely, the trail of crimes that led to the trial of this 72-year-old Philadelphia abortionist—babies born alive, quickly rendered dead, no permissions asked, no questions either.

I think Americans need to look at a lot more photos of babies and young children, their own and other people’s. That would be my point. They need to stare deeply, closely, carefully. As they look, they might stroke their chins; rearrange, perhaps uneasily, their sitting positions. They need to stare into young eyes, and note how terrifyingly fine is the line separating life from death. Dr. Gosnell showed just how fine. Out of particular women’s bodies, and into Gosnell’s chamber of horrors, living children frequently emerged. A few seconds later, quickly as the job could be accomplished . . . sorry, that was it. No more living children, just *former* “products of conception.”

It happened again and again; over and over; life and death a constant blur, under the abortion dispensation carried, you might say, to its logical conclusion at the Women’s Medical Society at 3801 Lancaster Avenue, in Kermit Gosnell’s Philadelphia.

The point that captivated and duly horrified the public was, shall we say, Gosnell’s devotion to the task of completing an abortion, never mind the condition of the newborn. How he did it was, for the judicial system, the sticking point.

He, or an assistant, did it with surgical scissors: a quick and easy procedure; the abortion-era equivalent of the headsman’s axe. The established practice was to cut the spinal cord of a baby (no longer a mere fetus) stubbornly, offensively living outside the womb after studious efforts to produce a different outcome. Baby A, Baby C, and Baby D, as they were known during the trial, met this fate. As it happened, Baby D had been delivered into a toilet by its mother.

William Murchison writes from Dallas for Creators Syndicate and is a senior editor of the *Human Life Review*. His book *The Cost of Liberty: The Life of John Dickinson* will be published in September by ISI Books.

Testimony described the child as making motions as if to swim. A Gosnell assistant addressed that predicament by drawing the baby from the water and cutting its neck. The jury convicted Gosnell of first-degree murder in one of the three cases and of conspiracy to kill the other two victims. The jury likewise found him guilty of involuntary manslaughter in the case of a 41-year-old Nepalese woman—a refugee—who had died while receiving the clinic’s tender ministrations. (A matter of too much anesthetic, I believe.)

Gosnell, who, according to the *Philadelphia Tribune*, earned nearly \$2 million a year in the abortion trade, was sentenced to life in prison in the first-degree case and 30 to 60 years in the other two cases. He waived, by agreement with prosecutors, his right to appeal. His 49-year-old wife Pearl, who helped at the clinic, received subsequently a sentence of 7 to 23 months in county prison. A clinic assistant, Adrienne Moton, won freedom on account of her cooperation with the prosecution and a pledge to seek redemption.

Said Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams, in summary:

I have seen a lot of senseless and cruel acts as the District Attorney of Philadelphia, but this case is arguably the most gruesome. I will not mince words. Kermit Gosnell is a monster. Any doctor who cuts into the necks severing the spinal cords of living, breathing babies, who would survive with proper medical attention, is a murderer and a monster.

Well, yes. And is that all? Is it by any means enough? “The most gruesome case” you would certainly have to call it: two parts Grand Guignol, one part Pennsylvania’s criminal statutes; a blood-stained narrative with few equals in modern jurisprudence. We risk something, nonetheless, by gagging at the blood without weighing the circumstances—the moral circumstances, if you please—that are the true stuff of the Gosnell case.

I invite reflection: Would a case of this nature have arisen in, say, 1963, as opposed to 2013? I suppose it might have arisen in certain foreign countries, but not in the America that Dr. Kermit Gosnell and I inhabited as youngsters on their way out of college, looking for places to land and flourish. I have never laid eyes on the man. I would guess, even so, the notion of snipping the spines of infants with surgical scissors would in those days have filled him with disgust. We did not think about such things back then. Or, to the extent we did, we associated them with photos and accounts of the Nazi regime in Germany, whose scruples regarding the infliction of pain and suffering were invisible to nonexistent. That itself was a puzzle. How could a race that had given the world Bach and Luther have so far let go of common morality? I frame the question only in order to frame another one: How could a country founded on, at the very least, a rhetorical commitment to the “certain unalienable rights” of its people (a commitment enhanced and augmented by the subsequent abolition of slavery) produce Kermit Gosnell?

Or, to put it another way, how could such a country generate moods and notions to correspond with, and then to feed, the culture of the Women's Medical Society, in the City of Brotherly Love, where the United States of America drew its first breaths. How did all that happen? And why?

Let me adduce a little more evidence in the Gosnell case, none of it directly suggestive of surgical scissors or infants born in toilets. The first piece of evidence pertains to the reaction of what we call the abortion rights lobby. Abortion, being a constitutional "right" on the same level as worship, speech, and trial by jury, requires powerful defense, it seems. That necessity put abortion rights spokespeople in a delicate posture. They could hardly defend Gosnell's medical indelicacies; they chose to fall back on abstraction—the right to abort this baby or that one. Here comes the bus! Quick—under it you go, Dr. Gosnell.

“Justice was served to Kermit Gosnell, and he will pay the price for the atrocities he committed,” said Ilyse Hogue, president of NARAL Pro-Choice America. “Anti-choice politicians, and their unrelenting efforts to deny women access to safe and legal abortion care, will only drive more women to back-alley butchers like Kermit Gosnell.” The back-alley butcher argument dates as far back as the 19th century, employed by the American Medical Association as a reason for prohibiting, rather than allowing, abortion. Twentieth century campaigners for legal abortion turned the argument inside out: The abortion ban (they asserted then and still do) actually *empowered* the butchers. Linking “anti-choice politicians” to such rhetoric and memories is a tactic meant to expunge the severe embarrassment caused the abortion movement by Kermit Gosnell and his surgical exploits. NARAL Pro-Choice America wants Americans to keep their focus on what NARAL represents as the central issue here: not the misdeeds of one doctor but, rather, a woman's unchallengeable right to abortion.

That's a little hard to do, speaking accurately. The Women's Medical Society, whatever its views on safety, morality, and aesthetics, was a clinic with an official location, 3801 Lancaster Ave., known to the state inspectors, and listed on the Internet: complete with a request to rate your service provider. Not that the Pennsylvania Department of Health often bothered to check on the WMS, neglecting inspections there from 1993 until 2010, when federal narcotics investigators swooped down, exposing at last what went on there. This wasn't pre-*Roe v. Wade*; it was post—way, way post—*Roe v. Wade*. The right to abortion, as delivered by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1973, had some gaping holes in it from the official perspective of its defenders. Nevertheless, one doesn't find NARAL organizing crusades against abortion butchers as a

class. The organization's obvious intention is to draw the veil over WMS with as much haste as possible. Dr. Gosnell, hmmm. Seems like there used to be someone by that name around here; haven't seen him in forever, though.

Attention turns—better said, gets deflected—to the various state legislatures working to tighten such modest restrictions as clearly didn't work well in the vicinity of 3801 Lancaster Ave., Philadelphia. Arkansas, even before the Gosnell trial had commenced, became the 10th state to ban abortions after 20 weeks, intending to challenge *Roe v. Wade* directly. North Dakota a few weeks later banned abortion in cases where fetal heartbeat is detectable. At the *New York Times*, Andrew Rosenthal's pro-"abortion rights" editorial page huffed and puffed: "[T]hese kinds of actions show the rising influence of a formerly fringe element of the anti-abortion movement that is dissatisfied with its side's considerable progress in incrementally curbing abortions."

Counter-attack—such becomes the strategy; sidestep or recede from the question of whether a Philadelphia abortion facility and its presiding "monster" (to use the District Attorney's term) raise important questions requiring answers. Such as: What is the authentic difference, for constitutional (leave aside moral) purposes, between a baby seconds away from emerging into the world and another one delivered seconds earlier? Is it that no constitutional protections attach to the former, whereas snipping away the life of the latter involves the doctor in hideous crime? If that is the imputed difference, on what basis does it rest? Could a philosopher carefully outline it for us? The question is no theoretical one, as we know from reading the newspapers or the Internet, and from watching TV. Kermit Gosnell is its face.

Declining to use Gosnell as other than a sacrificial goat—to be jailed and rhetorically slaughtered in order that other abortion doctors—might go about their daily business—the abortion professionals unintentionally show their hole card. The ideology of personal choice, in particular personal female choice, is their pole star. The abortion thing—abortion as a cause—isn't about women's safety, though that figures into it; nor is it about happy households full of "wanted" children; nor, least of all perhaps, is it about clarifying the circumstances in which candidates for "termination" defeat medical expectations, turning up alive instead of dead. A woman's right to do as she likes with her body is the topic that looms over seemingly less interesting matters. The ideologues of the cause couldn't be less concerned with the question of when to start calling a fetus a baby. "Never," is their implied answer. Abortion ideology trumps unborn life on this scale of values. It does so because modern thought (to the extent thinking takes place in these calculations) regards personal views and values as paramount. The solipsism into which our world collapsed about four decades ago (after a

warm-up starting decades earlier) annihilates competing considerations. What I—I, if you please; no one else—think is all I need to communicate. The womanly “I” is especially strong, linked as it is with the four-decades-old war on male dominance. A woman (so ideology suggests) *deserves* to decide for herself when she will give birth and when not.

Let me go over a second piece of evidence concerning the sway of ideology over certain of the moral instincts we used to see as timeless, among them the obligation to protect unborn life. “Americans’ Abortion Views Steady Amid Gosnell Trial,” the Gallup organization reported in May. In other words, not much changed in the public’s thinking about abortion, never mind what had gone on at the trial in Philadelphia. With Gosnell convicted but not yet sentenced, “Gallup finds 26 percent of Americans saying abortion should be legal under any circumstances and 20 percent saying it should be illegal in all circumstances. The majority, 52 percent, opt for something in between, as has been the case in nearly every Gallup measure of this question since 1975.”

All quiet, or mostly so, on the Gosnell front. No detectable motion save retrenchment. “[T]he stability,” says Gallup, “in Americans’ views about the legality of abortion suggests the trial has not swayed public opinion.” Only about a quarter of Americans said they followed news of the case very closely: which “makes the Gosnell case one of the least followed news stories Gallup has measured.” Those intellectually detached from the proceedings included self-described supporters of the pro-life cause: nearly half of whom—47 percent—said they didn’t follow the case at all. True, the media got their knuckles rapped by *Daily Beast* columnist Kirsten Powers for inattention to the case, as evidenced by superficial reporting. The charge made a sensation, and coverage, for whatever reason, perked up a little.

The main point to notice here is the general public’s—let us be kind—general ambivalence regarding the events in Philadelphia. Yes, such a tragedy! But there it is. What are we supposed to do, incinerate ourselves like Buddhist monks?

I have an opinion as to the reason so many eyes turn aside from the Gosnell spectacle, and from its obvious implications. I invite disagreement, in case I am wrong. Here is my opinion anyway. It is that over the years and the decades, on matters such as equal pay and job opportunity for women, the feminist movement has conscripted most of contemporary society, male and female alike. Abortion, the quintessential feminist issue, is a cause so unrelentingly promoted by feminism that it seems to many to represent another occasion for deferring to the people nominally most concerned—women. Has not choice, in any case, become the mantra of our age? We would shut down the exercise of personal judgment? The ideology of feminism commands stout denial of any proposal to circumscribe womanly choice—

including, as of this year, the choice to be blown into little bitty pieces on some foreign battle front, as a female member of a U.S. combat unit.

The influence of the media in ratifying and spreading the tenets of feminism cannot be underrated. When all you hear is woman's choice, woman's choice, woman's choice, the idea gets about that a woman's right to choose takes moral priority over concerns as to the misbehavior of the occasional male doctor, collaborating with a woman patient in the expression of her—what else?—right to choose. I think feminist ideology, as a widely accepted feature of contemporary life, intimidates and silences many a non-feminist whose reaction, in a better time, to the snipping of infant necks would have achieved atomic force.

The Gosnell events—again in my opinion—have left us with a couple of lessons. One is that violence inside the mother's body begets violence outside it, by coarsening emotions, by degrading not so much the legal as the moral standards on which civil and criminal law depend ultimately for strength and vigor. The second lesson, I think, is that no end is in sight to the work of moral reparation necessary for unborn life to claim the social respect due it. Better to lock up Kermit Gosnell than not to, but locking him up gets us only so far down the road to reparation. For that . . .



Brody and Margo Murchison

I return to the place I began. To look at children, and at their photos, closely, intently, lovingly, is to know better the perilously fine line between the life they breathe and the death—by indifference, by spontaneous decision—that obliterates all they might have stood for, all they might have done as sons and daughters of a benevolent and merciful God. I hate to put the matter in terms so bleak, so stark. I cannot think of any other terms that do the job.

The War on the Unborn

Eric Metaxas

“Forty years ago,” *Time* magazine announced on the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, “abortion rights activists won an epic victory.” But get what *Time* says next: “They’ve been losing ever since.” They’ve been “losing” because it’s getting harder to find so-called “clinics” that offer this so-called “procedure.” I’m not sure how this is bad news for the pro-choice movement. Didn’t they say they wanted to make abortion “safe, legal, and rare”?

Personally, I think it is spectacular news that more and more Americans are recognizing that aborting human beings is a moral horror. And I’m thrilled the abortion rate is going down, thanks to an amazing confluence of factors. First, thanks to the hard work of legislators and pro-life activists across the country, it’s harder for abortion mills to open their doors—or to keep them open. Second, young people today—born during a time and place when it is perfectly legal to kill healthy human beings waiting to be born—correctly view themselves as abortion survivors. They survived the clinics, the doctors eager to make a buck, the deadly philosophies urged on their mothers claiming that there is nothing wrong with destroying an inconvenient baby. Knowing they might have been legally killed before birth is part of the reason so many young people are pro-life. Third, technologies such as ultrasound allow us to peer inside the womb; it is no longer possible for the abortion lobby to get away with the risible nonsense that the unborn child is nothing more than a “clump of cells.” And fourth, recognizing the genuine needs and fears of women who find themselves unexpectedly pregnant, Christians have opened the doors of thousands of crisis pregnancy centers, saving the lives of countless babies and saving their mothers from a lifetime of guilt and grief. I’m proud to say that my wife, Susanne, manages the Midtown Pregnancy Support Center in New York—the city that sadly possesses the highest abortion rate in the country.

But the news is not all good. Despite the dropping abortion numbers, more than a million unborn babies are violently killed every year in America alone, their numbers adding to the more than 55,000,000 tiny lives snuffed out since 1973. We still have much work to do.

For starters, we must challenge the government whenever it undermines

Eric Metaxas is the author of two *New York Times* bestsellers: *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy* (2011) and *Amazing Grace: William Wilberforce and the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery* (2009). He and his wife Susanne, the president of the Midtown Pregnancy Support Center in New York City, were recipients of the Human Life Foundation’s 2013 Great Defender of Life award.

the family—as it is now doing with the “Plan B One-Step” so-called “emergency contraception” drug, which can cause abortions. Astonishingly, you can buy this drug in college vending machines, and a judge has recently ruled that girls of any age can purchase it without a prescription at the neighborhood drugstore, along with their lip gloss and candy bars. As the father of a 14-year-old girl, this enrages me. My daughter cannot go on a school field trip without my wife’s or my written permission, but she can now “legally” buy a dangerous drug without either of us ever knowing about it. And as I said in a recent *BreakPoint* radio commentary, Plan B will have another destructive impact. By law, children and younger teenagers cannot consent to sex; if they’re pregnant, it’s a case of statutory rape—or worse, violent rape. Making Plan B available to girls as young as 10 or 11 gives sexual predators another way to hide what they’ve done from their victims’ parents and doctors—and the police.

Another horror inflicted upon us by our government this year was the refusal, by the Republican-controlled House of Representatives, to pass a bill that would have outlawed sex-selection abortions. This means that the lives of unborn children can be taken *simply because they are male or female*. (In Asia, thanks to a cultural preference for boys, some 100 million unborn girls have already been put to death because of this barbaric practice.)

For the black community, abortion verges on genocide. It kills more black Americans than gun violence, cancer, AIDS, and heart disease combined. Can we doubt that abortionists target minority communities because they know there’s money to be made? This may be a big reason why, according to the Guttmacher Institute, black women abort their babies at *five times* the rate of white women. This means that black women who abort suffer higher rates of breast and cervical cancers—both linked to abortion—and also a greater incidence of post-abortion trauma. Is this not something our media should be talking about? Alveda King, the niece of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and a post-abortive mother, puts these statistics in ghastly perspective: “What would Martin Luther King, Jr., who dreamed of having his children judged by the content of their characters, do if he’d lived to see the contents of thousands of children’s skulls emptied into the bottomless caverns of the abortionists’ pits?”

Babies are also targeted by “search and destroy” fetal genetic testing. When abnormalities, or even just *potential* abnormalities, are detected, doctors put pressure on parents to abort. Shockingly, the great majority of unborn children who test positive for Down syndrome are aborted. [*Editor*: For a thorough discussion of Down syndrome abortion numbers, see Matthew Hennessey’s article “Testing Down Syndrome to Death” in the Winter 2013 issue of this

journal.] As I noted in *BreakPoint*, this is more than a tragedy; it's an outrage against God. And all of these horrors put together amount to total war against the unborn.

Sadly, many women don't even realize there's a war on—and that it's targeting them and their unborn children. Why? Because a refusal to tell women the truth goes back to the very beginning of legalized abortion. In the interest of making money, abortionists declined to tell women that, for example, their baby's heart began beating at 21 days, and brain waves could be measured at 40 days.

But eventually—when it was too late—women learned the truth. They realized that they had been lied to, and that realization, that *truth*, traumatized them. That's why we have so many groups like Project Rachel, an organization that helps women deal with post-abortion trauma. At the Midtown Pregnancy Care Center in Manhattan, my wife meets many of these poor women, and knows firsthand of their suffering. But the pro-abortion mainstream media simply refuse to acknowledge it.

Abortionists and their allies are still doing their best to drown out the truth. For instance, Texans passed a law in 2012 requiring abortion clinics to offer to perform a sonogram of every patient's unborn baby, provide a medically-accurate explanation of what they are seeing, and offer to let mothers listen to their baby's heartbeat. This last part was too much for pro-choice blogger Denise Paolucci. She came up with the idea of raising money in order to purchase iPods for abortion clinics. Her idea was to offer them to patients to allow them to drown out the sound of the baby's heartbeat. After raising a thousand dollars, Paolucci made the iPod offer to several Planned Parenthood clinics, some of which enthusiastically took her up on it.

Now, you kind of have to wonder why anyone would want to help women drown out the truth about abortion. After all, how much choice does a woman really have if she's kept in the dark about what she is doing? This reminds me of stories about German churchgoers who sang their hymns louder and louder to drown out the screams of the Jews being transported to the death camps on a nearby railway.

The hypocrisy of abortion advocates becomes even more evident when you recall their attacks on pro-life crisis pregnancy centers. Abortion proponents demanded that signs be placed outside crisis pregnancy centers informing women that abortions are not offered there. Because, as Nancy Keenan, a spokeswoman for NARAL put it, "We should all agree that a woman should not be misled or manipulated when she's facing an unintended pregnancy Being honest to a woman facing an unintended pregnancy

should not be too much to ask for.”

Unless, of course, the “honesty” leads a woman to choose to bear her child.

It all comes down to worldview. Those who run abortion mills believe that inconvenient babies are disposable, and that it is perfectly acceptable to deceive vulnerable women in the interest of making money. But Christianity teaches that all women should be treated with respect and dignity, and that all babies, born and unborn, have great value because they are made in the image of God.

One of my heroes, British abolitionist William Wilberforce, well understood the Christian teaching about treating all human beings with dignity. But as a parliamentarian, he also understood something about political battle tactics. If you saw the film about his life, *Amazing Grace*, you will likely remember a particular scene in which he dramatically gets the attention of upper-class society types. I recalled that scene recently given all the horrors revealed in the murder trial of abortionist Kermit Gosnell in Philadelphia. Wilberforce was a tireless advocate for those who were regarded as mere chattel, but he knew that words alone often fall on deaf ears. So he arranged for what his upper-class guests thought would be a pleasant boat outing. But Wilberforce sailed them right past a slave ship, close enough to smell and see the inhuman conditions the slaves were forced to endure. The partygoers were overwhelmed, upset, nauseated. What Wilberforce did may not have been polite, but it was certainly effective!

Similarly with the Kermit Gosnell trial, many Americans who casually considered themselves pro-choice were forced to see and hear, perhaps for the first time, what really happens in abortion clinics. Gosnell went on trial for seven counts of first-degree murder. The seven alleged victims were babies, survivors of late-term abortions who were accidentally born alive. He was also tried in connection with the death of a woman who died after a “botched late-term abortion.” (A botched *legal* abortion.) Initially, the mainstream media did its best to pretend the trial was not happening. As my friend Kirsten Powers noted in her *USA Today* column, “A Lexis-Nexis search shows none of the news shows on the three major national television networks has mentioned the Gosnell trial in the last three months.”

“This should be front page news,” she wrote. So why the lack of coverage? As another friend of mine, Rod Dreher, put it, “It is impossible to overestimate how sacred the media hold some sacred cows.” The mainstream press was eventually shamed into covering the trial. But if you missed it, a documentary called *3801 Lancaster* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7YmrsY4KSY>) provides all the nightmarish details. The title refers to the address of Gosnell’s

abortion clinic. Written and directed by David Altrogge—a young Wilberforce in the documentary film industry—*3801 Lancaster* reveals what happened at the so-called Women’s Medical Society over a period of 20 years. Nearly 160,000 people have viewed it on YouTube, getting an education about what “safe, legal” abortion is all about.

The clinic was situated in a rough neighborhood and catered to a mostly poor, minority clientele. Watching the film, we see how the facility, which looks run-down on the outside, was a filthy house of horrors on the inside. Walls were stained with blood. Jars were filled with what are gingerly called “fetal remains”—arms, legs, and so on. It gets worse, and I hate to be so graphic.

Gosnell specialized in what he cynically called “snipping”—which occurred when the baby Gosnell was trying to kill was nonetheless born alive. When that happened, the abortionist would “snip” the spine with a pair of scissors. That sounds pretty clinical and easy—but the reality was horrific and difficult. Murdering someone this way, even if it is a newborn infant, takes time; and of course it was painful to the child. Gosnell was charged for seven such “snippings”; a colleague may have performed up to a hundred of them.

Regarding the death of Gosnell’s 41-year-old patient, one newspaper reported that “this was not a back-alley operation.” Gosnell and company, according to one Pennsylvania state senator, were allowed to “butcher babies, butcher women, and nobody did a [darn] thing about it.” The mayor of Philadelphia, Michael Nutter, opined, “I think it’s quite clear that, if these allegations are true, we’ve had a monster living in our midst.” Philadelphia District Attorney R. Seth Williams said, “My comprehension of the English language can’t adequately describe the barbaric nature of Dr. Gosnell.” Williams, a Democrat, regarded Gosnell’s actions as so heinous that he sought the death penalty. How, you might ask, did authorities allow this carnage to go on for so many years? According to the grand jury report, the Pennsylvania Department of Health, in order to remove “barriers” to abortion, had *stopped inspecting abortion clinics*. And no one cared, anyway, because most of the women were poor and members of minority groups.

Thank God that Gosnell is no longer in practice. He is now serving a life term in prison, with no possibility of parole.

Another “Wilberforcean” tactic was employed by Lila Rose, a modern-day crusader for the sanctity of human life, and her group, Live Action. Live Action describes itself as “a new media movement dedicated to ending abortion and building a culture of life.” (I only wish the old media had the

same agenda!) Live Action released a series of undercover videos entitled “Inhuman: Undercover in America’s Late-Term Abortion Industry.” While not as grisly as the stories coming out of Gosnell’s house of butchery, these videos nonetheless show the chilling and callous attitude of late-term abortion providers. The first video shows an abortionist in our nation’s capital saying that if an abortion resulted in a live birth, he “would not help” the baby struggling for life. A second video focuses on another hotbed of late-term abortions—the Bronx, New York. We’re told that 41 percent of all pregnancies in New York City end in abortion, and that half of all unborn children in the Bronx are being aborted.

But these are merely statistics; the video puts them in context. A young woman from Live Action pretends to be seeking an abortion for a late-term pregnancy. She uses a hidden camera to expose the callous attitude toward human life of a counselor at the Dr. Emily Women’s Health Center. When asked what happens during the procedure, the counselor—who has worked at her job for 11 years, since the age of 16—avoids words like “baby” or “kill,” and says that the “pregnancy” is suctioned out. Then the counselor goes into how the clinic disposes of the remains, and what the clinic workers would do if the baby showed signs of movement. And when asked what to do if the baby comes out at home before the scheduled abortion, the counselor says, “flush it!”—obviously untroubled by the implication that what is being “flushed” is a human being, not a waste product.

Listening to the counselor’s cold-blooded answers is not for the faint of heart. But the truth has to come to light—even if it makes us and others sad and upset in the process. These Live Action undercover videos, which are certainly legal, are the kind of thing I believe Wilberforce would have done to get the truth out about the evil of abortion. I heartily commend Live Action for having the courage to make them.

These stories should inspire each and every one of us to get involved in the battle against abortion. Ask yourself: “What are my talents and interests?” If you like to give parties, consider holding a baby shower for a local crisis pregnancy care center. If you are good with people, consider volunteering your time at such a center. When I asked the National Right to Life Committee for more ideas, they suggested the following: Pray, register to vote, contact your senators and representatives to lobby on behalf of pro-life legislation, place educational pamphlets in church literature racks, talk to your pastors and encourage them to speak out on pro-life issues, bring pro-life speakers into your church or community organization, contribute financially to pro-life organizations, follow pro-life groups on Twitter or “like” their Facebook page.

Finally, while I believe that Christians must speak out passionately on the issue of abortion, how we speak about it is as important as the points we make. We must remember that, apart from the grace of God, chances are we would be on the other side of this issue. We tend sometimes to demonize our enemies instead of loving them and, more to the point, *showing* them that we love them. We would do well to heed the example of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who had no doubts about the evil of abortion. “Destruction of the embryo in the mother’s womb,” he wrote, “is a violation of the right to live which God has bestowed upon this nascent life.” Raising “the question whether we are here concerned already with a human being or not is merely to confuse the issue.” What’s clear, Bonhoeffer said, is that “God certainly intended to create a human being and that this nascent human being has been deliberately deprived of his life.” Abortion, Bonhoeffer bluntly concluded, is “murder.”

At the same time, as I noted in *BreakPoint*, Bonhoeffer spoke compassionately about the “many different motives”—such as despair, economic destitution, and misery—that often lay behind the act. He went so far as to say that “the guilt may often lie with the community rather than with the individual.” Thus, while abortion is certainly murder, we should think twice about labeling the mother a “murderer.” We must also keep in mind why it is possible to love the sinner while hating the sin: grace and forgiveness. We know that our sins, no matter how great, have been and can be forgiven. We know, some of us from personal experience, that this most decidedly includes abortion. This knowledge is what makes efforts like those of my wife possible.

But pro-abortion people simply don’t know this. They hear our condemnation of abortion as a condemnation of themselves. That’s why our love for them cannot be an afterthought; the kind of thing we say *after* people have reacted in hurt or anger. Instead, we must lead with our love. We must love them before we dream of reproaching them. After all, that was Jesus’ way of doing things. While he attacked the Pharisees, he had compassion on the harassed and helpless people. He even wept over the city that would crucify him.

It’s 40 years since *Roe v. Wade*, but I am proud that Americans have not given up the battle to protect innocent unborn babies. Despite the encouraging progress we’ve made, unborn babies continue to die violent deaths every day. So the battle must continue. We must keep fighting—with commitment, truth, and joy as our weapons. And may the Lord help us.

An Unparalleled Archive

Anne Conlon

Thanks, Rusty—and David and Denise and Katie and everyone else at *First Things*—for hosting us this evening. It's no exaggeration to say that for a long time hardly an issue of the *Human Life Review* has appeared in which we haven't reprinted a piece or two from *First Things*. Many thanks for allowing us to share *your* writers' insights with *our* readers. I'd also like to thank Maria McFadden Maffucci, the *Review's* editor, for encouraging me to put together these two collections of essays: *The Debate Since Roe: Making the Case Against Abortion*, a pro-life reader we published a couple of years ago (which features, by the way, the text of a great speech Fr. Neuhaus gave at Fordham in 2001), and its new companion volume, *The Reach of Roe: Eugenics, Euthanasia, and Other Assaults on the Dignity of Human Life*, about which George McKenna will speak in a few minutes. George has contributed an essay to each of these books, and I am grateful to him for agreeing to join me tonight—as I am for all the friendly faces I see here.

In an interview last year, I was asked if editing *The Debate Since Roe* had been “an utterly depressing project.” Not *utterly* I said, but it was disheartening to see how all the important arguments against abortion were being made—and powerfully made—from the very beginning of the debate ignited by the Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision. My late boss J.P. McFadden created the *Human Life Review* because he believed there had to be a record of that debate: “We won't be like Nazi Germany,” Jim insisted. “No one should be able to say, whatever happens, that they didn't know what's actually going on here.”

Well, I can say—after a long trek through the archive—what's been going on here during the last 40 years is *amply* documented in the 38 volumes of the *Human Life Review*. It is a unique, and I think fair to say, *unparalleled* archive, housing a rich mix of original articles and essays, along with reprints of important pieces that were first published elsewhere. It contains texts of political speeches and legislative landmarks—for instance, James Buckley's 1973 Senate address introducing a Human Life Amendment and a 1982 article by Henry Hyde, supporting a Human Life Bill in the House. There is also the testimony of witnesses who were called before House and Senate committees over the years to consider how Congress might reclaim the ground arrogated by the Court in its abortion ruling. Witnesses such as Jérôme Lejeune, the

Anne Conlon is managing editor of the *Human Life Review* and editor of *The Debate Since Roe* (2010) and *The Reach of Roe* (2012). This is the text of a talk she gave at *First Things* magazine, May 15, 2013, about what she learned during her trek through the *Review's* 38-year-old archive.

French pediatrician and geneticist best known for having identified the cause of Down syndrome, and Professor Hadley Arkes, who authored The Born-Alive Infants Protection Act, signed into law by George W. Bush in 2002. All of these are included in *The Debate Since Roe*. This collection, as well as the new one, features the work of doctors and lawyers, politicians and political scientists, philosophers and clerics, academics and journalists, and, to quote Jim again, those who bring “a layman’s view of the meaning of it all.” Those would be people like me.

I went to work for Jim in 1995, not knowing that he was a prominent member of the pro-life movement; not knowing, I must confess, that there was even such a thing *as* a pro-life movement. But after 15 years working on Madison Avenue, I was looking to engage with something more serious than perfume copy. And I was willing to start at the bottom—again. As it turned out I didn’t have to start at the bottom: The *Review* was about to lose its managing editor. That urgency, I suppose, along with a handful of letters-to-the-editor I’d written on abortion, convinced Jim to give a disenchanted advertising copywriter a chance. He hired me more or less on the spot, just as William Buckley had hired him when Jim turned up in New York after getting out of the army, looking to sign up as a foot soldier in Buckley’s nascent conservative movement. Jim went to work for him in 1956, just months after Buckley founded *National Review*. Twenty years later, when Jim—by then NR’s associate publisher—brought out his own journal of opinion (one whose purpose might be described as standing athwart *Roe v. Wade* yelling stop), he not only knew a lot about running a magazine, he also had an impressive Rolodex: James Buckley. John Noonan. Malcolm Muggeridge. Harold O.J. Brown. C. Everett Koop: Work by all of them appeared in the *Human Life Review* during its first year—and for many years after that.

When *Roe v. Wade* was decided on January 22, 1973, Jim and family were in Florida on vacation. He once recalled to me his growing outrage as he read the text of the ruling in the *New York Times* the next day, realizing that, *pace* the paper of record’s headline—“High Court Rules Abortions Legal the First 3 Months”—the justices had in fact granted a Constitutional imprimatur to abortion-on-demand—throughout nine months of pregnancy. Even abortion supporters were surprised by the sweep of the ruling, which nullified abortion laws in all 50 states. I should say rulings: *Roe v. Wade* and a companion case, *Doe v. Bolton*, as most of you probably know, were decided the same day. And it is *Doe*’s astonishingly broad definition of “health of the mother” that created a loophole big enough to drive millions of mid and late term abortions through. The *Doe* opinion stated that the medical judgment whether to allow an abortion “may be exercised in the light of all factors—

physical, emotional, psychological, familial, and the woman's age—relevant to the well-being of the patient. All these factors,” the Court stipulated, “may relate to health.” It is a loophole big enough to have granted safe haven, at least until recently, to a serial killer like Kermit Gosnell, who aborted scores of viable babies, murdering, it appears, most of them *after* delivery: albeit delivery of a most unconventional kind.

Jim returned from Florida committed to undoing the Supreme Court's awful betrayal of unborn children. Within a year he had set up the Human Life Foundation, which began publishing the *Human Life Review* early in 1975. The purpose of this *Review*, Jim wrote, “is to inform those already interested in and concerned about the meaning of life, and death.” The first issue was devoted entirely to the “problem,” as he put it, of abortion, which, he went on, “raises very difficult questions, from the highest moral and philosophical levels down to basic social and even practical considerations.” I thought it might be of interest to take you through the *Review*'s first table of contents; to get a sense of the debate as it was unfolding back then.

The lead article was Senator Buckley's Human Life Amendment address, which I just mentioned. That was followed by the text of a speech given at a 1974 United Nations world population meeting in Bucharest, by Dr. Andre Hellegers, a professor of obstetrics and gynecology at Georgetown University, and Director of the school's Joseph and Rose Kennedy Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction and Bioethics. “The child,” Hellegers told his audience, “needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, *before* as well as *after* birth.” (His emphasis.) He urged the UN to support “fundamental reproductive biology research” that could “produce fertility control methods which *all* might find acceptable.” (Again, *his* emphasis.) Dr. Hellegers, who died in 1979, didn't live to see the UN become the chief purveyor of *abortion* as a global fertility-control method, nor did he see the Kennedy Institute of Ethics, as the organization he founded is now called, become a purveyor of abortion-friendly dogma. It is headed today by Margaret Little, a philosophy professor at Georgetown who espouses “The Moral Permissibility of Abortion,” to quote the title of one of her better-known essays.

Dr. Hellegers' address is followed by testimony supporting the Human Life Amendment given by John Noonan—now a noted federal judge, then a Professor of Law at Berkeley—when he appeared before a Senate Judiciary Committee in 1974. An amendment was necessary, he told the committee, to “correct the perversion of liberty in *Roe* and *Doe*.”

Next is a *Yale Law Journal* article by John Hart Ely, a Harvard law professor who supported abortion rights, but not *Roe v. Wade*. In “The Wages of Crying

Wolf,” Ely argued that the *Roe* decision was “not constitutional law and gives almost no sense of an obligation to try to be.”

Another contributor to that first issue was Rabbi Dr. Immanuel Jakobovits, then Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and the first Rabbi of New York City’s Fifth Avenue Synagogue (1958-67). In “Jewish Views on Abortion,” an essay he updated for the *Review* from an earlier work of his, Rabbi Jakobovits made clear that while Jewish and Christian teaching on abortion differ, Jewish teaching does proscribe most abortions.

Finally, there was an original essay by a young journalist at *National Review*, Michael Joseph Sobran. M.J. Sobran, as his articles were signed, was one of the most eloquent commentators on social issues that the age of *Roe* has produced. There are over 70 pieces by him in the *Review* archive.

Here I must also mention the *Review*’s four long-time Senior Editors, who in total have contributed over 200 articles to that archive: The syndicated columnist and author, William Murchison; investigative reporter and activist, Mary Meehan; and Ellen Wilson Fielding, an essayist of the first order. The fourth was the late Faith Abbott McFadden—wife of Jim, mother of Maria, and dear friend of mine. Faith died in 2011. “Ghosts on the Great Lawn” was her first article for the *Review*—it appeared in 1986—and she was delighted I chose to include it in *The Debate Since Roe*. So was I, I told her, because in that sui generis piece of writing, she makes one of the most arresting arguments against abortion I’ve ever encountered.

Jim wasn’t sure, at least not in the beginning, where all the material necessary to fill the pages of his quarterly journal would come from, but he was convinced that our side, as he put it, would get “the best vendors of words.” “What writer proud of his gift,” he wrote in the introduction to the *Review*’s 10th anniversary issue, “would befoul his reputation by supporting the killing of unborn babies, much less use his art to advocate it?” Not playwrights Clare Boothe Luce and Eugene Ionesco, who both appeared in early issues of the *Review*. Nor novelist Walker Percy, who in 1988 wrote a letter to the editor of the *New York Times*, warning that opinion polls “now in favor of allowing women to get rid of unborn and unwanted babies” might “ten years, fifty years from now . . . favor getting rid of useless old people, retarded children, anti-social blacks, illegal Hispanics, gypsies, Jews Why not,” Percy finished up, “if that is what is wanted by the majority, the polled opinion, the polity of the time.” The *Times* didn’t publish the letter. But Jim did. It is quoted in full in Edward Short’s profile of Percy, which is in *The Debate Since Roe*.

Nat Hentoff, whose essay, “My Controversial Choice to Become Pro-life,” is also in that collection, came to Jim’s attention in 1984 with a series of

groundbreaking columns he did on infanticide for the *Village Voice*. Jim gathered and reprinted them in a special 30-page supplement titled “The Babies *Doe*.” Four years later Jim published “The Small Beginnings of Death,” another 30-page special section of Hentoff columns, these focusing on euthanasia. Both “The Babies *Doe*” and “The Small Beginnings of Death” are included in *Insisting on Life*, a collection of Hentoff’s pro-life work that we published in 2005.

Jim also made sure his readers would see the work of ethicists like Paul Ramsey and Leon Kass. And social critics like George Gilder and Christopher Lasch. In 1992, he published a witty and incisive indictment of abortion by a young lawyer named Ann Coulter. And in 1996, he reprinted Naomi Wolf’s controversial *New Republic* essay, “Our Bodies, Our Souls,” in which she famously declared abortion to be a “necessary evil.” Wolf is a vendor of “word smog,” but Jim wanted her essay to be part of his record because in it she had actually acknowledged “the full humanity of the fetus, and the moral gravity of destroying it,” taking her pro-choice sisters to task for “entangling our beliefs in a series of self-delusions, fibs, and evasions.” Jim not only reprinted the essay but ran a symposium in which several commentators, including George McKenna, took the feminist *enfant terrible*’s nonsensical necessary-evil argument to the woodshed. George himself had published an essay, just a month before Wolf’s, which also got much attention. “On Abortion, A Lincolnian Position” was the September 1995 cover story in the *Atlantic Monthly*, and it sparked hundreds of letters to the editor. It was reprinted in the Fall issue of the *Review*, with Jim observing that “we have the uniquely right audience for what Professor McKenna has to say; it belongs in our ‘permanent record’ of the abortion saga.”

Most famously, in 1983 Jim published “Abortion and the Conscience of the Nation,” an original essay by Ronald Reagan. The first—and only—such essay penned by a sitting president of either pro- or anti-abortion persuasion, it appeared during Reagan’s first term in office. “My administration,” President Reagan declared in the *Human Life Review*, “is dedicated to the preservation of America as a free land, and there is no cause more important for preserving that freedom than affirming the transcendent right to life of all human beings, the right without which no other rights have any meaning.” Barack Obama, safely ensconced in his second term (or maybe not so safely) recently made history too—by becoming the first president to address Planned Parenthood. The nation’s largest abortion provider, Planned Parenthood produces a dead baby every 94 seconds. Yet, in his euphemism-laden remarks, Obama never once used the word abortion.

Jim McFadden died in 1998. Since then his daughter Maria has edited the

Review, and minded the record, which, I might add, contains more than a few articles of hers. (One of them, “Owning Death,” is included in *The Reach of Roe*.) Maria has brought in new writers as well as shepherded important work by long-time *Review* contributors, such as anti-euthanasia advocates Wesley Smith and Rita Marker—both have essays in the new book. She’s run symposiums on timely subjects such as the British Siamese twins case in 2001 and the state-ordered extermination of Terri Schiavo in 2005. Most recently, she snagged not only Rusty Reno and David Mills of *First Things* but also Cardinal Timothy Dolan to participate in a symposium last spring titled “Truth Telling in the Public Square.”

Maria also published Cathy Cleaver Ruse’s startling review of the transcript of the partial-birth abortion trial that took place in 2004 in the Southern District of New York. Reading it will disabuse anyone of the notion that the man who ran the baby butcher shop in Philadelphia was an “outlier,” as the National Abortion Federation and other abortion groups have called Kermit Gosnell in recent statements. In some ways the testimony Cathy Ruse records in “Partial Birth Abortion on Trial” is even more disturbing than accounts of Gosnell’s grotesquery that animated his murder trial (but not many news accounts). More so because the voices we hear are those, not of the back alley, but of the Main Line: physicians and medical-school professors working in places like the University of Michigan and Weill Cornell Medical College here in Manhattan. The only real difference between these denizens of respectable medicine and Kermit Gosnell is that they, no doubt, are able to successfully administer lethal shots to babies’ hearts before they quite legally “snip” their necks.

No one should be able to say that they don’t know about abortion—or about all the other assaults on the dignity of human life that the *Human Life Review* has been chronicling all these years—resurgent eugenics, euthanasia, the destruction of embryos for so-called life-saving research, cloning, designer babies, and what one commentator calls fetal search and destroy missions through pre-natal testing. But of course we hear all the time about people who apparently don’t know. Most people today are shocked—truly shocked—to learn that abortion on demand is the de facto law of the land. In a recent poll, 55 percent of respondents said they didn’t know that Planned Parenthood did abortions. A few weeks ago I heard a speaker at a pro-life conference describe her encounter with a young African-American man who was handing out Planned Parenthood literature in the street. As she recounted it, as soon as he heard from her about how abortion is decimating the black community, he left off his pamphleteering and pledged to learn more. Perhaps he has

learned about Kermit Gosnell. We can hope.

I began by saying it was disheartening to learn that the important arguments against abortion were being made from the very beginning of the debate. Running through the 38-year-old archive are scores of iterations of those arguments, which are also, really, arguments against euthanasia and the other assaults on the dignity of human life, with which we are becoming all too familiar. Sometimes it is hard for me not to think that our culture has lost its mind. And that years of suppressing common sense, and logic, and simple human decency have created a huge and seemingly unbreachable divide between people, like me, who cling to the age-old sanctity-of-human-life ethic, and those who embrace, perhaps even unknowingly, the emerging utilitarian calculus that favors the strong over the weak, convenience over duty. Will the conviction of Kermit Gosnell for first-degree murder this week begin to bring the culture to its senses? We can hope.

And I mean to leave off here on a hopeful note. Even if our side must reconcile itself to a long struggle, I take heart when I think of people like Paul Greenberg, the long-time editorial-page editor of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, who we honored with our Great Defender of Life Award a couple of years ago. Greenberg wasn't always pro-life. In fact, in the 80s he sparred over the legality of abortion with a local pastor named . . . Mike Huckabee. The first time Jim reprinted one of his columns, he wrote that Greenberg had been on "a slow road to Damascus." But his conversion proved Jim's point about "vendors of words"—Greenberg, a Pulitzer Prize winner, is one of the best of them. He gave a wonderful address at our dinner for him—it's in *The Reach of Roe*—ruthlessly honest about the self-delusion he had engaged in for years in order to defend abortion, but was finally able to throw over. There's comfort in that, he said. If he could change his mind, others could as well. Jim and Faith McFadden believed that. Maria and I and the rest of the people at the *Human Life Review*—Rose DeMaio, Pat O'Brien, and Christina Angelopoulos—believe that as well.

Thank you.

Pro-Abortion Rhetoric:

From “Pro-Choice” to...?

Laura Echevarria

It was bound to happen sooner or later: The term “pro-choice” has fallen out of favor with the American public.

Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) recently discovered that the word just doesn’t seem to have the power to motivate the general population in the way it did when it was first coined. And while other pro-abortion groups may continue to use it (“pro-choice” still has authority among the faithful), Planned Parenthood is attempting to cast a wider net by abandoning it all together.

In the modern media culture of 24-hour news, the term “pro-choice” has been used for everything from abortion-on-demand to giving parents the option of choosing what kind of school their child can attend. It is deliberately ambiguous regarding the “choices” that are available. But when the term was first used, it was a Madison Avenue advertising agency response to the pro-life movement. Ann Friedman, writing at NYmag.com notes,

The term *pro-choice* wasn’t born of a need to describe the pantheon of issues encompassed by the feminist movement. It was reactive. When the anti-abortion movement began organizing under the “pro-life” banner after 1973, abortion-rights activists scrambled to find a similarly morally hefty term to describe their beliefs about reproductive rights. *Pro-choice* was born.¹

The term “pro-choice” may have been reactionary, but it was born out of phrasing that resonated in the polls. William Safire in *Safire’s New Political Dictionary* writes,

This term [pro-choice] surfaced in sloganeering to avoid the harness of “pro-abortion.” This inspired use of “choice” reflected polls that showed more people identifying themselves as being “in favor of a woman’s right to choose” than “in favor of legal abortion.”²

In America, as in most Western democratic societies, the word “choice” represents our ability to act without government restrictions and through our own decision-making processes. For Americans, it symbolizes the American doctrine of Freedom—which is why pro-abortion activists received positive responses to the term in the first place.

Laura Echevarria was the director of media relations and a spokesperson for the National Right to Life Committee from 1997 to 2004. Now a writer living in Virginia, she teaches composition at a small college while working on her master’s degree in English Education. She continues to host her own blog at www.lauraechevarria.com.

But it no longer has the clout and influence it once did. According to a Gallup assessment,

While Americans' identification as "pro-choice" has waned over the past year, their fundamental views about the morality and legality of abortion have held steady. Half of Americans, 51%, consider abortion morally wrong and 38% say it is morally acceptable—nearly identical to the results in May 2011.³

We in the pro-life/anti-abortion movement have done our fair share to contribute to the negativity surrounding the term. Who wants to be known as "pro-choice" when having a "choice" isn't as much of a value as being for life?

Friedman continues her observations,

In more common usage, however, *pro-life* is pro-birth and *pro-choice* means pro-abortion. This comes through in quotes like this one, from a Planned Parenthood focus group on the terminology: "There should be three: pro-life, pro-choice and something in the middle that helps people understand circumstances [. . .] It's not just black or white, there's gray." The implication? *Pro-choice* clearly fails to convey the grayness that feminists say it represents.⁴

So, Planned Parenthood has decided to stop using the "pro-choice" term because they feel it is no longer relevant. And they are not planning to replace it.

What happened, why, and, more important, *what* are they going to call it instead?

The Death of Old-School Feminism (and What It Means for "Choice")?

For a comparison, we can look at the broader picture. Abortion-on-demand is part of the larger, old-school feminist movement, which has also lost the power it once had. Like the Baby Jane Hudson character Bette Davis plays in *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?*, feminism is an old woman who longs to bring back her luster. She flirts, cajoles, and manipulates others in an attempt to recapture her lost youth, but it slips away at every grasp. Nowhere is this more evident than in a 2012 survey done by Netmums, the largest women's website in Great Britain. It is probably the most thorough and recent survey on modern feminism and serves as a guide for the state of feminism in the U.S., where polling data have shown similar results.

In the survey, a majority of the 1,300 women respondents did not identify with traditional feminism. According to the British newspaper, *The Telegraph*,

[A]lmost a third (28 percent) think traditional radical feminism is "too aggressive" towards men while a quarter (24 percent) no longer view it as a positive label for women.

One in five describe feminism as "old fashioned" and simply "not relevant" to their generation. And less than one in 10 (nine percent) of those aged 25 to 29 identified with it, while a quarter of older women aged 45 to 50 described themselves as a feminist.⁵

The reporter notes that observers have begun to call this move away from the traditional feminism movement “FeMEEnism,” because “it gives women the right to live very varied lives without judgment from their peers—rather than be dictated to by the 70’s-style ‘sisterhood’ with a solitary viewpoint.”

In 2009, CBSNews conducted a poll asking women about the impact of feminism on their lives and whether they identified with the feminist movement. While the feminist movement was seen favorably among respondents, CBS reported, “[M]ost are reluctant to call themselves a feminist outright. Just a quarter of women say they consider themselves a feminist; 70 percent do not. These numbers have changed little over the years.”⁶

This rejection of modern feminism from the 1960s, where today’s aggressive pro-abortion feminist culture was born, may be a contributing factor as to why women today are uncomfortable with the term “pro-choice.” The word is too closely tied to the hostile feminism born of the 1960s.

But the move away from the aggressive-feminist stereotype doesn’t explain the bigger picture. For that we need to look at how people establish personal values.

“Pro-Choice”—A History of Relativism

For pro-lifers and those who lean pro-life, the most effective messages about abortion are those framed using moral absolutes. “Abortion stops a beating heart” is one such message. It is effective through its use of a simple scientific fact (“a beating heart”) and the moral absolute that killing someone is wrong (“stops a beating heart”).

For pro-abortion groups and their supporters, a message using a woman’s experience is very effective. Pro-abortion media campaigns often center around individuals and their experiences because these narratives can deepen and reinforce pro-abortion opinion on the issue.

According to cognitive scientists, messages like these are based on “frames” or our individual perspective of the world. George Lakoff, professor of cognitive science and linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley, an advisor to Democratic candidates, and a proponent of liberal thought, says, “Frames are mental structures that shape the way we see the world. . . . In politics our frames shape our social policies and the institutions we form to carry out policies.”⁷

During the decade-long battle over the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act, we saw these different messages in action. Pro-abortion groups used the personal experiences of women who had partial-birth abortions to try to reinforce pro-abortion support. Pro-life groups focused on the act of the abortion itself—maintaining that the gruesomeness of the procedure, coupled with

life-size fetal models, would be most effective at engendering support, both on Capitol Hill and around the nation. While the personal narratives may have been compelling, the reality of the partial-birth abortion act itself was too ghastly for most Americans.

There have been other instances where the moral relativism of pro-abortion groups stands in stark contrast to the feelings of most Americans and appears as disrespect or a complete disregard for any morality. For example, following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Planned Parenthood affiliates offered free abortions to survivors and widows of victims. The idea of Planned Parenthood proposing to take lives through abortion after such a horrendous loss of life shocked and surprised many Americans.

But Planned Parenthood and its allies view the fight over abortion as a power struggle for women, while pro-lifers view it as a fight over a moral absolute: Killing the innocent is wrong. These are the frames of the two movements, but what about the people caught in the middle?

The Pro-Life/ Pro-Choice Camp or Trying Have It Both Ways

In abortion polls, the “middle” group of polling respondents is referred to in some circles as the “mushy middle” and in others as the “middle-ground.” They are the respondents who think abortion is acceptable under certain circumstances—usually for rape, incest, and during the first three months of pregnancy. This “middle” exists when individuals are emotionally drawn to stories of personal experience, or they may be swayed by pro-life arguments and appalled by pro-abortion extremism. Either group may not feel comfortable “imposing” their viewpoint on others, but will draw the line and support the pro-life side with money and votes when they feel their personal morality has been violated—as in the case of the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act.

In a capstone project in 2011, Trina Stout, then-candidate for a master’s degree in public communication at American University, referred to the “mushy middle” as the “Abortion Grays.” In her paper, Stout wrote,

Grays can be divided into two basic groups. The first group agrees with the pro-choice *principle* that women should decide whether or not to have an abortion, but also agrees with the anti-abortion view when it comes to specific *circumstances*. The second group has never really thought much about abortion; their opinion on the matter can best be predicted by their political or religious views (Hickman & Hayes, 2011).⁸ When this second type does think about abortion, they consider it in terms of their own personal experience with abortion—themselves, someone they know, or things they have heard (Greenberg, 2011).⁹ [emphasis original]¹⁰

Many Americans are conflicted about abortion but cannot seem to settle

on firm moral ground on the issue. According to the Public Religion Research Institute,

The binary “pro-choice”/“pro-life” labels do not reflect the complexity of Americans’ views on abortion. Seven-in-ten Americans say the term “pro-choice” describes them somewhat or very well, and nearly two-thirds simultaneously say the term “pro-life” describes them somewhat or very well. This overlapping identity is present in virtually every demographic group.¹¹

The problem inherent in the pro-choice ideology is that it ignores real issues. In her groundbreaking article, “Our Bodies, Our Souls” which appeared in *The New Republic* in 1995, Naomi Wolf addressed this. She wrote,

But, to its own ethical and political detriment, the pro-choice movement has relinquished the moral frame around the issue of abortion. It has ceded the language of right and wrong to abortion foes. The movement’s abandonment of what Americans have always, and rightly demanded of their movements—an ethical core—and its reliance instead on a political rhetoric in which the fetus means nothing are proving fatal.

The effects of this abandonment can be measured in two ways. First of all, such a position causes us to lose political ground. By refusing to look at abortion within a moral framework, we lose the millions of Americans who want to support abortion as a legal right but still need to condemn it as a moral iniquity. Their ethical allegiances are then addressed by the pro-life movement, which is willing to speak about good and evil.

But we are also in danger of losing something more important than votes; we stand in jeopardy of losing what can only be called our souls. Clinging to a rhetoric about abortion in which there is no life and no death, we entangle our beliefs in a series of self-delusions, fibs and evasions. And we risk becoming precisely what our critics charge us with being: callous, selfish and casually destructive men and women who share a cheapened view of human life.¹²

I remember when Wolf’s article first appeared. I had been with National Right to Life only a year and her recognition of the problems native in the pro-abortion philosophy were revolutionary for a movement reliant upon stereotypes and clichés. Our media department copied her article extensively to reporters and media outlets, using it to show that, when honest, even feminists accepted that death was the end result of an abortion. I never thought that I would be using her article to explain a change in Planned Parenthood’s rhetoric on the issue less than 20 years later.

The Campaign to Reframe the Debate

Planned Parenthood is leading the way in a new campaign to change how American women, especially the “mushy middle,” view the pro-abortion movement and the abortion issue. To understand how they intend to accomplish this, we need to look no further than the grandfather of rhetoric, Aristotle. Aristotle developed three areas of argument that must be addressed

when persuading an audience: *ethos* (Greek for “character,” this has to do with the trust or believability of the speaker and his message), *logos* (an appeal to logic), and *pathos* (an appeal to emotions). We still use this structure today, although modern audiences are moved more by emotion. (Ancient Greeks valued *logos* over all other elements of an argument.)

Anyone trying to persuade a group of people must include *ethos*, or trust, as a vital component of the message. Although a Gallup Poll conducted in May 2012 showed that only 41 percent of those surveyed characterized themselves as “pro-choice,” a Quinnipiac University poll conducted in February 2012 showed that a majority of 55 percent viewed Planned Parenthood favorably. Sixty percent of those surveyed opposed cutting off federal funds to Planned Parenthood.¹³

Unfortunately, Planned Parenthood is trusted by many who would fall into the “mushy middle.” The credibility of Planned Parenthood is strong among a majority of Americans and among those who sit in the middle on the abortion issue. A March 2013 poll conducted by the Polling Company for the National Right to Life Committee showed that 63 percent of those surveyed viewed Planned Parenthood favorably and 55 percent did not know that Planned Parenthood performed abortions.¹⁴

Next, effective persuasion requires a resonating message that addresses the *pathos* or emotional needs of the audience. The next step in the evolution of Planned Parenthood’s message (i.e., rejecting the term “pro-choice”) can be found in a video on the organization’s website. It makes an emotional connection to the viewer by recognizing the conflict the “mushy middle” has on the abortion issue, but returns to Planned Parenthood’s “Who decides?” slogan:

VOICE OVER: *Most things in life aren't simple. And that includes abortion. It's personal. It can be complicated. And for many people, it's NOT a black and white issue. So why do people try to label it like it is? Pro-choice? Pro-life? The truth is these labels limit the conversation and simply don't reflect how people actually feel about abortion. A majority of Americans believe abortion should remain safe and legal. Many just don't use the words pro-choice. They don't necessarily identify as pro-life either. Truth is, they just don't want to be labeled. What they want is for a woman to have access to safe and legal abortion, if and when she needs it. But when it comes to abortion, who decides? Her congressman? Her governor? Her president? Women don't turn to politicians for advice about mammograms, prenatal care, or cancer treatments. And they shouldn't. Politicians don't belong in a woman's personal medical decisions about her pregnancy.*

When it comes down to it, we just don't know a woman's specific situation. We're not in her shoes.

Ultimately, decisions about whether to choose adoption, end a pregnancy, or raise a child must be left to a woman, her family, and her faith, with the counsel of her doctor or health care provider.

So the next time you talk about abortion, don't let the labels box you in.

Have a different conversation.

A conversation that doesn't divide you, but is based on mutual respect and empathy.

To learn more, go to notinershoes.org.¹⁵

Notice that the third element of an argument, *logos*, isn't addressed as heavily or as well (fallacies, not logic, are apparent in the video). Facts and logic generally work against Planned Parenthood, so the "facts" presented are confined to women's personal health-care decisions, which are unrelated to the life-and-death decision inherent in an abortion. But, lucky for PPFA, hard facts and logic do not resonate as well with their constituency or with the moral relativism of the "mushy middle" that PPFA is trying to reach.

A recent opinion piece in the *New York Times* stands as an example of this approach. The writer Judy Nicastro, a former member of the Seattle City Council, was faced with giving birth to twins, one of whom would have an extremely difficult start in life due to a hernia that compressed the organs in his chest and prevented his lungs from developing properly. She and her husband made the decision to have an abortion with the "counsel" of a physician. Nicastro writes:

[T]he pediatrician could tell that we were looking for candid guidance. He cautioned that medical ethics constrained what he could say, then added, "Termination is a reasonable option, and a reasonable option that I can support." . . . He said what we already knew. But we needed to hear it from professionals, who knew we were good parents who wanted what was best for our children.

The next day, at a clinic near my home, I felt my son's budding life end as a doctor inserted a needle through my belly into his tiny heart. . . . As horrible as that moment was—it will live with me forever—I am grateful. We made sure our son was not born only to suffer. He died in a warm and loving place, inside me.¹⁶

In writing of her abortion, Nicastro has deliberately made the willful death of an unborn child sound pleasant and peaceful. This is the approach Planned Parenthood is taking—rewrite the narrative of abortion so that abortion decisions sound like they are contemplated by intelligent, caring parents who want only the best for their unborn children—even if that "best" is death.

According to Brooks Jackson and Kathleen Hall Jamieson in their book, *unSpun: Finding Facts in a World of Disinformation*, "A simple rule of persuasion holds, 'Frame the issue, *claim* the issue.'" [emphasis original]¹⁷ This rule falls more into an appeal to emotion (*pathos*) and works well with

the individuals Planned Parenthood is trying to reach with its message. PPFPA used this technique during the 2012 election campaign by framing “women’s issues” as a debate primarily over contraception. It worked. In response, the mass media shunted abortion aside and focused on the sensational aspects of the debate over women’s issues, namely the idiotic comments about rape by a conservative candidate and the controversy over contraception and morning-after-pill coverage in the Obama health-care plan.

In its new campaign, Planned Parenthood is seeking to use the same language as before, i.e., “When it comes to abortion, who decides?” But, by removing “pro-choice” from the pro-abortion lexicon, they may hope to draw in people who are uncomfortable with the extremist language and tactics associated with the term “pro-choice.”

The reality of abortion still has the ability to shock and appall. The trial of Kermit Gosnell shed some much-needed light on the horrors that go on behind the doors of an abortion clinic. While the extremely unsanitary conditions in Gosnell’s clinic are likely not present in the majority of abortion clinics, the casual discard of babies and their body parts is reality. The difference is that Gosnell stored the remains over the long term. The grand jury report summary states, “[S]cattered throughout, in cabinets, in the basement, in a freezer, in jars and bags and plastic jugs, were fetal remains. It was a baby charnel house.”¹⁸ Revelations such as these stun Americans, yet the repeated response of the majority of pro-abortion groups is to ignore or deny the truth that abortion, in the words of Naomi Wolf, “can only be rightly understood as what Dr. Henry Foster was brave enough to call it: ‘a failure.’”¹⁹

Supporters of the abortion movement may feel comfortable circling the wagons to defend the indefensible, but the majority of Americans are not comfortable aligning themselves with a movement that denies the questionable morality and natural revulsion of abortion on demand.

In *unSpun*, Jackson and Hall Jamieson note, “[S]ometimes choosing a word means choosing sides. When discussing abortion, which word do you choose, ‘fetus’ or ‘baby’? Are you ‘pro-choice’ or ‘pro-life’? But there’s generally much more to any issue than a name or slogan can tell us.”²⁰ By avoiding a label, the “mushy middle” may feel that it is not choosing sides and, therefore, is free to move back and forth as specific issues and legislation are introduced to the public.

The Danger to the Pro-Life Movement

The problems for pro-lifers inherent in the no-slogan approach being taken by PPFPA are the corruption of the ideas behind the labels and the strong possibility that Planned Parenthood will attract supporters and potential voters

through this new approach. In January 2013, MSNBC reported,

Among the “middle-ground” voters, as pollsters call those straddling the pro-life/pro-Roe divide, nearly half said their own view of abortion depended on the circumstances. But whatever their own attitudes, most agreed that a woman should be able to make her own decisions about her pregnancy. “I’m pro-life for me,” said one middle-grounder. “But for the safety of women, it’s important to keep the right to have that choice.”

“There should be three [labels],” another told the pollsters: “pro-life, pro-choice, and something in the middle that helps people understand circumstances. It’s not just black or white—there’s gray.”²¹

The corruption of the term “pro-life” is a real danger. In recent years, supporters of abortion-on-demand have used the term “pro-life” on bumper stickers, banners, and posters in an effort to reframe the debate. “Planned Parenthood is Pro—cancer screening, HIV testing, prenatal care—Life” read one abortion proponent’s sign at a rally. Another Planned Parenthood supporter held a sign that read, “pro-health, pro-life, pro-family, PRO-CHOICE.” Bumper stickers for sale to the pro-abortion community include several that read “Pro-life and Pro-choice.” These are only a few instances, there are many more.

My prediction is that Planned Parenthood and its cohorts will, over the next few years, attempt to paint the pro-life movement as strictly “anti-abortion” and PPFA and its supporters as the true the face of the “pro-life” movement. It is hubris on their part, but so is everything else PPFA does. Keep in mind that this is the same group that hammered the Komen Foundation in the press, and subsequently won the public relations battle, because the Komen Foundation chose to give funds to groups that actually do mammograms—groups that did not include PPFA affiliates.

By co-opting the term “pro-life,” abortion supporters and their allies can feel good about their decision to support abortion-on-demand, potentially remove some of the strength of the pro-life movement, and perhaps bring in those who straddle the middle.

The campaign to change the way Americans view abortion has already begun. In June 2013, abortion supporter Beth Matusoff Merfish wrote of her mother’s abortion, concluding,

What the movement for reproductive rights needs is for the faces of freedom to emerge from the captivity of shame. To my mother’s generation, I ask: Speak openly about the choices you have made. To all women: ask your mothers, grandmothers, godmothers, aunts, sisters, daughters and partners about their reproductive histories. Show that abortion has myriad faces: those of women we love, respect and cherish. You have the power to cement in the minds of your communities and families the importance of reproductive freedom. You have made decisions that are private, even

anguishing, but the weight of this political moment demands that you shed light on those decisions.²²

Appealing to the emotions of readers, Matusoff Merfish presents abortion as a heart-wrenching yet (almost) righteous decision. She implies earlier in her opinion piece that abortion isn't just for *other* women but for Every-woman. This argument is meant to make abortion sound common and far-reaching, effectively arguing that since it cannot be avoided, it must be embraced.

Reaching Middle America on the abortion issue has always been a challenge, but the challenge facing the pro-life movement is something the pro-abortion movement faces as well. Groups like Planned Parenthood will have to continue to modify their message in an effort to meet the people in the middle.

To return to Aristotle and how to frame an argument, the pro-life movement needs to undermine the *ethos* of groups like Planned Parenthood. We have truth on our side, and the pro-abortion movement continues to ignore facts in favor of sensationalism and lies. Although the media often gives the pro-abortion movement a pass when it comes to news that will affect their side of the issue negatively, the Internet, social media, and alternative news outlets have the potential to transform the debate. But we have to keep in mind that the pro-abortion movement has extensive structural and financial resources at their disposal.

Next, we need to address *logos* or logic. The pro-life movement needs to keep driving the message home that the pro-abortion movement is based on lies. We need to continue pointing out Planned Parenthood's role as the nation's largest abortion provider as well as their extremist view that abortion should be legal throughout all nine months of pregnancy. We need to use their words against them.

As for *pathos* or the emotional needs of the audience we are trying to reach, we need to be pro-active in defining the debate. When Planned Parenthood says that abortion is not a black-and-white issue, we need to remind Americans that, for the child involved in the abortion, the result is very stark. We can present information on fetal pain and the humanity of the unborn child. An aggressive, wide-ranging media campaign could strengthen the anti-abortion/pro-life views of those Americans who reside in the mushy-middle. As Peter Spiliakos notes in a recent *National Review Online* article:

A plurality of Americans already support banning most abortions after 20 weeks. Focusing on the humanity of the late-term fetus would remind those Americans that some politicians support late-term abortions—and those politicians could be named. Focusing on the humanity of the late-term fetus would raise the salience of the

abortion issue for some opponents of late-term abortion. It would probably even win some converts.²³

When Planned Parenthood and its supporters claim to be pro-life, we need to remind Americans that we in the pro-life movement are the only ones who are working to protect both the child *and* her mother. We can emphasize actual stories of real women who have faced the life-and-death decision of abortion. The stories and reflections of women who chose life for their children or who regret their abortions will help Americans recognize the genuine help available through crisis pregnancy centers and the pro-life movement. These stories can help Americans realize that abortion is not a solution to the problems facing women.

A pro-life media campaign poised to correct and address Planned Parenthood misinformation is needed. It needs to be responsive, pro-active, and sophisticated. We have the tools and the means at our disposal, but we have to adapt—and quickly—to Planned Parenthood’s ever-changing tactics.

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*"Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him when he worked
the main room at the Jest 'n' Joust."*

Seeking Sanctuary:

The Loss of Childhood Innocence

Ellen Wilson Fielding

One of those experiences that remind adults how far they have fallen from youthful innocence is watching a young child's reaction to an ad on TV. The child absorbs the voice-over's message about miracle mops or detergent or breakfast cereal or antidepressants or hand sanitizer—it doesn't really matter what the product is or whether he has any need for it—and takes it to heart as gospel truth: “We need to get this mop, Mommy, it cleans the best”; “Yoo-hoo chocolate milk is healthy for you—can we buy some at the supermarket?” Gazing into the trusting eyes of a child too freshly minted to recognize the cynicism of Madison Avenue when he hears it, you can identify with Jonathan Swift when he conceived the humorless but truthful uber-rational Houyhnhms, those painstakingly honest but pedantic talking horses in *Gulliver's Travels*. The kind of duplicitous adult human beings who create, approve, consume-with-ironic-smile, or critique such marketing appear worthy of the contempt the Houyhnhms reserve for the uncontrolled and untrustworthy human Yahoos.

Many adults whose hearts are touched or withers wrung by these youthful pawns of the world's P.T. Barnums (“There's a sucker born every minute”) resort to a solution that in its own way is as corrupting as Madison Avenue. They teach children from a tender age to see through the marketing machinations—to assess claims and analyze language and look for loopholes, just like canny adults (though most of these adults, despite their dearly bought skepticism and cynical overlay, remain vulnerable to the admen's offers). And in fact this cultivation of skepticism and questioning of adult wisdom at a time when children are, so to speak, naturally in skepticism's latency period, extends beyond sales pitches to political speech, historical icons, traditional values, and homespun wisdom. The “Question Authority” mentality more age-appropriate for adolescents and young adults has percolated well below middle school and into the ranks of what used to be the True Believers. So the kind of child that I opened this article with, whose reaction to claims of efficacy (or virtue, or justice) is trusting acceptance, is nowadays at most seven or eight years old and not much more. For years now we've heard that the onset of physical puberty is occurring earlier than it used to, for reasons

Ellen Wilson Fielding, a longtime senior editor of the *Human Life Review*, is the author of *An Even Dozen* (Human Life Press).

partly clear and partly murky. However, this other sort of precocious maturity—the non-physical kind of premature cynicism—like the prepubescent girls aping their older sisters’ skin-baring and tight-fitting fashions, is perhaps even more alarming and disconcerting.

In fact, in our time we see both aggressive and defensive onslaughts against the innocence of our young children. Our society has been brooding over the aggressive kind to little or no effect for decades now: the coarse language and suggestive-to-obscene lyrics of even what used to be the safer kinds of pop music, for example. On television, cable TV’s generation of hundreds of channels accelerated the breakdown of rules and regs the networks had long chafed under, such as bad language, openly lewd or suggestive situations, and levels of gore previously quarantined from appearing on the small screen, with its easy access by all demographic groups. In short, as all of us know, some of us rejoice in, and many of us deplore, today’s world is unprecedentedly porous to view by the young. It is not so much that they can easily eavesdrop on inappropriate conversations or peer into matters beyond them as that they are assaulted by unregenerately adult content. They are stunned by it, seduced by it, exposed to it as an innocent passer-by may be exposed to a flasher.

That’s the aggressive form of precocious knowledge, and it is very aggressive indeed—so aggressive that many parents and teachers from a variety of political persuasions wish with greater or lesser degrees of resignation or despair that there was something we could do about it, if only we could come up with a large-scale societal cure that did not involve the imposition of *sharia* law and the donning of burkhas. The reactive or defensive extension of precocious knowledge, on the other hand, derives partly from the general desire to enlighten and instruct young people let loose in this largely unregulated and untruth-telling world, and partly through a very specific desire to preserve them from destructive con games and the kind of sexual lures and abuse that we’ve also seen all too much of.

The most large-scale and so to speak structural of these well-intentioned assaults on innocence are the school and youth group programs designed (in response to sexual predators) to teach children about appropriate and inappropriate touching. For the very smallest ones the approach is to enable them to recognize adult boundary crossing without overly sexualizing the presentation, but any child taking the whole thing seriously enough to imbibe the cautionary instruction could hardly avoid viewing surrounding adults with a more suspicious and even fearful eye—something that may well have a useful protective function, but comes at a price we may underestimate. For better or worse we are in a different territory from the age-old warnings

about getting into a stranger's car; as children advance not far beyond preschool, many are gradually being introduced to the (factually based but still overly alarming) information that the people statistically most likely to offend in this way (and therefore presumably most suspect) are relatives, neighbors, and family friends. Loving and wanting to protect our children but not wanting them to fear sexual perversion in every holiday hug creates a dilemma.

This is a difficult issue precisely because the damage done to the victims is heartbreakingly real, deep, and long-lasting. Yet it's hard to believe that these preparation courses will really help most of those threatened closest to home (by, say, a mother's boyfriend, a babysitter, an uncle, or step-sibling). The level of preparation in the schools, though perhaps sufficient to unsettle a roomful of kids, is likely inadequate to equip any youngster not already confident and confrontative to tell on a relative or family friend. It's possible that an abused child may gain from such resources some protection from misplaced guilt or the feeling that the child invited the abuse. On the other hand, being informed by authority figures (even subtly, by illustrations in a workbook, for example) that people inside or frequenting the home are possible suspects, could surely (if it has any effect at all) diminish a child's confidence in and heighten his anxiety over significant adults in his life. The minority who tragically have good reason to be anxious may or may not find that helpful. The by-far-greater number whose homes do not expose them to that kind of trauma are needlessly invited to apprehend horrors. (As an Italian I know expressed it, "The child should not be afraid of the mother's soup.")

That's the down side to this extreme version of the defensive deflowering of innocence. And even though it occurs for the best of motives, it is important for us to face up to that down side, whether or not our society decides to accept it as a necessary evil to prevent greater evil. Note also that this same society willing to place the burden of precocious suspicion on young shoulders rejects sacrificial choices that pit protection of the young against adult freedoms. It's hard not to conclude that in many spheres the young are being forced to pay the price of adult "freedoms." For example, widely available forms of soft (and not so soft) pornography, sexual references, and provocative clothing even in venues and at times that children will be exposed to—those kinds of things demonstrate mainstream society's truly shocking fall from the kind of traditionally-accepted self-restraint of language, appearance and behavior that used to protect the youngest and most innocent of its members. Graphic language or an exposed breast or two may seem paltry compared to more direct dangers to innocence—and of course they are, in a sense—but

both kinds of assault come from people's inability or unwillingness to adapt with rudimentary self-control to the differing needs, rights, and sensibilities of those around us.

I can't help thinking of another elemental danger to children's innocence today, however—one that in the United States arose nationally 40 years ago. I am thinking of the effect of abortion, as an idea and as a reality within children's families.

Those readers who are parents have had to decide when and how to allow the fact of legal and widespread abortion to penetrate the consciousness of their young ones. There are arguments for and against the different options—in fact, there are no truly “good” options available, precisely because abortion denies the claims of the youngest and most innocent among us to society's protection. Perversely, our self-righteous secular societies praise the legality of abortion as an engine of liberation and self-determination rather than admitting complicity in over a million children sacrificed to “liberation” each year.

Some pro-lifers participate as families in events like the yearly March for Life or candlelight vigils in state capitals, or perhaps they pray and witness at the local abortion clinic. Their babies and toddlers do not of course immediately register what's going on, but surprisingly soon—as everything comes surprisingly soon when you have children—the questions come or the child's rudimentary ability to turn two plus two into four appears.

I did not bring my own little ones to marches or public demonstrations, partly because I feared the effect of an opponent's ugly reaction (“Mommy, why is that lady saying such mean things?”) and partly because I wanted to shield them while I could from graphic pictures and the even uglier reality they testified to. Nevertheless, soon enough—maybe at home with the evening news in the background or in the car with the radio on—the question would come: “What is abortion, Mommy?”

I find it hard to imagine that this is an easy conversation even for Francis Kissling or Nancy Pelosi. I think that even if the heads of Planned Parenthood and NARAL were chatting about daycare options during a play date for their young daughters, such a question might provoke an awkward silence and a cleared throat or two before one or the other embarked on the party line about clumps of cells multiplying away when it's just not a convenient time, and the need to terminate before someone unwanted makes it down the birth canal.

The reason the silence is so awkward and the words come so slowly and unsatisfactorily to most of us, whether pro-life or pro-choice, is that the first and immediate reaction of *all* young children I have ever known or heard

about is shocked disbelief. Some women do *what*? The law says it's all right to do *what*? "But Mommy, what do you mean?" No young child finds such a right intuitively "natural"—how could anyone not anaesthetized by custom and propaganda do so?

Probably the first reality about human relations that all children become aware of—except in the case of the most extreme parental neglect and abuse, and sometimes, amazingly, even then—is that mommies take care of their babies. (Daddies have their exalted position too, but it may take a few more months to fully register and label it, given that nine-month head start in the womb, the elemental breast-milk connection, and those handy nurturing female hormones.) Over millennia of human existence, the death of a mother has been the most harrowing fear most children could entertain in this regard. Many of us can remember as small children petrifying ourselves by allowing that bogeyman entrance from time to time when an absent parent was unexpectedly late in returning home. Imagination supplied vivid footage of a car crash or an assault in a dark alley, and existential terror took over. *What will happen to me? Who will take care of me? Who will love me and give their life for me?*

Learning about abortion insinuates in some ways an even more elemental horror than the death of a parent. This human sanctuary, this elementally trustworthy and essential relationship, becomes theoretically at least problematic and contingent (though I'm sure that very soon most children mostly explain away the sense of personal threat—*My mother wouldn't do that, in the case of a pro-lifer's children; and less satisfactorily but still somewhat consolingly for the pro-choicer's children: My mother didn't do that*).

Though maybe she did—to an earlier or later sibling. The news that abortion is legal, is possible, is common and commonly accepted, is world-shaking and world-shattering to a young person because it takes the very gradually dawning awareness that the world is not safe (accessed incrementally, over the course of years) and exponentially raises the threat levels. It turns natural human relations upside down, creating a stomach-lurching, security-sucking sense that nothing can be relied upon. And in such a world—unfortunately, the world that we all have to deal with—nothing (outside of God) *can* really be relied upon. No common definitions of justice, protection of innocents, understanding of family and sexual roles, or agreement about the proper purpose and limits of government.

Consider how viscerally and physically we react, even as adults, when we feel ill or threatened or bereaved or off-balance or emotionally assaulted.

What are the kinds of things we do to feel better, regroup, self-nurture? We retreat to beds and piles of pillows and blankets, we seek warmth and softness and muted sounds and low lights, we rock back and forth, reduce sensory overload, close our eyes. *We assume a fetal position.* In short, we retreat to the ultimate place of safety and security, the womb.

Only, in a world where abortion is commonplace, it isn't necessarily a safe place at all. Oh, it was once safe enough for us, or we wouldn't be here. We made it out, after all. But consider the profound, absolute dependence of even (born) infants and young children. Their very lives literally and continuously depend upon the willingness of a more powerful and benevolent being or beings to feed them, keep them warm, shield them from the threats of Nature. They not only want but *need* arms holding them and transporting them. (Remember those developmental psych classes, where we learned about those baby monkeys failing to thrive when separated from a mother or even anything that could approximate the mother's soft, comforting presence.)

Gradually, as these young ones grow and develop, they will need to be taught rudimentary self-care and self-protection—the bare minimum needed for a shot at survival. All of that (and much more, of course, such as love and video games and prom dresses and college tuition) suddenly enters the category of what *might not have been* when we realize that, for a million or so American babies a year, all of that never will be.

I think that shame—not so much personal but corporate or tribal shame—is a second reason why many of us feel reluctant to initiate young people to the reality of abortion. You might recall an incident in *Out of the Silent Planet*, the first book of C.S. Lewis's adult space trilogy. The protagonist finds himself kidnapped and placed on a secret manned space flight to Mars, which turns out to be inhabited by intelligent beings similar to us in many ways—thought processes, family relationships, etc.—but with the rather enormous difference that they do not share our fallen, sin-prone nature. Unlike us, in other words, these beings committed no Original Sin to pass down to their descendants, so they experience no habitual tilt towards greed and selfishness, no difficulty in choosing the good, no clouding of conscience and rebellion of the will. The human protagonist in Lewis's story inadvertently causes the death of one of these beings because he cannot bring himself to warn them against the evil scientist who kidnapped him. The protagonist is ashamed of his fellow human's evil capabilities because, latently and potentially, they are his own. He is ashamed of their common human sinfulness, which he anticipates will shock and repel his new, unfallen friends if he tells them.

Something of that complicit shame attaches to our reluctance to enlighten

our children about the human threats in our adult world. In contrast to our little ones who come initially wired, it seems, to regard us as all-wise, powerful, and beneficent (at least for the first few years), we not only are aware of nasty pockets of perversity like pornography and self-centeredness, but even the best of us know them at least somewhat from the inside. We have lived with many of the temptations, internal fault lines, and susceptibilities that incline people to wrong—to *very* wrong—choices, and that life history taints us with something of the common shame of being a member of a fallen species.

But after all, rugged realists might say, this *is* our human nature, and in particular this socially commonplace choice of abortion *is* an option, an alternative, a possibility that, yes, may deal death to a rather large number of human beings already queued up to encounter the human condition, but in the process may enhance the freedom of other, already-born human beings to enjoy life. Isn't our reluctance to shatter the child's unrealistic illusions about the sanctuary of the womb and the fundamental dependability of mother love a kind of unhelpful sentimentalism?

Remember the over-protectiveness of Phoebe's mother in a famous episode of the '90s TV series "Friends," where we learned that as a child Phoebe was shielded from the tragic endings of classic children's movies like "Old Yeller." That's because her squeamish mother would kill the TV or close the offending book before the final scene. When an outraged Phoebe, all grown up, finally catches the death of Old Yeller on TV she exclaims: "What kind of sick doggie snuff movie is this?" Don't our children (so the rugged realists might argue), destined for good or bad to live in the world as it is and not as we wish it were, deserve to know its lights and shades?

One way or another, whether they "deserve" to or not, our children will become acquainted with reality, but how this happens matters. It is surely a loving parent's part to help his or her child learn about socially accepted evil at the right time and in the right way, acknowledging it in shame as wrong, stressing that it is perversely contrary to the identity of a mother to sacrifice her young, and explaining that those tempted to do so in dire circumstances need support to achieve a genuinely human choice in line with her nature, her deepest desires, and those of her child. Such "telling" is very different from being told that what appears to be evil and threatening to the child and his siblings must be acknowledged on balance as a good in those (not infrequent) situations where the interests of the expectant mother and the expectant child diverge.

For even worse than the discovery that the place of ultimate safety and security, the cushioned confines of the womb, can in our era legally and to

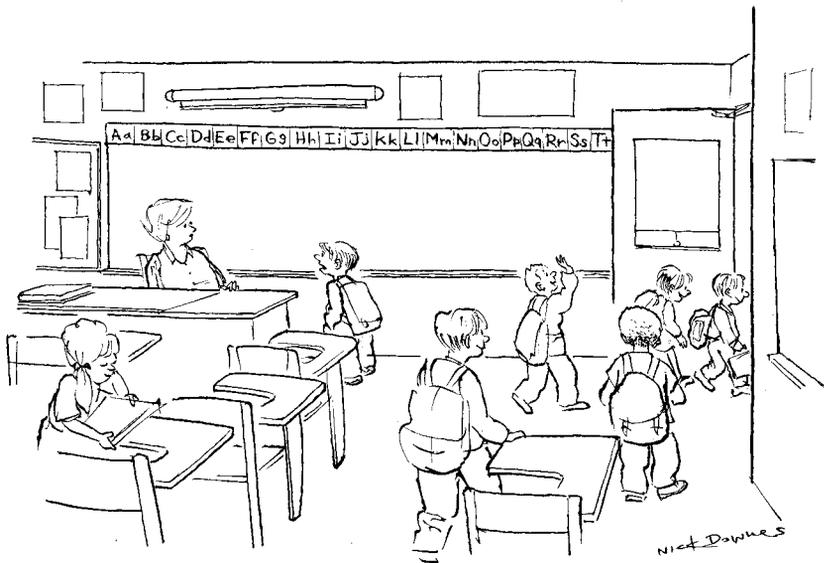
many minds ethically be turned into a lethal chamber, is the discovery that no person or place in this self-defining, self-realizing, and self-creating society need stand by a chosen role, creed, loyalty, or identity. A loving mother to one unborn child may turn into the agent of the next one's death (or in the case of IVF pregnancies, may welcome one tenant of the womb while evicting multiple siblings.) We are several generations into being progressively more accustomed to impermanent and fluid family relationships: co-habiting couples, separately living couples, combinations of step-families and half and step-siblings in multiple households, married and unmarried, and often the accompanying chaos of years of daycare with rotating caretakers. Today we are adding to this quicksand of shifting family assemblages homosexual couples as adoptive and semi-biological parents under a variety of templates: surrogate parenthood and sperm donation among them.

And this possibility of redefining or rebranding one's life, so to speak, ties back to our earlier discussion of the child's loss of the womb as safe haven. For women, despite the seemingly fixed ramifications of their gender (the physical apparatus, the hormonal equipment), despite the fact that they are seemingly "born that way," wired for mother love, can and do not only self-define whether they are to be motherly beings, but determine by biological and legal innovations whether and when they do in fact become mothers.

And yet. Security expert Gavin de Becker's justly popular book on self-protection, *The Gift of Fear*, was followed by a second book about securing the safety of children, *Protecting the Gift*. One piece of advice in the latter book is telling. De Becker notes that most parents pass on to young children the admonition to look for a policeman when they are lost in a crowd or feel threatened by someone. De Becker first points out why he considers that advice flawed: To a child, pretty much anyone in a uniform with a badge and a gun is a cop, but that includes the perimeters of what we may loosely call law enforcement, such as mall security and night watchmen. Some of these are likely not the most trustworthy people for a child to seek out, given that security firms can and often do hire people with criminal records.

So de Becker advises concerned parents instead to play the odds by picking the population group that is statistically the safest and most likely to involve themselves in a child's troubles: Tell your child to approach the nearest woman. Yes, de Becker is drawing on gender stereotypes here, but this is just the sort of situation where latching onto a stereotype makes sense. The child has no time and the parents have no opportunity to do background investigations to determine which nearby person is most likely to help and

not to hurt. In our self-inventing, self-defining, stereotype-despising society, that person is still more likely to be the one who is biologically qualified to mother. De Becker does not guarantee that every woman who spells a potential refuge to a scared young child will care and will help (we would all like to bypass Lady Macbeth, for example). No one can make such a guarantee—and indeed, since Adam and Eve’s fall in the Garden of Eden, no earthly place promising perfect safety and security has ever proved completely trustworthy. But the odds—even today, even after 40 years of legalized abortion—are still in the small lost child’s favor. The instinct to trust in the woman’s nurturing qualities is to that extent still sound, despite the battleground that the womb has become and the myth of perfect freedom to do and to be whatever we wish. God made us, after all, to delight in the freedom to be what we were created—loving images of our loving Creator, though limited, partial images expressed in our creaturely finitude: Male and female he created us. The expanse in which to explore and expand upon that maleness and femaleness is wide, but not so wide as to induce vertigo. Like all ultimately safe or safeguarded territory, our nature has limits, boundaries within which to develop and explore, but beyond which (the old mapmakers used to inscribe), dragons lie.



“Will I see you in September, or lose you to a summer love?”

The Grand Refusal:

Abortion's Pogrom Against Contingency

Caitlin Smith Gilson

“There is no worse philosophy than a philosophy which despises nature. A knowledge that despises what is, is itself nothing; a cherry between the teeth holds more mystery than the whole of idealistic metaphysics.”

—Jacques Maritain

“He is a man who is to be a man; the fruit is always present in the seed.”

—Tertullian

In his 1929 work *Three Reformers*, French Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain referred to modern Western society as a “homicidal civilization.” When he died in 1973, *Roe v. Wade* had just been handed down in the United States. Forty years later, this ruling is the capstone (indeed the gravestone) and inevitable result of our “homicidal civilization,” and it can be cartographically traced to the rampant rationalism that left no room for the irreducibility of the human soul.

The historical deconstruction of the soul is, in some form or another, the loss of the philosophical principle of intentionality, which is man’s foundational relationship with and dependency on the world for his knowledge and activity. It is this loss which is at root in the prolonged collapse of the soul and the protracted suicide of Western man. The loss of this foundational relationship is ultimately the denial of key fundamental presuppositions, those non-demonstrable irreducible facts of existence by and through which I begin my discourse and journey as a being in the world. The three key presuppositions are as follows:

- I am in the world; I do not need to prove it and I cannot deny it; the world in all its fullness is the *irreducible* ground of the possibility of my knowledge and action.

- I know myself only in the face of otherness; I do not need to prove the self or otherness and I cannot deny them; self and otherness are the *irreducible* constituents of being human.

- I am free; I do not need to prove free will and I cannot deny it. Free will is found in the *irreducible* newness of each man’s free rational activity of the

Caitlin Smith Gilson, Ph.D., is the chairman of the philosophy department at the Pontifical College Josephinum, a Roman Catholic seminary in Columbus, Ohio, and author of the forthcoming *The Philosophical Question of Christ*.

will. It is not absolute, nor need it be, and the precondition of its choosing is intelligence and self-mastery, requiring time and, especially, societal and familial assistance. It is not absolute and it can be poisoned at the well of childhood by the ugliness of the broken home and a demonic culture of death.

One may call these presuppositions hopelessly naïve preconceptions, but they are the *irreducible* and unbroken ground of the possibility of knowledge and action. If man does not accept these presuppositions, he exposes himself to a deeper naiveté—the view of the world as, at best, a reductionist construct derived from sense data and power-driven social conflict. The loss of these presuppositions has allowed the emergence of determinism, behaviorism, positivism, and all the other forms of postmodernist secular nihilism. If the world, self, otherness, and free will are not irreducible facts by which I begin my activity as a knower, then we leave ourselves open to reducing the world, the self, otherness, and free will to these empty secular myths.

Man's unseemly fascination with the reductionist pseudo-certitudes and arrogant pretensions of natural science and psychologism has dictated and dominated much of human action and is at the heart of the malignant neglect of these intentional presuppositions. Such neglectfulness contributed to the deterministic world view of man as a mere microorganism within that cell of determinism. The world of attainable transcendent meaning was thus "bracketed" and then discarded; any remains became a reconstituted world: a series of relativist subjectivisms overflowing into an endless series of hidden determinisms that eviscerate and emasculate all responsibility and lurk in the deceptive language of tolerance, equality, and rights. In all these terms an abundant nihilism reigns, removing the absolute sense of Good and Evil in human action as well as the accountability of a natural-law ethics of ends, limits, and natural objective goods.

Without these presuppositions man is unable to know himself. He is unable to perceive or engage or confront the genuine irreducibility of each man. He is left to an extorted examination of the reductive residuum: behavior, genetics, environment, and political obsession. Is this not the essence of ideology and its bloodless abstractions, which are blind to the primal beauty and terror of existence and which subvert the civilizational shapes of historical finitude and friendship? Ideology is marked by an indifference in the former and an irreverence in the latter, both bordering on the diabolical.

After the loss of a genuine intentionality, the soul straddled a state of existential listlessness, not residing fully within the body or in the world or in Being. Unable to be accounted for either by the prevailing behaviorisms or the radical ideologies, the soul became, strangely enough, the unnecessary appendage, a cumbersome, meddlesome medieval hangover restricting man

from the new, unlimited, and will-based meaning of the world. What is lost is the fundamental truth that the soul is neither reducible to matter nor self-enclosed, either of which erroneous preconceptions can justify the unjustifiable and deny the undeniable, namely, the irreducible otherness of the unborn child.

In this simplistic intellectual Pelagianism, the soul was no longer the “noble carrion” of Gerard Manley Hopkins that finds itself more alive as it “lay wrestling with my God.” Instead, as it was severed from or reduced to the body, the soul was picked over for its leftover meanings, meanings that could be deformed and pressed into the service of the prevailing right-wing and (even more so) left-wing ideologies. What connects these ideologies as positions outside and hostile to the faith is that each dispenses with the route that Aquinas called the *longior via*, the longer way. The rightist refuses to traverse it, while the leftist annihilates it; the leftist dilutes the mystery of existence, while the rightist reifies it. The soul thus became nothing more than a gossamer slip of a “word” to hide the modern tyrant: the ideologue with all his atheistic secularisms and vulgar political attitudes.

The soul, no longer the form of the body, was either further bracketed as a strictly religious category or reduced and resituated into that absolute vacuity known as “world spirit” or the so-called tide of history. The soul became an alien category outside the world of natural meaning, with nowhere left to turn except to the many romantic pessimisms unleashed in response to the Enlightenment. The soul became “personality.” Yet even personality, more often than not, drowned out and dried up in a penumbra of materialisms as deep and as dark as Marxism and Fascism.

The last counterfeit substitute for the principle of intentionality, and with it the relevance of the human soul, dried up in the aftermath and deflation of European idealism and rationalism following the First World War. In its ruins the theological and philosophical truths lingered as transient perspectives in the many half-way houses collapsing in the gutters of World War I and the ensuing postmodernist crisis that persists to this day. One might recall Schopenhauer’s sad dilemma: If there is no God to be comprehended, then the world is barren and meaningless, because man has no pattern by and through which to accomplish God-likeness. But poor Schopenhauer’s only consolation, the denial of the will-to-live through his noble escape hatch of forgetting the will in an endless aesthetic, was to be terribly mismanaged by Feuerbach’s fervent and materialistic God usurpation. However, this too was in turn overthrown, in favor of the collective where all are equally soulless products of a constructed social contract.

Here the last meaning of the soul was to be emptied. Its deconstruction

began by removing the soul's intentional relationship to the world and to God, but it required more: namely, a newfangled version of the "soul" *as* individual but with no other responsibility than to the continued and relentless affirmation of the self. Paradoxically, the loss of the personal in favor of the social collective did not obliterate the individual but rather reaffirmed it in a radically new light! Secularism and materialism, those great levelers, would hand in hand unleash the totalitarian reign of the individual built on an atomistic solipsism and pure perspectivism. Here power determines the context and content of the constructed individual, granting absolute right to gender or race or class or the so-called ideals of civilization. With the mask of objectivity removed, one is left with the struggle for power. And in this struggle *solidarity trumps objectivity*. Solidarity in guilt drowns even the objectivity of the evil act.

If we are to accept the parameters of God usurpation, then we must also accept the following: 1) there is nothing, no soul residing within man, he is what he makes of himself in the immanent or rather immediate; and 2) if there is no "soul," neither is there any rootedness directing knowledge and action. Man has no other, knowledge has no object, other than the self, and the self has no object other than itself! Man is his own subjective content.

Among the most pernicious repercussions of the reordering of man's noetic primacy are the dramatic alterations to free will. Historically, freedom allowed itself to be reduced when we conceived of it as a kind of grasping of some distant "universal" superimposed over and against the world. Once the inauthentic sense of freedom was linked to Christianity, as for instance in Kant, and subsequently condemned, so too of course was any genuine sense of a natural light (*lumen natural*) given by God. When solidarity trumped objectivity, free will fell to the *reduction to choice* so esteemed by the liberal tradition. Choosing among a plurality of indifferent alternatives constituted freedom, and indifferentism reigned because man decided to be *beyond* good and evil. The only meaning left was that known as the "absolute right" of the individual to secure his own content. It is no surprise that the genocide of abortion continues unabated, thriving under the deformed meaning of women's "rights"!

The soul and its existential privilege vanished into a self-induced coma, or rather a hall of mirrors where man can no longer call out from the abyss of the soul to the abyss of Being: *Abyssus abyssum invocat* ("Deep calls to deep"). Man begins and ends without otherness, having no beginning or end but the totality of the I—which is itself a mere construct. In so far as "knowledge" has any meaning, the world is "knowable," but only as a

plurality of fantastical and shifting constructs. It *has no meaning behind it* (thus losing its character as sign), but only countless constructed meanings or “perspectives.” God is an empty fiction. Nietzsche proclaimed the death of God, and his postmodernist offspring proclaim the death of the soul, and this proclamation is far more powerful because it does not even need to be spoken. Now there is no faith but the faith in the relativity of all opinions and there is no absolutism but absolute relativism. Only our own needs interpret the world: our drives and their for-and-against attraction and repulsion, every drive as a kind of *lust to rule*, each with its perspective which it *compels* all other drives to accept as norm. When one drive becomes so powerful that it forgets or rejects or denies or covers up the fact that it is itself just a relative interpretation, then hierarchies, power structures, “ideals” are built up—and these must be deconstructed and brought back to the only fact acknowledged by the doctrine of post-modernism—that there are no facts; there is no universal rational ground for interpretation; there is only a multitude, a pluralism of perspectives. And this passes for freedom. What child stands a chance against it? Children are doomed (if they make it out of the womb) to shoot their way out of immanent relativism, as at Columbine.

But this is a deadly moral Ponzi scheme run by more-than-Dickensian knaves and imposters, a Potemkin village masking the emptiness of the lie: deducing the non-existence of truth from the arbitrary refusal to seek the truth. For such an ideology, only the possibility of truth is too impossible to entertain. This is the soul-less soul and goal-less goal of the protracted suicide of the West described by James Burnham a half century ago. The Western intellectual is, oddly enough, strung out on the very contagions that anesthetize the mind, curdle the heart, and debase the will, rendering impotent the natural inclinations to truth, action, and love—making even basic endurance or survival *problematic*. Man falls, as Maritain noted, all the while thinking he is rising, mistaking this betrayal for freedom.

In sum, the loss of the soul requires a series of related *denials* fully accomplished in the modern/postmodern world. Man first denied any *center of unity* in the so-called object of cognition. To do so, he went far *beyond* the Kantian critique of *imposing subjective limits on knowledge* by denying any radical metaphysical otherness on the part of the so-called object at all. This denial is far-reaching, because it dismantles any foundation rooted in self-presence or the perception of Being that acts as the independent arbiter and criterion of truth, whether this foundation be God, Nature, or Reason. Even subjectivity in the Cartesian sense is a mere construct, a *fiction* along with God, Being, and Truth.

Thus, after denying 1) any center of unity and 2) any notion of foundation

or reference point or bottom line, Postmodernism also denies 3) *meaning*. The postmodern loss of the soul thus goes farther than any modern existentialism, since existentialism looked for meaning in a transcendently meaningless world. Not only is there no transcendent meaning, but the very *idea* of meaning is *repressive*. The soul thus perishes in a fundamental self-referential *solipsistic relativism*.

Where does man go from here? How do we re-introduce the world, a re-introduction that goes beyond the limited scientific or sentimental re-introductions that have fallen short of bringing back the soul? Unfortunately, in this present empty and homicidal state, the re-affirmation, re-articulation, and re-grounding of the soul often appear as a kind of aesthetic speculation, a mere vague expression of a counterfeit transcendence in a world that appears fundamentally un-transcendent. We are circling here a basic distinction between classical-medieval and modern thought. Modern thought is ideological *because* it does not allow the possibility of knowing the world, but only of knowing ideas about the world. Thus it builds upon an idea of man, an idea of history, an idea of culture and tradition, an idea of politics, all of which emerge concretely as *ideals* of man, history, culture, tradition, and politics. But what are ideals to the modern mind? They are *values*: subjective, personal, idiosyncratic, non-binding, and cognitively empty values. Does it make one whit of conceptual, philosophical difference which values are “embraced” or “cherished,” when the very understanding of values as ideals and ideals as ideas and ideas as beliefs is the common and determining factor in our conception of man? Can even a conservative social order endure with such a contradiction lodged in its heart?

If this is what makes modern thought ideological, what makes it modern is this. All its claims can be traced, even in their merely apparent mutual exclusivity, to the guiding movements of modern philosophy, primary among which are the following: The attempt to divide the world into a radical incompatibility between ideas (luminosity) and things (opacity), as in Descartes; the move to reduce the world to an aggressive partisanship of willfulness versus unintelligibility, as in Kant; the transfiguration of the world into Pure Idea, as in Hegel; the degeneration of the world into Pure Action, as in Marx; the overcoming of the world through Pure Power, as in Nietzsche. Truth comes to be ideas as functions of the Pure Self: Whether these ideas are abstract or concrete, metaphysical or historical, pragmatic, empiricist, positivist, or imaginative is not the important point. What is important is that the world becomes either a radical beyondness or a sheer immanence equivalent to selfhood. Does it matter which head of the Gorgon we prefer

to gaze at? In either instance, the world becomes an idea-logos, an *artificial construct*.

But where then is this transcendent meaning? How can man rise above and outside the greatest evil, i.e., the all-too-present denial of evil? It seems that postmodern man is so far down the path of annihilation that the region of transcendence that affirms the irreducibility of the soul is practically inaccessible to him. All human actions call forth their own unrepeatability. What actualizes man's relations in the world is that his actions cannot be retrieved; they are fundamentally final because finite. This irretrievability that forms the tapestry of finite actions is the appearance of history, thus rendering this history as well as all its formations unrepeatable. This finality in every action means that man can actively close himself off from, and thus forget, the activity of transcendence. As St. Anselm knew, all we own is our own nothingness—but so too can we approach to a kind of nothingness, said St. Augustine, by allowing an empty and dangerous nihilism to prefigure, situate, and resolve our actions.

Modernity is the age of the monster, the dynasty of terror. Nihilism has broken open and has perhaps permanently severed man from tradition. Yeats' slouching rough beast *has been born*. Man has replaced tradition with a new anti-tradition, one that de-ritualizes, de-sacramentalizes, and thus de-traditionalizes existence. This new "tradition" denies death through death and kills as it denies it is killing. Thus the weasel-word language of "termination."

In this most severe crisis, can man go home again? What does this mean? Can we look to the traditional vision of transcendence, of man rising up to the universal good? Has the tradition of transcendence been so historically annihilated that, by invoking it, man is invoking only an alien empty category that only distracts from the problems of modernity?

If the absolute is discoverable only in the particular and the particular is characterized by man's *towardness* to a world of creativeness, adventure, and non-sequitur (the *longer way* of Aquinas), then abortion's *pogrom against contingency* has in praxis destroyed man's access to the divine and thus to himself. This massive interdict on intentionality, transcendence, and freedom has restructured and deformed our historical givenness and reduced it to a series of empty finite moments anchored to the self-enclosed realm of necessity at best and whim at worst. Because the participants in existence have knowingly or (even more perniciously) thoughtlessly embraced the present de-ontological system, rejections of the Christian vision anticipated by Maritain are materializing as the major obstacle to the relevance of the faith.

Is there hope? The foundation, the *arche*, like the soul, cannot help but

manifest itself even if only inauthentically. We see these inauthentic forms in the rabid consumerism and pornographic obsessions that feed the vapid individualism and in how, most particularly, political liberals invest other moral, environmental, and political issues with greater gravitas and an almost idealistic fanaticism, while rendering abortion a solely emotional issue. What does this mean? The absolute may always be *there*, but if it is not in a form that befits human nature, it is *as if* it does not exist. We live in the forgetfulness of Being, in the endless foundering in the nothing, the no-where of truthlessness. It is time to recollect Being as God. And, as the great Catholic philosopher Etienne Gilson noted in his little-known but prophetic 1948 talk *The Terrors of the Year Two Thousand*, “Not a sin, not a moral fault is there which is not first of all an error made to the detriment of intelligible light, in violation of the laws of the supreme reason.”

If we are to come home again, if we are to reaffirm the irreducibility and primacy of the soul and of the meaning of human life, it is not enough to invoke the pieties of transcendent meaning. In this world, calling forth transcendence in order to save the soul has more often than not subsumed the particular and all the activities of our everyday active life under the systematic umbrella of a static lifeless set of “universal goods,” “eternal verities,” and human rights. In this crisis of modernity, even the basic acceptance of modernistic renderings of “transcendent” universal goods has actually aided the continued thoughtlessness that unleashed the terror of modernity and the tyranny of abortion in the first place. Why? Because the meaning of “transcendence” in this world-homelessness is nothing more than an escape hatch, a hidden concession that blindly accepts that the soul, its irreducible foundation, and its transcendence are strictly outside-the-world religious categories. As a fundamentally alien category, the soul cannot contribute to meaning, because now there is no inherent or natural meaning left to discover or augment! So deep is this crisis that any breakthrough would quickly be relativized by the prevailing perspectivalisms that have conquered every arena of thought, particularly the academic, and among the academic even those pockets of professional Thomists who see “objectivity” as an emergency exit from the trials of historical temporality.

Christianity, sorting through the intellectual and spiritual carnage, was presented with two competing unacceptable alternatives: the soul reduced to a material principle or to an irreducible principle of merely religious sentiment. Of course, Christianity chose the latter, the lesser of two evils. But this modern religious choice was fraught with a minefield of defections, desertions, and denials, because both alternatives carry the same fatal flaw:

the blind allegiance to a reductive rendering of the natural world. This flaw not only creates the unnecessary opposition between the body and the soul but issues in the exact same conclusion for both alternatives: when the soul is relegated to a strictly religious category, the result is the separation of God from Being! The soul is left to remain outside the region of the current confines of meaning, flung into the homelessness of nonbeing, again contributing nothing but hollow religious sentiment and “values” and appeals to a tradition already emptied of its intelligibility and transcendence.

Before man proclaimed God’s death, he had already buried natural meaning to accomplish that last rite; he had already killed off the soul. Underneath all this persisted the anesthetized extraction of Being from the world, and this extraction happened at night and behind our backs. Being is not in the soul or in the world—and now, it is not in God. Being is nowhere to be found. Without Being as God, there is no meaningful direction to human knowledge and activity. There is no con-substantial intellectual exegesis of the world or tran-substantial sense of man in God. All of these unities are now but phantom apparitions of a stale and primitive religion.

Before the moral collapse came the metaphysical collapse, and before the metaphysical collapse came the epistemological collapse. All these implosions cannot help but point towards the remnants of soul that mirror the contemporary, humanistic, and effete figure of Christ: a half-dead corpse dragged through the centuries pardoning while condoning all sins, until there is no such thing as sin because it has lost all of its meaning.

While it was once possible to be, like Maritain, politically liberal and theologically faithful without contradiction, since *Roe v. Wade* this is now an impossibility. In many respects, man cannot go home again; we are strangers in a strange land; as *homo viator*, we are without a way home. We live in the annihilation of the given, and abortion is unfortunately debated within this context-without-content. The classic moral vision is suppressed in all its real forms, the ground of its activity is uprooted; at most it is a shadow-land of frail bloodlines of recollection, remembrance, regret, and forgiveness. These frail bloodlines convey the evils of abortion, but haven’t the metaphysical strength to articulate the reasons why abortion is a profound existential defection, desertion, and betrayal. In a moral vision constrained by the loss of Being, Christianity is limited to waging a defense of life through emotional affectivity and a proclamation of traditional values that more often than not falls on deaf ears. Man and world are no longer in a relationship of mutual obligation and implication. Absolute right knows no obligation. It is sheer insatiable demand—a demand even and especially for the blood of the innocent.

Catholicism and its intellectual tradition by no means equated the soul to

the Kantian consciousness or the Hegelian spirit. For our tradition, the paradoxical mathematics of the human person is that *one* soul united to *one* body equals *one* man. The logic of perfection is that the soul is the principle of life, and that it is inseparably and existentially discoverable only within the world. The soul's situatedness within man, incarnationally understood within the world, grounds religious insight. Thus, unlike the consciousness emptied of everything but itself, the Catholic soul was never a merely religious or solipsistic fantasy. We cannot defend human life by positing the soul as a merely subjective religious category!

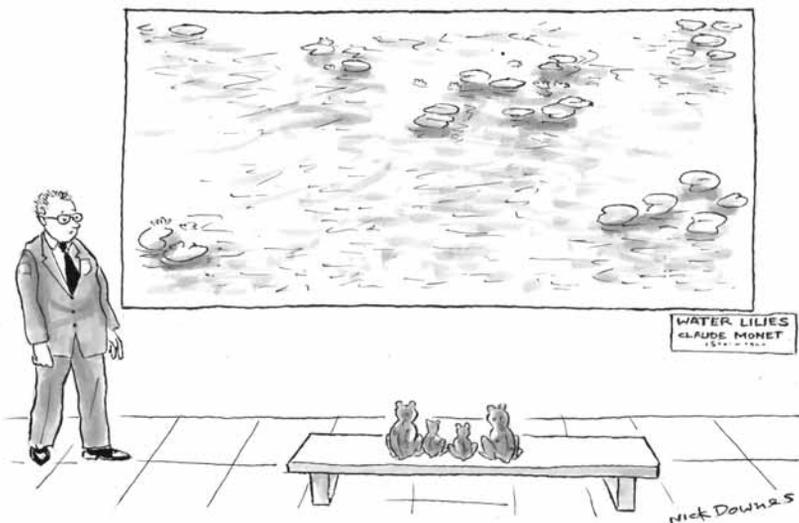
To confront the homicidal culture of death, we must reject its empty and reckless moral platitudes and return to the origins of ethics. Again, the moral collapse began in the metaphysical collapse, which is itself founded on an epistemological collapse. Thus, if we can delineate the metaphysical evil of abortion through a reflective meditation on the meaning of temporality, contingency, intentionality, freedom, and history, then and only then can we make possible a more powerful ethics to defend life.

We can re-affirm what it means to be man as a rational animal (which is an unfortunate term to begin with), but we must uncover it as it is re-awakened in Gabriel Marcel's *homo viator* (man as wayfarer), in G.K. Chesterton's everlasting man, in Kierkegaard's stages on life's way, in Pascal's wager. The loss of the soul is the loss of the principle of intentionality, and what is this loss but the continued neglect of man's relatedness in and to the world? The loss of the soul is reflected in the prolonged historical mismanagement of "rational animal" and its terrible disservice to reason! Reason, as the distinction between man and animal, has been overused and precariously applied, resulting in a latent and widespread neglectfulness of the senses, the passions, and the genuine meaning of St. Thomas' *longior via*. The disposition of this "rational animal"—with its litany of dead "concepts," "ideas," "abstractions," "substantial forms," and "acts and potencies"—has more often than not obliterated the genuine insight of metaphysics: Being outstrips all of our thoughts, ideas, and meanings, and it must do so in order for man to have genuine thought and action in the first place!

The moment reason was pressed into laying conceptual concrete over what it considered an "unwieldy" existence, the moment it constructed a direct highway of "clear and distinct ideas" to answer or frame such problems as immortality or (especially) the existence of God, it lost everything. It might not be too much of a stretch to say that this degenerate and decadent metaphysics itself produced as its endgame scientism/behaviorism/determinism, because that decadent metaphysics pays only lip service to Being and God as parts of an elaborate word game.

It is the soul to which the body is united and for which it exists, the two coming together in what theologian Father Romano Guardini called a holy association as the unity of a man, requiring time and the world for its journey—it is this soul that possesses a logic of its own. The French writer Georges Bernanos, who knew that the vast cemeteries under the moonlight were the graveyard of modern man, also knew “that everything beautiful in the history of the world has originated without anyone’s knowledge, from the mysterious accord which exists between the humble and burning patience of man and the gentle mercy of God.” The communion of man in political association is the least of exceptions. The isolating speculations of political and philosophical angelisms and materialisms are deformities that make up ideologies but unmake societies. But it is by the soul’s self-understanding, through its presence in and to the world, that the world becomes habitable; the transcendental disposition of man binds him to creation. This is the longer way, but the surer way, and it is incompatible with any ideology.

A cherry between the teeth holds more mystery than the whole of idealistic metaphysics and ideological politics, and thus more reality than the entirety of their subsequent materialisms with their overflowing secular banalities. A child in the womb is the holy and full incarnate mystery of a cherry between trembling teeth; it is the savor, the meaning inherent in and spanning from the birth of the little sparrow to the sacrament of last rites.



The Pro-Life Legacy of Pope Benedict XVI

John Burger

When Pope Benedict XVI spoke about threats to the sanctity of human life, he was not pronouncing from some academic ivory tower. Growing up in Germany, young Joseph Ratzinger had a cousin with Down syndrome. The boy was about the same age as 14-year-old Joseph in 1941, when Nazi officials came one day and took him away “for therapy.”

He did not come back. Apparently, he was the victim of a Nazi program to euthanize people with “undesirable” hereditary deficiencies.

The racial and ethnic cleansing that took place in Pope Benedict’s beloved homeland under the National Socialists has led many to echo the phrase “Never again.” But Ratzinger, who recognized the denial of humanity undergirding such cleansing, has since witnessed repeated attempts to redefine human nature in the interest of abortion, artificial reproductive technologies, eugenics, population control, embryo-destructive research, assisted suicide, and euthanasia. He has devoted his life to providing an intellectual framework to understanding the culture of death and, as pope, used a worldwide pulpit to win hearts and minds to a culture of life.

Benedict stepped down from the papacy in a historic resignation in February 2013. Through his years as pope and his work as a theologian, he leaves a legacy of deeper understanding of the truths of the Christian faith. That effort has included a reaffirmation of the Christian vision of man as a creature made in the image and likeness of God and therefore enjoying a supreme dignity. It is that dignity, Benedict argues, that is violated by every manifestation of the “culture of death.”

Born in 1927 in Marktl am Inn in Bavaria, Germany’s most Catholic state, Joseph Ratzinger was a young child when Adolf Hitler rose to power. The young Ratzinger wanted to become a priest from the age of five; in the very year that Hitler invaded Poland, 12-year-old Joseph entered a minor seminary. Two years later, like all 14-year-olds, he was forced to join the Hitler Youth, although he refused to attend meetings. However, he was unable to resist being drawn into World War II: His seminary studies were interrupted in 1943 when his class was drafted to serve in an auxiliary anti-aircraft corps.

Later, young Ratzinger was pressed into service in an Austrian border area near Hungary, where he saw Jews being marched off to death camps. After a short period at home, he was drafted into infantry training, but illness

John Burger is a free-lance writer and editor.

kept him from the front. As that front closed in and the American Army occupied Bavaria, both Joseph and his only brother, Georg, were sent to prisoner-of-war camps.

Their internment did not last long, however, and both brothers resumed seminary studies at the end of 1945, in Freising. After ordination in 1951, Joseph began a teaching career that would take him from Freising to Bonn, Münster, Tübingen, and Regensburg. In the early 1960s, he served as a theological advisor to Cardinal Joseph Frings, Archbishop of Cologne, at the Second Vatican Council. Father Ratzinger attended all four sessions of the council.

Later, Ratzinger lent his talents to the International Theological Commission. Pope Paul VI appointed him archbishop of Munich in 1977, and he became a cardinal the same year. The following year, he took part in the conclave that elected Cardinal Karol Wojtyła as bishop of Rome, and in 1981, Pope John Paul II named him prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. It would be the start of nearly a quarter century's service as the Church's chief point man for the resolution of theological disputes.

Perhaps his greatest contribution to the defense of human life during this period was the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's "Instruction on Respect for Human Life in Its Origins and on the Dignity of Procreation." This 1987 document, often referred to by its Latin title *Donum Vitae* ("Gift of Life"), sought to answer problems presented by relatively new procreative technologies and practices, such as *in vitro* fertilization, artificial insemination, and surrogate motherhood.

Among the points *Donum Vitae* made are the following:

- Human reproduction must be the fruit of marriage and respect the inseparable connection between the unitive and procreative meanings of the conjugal act.
- A child conceived as the result of spouses' mutual self-giving is a gift from God, while artificial reproductive technologies lead to regarding the child as a product.
- Techniques that assist the conjugal act in attaining a pregnancy (such as surgically opening a blocked fallopian tube) may be licit, but those that replace it or substitute for it (such as *in vitro* fertilization) are not.

"He had a significant role in the preparation of *Donum Vitae*," said Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk, director of education at the National Catholic Bioethics Center. "I think he has shown a particular interest in the relationship between science and religion, seeking to craft a synthesis of sorts in terms of their

mutual complementarity, deeply cognizant of the importance of both to the life of contemporary society.”

More than two decades later, in 2008, as pope, Benedict approved what could be considered a “sequel” to *Donum Vitae—Dignitas Personae* (“The Dignity of the Person”), an “instruction on certain bioethical questions,” looking at technologies that had not existed in 1987.

Another of Cardinal Ratzinger’s contributions during his time as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith was a major address at a 1991 meeting of cardinals examining the subject of threats against human life. Though he recognized that there was no dearth of Church statements on the defense of human life, he recommended that the Church issue a document that would consider both individual morality and “social and political morality.” “The field remains wide open for a global restatement on the doctrinal level, which would go to the deepest roots of the problem and denounce the most aberrant consequences of the ‘death mentality,’” he said. He suggested that the document “involve a joyous restatement of the immense value of each and every human being, however poor, weak, or suffering he or she may be. The statement would show how this value is seen in the eyes of philosophers, but above all, in the eyes of God, as Revelation teaches us.”

Four years later, Pope John Paul II published his encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* (“The Gospel of Life”) in which he condemned abortion, euthanasia, and other assaults against human life. And, as if responding to Cardinal Ratzinger’s suggestion of restating the value of every human life, the pope wrote, “Man is called to a fullness of life which far exceeds the dimensions of his earthly existence, because it consists in sharing the very life of God.”

Objective Truth

After the death of Pope John Paul in 2005, the College of Cardinals elected the 78-year-old Joseph Ratzinger, whose public style was decidedly lower-key than John Paul’s. The Polish pope had been an actor early in life, a background that served him well in public appearances. Ratzinger, on the other hand, was a scholar who would have been happy to retire and spend the rest of his days writing books. And yet, as pope, he appeared to eventually win the hearts of most Catholics and many non-Catholics.

“Some thought that Benedict XVI, already old when elected, would be merely a transitional figure, a caretaker who would serve for a few years and then hand over the Church that he inherited from the Blessed John Paul II to a younger man,” said Steven Mosher, president of the Population Research Institute. “But neither the Church nor the Pope have been in a holding pattern over the last eight years.”

Benedict's strong emphasis on the reality of an objective truth and strong criticism of the moral relativism of the times drove an eight-year pontificate that saw the release of three encyclicals and numerous other documents; 24 foreign trips, including one to the United States, and several controversies, including one in which it was thought that he was changing Church teaching on the use of condoms. He was doing no such thing, but the clever way in which he framed the argument brought attention to the reason the Church denies the licitness of contraception—because it divorces the procreative and unitive meanings of marriage.

The condom controversy grew out of the publication of *Light of the World: The Pope, the Church, and the Signs of the Times*, a book-length interview German journalist Peter Seewald conducted with the pope. Seewald posed the objection that “it is madness to forbid a high-risk population (AIDS) to use condoms.” To which Pope Benedict answered, “There may be a basis in the case of some individuals, as perhaps when a male prostitute uses a condom, where this can be a first step in the direction of a moralization, a first assumption of responsibility, on the way toward recovering an awareness that not everything is allowed and that one cannot do whatever one wants. But it is not really the way to deal with the evil of HIV infection. That can really lie only in a humanization of sexuality.”

Asked to clarify, the pope denied that the Church regarded condom use as a “real or moral solution, but in this or that case, there can be nonetheless, in the intention of reducing the risk of infection, a first step in a movement toward a different way, a more human way, of living sexuality.”

In a November 2010 interview, Vatican Cardinal Raymond Burke told me that the pope was

... simply making the comment that if a person who is given to prostitution at least considers using a condom to prevent giving the disease to another person—even though the effectiveness of this is very questionable—this could be a sign of someone who is having a certain moral awakening.

But in no way does it mean that prostitution is morally acceptable, nor does it mean that the use of condoms is morally acceptable. The point the Pope is making is about a certain growth in freedom, an overcoming of an enslavement to a sexual activity that is morally wrong so that this concern to use a condom in order not to infect a sexual partner could at least be a sign of some moral awakening in the individual, which one hopes would lead the individual to understand that his activity is a trivialization of human sexuality and needs to be changed.

“A large part of Pope Benedict XVI's great legacy both to the Church and to the world will be constituted by his scholarly writings and teachings which call us to search and inquire more deeply into the truth of Christ and of our relationships with each other and our communities as a whole,” said

Archbishop Francis Chullikatt, the Holy See's representative at the United Nations. The archbishop continued,

Through his deftly articulated scholarly writings and erudite teachings he highlighted the Church's evangelizing mission: not merely to engage in public debate on the protection of life but also to compel all people to move beyond a dialectic of political divide towards a deeper understanding of the true dignity and worth of every human person. In so doing, the pope invites all of us to open our hearts and minds to the transcendent and to move beyond self-interest and egoism in order to welcome life as the true gift of God: to be protected, nurtured and cherished by all of us together, in harmony, for the common good of future generations yet to be born.

Father Matthew Lamb, the director of the Graduate School of Theology at Ave Maria University, sums up Benedict's pro-life legacy this way:

Pope Benedict saw clearly the importance of the pro-life movement so greatly influenced by his predecessor, Blessed John Paul II's masterful encyclicals such as *Veritatis Splendor* and *Evangelium Vitae*, as well as in his many addresses and visits over almost 27 years of his pontificate. The legacy of Pope Benedict in regard to the pro-life movement is, in my judgment, his concern to show that the foundations of the movement are to be found in our God-given human reason, common to all. As prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, then-Cardinal Ratzinger laid out key aspects of Catholic Magisterial teachings in the 1987 instruction *Donum Vitae*. In line with John Paul II's *Fides et Ratio*, and his own profound studies of St. Augustine, Pope Benedict knew the importance of divine revelation to lift the darkness of our fallen condition. Given the proliferation of anti-life technologies today, it was especially important for the Church to proclaim, as he had the CDF do in the 2008 instruction, the dignity of human beings (*Dignitas Humanae*).

“Everything Collapses”

When he became a bishop in 1977, Ratzinger chose the motto “Cooperators of the truth,” because, as he put it:

On the one hand I saw it as the relation between my previous task as professor and my new mission. In spite of different approaches, what was involved, and continued to be so, was following the truth and being at its service. On the other hand I chose that motto because in today's world the theme of truth is omitted almost entirely, as something too great for man, and yet everything collapses if truth is missing.

Everything collapses, including a culture that upholds the sanctity of human life.

Caritas in Veritate, the pope's 2009 encyclical also known as “On Integral Human Development in Charity and Truth,” is worth quoting at length in this regard:

In vitro fertilization, embryo research, the possibility of manufacturing clones and human hybrids: all this is now emerging and being promoted in today's highly disillusioned culture, which believes it has mastered every mystery, because the origin

of life is now within our grasp. Here we see the clearest expression of technology's supremacy. In this type of culture, the conscience is simply invited to take note of technological possibilities. Yet we must not underestimate the disturbing scenarios that threaten our future, or the powerful new instruments that the "culture of death" has at its disposal. To the tragic and widespread scourge of abortion we may well have to add in the future—indeed it is already surreptitiously present—the systematic eugenic programming of births. At the other end of the spectrum, a pro-euthanasia mindset is making inroads as an equally damaging assertion of control over life that under certain circumstances is deemed no longer worth living. Underlying these scenarios are cultural viewpoints that deny human dignity. These practices in turn foster a materialistic and mechanistic understanding of human life. Who could measure the negative effects of this kind of mentality for development? How can we be surprised by the indifference shown towards situations of human degradation, when such indifference extends even to our attitude towards what is and is not human? What is astonishing is the arbitrary and selective determination of what to put forward today as worthy of respect. Insignificant matters are considered shocking, yet unprecedented injustices seem to be widely tolerated. While the poor of the world continue knocking on the doors of the rich, the world of affluence runs the risk of no longer hearing those knocks, on account of a conscience that can no longer distinguish what is human. God reveals man to himself; reason and faith work hand in hand to demonstrate to us what is good, provided we want to see it; the natural law, in which creative Reason shines forth, reveals our greatness, but also our wretchedness insofar as we fail to recognize the call to moral truth.

Criticizing the attempt to link human development and anti-poverty efforts with population control, the pontiff stated in the encyclical:

Openness to life is at the center of true development. When a society moves towards the denial or suppression of life, it ends up no longer finding the necessary motivation and energy to strive for man's true good. If personal and social sensitivity towards the acceptance of a new life is lost, then other forms of acceptance that are valuable for society also wither away.

Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide

Benedict also employed the Christian vision of man to back up his arguments against physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia. He warned against a "utilitarian vision of the person," such as during a Pontifical Academy for Life conference at the Vatican on Feb. 21, 2009, where he observed:

There is a tendency to give priority to functional ability, efficiency, perfection and physical beauty to the detriment of life's other dimensions which are deemed unworthy. The respect that is due to every human being, even bearing a developmental defect or a genetic disease that might manifest itself during life, is thus weakened while children whose life is considered not worth living are penalized from the moment of conception.

In addition, in a Feb. 5, 2010, address to the Bishops of Scotland on their *ad limina* visit to Rome, the pope said that support for euthanasia "strikes at

the very heart of the Christian understanding of the dignity of human life.” He explained that, “The Church offers the world a positive and inspiring vision of human life, the beauty of marriage and the joy of parenthood. It is rooted in God’s infinite, transforming and ennobling love for all of us, which opens our eyes to recognize and love his image in our neighbor.”

On a visit to a residence for the elderly in London in September 2010, he reiterated what he had said at the start of his pontificate: “Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary. Life is a unique gift, at every stage from conception until natural death, and it is God’s alone to give and to take.”

True Peace

Respecting the truth of the human person has wider implications for society and its own aspirations. As Father Shenan Boquet, president of Human Life International, noted, Benedict

. . . began to integrate the defense of life with the Church’s social doctrine In *Deus Caritas Est* [“God is Love,” the pope’s first encyclical, issued in 2005] and *Caritas in Veritate* the Holy Father makes it clear that the false compromises of many human development organizations are counterproductive precisely because they are built on the premise that human life is not sacred, that the human being is not made in the image of his creator, and thus any dignity ascribed to him is only a function of his productivity. Pope Benedict dealt with this quite often, responding with his terrific formulation that authentic, integral human development means responding in love to the whole person (including his eternal dimension), and to every person.

On Jan. 7, 2013, one month before he announced he would be resigning, Benedict told diplomats accredited to the Holy See that:

The building of peace always comes about by the protection of human beings and their fundamental rights. This task, even if carried out in many ways and with varying degrees of intensity, challenges all countries and must constantly be inspired by the transcendent dignity of the human person and the principles inscribed in human nature. Foremost among these is respect for human life at every stage.

The pope’s Message for the World Day of Peace 2013 spoke of this truth as well:

The path to the attainment of the common good and to peace is above all that of respect for human life in all its many aspects, beginning with its conception, through its development and up to its natural end. True peacemakers, then, are those who love, defend and promote human life in all its dimensions, personal, communitarian and transcendent. Life in its fullness is the height of peace. Anyone who loves peace cannot tolerate attacks and crimes against life.

These principles are not strictly truths of *faith*, he pointed out, but are “inscribed in human nature itself, accessible to reason and thus common to all humanity.”

During a 2010 “Vigil for All Nascent Human Life,” an event he initiated at St. Peter’s Basilica at the beginning of Advent, the time of preparation for Christmas, the Pope reflected on the mystery of the Incarnation. Advent, he observed,

. . . helps us live anew the expectation of God who took flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary, God who makes himself little, who becomes a child. It speaks to us of the coming of a God who is close, who chose to experience human life from the very beginning in order to save it totally, in its fullness. And so the mystery of the Lord’s Incarnation and the beginning of human life are closely and harmoniously connected and in tune with each other in the one saving plan of God, the Lord of the life of each and every one. The Incarnation reveals to us, with intense light and in a surprising way, that every human life has a very lofty and incomparable dignity.

The pope also touched on themes of human exceptionalism and dignity, natural law and science. Man, he said, is the

. . . one unique being, endowed with intelligence and free will, as well as consisting of material reality. He lives simultaneously and inseparably in both the spiritual and the corporal dimension.

Experience itself and right reason testify that the human being is capable of understanding and of wanting, conscious of himself and free, unrepeatable and irreplaceable, the summit of all earthly realities, and who demands to be recognized as a value in himself and deserves always to be accepted with respect and love. He is entitled not to be treated as an object to be possessed or a thing to be manipulated at will, and not to be exploited as a means for the benefit of others and their interests.

With regard to the embryo in the mother’s womb, science itself highlights its autonomy, its capacity for interaction with the mother, the coordination of biological processes, the continuity of development, the growing complexity of the organism. It is not an accumulation of biological material but rather of a new living being, dynamic and marvelously ordered, a new individual of the human species. This is what Jesus was in Mary’s womb; this is what we all were in our mother’s womb. We may say with Tertullian, an ancient Christian writer: “the one who will be a man is one already” (*Apologeticum IX*, 8), there is no reason not to consider him a person from conception.

In such a passage, we see Joseph Ratzinger’s ease in synthesizing science, reason, and revelation. He offers a path for the believer to follow: Become familiar with all three realms so as to be able to proclaim the “gospel of life” to the multiple types of audiences in today’s diverse world. The need is urgent and great. The screams of the Second World War still echo with the cry, “Never again.” But had Joseph Ratzinger’s cousin with Down syndrome been conceived in our own times, when we’ve seen an upswing in prenatal testing for “undesirable” deficiencies, he might never have been allowed to be born.

Why Do It for Free?

Leslie Fain

Instead of signing up for work study, or working at a restaurant, some attractive college girls are now hiring themselves out for dates and/or relationships to cover tuition or rent or earn extra money. Having sex with the client is not “mandatory,” but may be “aspired to.”

Elizabeth, an articulate and upbeat 27-year-old second-year student at the University of Toronto, is one such young woman. She has three “Sugar Daddies” through a website called SeekingArrangement.com, which has 2.1 million members worldwide. She described a recent trip to Oregon, where she stayed with one of her Sugar Daddies for a week at a nice hotel. On one outing, he took her to the woods and taught her how to shoot a gun. On another, he brought her to a salon to have her hair done, before treating her to a shopping spree.

“He completely spoiled me, which was nice,” she said.

SeekingArrangement.com is “the world’s largest dating website in which wealthy benefactors add value and improve the lives of attractive members,” according to Public Relations Manager Leroy Velasquez. The site was the brainchild of MIT graduate Brandon Wade, who has gone on to found WhatsYourPrice.com, where generous men bid on dates, and MissTravel.com, where wealthy men who want traveling partners hook up with attractive women.¹ SugarSugar.com, a similar site that is not owned by Wade, was also contacted for this article, but did not respond. In contrast, Velasquez answered all questions for this interview and arranged interviews with the two college students featured in this story.

In an interview with *The Daily Beast*, Wade said he started SeekingArrangement.com because he knew what it was like to have trouble getting dates. Smart but shy growing up, Wade was told by his mother that if he did well in his studies, he would one day be able to find a good job, “be generous,” and “have options.”²

A native of Vancouver, Elizabeth is the oldest of four children from a family of doctors, actors, and models. Her mother, two aunts, and grandmothers are psychiatrists, and she has worked as a model in Canada. Her father, a conductor, left the family when she was 10, at her mother’s urging, according to Elizabeth. “Emotionally he can’t handle much, and my mom had enough and thought she could do better raising us herself,” she

Leslie Fain is a freelance writer who lives in Louisiana with her husband and three sons. She can be reached at lwfain92@gmail.com.

said, adding that she still talks to him and visits him whenever she gets home. Raised in both the Catholic and Methodist Christian traditions, she describes herself now as “more spiritual than religious,” and adds that she doesn’t feel guilty about what she is doing.

Although SeekingArrangement.com gives members “options,” serious relationships that lead to marriage do not seem to be the point of it all. Could Elizabeth see a permanent relationship with any of these men in the future? “It is a weird question, because of the money that comes into it.” She adds, “We skyped a lot before we really got to know each other. Maybe.”

In Elizabeth’s case, relationships with two of her Sugar Daddies are sexual, while the third non-sexual one will be ending soon. “I wasn’t feeling a connection,” she said of that relationship. “I don’t want to sleep around with just anyone I don’t connect with.” According to Elizabeth, the relationships she pursues on the site are not just about having sex; she wants someone she can talk to, gain wisdom from, she said.

When she moved to Toronto to attend college, Elizabeth didn’t know anyone and was bored, so she signed up at the site. Two of her sisters know about her relationships, and tell her that as long as she is careful, she should be fine. She views using SeekingArrangement.com as an alternative way to create relationships.

“It was more of an experimental thing, then I got financial assistance,” she said. “It’s kind of crazy.”

As far as what she makes from her Sugar Daddies, the amount varies. She spends the money on rent and other expenses. In March, she made \$5,000.

Does this make Elizabeth a prostitute? “The key difference between being a Sugar Baby and being a prostitute is the word ‘relationship,’” said Velasquez. “Members on SeekingArrangement.com engage in actual relationships that are fostered. Prostitution in itself is a black-and-white transaction where money is exchanged for sex, no matter the circumstance,” he said. “Sex is never a requirement of a relationship, though it may be aspired to. The reality is that most sugar relationships resemble a typical boyfriend-girlfriend type relationship, with an added financial incentive.” In addition to what Velasquez describes as the “typical boyfriend-girlfriend relationship,” SeekingArrangement.com also has a growing LBGT (Lesbian Bisexual Gay and Transgender) community, with over 256,000 gay members, he said.

Can an Ex-Prostitute’s Dark Past Shed Light on a Sugar Baby’s Future?

Julie Debbs, who is program director for Community Against Sexual Harm (CASH), said young women who join sites like SeekingArrangement.com or SugarSugar.com are victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Debbs

shares something in common with the young women who join SeekingArrangement.com. In 1976, when the Sexual Revolution was in full swing, Debbs, a pretty blonde freshman at American River College in Sacramento, California, took her clothes off and put them back on in front of a stranger in exchange for money to buy college textbooks. That one bad decision sent Debbs on a downward spiral of prostitution, drug abuse, sex trafficking, and physical abuse at the hands of johns (or tricks) and pimps.

“I was stabbed seven times and raped different times by tricks,” said Debbs. “I don’t know the count of the rapes by tricks—I lost count—so the number seven for rapes could be accurate. I was . . . tortured once, and held hostage for several hours until I could escape—all by tricks.”

However, after that first encounter in a Fresno hotel, Debbs said she felt no guilt and no trepidations about what her next 30 years would be like. “I felt empowered,” she said. “You felt free. I didn’t have to worry about getting college books anymore. I didn’t have to worry about putting food on the table. I certainly wasn’t going to make \$10 an hour working at McDonald’s, not that there was anything wrong with that.”

Debbs initially engaged in prostitution after failing to qualify for a student loan because she lived with her parents the year before, and her income was counted with theirs. “It was bothering me I couldn’t get money for school,” she said. Sometime earlier, Debbs discovered that her roommate, a long-time high-school friend, was selling herself for rent and college money.

“When I found out she was prostituting herself, I was totally grossed out,” she said. “I didn’t even want to sit on her bed. I was just like, ‘Just don’t bring that stuff here.’” Before long, though, Julie was giving her roommate rides to Fresno so she could turn tricks without her parents and their friends knowing. Julie would sit in the parked car, while her roommate turned a trick in the hotel.

On those outings, prostitution crossed her mind, but “I couldn’t bring myself to do it, because it would be disgusting.” But then one night out in Fresno, her roommate, well aware of Debbs’ money crunch, came to the car window and told her the guy in the hotel room said he would give Julie money if she would just dress and undress for him. “I still remember his name, although I don’t remember any of the others. He wasn’t a bad person. The rest of them were, though.”

Debbs, the youngest of four children, describes her own childhood as good, what you would call white-collar, upper-middle class. Her family was Catholic, and her parents gave all the children the chance to make their own decisions with regard to religion when they were 12. They all decided to opt out.

“I moved out when I was 18,” she said. “I was very rebellious, I didn’t like rules. I had to be home at midnight, and I wanted to go party when I wanted to go party.”

Debbs said she became fully immersed in the lifestyle because of the need to bond with others who were doing the same thing. “You get lonely because you can’t really tell anybody. So I started hanging around people who did the same thing. You can’t keep the lifestyle, and keep it inside, or you will go crazy. I started going to ‘pimp parties.’ Imagine you are on Seeking Arrangement and you have that secret to keep. It’s a lonely secret to keep.”

“Next thing you know, we are having parties at our house with the pimps and the hookers.” After a year, it got to be too much—the drugs, the partying, the prostituting—so ironically, the thing that had to go was school, the debt which got her into prostitution in the first place. “So my point is,” said Debbs. “Things can change.”

Dr. Melissa Farley, executive director of Prostitution Research and Education, agrees that women who join sites like SeekingArrangement.com are victims of commercial sexual exploitation, and sent me the following statement that will soon be published in an article on online trafficking: “The seeking arrangement.com website’s goal is to create what the site’s pimps describe as mutually beneficial relationships between two people. Such a relationship is usually between an older and wealthy individual who gives a young person expensive gifts or financial assistance in return for friendship, or intimacy.”

Some who are in law enforcement see Sugar Babies as prostitutes. In an interview with Louisville, Kentucky station WDRB, Sergeant Andre Bottoms of the Louisville Metropolitan Police Department said, “What makes it illegal is they’re still getting paid for sex whether they go to dinner or a club or any other activity,” he said.³

“But police can do little about it,” according to the article on WDRB’s website. “It is out of control . . . until there’s an exchange of money for a sex act it’s not illegal,” says Bottoms.⁴

Debbs observes that there is a fine line between sexual commercial exploitation and sex trafficking, and sexual commercial exploitation could turn into sex trafficking. In fact, prostitution is the *root cause* of sex trafficking.⁵ Plus, Debbs adds, “You don’t know who is behind that girl behind the computer. How willing is she?”

There has been speculation in the media about whether or not SeekingArrangement.com and Wade’s other sites could be vehicles for sex trafficking,⁶ but Velasquez responds that there is nothing to it:

Since we are a very small community, we instill a culture of self-reporting. Members are able to flag others for any fraudulent or suspect activity ranging from fraud to

solicitation. Such activities violate our terms of use. Our members are looking for an arrangement that adds value to their lives—if they meet someone who does not provide this for any reason, they will report that offender.

We are also one of the only websites to provide a background check for our members. For a one-time fee, members are able to subject themselves or others through this process. If they pass, then they receive a “Background Verified” badge on their profile.

Since we were founded in 2006, no incident of sex trafficking has ever occurred through our website. We also willingly cooperate with law enforcement if any members engage in illegal activities.

Willing Adults or Young Victims?

Often, victims of commercial sexual exploitation do not realize they have been coerced, explained Debbs. “If she is arrested, she might be in love with him or have a trauma-bonding with him. They have to go through a lot of counseling to even find out what is going on.” According to her, young women who are sexually exploited in this way do not realize the long-term effects. “They don’t realize how they will look at men—every man a trick,” she said. ““What can I get from him?””

Debbs estimates that some of the girls on SeekingArrangement.com may be making \$20,000 a month right now, while they are in college. It will be a rude awakening for them, once they graduate and realize that they will be making, at best, \$4,000 a month to do a lot more work. And “The temptation for easy money will always be there.”

With regard to prostitution, the statistics are pretty dire. Debbs reports that only two percent of prostitutes ever get out. Most women will not abandon prostitution, even in a form like SeekingArrangement.com, because the money is too good, and how many people would be satisfied with a job making 75 percent less for more work?

Elizabeth remains unconvinced, though, both about the motive behind what she is doing and the allegation that she will have a hard time in the future living without Sugar Daddies to support her. “I don’t agree, money isn’t everything,” said Elizabeth. “If money is the only reason you were doing it—once the money is spent—you can never get over what you did. It would bother my conscience too much.”

Debbs, who speaks from a wealth of experience counseling women who have been in prostitution, doesn’t think women like Elizabeth are lying when they make that kind of statement, but believes they are simply in denial. One reason women like Elizabeth can participate in a site like SeekingArrangement.com without suffering too much guilt is that they are able to depersonalize the whole experience, in Debbs opinion. “Your body is not your body, it is no longer a part of you,” she said.

Monica, a 20-year-old Sugar Baby who is a junior double majoring in Spanish and hospitality at Florida International University in Miami, has certainly rationalized what she is doing. “It is the same thing as dating younger guys because it is like a real relationship except the money is so expected,” she reasons. “I date guys who I don’t ask for money,” she said. “If I am doing it for free, why not ask for money?” Incidentally, the “Why do it for free?” line of thinking is routinely used in ploys by pimps to groom women for prostitution, according to case studies.⁷

In news articles on the web about SeekingArrangement.com, there are plenty of interviews of the young women, but none quoting the men. “The women will defend it to their dying day,” said Debbs. “They have a great lifestyle.” For now anyway.

Monica, for her part, is not keeping her involvement a secret. “Everyone knows,” she said. “It’s funny. I don’t know. It’s a joke. People aren’t really shocked; they literally laugh every time I talk about it.” She has two Sugar Daddies, and only one of the relationships is sexual. “I basically get what I want from one of them without the sex part.” Again, there are parallels between Monica’s story and case studies of prostitutes and pimps by researchers. Prostitutes are often encouraged by pimps to have at least one Sugar Daddy who supplies money without sex, because it is a good way to bring in extra income.⁸

Monica, who initially found the idea of SeekingArrangement.com exciting, learned about the site from a friend who knew someone who was doing it, and reported that it worked out well financially for her. She earns about \$1,000 a month from SeekingArrangement.com. “I use the money for everything: general expenses—rent, phone bill,” said Monica. SeekingArrangement.com worked so well for her, in fact, that she quit the job she had at a South Beach Hotel. She claims she could quit being a Sugar Baby at any time, because it is not something on which she is dependent—this year, her tuition was paid by her parents and loan money.

Like Elizabeth, Monica said that she feels no guilt about what she is doing, but admits it does conflict with her religion a little. Raised in what she describes as a Christian family, she refused to qualify whether they were Protestant or Catholic, saying she did not think about it in those terms. Monica admits she does not like the fact that “she can’t tell her parents” about her involvement with the site.

Only one aspect of the Sugar Daddy arrangements gives Elizabeth pause. It involves her girlfriend, who also signed up as a Sugar Baby and has two Sugar Daddies. “Both of her Sugar Daddies are married, and she has a boyfriend. I don’t agree with that,” said Elizabeth. “The guys are married,

and their wives don't know about it."

According to Velasquez, 33 percent of the 2.1 million Sugar Daddy members are married. ("We encourage our members to be upfront and honest, especially when sharing their relationship status.") There are approximately 12 Sugar Babies to every Sugar Daddy on the website. The 33 percent figure given by SeekingArrangement.com is probably not accurate, according to Debbs. "Sure it is a lot higher." The men are not going to give real information, she said, because "these are people leading secret lives."

What would Elizabeth do if she found out that one of her Sugar Daddies was married? "If I were to find out that I was being lied to in any way I would end it. Simple as that," she said. "I see this whole thing as building a relationship, a non-conventional one. Relationships are built on trust. Without trust I really don't see anything [worth] sticking around for." Would she tell a future boyfriend or spouse about her involvement with the site? "Definitely," she said.

Is This Generation More Vulnerable to Prostitution Culture?

Elizabeth, Monica, and others in the 18-to-29-year-old age range are what sociologists such as Dr. Christian Smith, assistant professor at Notre Dame, call "emergent adults."⁹

Smith, one of the authors of *Lost in Transition: The Dark Side of Emerging Adulthood*, studied a segment of this group, 18-23, by drawing on 240 in-depth interviews. In the book, Smith and his colleagues catalogue emerging adults' ideas and behaviors with regard to morality, sex, consumerism, and civic and political engagement.¹⁰ The interviews are unsettling in that they show "that the passage of American youth moving from the teenage years toward full adulthood today is often confusing, troubled and sometimes dangerous. Many who take this passage find themselves disoriented, wounded, and sometimes damaged along the way."¹¹

It is easy to judge emerging adults like Elizabeth and Monica and their choices, until, as Smith points out, we realize their lives are rooted in the mainstream American culture.¹² Smith maintains that older adults—the parents, grandparents, teachers, coaches, and religious and civic leaders—must accept a lot of responsibility for the bad decisions, confusion, and pain these young adults have faced and will face, because we have failed to effectively teach them to reason morally.¹³

In their book, Smith and his associates list six major social changes that have converged to shape the rise of "emergent adults." First is the rise of higher education. Young people are no longer entering the job force at 18 in order to start lifelong jobs. Instead, these emerging adults are staying in

school, sometimes through their early 30s, earning multiple degrees. Smith attributes the GI Bill, changes in the American economy, and the subsidizing of colleges and universities for this rising trend.¹⁴

The second social trend that has contributed to emergent adulthood is the rise of late marriage. According to Smith, between 1950 and 2006, “the median age of first marriage for women rose from 20.3 to 25.9. For men during the same time the median age rose from 22.8 to 27.5 years old. The sharpest increase for both took place after 1970.”¹⁵ Currently, the average age for first-time marriage is at an all-time high—27 for women and 29 for men, according to a study sponsored by the National Marriage Project, The Relate Institute, and The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy.¹⁶

Third, changes in the global economy have also contributed to emerging adulthood. With corporate takeovers and buyouts, the workplace is no longer the stable place where your father worked for 40 years before retiring and receiving a gold pocket watch. With technology constantly changing, young people’s skills must keep pace. “This itself pushes youth toward extended schooling, delayed marriage, and, arguably, a general psychological orientation toward maximizing options and postponing commitments.”¹⁷

A fourth trend is that parents are more willing to support single adults financially through their 30s, partly because of the reasons already mentioned.¹⁸ In fact, parents are spending close to \$40,000 per child between the ages of 18-34, on cash, housing, educational expenses, and food.¹⁹

The fifth trend contributing to the rise of emerging adulthood is the creation and widespread distribution of “the Pill” and other more reliable forms of contraception. “The cultural effect of this, among others, has been to disconnect sexual intercourse from procreation in the minds of many Americans After the 1960s, that connection faded, at least in the cultural imagination. Sex then increasingly came to be seen as a normal element of any close or perhaps even casual relationship and had nothing to do with having a baby—serving, for many, as a kind of recreational activity.”²⁰ Or, as in the case of many Sugar Babies, personal or casual relationships with a little financial aid on the side.

The final contributors to the rise of emerging adulthood are the theories of poststructuralism and postmodernism in America. As Smith points out, these French literary theories filtered down and “became democratized and vulgarized in U.S. culture.” Postmodernism eventually became “. . . individualistic subjectivism, soft ontological antirealism, and absolute moral relativism.”²¹

Emerging adulthood is marked by the freedom to experiment, explore, make mistakes, and try again.²² It is also shown to be “more complex, disjointed, and confusing than it was in past decades.”²³ One thing is for sure with this age group: “The steps through schooling, a first real job, marriage and parenthood are simply less well organized and coherent today than they were in the past.”²⁴

Prostitution predates the recent phenomenon of “emergent adulthood,” but sites like SeekingArrangement.com could make prostitution more accessible to young people who would not have tried it otherwise because of the physical dangers and stigma. Second, the popularity of sites like this serves as further evidence that prostitution culture is becoming ubiquitous in mainstream culture. For example, one can go to any department store to see teenage girls’ fashions that seem to be influenced by both porn and prostitution culture. Middle-class women are getting breast enhancements. Rap music glorifies pimp culture. And you only have to look back to 1990 to see America’s then-Sweetheart Julia Roberts playing a prostitute whose life seemed more like Cinderella than that of the typical street walker.

Could something like the SeekingArrangement.com lifestyle ever become commonplace? “I would not say that this could never be widely socially acceptable,” said Smith, in an interview for this article. “It seems to me that the major cultural pieces making this make sense are already in place.”

So why does a site like SeekingArrangement.com seem so shocking? “It’s not a shock to me,” counters Debbs. “It’s a shock to other people. If they think of prostitution, they think of a girl standing on the street. Thinking of a college girl is a shock to normal people. This doesn’t happen to college students—that’s white America.” Although you do not have to peruse these sites long to see the number of black and Latino Sugar Babies who are members of these sites as well.

“What is shocking may be the public nature of the Internet media, the purely instrumentalist market exchange of the intimacy, and the fact that these young women do not seem to be economically desperate,” said Smith.

“On the other hand, given some of the shifts in beliefs about life, bodies, relationships, and sex, there should be formally nothing objectionable about this for many people, if they thought about it, since it’s two consenting adults,” he said. “Guilt is something that people can to some degree learn to manage, by convincing themselves through rationalizations that this is not prostitution. That certainly takes a lot of cultural and emotional work to succeed, though I don’t doubt that for some people this is not a big deal. They might view working at McDonald’s to put themselves through college instead as just another form of prostitution.”

Prostitution's Effect on the Culture at Large and the Culture of Life

Although libertarians would argue otherwise, prostitution hurts our society. Everyone suffers—from family members to local business owners to communities to the children of prostitutes²⁵ to the women themselves to the children and young adults trafficked into prostitution. I could not find any statistics on prostitution, sex trafficking, and abortion, despite contacting the Guttmacher Institute, Planned Parenthood's research arm; The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; and the Centers for Disease Control. Representatives from those organizations told me the lack of statistics is due to the illegal status of prostitution in some countries and areas. However, there are countries and areas where prostitution is legal—Holland and Las Vegas come to mind—where statistics on prostitution and abortion could and should be recorded.

In a lifestyle where women are having sex multiple times a day, where, according to numerous sources, they are paid less if they insist on condoms, and where drug abuse may make it difficult, if not impossible, to practice “safe sex” or consistently use contraception, it only stands to reason that pregnancies will occur. In case studies featured in a report for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, former prostitutes who admitted to having abortions were recorded as having more than one.²⁶

Meanwhile, in 2012 the *Washington Times* covered a report by the United Nations, “Sex Work and the Law in Asia and the Pacific,” in which the UN advocated decriminalizing prostitution and adopting the use of euphemisms such as “sex worker” rather than prostitute. According to the story, the UN reported that in Asian countries and regions where prostitution was decriminalized, condom use increased, and HIV rates went down.²⁷ Who do physically “cleaner” prostitutes really benefit, though? HIV rates may decrease with decriminalization, but does any culture honestly benefit from prostitution?

It is easy to feel sympathy for a sexually abused 12-year-old who runs away from home and is preyed on by a pimp who shows her “love” and then enslaves her in prostitution, telling her “your mother will never take you back after what you’ve done.” But why feel sorry for Debbs—or Elizabeth or Monica—when they were and are consenting adults who simply made foolish decisions? Well, in Debbs’ case, she made a bad decision that spiraled out of control into a lifetime of abuse. And as Smith and his colleagues point out, young people cannot make correct moral decisions without the right preparation.²⁸ Who is to say that the same dark future Debbs found may not be in store for Elizabeth, Monica, and other young women who join these websites?

What about the emotional, moral, and physical toll prostitution takes on

women? Young women are venturing into these practices at a time when they do not always know what they are getting into. Further, although the young women I interviewed did not necessarily *seem* to be in economic straits, there is no real way to know, or to know about the other women who sign up for SeekingArrangement.com and similar sites. There is also no way to know how many of these women may have sexual and/or physical abuse in their backgrounds, as many of the women do who enter prostitution. Many of the prostitutes who start out as juveniles have been sexually abused as children, run away from home, and are preyed upon by other adults, who literally wait for runaways to get off the buses.²⁹ These are good reasons to view prostitutes and other victims of commercial sexual exploitation as human rights victims.

Is Eradication of Prostitution Even Possible?

After years of substance abuse, Debbs decided to get off drugs and alcohol. She found a mentor, a woman who had gotten herself out of prostitution. "She talked to me about integrity." Now Debbs is one of the lucky two percent who managed to leave. At the time, Debbs had her own "Sugar Daddy" who for several years had paid her bills. After working with her mentor, Debbs told him she never wanted to see him again, and shut the car door. "I would rather live in a homeless shelter now than go back to that way of life," said Debbs.

As part of turning her life around, Debbs earned an AA Degree in Human Services and Chemical Dependency Studies. Presently, she is working toward her bachelor's in Social Work at California State University, Sacramento (CSUS). Her goal is to eventually gain a master's in Social Work at CSUS. She is also a California Certified Drug and Alcohol Counselor (CADC). The recipient of 11 scholarships, she is one of Oprah Winfrey's Ambassadors of Hope.

There are many programs and services out there for underage prostitutes and foreign victims of sex trafficking, but the money is not there for helping older prostitutes, which compounds the difficulty women have leaving it. Sex trafficking is what gets all the attention these days, Debbs explains. However, those of us concerned with sex trafficking would do well to crack down on the demand side of prostitution. In Sweden, where prostitutes are treated as human rights victims and the johns are prosecuted, both prostitution *and* sex trafficking rates have plummeted.³⁰

"When a woman is caught in prostitution, she is disgusting," Debbs said. "When a man is caught, he gets a slap on the back." She advocates John Schools, in which the courts force male solicitors to attend classes in which

they learn how prostitution hurts women and society at large. Debbs believes that publishing photos of johns in newspapers and on websites in the same way that cities print photos of child molesters would be a good way to cut down on prostitution.

One of the problems with trying to eradicate prostitution is the public perception that it will always be with us. But prostitution is not the “world’s oldest profession”; in fact, as Farley put it, “[I]t is a human rights violation committed usually against poor women, very often against those who are ethnically marginalized.”

Farley went on to argue that the belief that prostitution will go on forever is propaganda from pimps, traffickers, and sex buyers—“aimed at rationalizing their behavior and at getting good folks to give up. I think the same has been said about chattel slavery,” she said.

If prostitutes were treated like human rights victims, it would be easier for them to get their medical, psychological, and spiritual needs met. It would be easier for them and their children to receive help from churches and charity organizations, because they would not have to hide from the law. It would make it possible for pregnant prostitutes to get help from crisis pregnancy centers, rather than aborting. It would be easier to find “the least of these” who have been forced into prostitution and sex trafficking. It would get them out of the shadow of their pimps.

It is important to stop glorifying pimp culture, Debbs maintains. “Men should tell boys about how our society views women. What does this do to your mothers, your sisters, and your daughters?”

Debbs believes that in order to keep young women from trying out sites like SeekingArrangement.com, parents need to teach girls at an age-appropriate time what pornography is and what it does, because pornography fuels prostitution.³¹ She adds that girls need to be taught the value of being a woman. “We don’t have to use our bodies or our physical image,” she said. “You can dress fashionably without being sexual objects.”

Popular culture, in the form of music and movies, has certainly romanticized prostitution to young women, according to Debbs.

To women who have gotten involved with SeekingArrangement.com and other websites, she asks, “How will you view this when you are 30 years older? How does it affect how you view men? How will this affect their ability to have a normal, healthy relationship? I like to tell the girls, ‘Fast money is no money, and slow money is sure money.’”

At 55, Debbs said she continues to suffer the consequences of years spent in prostitution. “I don’t know what it is like to be in love, or to date or to feel special,” she said. “I have regrets. I wish I could have done something a long

time ago because I missed so much about what real life was like. I didn't know what it was like to have fun because I was getting paid to have fun, or I was acting, or on drugs."

As a society, we need to stop tolerating prostitution. It is fueled by pornography, it is influencing our culture, it destroys communities, it feeds off of and encourages sex trafficking, it hurts women and children and contributes to abortion.³² But like slavery in the United States, it doesn't have to be with us forever. We just need to stop listening to the people who benefit from it.

Elizabeth and Monica, the Sugar Babies interviewed for this article, chose to go by pseudonyms.

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“Celebrizines?”

BOOKNOTES

Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon's Journey into the Afterlife

Eben Alexander, M.D.

(Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 196 pp., 2012, \$15.99)

Reviewed by Mark S. Latkovic

For the ancients, the heart was the symbol of the person. (The Psalmist's cry, "A clean heart create for me, God," 51:12, essentially means make me a new *person*.) Today, it is the brain that moderns consider to be the heart of the person. Wait a minute: *The brain is the heart?* Are you confused yet?

Here's what I mean. Many neuroscientists consider our brains to be the organ that pretty much makes us everything that we are. And with good reason, since most scientists say it's the body's *organ of central control*. It's why so many people are fascinated by the brain these days, and why popular books about it are quite, well, popular. Books by psychiatrists, lawyers, neurophilosophers, and neurosurgeons on the brain proliferate. And most of them accept the materialist's dogma of *mind equals brain equals person*. Of course, there are notable exceptions, dissenters to this dogma. As we'll see, the author of this book is one of them.

But books about heaven and the afterlife also still hold fascination for many moderns, even though, we are often told, they have outgrown faith of any kind. So combine a book about the brain with talk—even "proof"—about the afterlife, and you have double the magic! This combo is what neurosurgeon Dr. Eben Alexander dishes up in *Proof of Heaven*. When a neurosurgeon has a near-death experience, *people listen*, to paraphrase the old E.F. Hutton commercials.

But at this point, we might ask, *why?* Why should we pay more attention to a neurosurgeon on these matters? Does a neuroscientist have any more authority or expertise on out-of-body experiences than anyone else—a theologian or philosopher, a priest or a rabbi, for example? Well, surely he or she knows more about the brain and biological death than the average Joe. Largely because our Western, technological culture identifies the brain with personhood—as Alexander once did (see p. 34)—the neuroscientist holds court in our society.

At the time of Alexander's near-death experience in November 2008—an experience brought on by an extremely rare illness (bacterial meningitis)—he is a middle-aged neurosurgeon from the South, with a wife and two boys and an extended loving family. A nominal Episcopalian, he goes through the

religious motions, all the while “knowing” that his science has made God, faith, and heaven simply comforting thoughts with no basis in reality. The picture we get of him is of the kind-hearted atheist (rare these days!) who enjoys his work and loves his family.

For me, however—and I hate to disappoint the reader here—the most moving and interesting part of Alexander’s story is not his vivid description of the afterlife, but the revelation that he is adopted, and the pain and existential angst this causes him later in life when he believes that his birth parents want(ed) nothing to do with him. Only later is his downward spiral of depression and drink reversed when he reunites with his birth parents and siblings in 2007. But this only comes after persistent correspondence between him, the adoption agency, and his biological sister, who acts as the go-between for the family.

His extremely vivid descriptions of what the afterlife is like and looks like did not hold my attention as much as when he was describing his adoption story and the attempt to meet his biological parents. In fact, after a while, the tour of the afterlife began to get a bit tedious and my interest in it waned. Although there were elements that I could in fact accept and found fascinating, I must say I found his portrait of heaven a bit “over the top.” Readers of different faiths than my own (Catholic) might compare Alexander’s account of the afterlife with their own religious beliefs on this matter.

Much of what Alexander’s portrayal of his NDE was like, if we are to use the traditional terms of Christian belief and theology in an analogous way, could be said to resemble Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven—though he doesn’t use the terms Purgatory or Hell, and the term Heaven, despite the book’s subtitle, is used only seven times. Rather, he uses self-styled terms such as “Realm of the Earthworm’s Eye View,” the “Gateway,” and the “Core.”

He also uses the term God, but prefers “Om” (“Divine” and “Deity” and “Creator” also make appearances) and throws in stuff about a woman friend “channeling” and words like “Orb” and “Spinning Melody.” For this reviewer, at times it began to sound a bit too “New Agey,” as Sarah Palin might say. I even started seeing images of a Moody Blues album cover.

The single most important discovery he makes in the afterlife? It is, he says several times, “The unconditional love and acceptance” that he experienced (p. 73). In fact, it’s the first message he receives in the afterlife. The second: “*You have nothing to fear.*” And the third: “*There is nothing you can do wrong.*” The first two I’m okay with. They can be squared with classic Christian doctrines of God’s love and mercy. But I’m not so sure about the third one: Hey, we make mistakes! He boils this other-worldly three-part message down to: “*You are loved.*” And even more simply: “*Love*” (see pp. 70-71).

Not to over-psychoanalyze this, but one may well ask if these messages do not in some way help Alexander to cope with his adoption experience as well as his questions about God. His adoption story is a testament both to the power of adoption to transform a life and to that innate need all of us have to know our roots, to know where we are from. His search for his birth parents and his search for God are of a piece and are the real lessons of the book.

Dr. Alexander claims that he had a unique NDE, because throughout it, he wasn't aware of who he was (see pp. 77-79, 162). Moreover, his prognosis was indeed quite grim: By all accounts, he should not have made it. Remarkably, he claims that his brain was not working at all throughout his seven days in a coma (see pp. 9, 129-130). To be more precise, the higher-brain functions associated with the neocortex were completely gone; only the "primitive" functions associated with the brainstem were working (see p. 135). If he survived, he would have been a severely brain-damaged "vegetable," as he puts it.

But survive he does—and after a couple of months, he makes a full recovery. Not easily explained at all. Some might call it, as he does himself, a "medical miracle"—and one that he firmly believes happened "for a reason" (p. 144).

But he makes many philosophical and theological mistakes in interpreting his experience. For example, Alexander expresses an affinity with anthropological dualism—i.e., separating the person from his/her body—when he writes, "My mind, my spirit—whatever you may choose to call the central, human part of me—was gone" (p. 16). Later in the book (pp. 80-86), he speaks of how "spiritual beings . . . *inhabit* mortal brains and bodies" (p. 84, my emphasis).

Sound philosophy confirms, however, the profound *unity* of the human person—i.e., body and soul together. The body is not some external garment we wear, only to shed at death to then reveal the "real" person. The body is an *intrinsic* aspect of who we are as persons; it shares in our personal dignity. We are, through and through, *embodied* beings in this life.

After the dramatic life-changing experience of his NDE, Alexander becomes an "evangelical" brain scientist who wants to spread the good news (see pp. 124-128)—but only to find an audience of doctors as skeptical as he had been before his afterlife adventure. Just as he had once believed, doctors and scientists consider NDEs as pure fantasies: "products of a brain struggling to hold on to life, and nothing more" (p. 141). Alexander reviews various scientific hypotheses to explain his NDE (see pp. 141-143), refuting all of them (see also Appendix B, pp. 185-188). Of course, he never deals with the biggest objection: the possibility that he's just making all of this up, i.e., lying.

In sum: To have the kind of complex thoughts he said he had, he needed a

functioning neocortex, and he claims he didn't have one. Indeed, lacking higher-brain functions, he shouldn't have had any experience whatsoever (see p. 170). Recent stories (e.g., <http://www.esquire.com/features/the-prophet>), however, have attacked Alexander's claim that he lost all consciousness, saying that the drugs that placed him into a medically-induced coma had something to do with his heavenly hallucinations. These stories also seriously—and in my opinion, persuasively—attack his overall credibility.

At this point, it is important to note that although thinking is dependent on our brains, we do not actually think *with* our brains. Alexander would now, I believe, affirm that proposition. Rather, thinking is something that only human beings are capable of doing, because they are the only beings with a *spiritual principle* as part of their make-up, i.e., an immaterial, rational soul. This enables human thought to be “self-reflexive”: We can know that we know.

Even if the brain has totally ceased to function (i.e., “brain death”), this does not necessarily mean that the person has ceased to exist—unless we want to wrongly identify the person with his or her brain. Many scholars are in fact challenging the brain-death criteria of human death. Questioning the legitimacy of neurological criteria for determining death doesn't mean, however, that thinking is still possible despite the loss of higher-brain function—which Alexander claimed happened in his case—as opposed to merely having lower-brain function. Whatever our approach to these issues, one thing is certain: There is great mystery surrounding the brain.

Although I find many parts of *Proof of Heaven* compelling, I also find many parts of it farfetched, or at least expressed in ways that come with some “New Age” baggage, as I noted before. Along these same lines, another idea that rubbed me the wrong way, with its overtones of Gnosticism and its claim of having secret knowledge, was Alexander's grandiose claim to have learned the deepest secrets of the universe while in the spiritual realm.

Much of this is related to his notion of the oneness between our consciousness and God—what the New Age movement calls “Cosmic Consciousness” or “God consciousness.” According to Alexander, consciousness is the basis of all existence as well as the greatest thing in existence (pp. 153-154, 162). In his words, it is “the great and central mystery of the universe” (p. 171).

But don't get the wrong idea at this point. It's not that I'm totally skeptical of everything he says in the book. I too believe in spiritual realities. I too believe in an afterlife. I too believe in Heaven. I too believe in an immaterial soul that survives death But as a Catholic Christian, I also believe in a Judgment. I believe in a Hell. I believe in a personal God.

I must say that my “baloney detector” was beeping loudly as I read Alexander’s account of his NDE. And in light of the aforementioned *Esquire* story, I now have even further doubts about the authenticity of Alexander’s NDE.

But read this interesting book for yourself, and see what you think. I, for one, have no reason to disbelieve the phenomenon of NDEs in general. I just have serious questions about many of the claims and details of Alexander’s NDE. People of faith may find great comfort in the phenomenon of NDEs. And in fact, both believers and non-believers may also find them to be incentives for making life-affirming choices. Yet before doing so, I believe they must first accept them as nothing but the truth.

Mark S. Latkovic is a Professor of Moral Theology at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, MI.

Modern Moral Problems

Msgr. William Smith

(Ignatius Press, 330pp., 2012, \$18.95)

Reviewed by Daniel J. Blackman

Modern Moral Problems is a collection of articles in the field of casuistry by the late Msgr. William Smith originally published in *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* from 1992-2005. A large number of topics are covered thoroughly and concisely. Msgr. Smith demonstrates a first-rate ability to draw from the fullness of the Church’s Magisterium and the best of moral theologians over the decades. Beginning and end of life, medical ethics, marriage, contraception, homosexuality, legislation, taxes, war, authority and dissent, money, and the sacraments are dealt with in a way that we do not often come across. It is not possible to give a detailed account of every topic covered, but there are several areas that ought to be given attention due to their significance for our times.

Regarding human life from conception, Smith draws out several interesting points. First, he argues that the teaching of *Evangelium Vitae* (EV) 62 is a reiteration of the Church’s already infallible teaching, written down in a formal manner as an infallible statement made again in the contemporary Magisterium. Similar arguments are made by some theologians (John Ford, Germain Grisez, Ermenegildo Lio, et al.) regarding the reiteration of the

Church's infallible teaching on contraception found in *Humanae Vitae* (HV) 14, which itself contains a condemnation of abortion along with contraception.

Second, Smith draws readers' attention to the management of ectopic pregnancy by use of methotrexate (MTX), which is an agent that interferes with the nucleic acid synthesis (DNA and RNA) of rapidly multiplying cells such as trophoblastic cells (precursor to the placenta proper) and also the blastomeres, the cells of the embryo proper, which are also rapidly dividing by mitosis. Smith argues that the use of MTX is illicit, as it constitutes a direct abortion. Smith points his readers to a scholarly paper from 1994 by William E. May to support his position. However, May has since changed his position to support the use of MTX, along with Christopher Kaczor and Fr. Martin Rhonheimer. On the other hand, in 2011 Marie Anderson, Robert Fastiggi, and others published rigorous and useful response against arguments supporting the use of MTX.

Smith comes out against embryo adoption in one of his articles, but welcomes opposing views and correction. This matter is included in the 2008 CDF's *Dignitas Personae* (DP), which some experts believe leaves the question open, while others do not. Theologians from Janet Smith, Christian Brugger, and William E. May to Tadeusz Pacholczyk and Nicholas Tonti-Filipini continue to argue over whether embryo adoption is licit in light of DP.

The use of vaccines that have in some way been developed using tissue from an aborted child is yet another engaging issue examined. Smith argues that it is morally acceptable (based on the moral theology of cooperation, duty of parents towards children, distance of time), but lacking from his discussion is the use of ethical alternatives on the market, which perhaps did not exist at the time Smith was writing. In 2005 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) published its *Moral Reflections on Vaccines Prepared from Cells Derived from Aborted Human Foetuses*, concluding that parents can have recourse to such vaccines, such recourse being understood as a passive material cooperation and, in its mildest and remotest sense, also active, morally justified as an *extrema ratio* due to the necessity to provide for the good of one's children and of the people who come in contact with the children (pregnant women). However, the CDF's *Moral Reflections* exhorted, such a situation should be eliminated as soon as possible (Smith concludes much the same). The CDF document also concluded that there is a grave responsibility to use alternative vaccines not derived from cells from aborted fetuses.

Modern Moral Problems carries an imprimatur, yet Smith's writing on less than perfect abortion legislation does not appear to present the Church's

teaching correctly. Smith mentions an article by Fr. Joseph Farraher and cites documents by Cardinal John O'Connor and Bishop John Myers writing in 1990, both of whom supported the position that Catholic legislators and proliferers could support "imperfect legislation" that may limit the number of abortions while not completely prohibiting all abortions, such as abortion for disability, rape, and incest or abortions performed up to a set time limit. Smith gives his support to the position and cites the CDF *Declaration on Procured Abortion (DPA)* and *EV* to support this position.

However, this is not a settled question, and the evidence suggests the opposite of Smith's position. First, all legislation, insofar as it is man-made and constructed within the strictures of human language, is imperfect. Philosopher Livio Melina has criticized the term as inadequate and misleading. Angel Rodríguez Luño argues that "imperfect" deflects away from the crucial question of whether a law is just or unjust. Second, Catholic legislators cannot support or vote for *intrinsically unjust* laws, regardless of the intention or political strategy of the proposer. The *DPA* No. 22 states: "man can never obey a law which is in itself immoral, and such is the case of a law which would admit in principle the liceity of abortion." Laws and amendments that permit abortion in some circumstances admit in principle the liceity of abortion. Smith cites Bishop Myers and Cardinal O'Connor as supporting unjust restrictive legislation. Yet Professor Charles Rice, in his book *No Exceptions: A Pro-Life Imperative*, tells us that in responding to the *Roe v. Wade* court decision, cardinals Krol, Manning, Cody, and Medeiros insisted on full restoration of constitutional protection for the unborn child, without exception. Medeiros stated that the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops would not, in principle, support an amendment put forward by Senator James L. Buckley that would have prohibited most abortions but permitted abortion if the mother's life was believed to be threatened. Cardinal Cody said such an amendment "was not justified on moral grounds" (presumably the situation of ectopic pregnancy and the use of double effect was not the case in point). Third, Smith equates support for restrictive legislation with what *EV* actually teaches: support for proposals aimed at "limiting the harm" and lessening "negative consequences" of abortion legislation, rather than voting for restrictive legislation. The CDF's 2002 document, "The Participation of Catholics in Political Life" (No. 4), and even more so the 2003 "Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions between Homosexual Persons" (No. 10), help us understand this point: The latter cites *EV* 73, adding "this does not mean a more restrictive law in this area could be considered just or even acceptable." It is not correct to think that only lowering the time limit for some abortions,

or a mandatory cooling-off period, or legislative exceptions for rape and disability, are the only options, and not supporting such proposals must entail a “do nothing” attitude. British scholar Colin Harte, a leading expert on this matter, presents readers with an array of just legislative proposals that can be put forward in order to limit the harm and negative consequences of abortion legislation without the need to unjustly discriminate against unborn children. Unfortunately, as it stands, scholars continue to disagree.

There is a brief article on divorce, remarriage, and receiving the Eucharist. Smith presents the official teaching of the Church, then examines and rejects an erroneous understanding of the internal forum of conscience argument (a Catholic divorces, remarries, and continues to receive Holy Communion, based on the decision of his or her own conscience that the first marriage was not valid, either without recourse to a marriage tribunal or despite the correct judgment of a tribunal), with reference to a 1991 essay on the topic by Joseph Ratzinger. In November 2011 *L'Osservatore Romano* reprinted a 1998 essay on this topic by Ratzinger, with a new footnote from a 2005 address by Pope Benedict to the priests of Ostia. Ratzinger firmly holds to the Church's traditional teaching, but calls for greater clarity and study over a correct application of the internal forum argument when a spouse is subjectively certain (cf. *Familiaris Consortio* No. 84) of marriage invalidity following a marriage tribunal decision that is erroneous, and also calls for study on the question of whether “non-believing Christians—baptized persons who never or who no longer believe in God—can truly enter into a sacramental marriage. In other words, it needs to be clarified whether every marriage between two baptized persons is *ipso facto* a sacramental marriage” and what remains canonically of such a marriage.

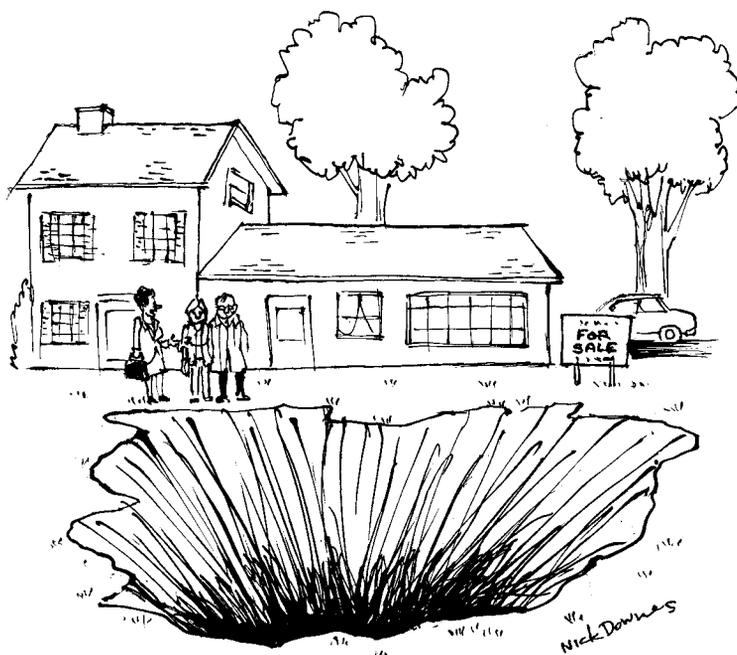
Another article unpacks the statements of Pius XII, Paul VI, and John Paul II on the moral use and abuse of natural family planning, along with the concept of responsible parenthood. Janet E. Smith holds that *HV*'s mention of *conscia paternitas* is better understood as conscious parenthood rather than responsible parenthood. Janet Smith has retranslated *HV*, particularly in light of Karol Wojtyła's *Love and Responsibility* (cf. J. Smith, “Conscious Parenthood,” *Nova et Vetera*, 2008). Msgr. Smith's concern for the defense of heterosexual marriage runs throughout the book. Smith offers many cogent arguments against same-sex unions and adoption by homosexual couples, and presents the authentic doctrinal and pastoral approach of the Church.

This volume also carries a very interesting debate, with Smith opposing Jon Keenan and James Fuller over the use of condoms to prevent HIV. Smith makes a strong case, rejecting the lesser-evil, double-effect, and proportionalistic arguments advanced by Keenan and Fuller. This has become even

more of a hot topic since the book-length interview *Light of the World* with Joseph Ratzinger in a private capacity while still pope.

Other fascinating gems to be discovered include discussions about taking sick days, the use of copyrighted materials, penal law and taxes, and whether confession over the phone is valid. In sum, this book is worth purchasing and will be a continual point of reference. Obviously, new authoritative documents have been published by the CDF and Pope-emeritus Benedict XVI, and moral theologians continue to grapple with unsettled questions, which needs to be taken into account when reading.

Daniel J. Blackman is an ethics and theology postgraduate working for the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) in Britain. This review is written in a personal capacity.



"And how's this for a conversation starter?"

From the Archives:

Letter from a Friend (1980)

William F. Buckley Jr.

Dear Jim:

You are aware, although many of your readers may not be, that I have had nothing whatever to do with the *Human Life Review*. Notwithstanding that we are professional colleagues and very old friends, the *Human Life Review* was an idea, journalistic, spiritual, and administrative, entirely your own. You did not consult me about it, ask my approval, or my help. I have never read an issue of it that contains a single article I had seen before. It is yours, and on this anniversary of it, I wish to say these words of reflection which you may or may not wish to pass along.

On a recent “Firing Line” featuring two experienced lawyers, one of them an official of the American Civil Liberties Union, the other a professor at the Yale Law School, we devoted the hour to reflections on the Supreme Court and the old issue of activism *versus* strict constructionism. I ventured the opinion, on which I had elaborated in my book *Four Reforms*, that the Supreme Court has become something of a secular ethical tribunal. Now the reasons for this evolution are both dismaying and reassuring. They are dismaying because the Supreme Court was never anointed to do the ethical thinking for America. It was instituted to ponder deviations between congressional behavior and the letter and guarantees of the Constitution. The Supreme Court, early on under John Marshall, institutionalized its authority to overrule Congress when the Court viewed an act of Congress as transgressing the rules of the Constitutional compact. Few scholars doubt that *Marbury v. Madison* was indispensable to the survival of the union, even though a civil war was required finally to make the point that the centrality of union overrode the (logically incompatible) primacy of the states (forgive me if I sound like Brzezinski).

But after the Civil War the Court continued to grow, exercising powers that went, finally, far beyond the formal authority required to maintain the cohesion of the union. This early period of judicial growth coincided with the period about which, to my knowledge, Irving Kristol spoke the most

William F. Buckley Jr, the founding editor of *National Review*, was the leader of the American conservative movement for decades. The author of several books—non fiction and fiction—he was a longtime syndicated columnist and also the host of the long-running PBS show, *Firing Line*. This letter appeared in the *Review*'s 5th-anniversary issue (Winter 1980).

resonant comment. What he said was that the most important *political* development of the last half of the 19th century was the loss of religious faith in an afterlife. Although religious-minded sociologists (one thinks of the late Will Herberg) continue to be reassuring on the matter of the inchoate commitment of the overwhelming majority of the American people to a religious faith, it is an undeniable development of the past one hundred years that America looked progressively to within itself to prescribe ethical conduct. That, liberated—if that word can be so abused—from any sense of responsibility to providence, we chased after a redemptive faith in secular experience. What we know as liberalism is described by men who deal in large canvasses as a secular eschatology. If final guidance was not to come to us from theologians, then it had to come from other sources. I say it had to come from other sources because (it's the good news) we are dealing with the American culture, which for all its recognized pragmatism has never been at ease with that brand of atomistic individualism that dismisses transcendent values. One of the reasons why philosophical *laissez-faire* failed as the governing philosophy of America is that American idealism could not come to terms with the *Social Statics* of Herbert Spencer, any more than, two generations later, it could come to terms with the arid individualism of Ayn Rand. We had to have something more; an ethically-oriented authority. Congress was manifestly incapable of serving as such. The general familiarity with the awful compromises by which politicians are ruled, in order to succeed in their profession, stripped that body of sufficient moral authority. Walter Lippmann attempted to rescue something called the Public Philosophy, and it is by no means dead, by which I mean that there survives a loose aristocracy of thinkers and moralists who attempt, without subordination to secular authority, to ask themselves what is the nature of the virtuous society. But “the public philosophy” is, nowadays, an unaffiliated cluster of randomly located little enclaves of higher thought, an analogue of those tatterdemalion railroad stops where one goes to flag down the express trains which, irregularly and impatiently, stop, now and then, to pick up vagrant pilgrims, whose importunities distract from the great, hectic vectors of commerce and thought.

Seven years ago, the Supreme Court ruled that the right of abortion was an extension of the right to privacy of the American woman. The Yale professor on “Firing Line” is an unusually experienced man, to be distinguished from the academicians who spend lifetimes removed from the vicissitudes of public policy. Robert Bork, you will recall, was Solicitor General of the United States in the first term of Richard Nixon. When the President decided, for reasons noble or ignoble, to discharge Special

Prosecutor Archibald Cox from responsibility for the investigation of Watergate, he instructed his Attorney General Mr. Richardson to execute that dismissal. Mr. Richardson declined to do so, presenting the republic with what the English would call a constitutional crisis. So did his deputy decline. The President reached down to the third official in line, promoting Mr. Bork to acting Attorney General; and Bork dismissed Cox, not out of any acknowledged sympathy with the President's motives, but out of a respect for the constitutional allocation of powers defined during the impeachment proceedings of the late Andrew Johnson.

Now, the willingness of Robert Bork to uphold executive authority notwithstanding that to do so was to act athwart the manifest emotional passions of the day, is not unrelated to what he said on "Firing Line" when the subject under discussion was the authority of the Supreme Court. What he said was that so submissive has the American public become to the moral authority of the Supreme Court that whereas even twenty years ago, when the Court ruled abruptly and with arrogant disregard for precedent and sound historical analyses, that common prayer in the public schools was a violation of the First Amendment to the Constitution, there had been an instantaneous outcry by the American people reflected in denunciations by every sitting governor save one, giving rise to a realistic expectation that the Court would actually be overruled by a constitutional amendment—"Now," Professor Bork said, "the decision of the Supreme Court on abortion doesn't have a chance of being overruled." He was making the point that the failure of the people twenty years ago to contravene the Supreme Court had become institutionalized. Whereas, as recently as in 1960, there was a genuine possibility that the Court might be overruled, now such is the docility of the people that the chances of overruling *Roe v. Wade* are nonexistent. And, he added, this is so notwithstanding that—I quote him—"no reputable constitutional scholar" can defend the reasoning by which the Court undertook to transmute the inchoate right of privacy to include a mother's sovereign right over the disposition of the unborn child.

I presume to give you this narrative, familiar to you and no doubt to your readers, in order to say something which you would justifiably expect to be pessimistic, but which in fact isn't so. While it is true that the Supreme Court exercises *de facto* authority over the ethical thought of the majority of the republic's moral activists, it does so by sheer presumption. That is to say, the authority of the Court over such metaphysical questions as whether the mother's right to privacy is superordinate to the right of the unborn child to life, is a matter of convention born of presumptuous opportunism, not of structured ethical hierarchy. Under the present dispensation, what the Supreme

Court ordains is not only what we are supposed to obey, but what we are supposed to believe. You will note that in respect of school prayer, and in respect of such civil rights and derivatives as the busing of school children, and affirmative action, there is widespread social docility—notwithstanding that intellectual dissent survives, indeed prospers. What you have done, through the *Human Life Review*, is to challenge the Court's thinking not merely on legal and constitutional terms (so brilliantly done by your regular contributor John Noonan). Your publication has raised problems for the Supreme Court every bit as cogent as the problems raised against the Supreme Court's *Dred Scott* decision, though that was back when the Supreme Court's decisions were treated as less than revelatory in authority.

You have, really, focused on the primal question, even as Lincoln did at Cooper Union and in subsequent statements. Lincoln said: Is a man a man—even if he is black? You have brought forth a journal whose pages are open to men and women who believe in revelation, and who do not believe in revelation; who believe in civil authority, but who do not believe that *moral* authority rests in Supreme Court justices, riding rogue waves of ethical opinion agitated by concerns over population, over unwanted children, over disgust with primitive black-market abortion technology—you have raised, in issue after issue, the only finally relevant question: *Is a child a human being even when it is husbanded within the womb?* You have invited analysts of great distinction to address themselves to that central question. By analogy, is the idiot-child, the mongoloid, the comatose-senescent—human being? Surely the cavalier criterion of a “useful life,” so improvidently proffered by Mr. Justice Blackmun in his majority opinion, is spectral in its implications. You are saying that—and in saying it you have adduced the opinion not only of men of religious conviction, Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, but, in one sense most interesting, men of science—Yes, a fetus is a human being. Your journal stands athwart the comfortable conclusion that a child is entitled to constitutional protection only beginning the minute when it actually emerges from the womb. You, accepting empirical terminology, ask the question: Is the physical emergence of the child from the womb a scientifically conclusive episode transubstantiating mere matter into a human being? Is “birth” the equivalent of the conferring of citizenship? What you have done is to funnel, through a journal of intellectual and stylistic distinction, the refined thought of scientists and moralists who wonder, gradually, whether the distinction implicit in the Supreme Court's ruling isn't, when you come down to it, every bit as arbitrary as the distinction which a previous Court accepted as sufficient to prolong a distinction between men white and men black, the one being human, the other not?

Where I think you have the singular leverage is that, the Court having accepted the role of moral tribune, it is paradoxically, open, in a sense never intended, to metaphysical argumentation. Such reasoning as it listens to in commonplace meditations on the nature of equality it could, without violation of its own traditions, extend to the consideration of equality of the right to life. I am saying that the Court's acceptance of comprehensive moral authority over so many questions renders it susceptible, in the sense it would not have been as a court immune to criticism from Robert Bork, or Raoul Berger, or the strict constructionists, to the nature of such arguments as you are advancing. This means that the social instrumentality that has stood most obstinately in your way in the Me Decade, might as suddenly turn in your direction—if the Court can be persuaded at first to meditate the cogency of the arguments, and then to draw on its authority for appropriate modifications of the *Dred Scott* decision of our time. As a constitutionalist you will not welcome a continuation of the Court's usurpations. As a moralist, you will not deny to Caesar the authority to abuse his authority for the purpose of pursuing right thought.

I do not deny that Robert Bork is correct in saying that it is unthinkable that we shall have a Constitutional Amendment overturning *Roe v. Wade*. But you are thinking the unthinkable. Robert Kennedy, in his closing but galvanizing days as a public figure, regularly closed his speeches by quoting Shaw: "Some men see things as they are and ask 'Why?'; I dream of things that never were and ask 'Why not?'" It is not uninteresting that Robert Kennedy, in the tradition of Martin Luther King, encouraged the thinking of the unthinkable. The interesting question arises whether politicians who wish to succeed in their profession will gradually recognize that that which is formally deemed to be unthinkable is what people really *are* thinking about. You are betting that the restless conscience of the American people will cause them to think, to ask themselves the most critical ethical question with which America is manifestly not at rest. In any event, you have raised the ethical question: whether we have sublimated privacy into the license to take life. I cannot imagine that anyone is engaged in a sustained endeavor of moral introspection more important than yours; nor conceive of anyone who might have done it better. Herewith my congratulations on your fifth anniversary.

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[Richard Hurzeler is retired from college teaching (anthropology, sociology) and visits the elderly in nursing homes and assisted-living centers. The following is an original commentary he did for the Human Life Review.]

Drop by Drop

Richard Hurzeler

Little Sam had become violent and uncaring, throwing plates and cups and toys. Cold as ice to our entreaties, he was like an impish little bear rejecting his waiting elders. Banging on trays and pots in the kitchen, he made clanging, clashing sounds like a heavy metal musician gone mad. Then there was the ripping of objects out of cabinets and the seizing of what lay on tables—a pillager in a frenzy.

We grandparents learned to prep for his visits, locking, taping, latching down doors, cabinets, appliance knobs, and whatever else could fall into his grasp. One might think we were under siege. And then there was the invisible screen over his mouth rendering him speechless. When kids his age were learning to explode with words and sounds, he would rarely emit a paltry peep. His eyes, averted from us, were engrossed in spinning things like the blades on the ceiling fan. It was as if he had shut the door on humanity. His diagnosis: autism, a technical term that sounds to many in our culture like something sinister. We—parents, grandparents, doctors, nurses, and occupational therapists—began to search a cluster of symptoms. It all reminded me of snarled fishing line: We'd uncover one thing but then another emerged. Medical staff performed like a well-oiled machine in describing symptoms but strategies were moving in baby steps. His mother became the expert on his options—diving into books, meetings, and Internet. And somehow we all prayed.

Each plea was like a drop of water falling on the hard surface of iron ore rock. We prayed and prayed, and, at times, felt prayed out. Little Sam had learned a few words, peeked at a person now and then. We kept on praying and calling, chanting, moving—various ploys to draw him out. And then somehow he seemed to be in a kind of gridlock. I sought out more prayer partners. Some were afraid when they heard that word autism. They felt it must be contagious. If they got too close to us they might catch it and like a kind of leprosy it would attack their bodies. Others did not want to know. It must be because people were misbehaving and getting what they deserved. Thank goodness they were clean and deserved to be clean. Finally there were those whose faith had been tested in trials and tribulations and had touched the dark bedrock of hope. They were those gutsy warriors and they joined the cause.

But Little Sam appeared to be making little progress. It seemed an inch a week. If he made a new type of noise or looked at someone new his Mom reported it like a quantum leap in faith. She knew that sometimes a little is a lot. Yet some of us began to wonder if the little guy was destined to be on the perimeter of the human race. Maybe it was time to accept that all our efforts were not enough and divine help could be found in a kind of serenity prayer which meant we were destined to

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live out our crosses. Yet, we kept our prayers “hoping against hope” as the Bible verse says. It was time for more faith. It was time to cast the nets deeper to land the larger fish. Persons on the edge of life—in nursing homes, flat on their backs, were asked to pray for him and if they protested they were told: “Look, you can be a prayer warrior right where you are. It’s okay—doesn’t matter that you can’t control your body. Don’t worry that you can’t move out of that bed. You have a Mission right where you are.” And a number of these agreed, and strengthened by these we persisted. And finally something happened. Those white irises in the corner of the yard hadn’t bloomed in years. And several of them were now glistening in the sun. And the boy started to react when we called him. He now repeats a lot of things we say. A nice problem to have. The other day his grandma got bowled over when he said: “More please” and handed her a plate. Our mourning has turned to dancing. The boy who was lost has been found. Providence as usual has its perfect timing and has been patient with our impatience. Little Sam looks at us now; we marvel at him. He’s stopped throwing things and rifling through drawers. All this by the grace of God.



Little Sam Frith

APPENDIX B

[Donald DeMarco, Ph.D., a Senior Fellow of HLI America, which is an initiative of Human Life International, is Professor Emeritus at St. Jerome's University in Waterloo, Ontario, and an adjunct professor at Holy Apostles College & Seminary in Cromwell, CT. The following "dialogue" is an original piece.]

Transcending Adversity: A Modern Job

Donald DeMarco

What follows is an imagined dialogue between God and Satan. All the historical references pertaining to the musician, however, are true.

Satan: I understand that you are going to create a musician of extraordinary ability.

God: Yes, and I have done this many times before.

S: I hate music, especially music of soaring beauty. It reminds me too much of You.

G: Many philosophers and artists have correctly noted that "Beauty will save the world."

S: You were lucky with Beethoven. I did everything I could to prevent him from composing: an alcoholic father with a mean temper, a tubercular mother, penury, deafness.

G: Beethoven transcended adversity and his music brought much hope to millions of people.

S: But You did not succeed with Vladimir Lenin. He confessed, "I know nothing that is greater than [Beethoven's] *Appassionata*. It is marvelous superhuman music. I always think with pride—perhaps this is naïve of me—what marvelous things human beings can do."

G: "Superhuman" is the right word.

S: Lenin went on to say, "But I can't listen to music too often . . . makes me want to pat the heads of people . . . But now one must not pat anyone's head . . . one has to beat their heads, beat mercilessly . . . Hmm – it's a devilishly difficult task."

G: His reference to the devil is most appropriate. And what happened to Lenin?

S: Well, I am not my brother's keeper, but in his 54th year, he was murdered by poisoning at the hands of Stalin.

G: He who lives by the sword dies by the sword.

S: You need not remind me of that tired maxim; my business, however you want to ridicule it, is still my business.

G: But a business that is not profitable for your victims.

S: Job and Beethoven kept the faith. I will see to it that your new creation will not.

G: He will succeed, despite your diabolical efforts.

S: I will send diphtheria into his life when he is 3 years old that will leave him blind for the rest of his life.

G: His parents will send him to a school for blind children and he will learn Braille. Eventually, he will compose in Braille. He will express gratitude for his blindness and tell people that it led him to music.

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S: His early career will coincide with the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War.

G: I will arrange that his musical education takes him to Paris before the onset of the war.

S: Then I will persecute him when World War II commences. He will marry a woman who is Jewish.

G: I will see to his safe conduct out of Germany into Switzerland and back home to his native Spain. His wife will be a source of great personal support and professional assistance for him. She will be an outstanding pianist. Her name will be “Victoria.”

S: Why does that have to be her name!

G: Because of what it presages.

S: All right! Now the *coup d'état*. His wife will suffer a miscarriage with their first child.

G: He will grieve deeply over this loss, but it will inspire his greatest work, the *Adagio* of his *Concierto de Aranquez*, for guitar and orchestra. He will have another child, Cecilia, who will dedicate herself to promoting his music.

S: But, given all his trials, obstacles, and misfortunes, surely this will be a minor work and soon forgotten.

G: In the words of one esteemed musicologist, this work “has become, quite simply, the most successful concerto written for any instrument in this century.”

S: You are referring to the 20th century. That was supposed to be *my* century! I chose this century to do my worst against You.

G: You said this to Pope Leo XIII in his vision of you, a truly horrifying vision which prompted him to write the Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel. This prayer was then said throughout the world at the end of every Mass.

S: I wanted him to despair, as I wanted your new creation.

G: Joaquín Rodrigo lived from 1901 to 1999. He is the “tranquil flower” on the “tortured stem,” offering the world a transcendent hope that soars above all the pain, grief, and disillusionment that plagued the 20th century.

APPENDIX C

[James Mumford is a British writer of fiction and non-fiction. His book *Ethics at the Beginning of Life* was published by Oxford University Press in June. The following essay first appeared in the July/August issue of *Standpoint* (www.standpointmag.co.uk) and is reprinted with that magazine's permission.]

The Flawed Logic of Our Abortion Laws

James Mumford

Perhaps it's the last great taboo. We have no problem sitting on the bus and telling our children about sex, moving effortlessly even in public from testing times-tables to expounding the birds and the bees. We fully endorse our teenagers being taught about contraception in their personal, social and health education classes. We're no longer queasy about the most graphic images of war, and most watersheds have been removed. We have no qualms about bringing up death and we joke about disability. And we're not coy in our conversations about gender.

But when it comes to abortion, well, that really is off limits. We suddenly get squeamish. An issue too emotive to engage with, too hot to handle. (Witness *New Statesman* columnist Mehdi Hasan's vilification on Twitter as being "anti-women" when he raised the subject). Because—and I write with a gentle heart, and not unaware of my Y chromosome—the argument is over, the consensus unquestionable, the debate dead.

Our silence is so astonishing because the reality is so widespread. With nearly one in five pregnancies ending in termination—nearly 190,000 a year in England and Wales—here is a truly classless concern, touching so many, talked about by so few.

When the issue last hit the headlines, in March 2012, it was only because it had a gender angle. You may recall: a number of abortion clinics were found by the *Daily Telegraph* to have been offering illegal sex-selection terminations. The Health Secretary Andrew Lansley's statement was revealing: "Carrying out an abortion on the grounds of gender alone is in my view morally repugnant." Doing it more indiscriminately, he appeared to be saying, is OK.

Abortion is now a non-issue because, in the public mind at least, the debate has been framed as a stand-off between religion and secular philosophy. While faith is thought to elicit a broadly pro-life position, reason supposedly supports a pro-choice one. But since faith rests on unverifiable claims—you can almost hear the mental cogs grinding—it can hardly provide a platform for policy, leaving us with an intellectually unassailable justification for abortion.

The problem is, however, that when you click the "Accept" button confirming those terms and conditions, something important happens: you inadvertently smuggle in the assumption that the philosophy underpinning the pro-choice position was, in itself, coherent. That it was robust and truthful. That it made sense of the world as it is, not as we might have wanted it to be. That it had an essential purchase on reality. That it was timeless truth rather than a particular paradigm riding high at

one particular moment in history—in short, a specific strain of liberal, Anglophone, late-20th-century moral and political philosophy.

But now there are many thinkers—most prominently, postmodern ones—who lead us to question how good that philosophy was. How good in terms of accounting for the human condition. How good at fitting the facts.

It is with the whole concept of “viability” that the philosophy really falls down. Forty-six years ago, when parliament passed the Abortion Act, it did not declare all pregnancy terminations legal. It didn’t say that every creature resident in its mother’s womb was now outside the protection of the law. Rather, it established what was effectively a two-tier response to abortion, with broad defences covering abortions carried out in the early part of pregnancy and a more restrictive response to those carried out after 28 (now amended to 24) weeks. Why 28 weeks? Because, crucially, that was when the foetus was thought to be “viable,” described in an earlier piece of legislation, the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929, as the point at which the foetus was “capable of being born alive.” This was the point that was picked, the point when the state accepts a compelling interest to safeguard human life, when we may rightly think of the new one as our equal (of sorts), as an entity that is to be afforded increased protection.

Six years later, the American judiciary followed the British legislature in also selecting viability as the threshold below which termination was permitted. In the landmark case *Roe v. Wade* (1973) Justice Blackmun defined viability similarly: as the moment when a foetus becomes “potentially able to live outside the mother’s womb, albeit with artificial aid.”

That adverb was in fact something of a misnomer. By “potentially” Blackmun and Western civilisation with him didn’t really mean “potentiality” in the strict philosophical sense. Less developed foetuses are potentially separable from their mothers simply by virtue of the fact they are human and that’s what humans tend to become. No, “viability” designated instead an actual here-and-now capacity for independent existence, by which of course was meant birth. These entities still deserving of defence could be born now. They could survive the onset of breathing and oral feeding—that’s what the word “viability” encapsulated and what, since that time, has never really been contested. The only question has been when that moment comes—to which the answer depends in part on the state of medical technology.

It was no coincidence that our culture chose viability as the pivotal point. There are other contenders: emerging biological characteristics such as the primitive streak; the detection of a heartbeat or brainwaves; the onset of foetal movement (the “quickenings” so important to medieval thinkers); even the emergence of self-consciousness. But in an individualistic culture that ever since Rousseau has prized autonomy and detested dependency—“each of us, unable to dispense with the help of others, becomes so far weak and wretched,” the fanatical Frenchman wrote in *Emile*, his manual on education—it is no surprise that we took viability, the first shoots of autonomy, as the all-important cut-off point.

But step back a second. Because what are we really talking about here? What is the phenomenon in question? The natural reality in view? It is that human beings first appear in a state of radical dependency. We do not arrive in the world like the Greek gods—fully formed, instantly recognisable, immediately adult. We are not sown from the dragon’s teeth, as in the autochthonous myth of the founding of Thebes, springing up as autonomous individuals.

On the contrary: the animal that is to be king of the jungle begins as a weakling prince. Without exception we all appear in the world in the same way—in situations of total dependence, in the context of wholly asymmetrical relationships with our maternal hosts. And so the reality any discussion of morality, any wrestling with right and wrong, must take into account is what the German-Jewish philosopher Hans Jonas called “the radical insufficiency of the begotten.” Nor is there anything pathological about our weakness, the fragility which characterises our earliest stages of development. Nothing has gone wrong to make this our way of appearing in the world.

Yet if this is the way human beings come forward, what sense did it ever make to elevate viability into the ultimate criterion for entry into the community of people who, in the eyes of the law and in the standing of society, matter?

Nor is it as if our dependency stops there, with our delivery from the womb. Justice Blackmun gives it away: viability is the moment when the foetus is “potentially able to live outside the mother’s womb, albeit with artificial aid.” In the case of our species, living outside our mother’s womb is not the same as standing on our own two feet. Living apart from our mother does not entail achieving independence or living strictly “unaided.” It means simply that we might be kept alive by the efforts of others. That a ventilator might work. That intensive care could be lifesaving.

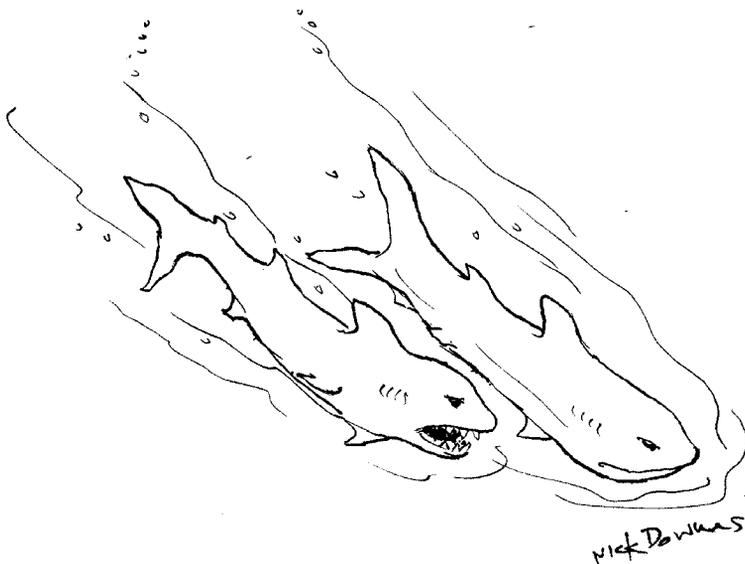
The ancient world was more explicit about an indignation we seem to share. In his *Natural History* Pliny the Elder commiserated: “But man alone on the day of his birth Nature casts away naked on the naked ground, to burst at once into wailing and weeping, and none among all the animals is more prone to tears, and that immediately at the very beginning of life . . .” It was as if our dependency was a great embarrassment, the secret that could prove the undoing of the species.

But in our time, importantly, it is feminist philosophers who lead us to contest the basic veracity of viability. Liberal political society, writes Seyla Benhabib, should not assume “a strange world” where “individuals are grown up before they have been born.” The fantasy of detachment, the illusion of the asocial, the mirage of self-sufficiency—these could only have been sustained in a patriarchal culture which has systematically sidelined the “different voice” of female experience. And, we might add, a culture which involves a good deal of amnesia. For when it comes to abortion I can only insist on autonomy, or on its first flicker that is viability, by forgetting that I—the one now making the decision, the one asserting my independence, the one enjoying my independence—was “of woman born.” I can only avoid contradiction by indulging in what Freud termed “the neurotic’s family

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romance” of rejecting his parents.

All this may seem a far cry from the agony of an unplanned pregnancy, from the lonely moment I have not personally experienced when a woman, or perhaps a couple, wake up, take the test and begin to realise the enormous negative ramifications of that positive result. And nor do I think we can simply turn the clock back, make all abortion illegal, and instantly criminalise tens of thousands of women. But recognising the adoption of viability to have involved a category mistake of profound proportions does raise unsettling questions. It is a state of affairs which is disconcerting, even without bringing in other issues such as late-term abortions on grounds of disability. It does disrupt the neat narratives we tell ourselves about the world we have built since the Second World War. What happens daily on such scale across our hospitals and clinics, while hundreds of counterpart couples simultaneously in their homes fret about infertility, does complicate our claim to be an ever more serene society. But above all, exposing viability throws us back on the reality of vulnerability and thus the very meaning of human rights.



“Now, take your humans—they’re a whole different kettle of fish.”

APPENDIX D

[*George Weigel is Distinguished Senior Fellow of Washington's Ethics and Public Policy Center. The following is reprinted with the permission of the Denver Catholic Register.*]

Tribulation Compounded by Blasphemy

George Weigel

As the Revised Standard Version renders the fourteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, Paul and Barnabas remind the proto-Christians of Antioch that it is only “through many tribulations” that we enter the Kingdom of God. The New American Bible translation drives the point home even more sharply: “It is necessary for us to undergo many hardships to enter the Kingdom of God.”

Christians in the United States who imagined that, whatever tribulations or hardships they have to endure, they would not include speeches by the president of the United States and the policies of the United States government had better reconsider, in light of President Barack Obama’s April 26 address to the annual Planned Parenthood Gala at Washington’s Marriott Wardman Park Hotel.

It was an appalling speech that had the sole benefit of clarifying the last-ditch commitment of the present administration to the most open-ended abortion license possible. And it drew a line in the sand that those committed to the biblical view of the sanctity of human life cannot ignore—and must challenge.

Planned Parenthood is a multimillion-dollar industry, funded in no small part by the federal government, that has been directly responsible for the deaths of millions of unborn children and is currently responsible for over one thousand such deaths every day; yet the president described Planned Parenthood’s work as “providing quality health care to women all across America.”

Pro-life advocates’ efforts to craft state laws requiring Planned Parenthood clinics and other abortionists to follow the minimal sanitation and safety standards required of true medical facilities are, according to the president, a matter of “shutting off communities that need more health care options for women, not less.”

The clinic-regulation laws that have been passed in states across the country are, the president charged, part of an “orchestrated and historic effort to roll back basic rights when it comes to women’s health”—as if abortuaries that do not meet the health and safety standards required of your local McDonald’s are contributing to anyone’s “health.”

Moreover, such laws are an attempt to mandate “government injecting itself into decisions best made between a woman and her doctor”—as if a butcher like Philadelphia’s Kermit Gosnell, who severed the spinal cords of infants born alive in botched abortions, was any woman’s personal physician.

Perhaps because the Obama speech to Planned Parenthood coincided with Gosnell’s homicide trial, the president did not utter the word “abortion” once. But the timing notwithstanding, that omission was hardly surprising in an address that may have set a new standard for deliberate misrepresentation of reality.

For it requires willful moral blindness about reality to say that “what Planned

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Parenthood is about” is helping “a woman from Chicago named Courtney” make sure she could start a family, by providing “access to affordable contraceptive care to keep her healthy” in the face of a fertility-threatening disease. Today, President Obama noted to applause, “She’s got two beautiful kids. That’s what Planned Parenthood is about.”

About the millions of “beautiful kids” (many of them African-American) who were never born because of Planned Parenthood, the president of the United States had not a word to say. Not a word of remorse. Not a word of compassion, for either the slaughtered innocents of our time or the mothers suffering post-abortion trauma. Just a celebration of “your right to choose,” without the slightest moral pause over the question, “Choose what?”

But there was worse. For President Obama concluded his remarks as follows: “Thank you, Planned Parenthood. God bless you . . .”

And that is nothing short of blasphemy.

Too harsh? No. For in its discussion of this grave sin against the Second Commandment, the Catechism of the Catholic Church (paragraph 2148) teaches that “it is also blasphemous to make use of God’s name to . . . reduce people to servitude, to torture persons or to put them to death.” That is precisely what happens in Planned Parenthood abortuaries. And on that, the president of the United States called down the divine blessing.

Pray for him. Pray for the United States, which is in very, very serious trouble.

APPENDIX E

[Kevin D. Williamson is a roving correspondent for *National Review* and author of the newly published *The End Is Near and It's Going to Be Awesome: How Going Broke Will Leave America Richer, Happier, and More Secure* (HarperCollins). The following essay appeared on *National Review Online* (www.nationalreview.com), July 1, 2013. © 2013 by *National Review, Inc.* Reprinted by permission.]

Abortion After Texas

Kevin D. Williamson

There are many who understand the movement against abortion as part of a broader nonviolence movement, and that has some merit. It has substantive merit in that answering the fundamental question about abortion must to some extent inform our views about other kinds of killing. And it certainly has rhetorical value: In a meme culture, it is good to be on the same side of an issue as Mohandas Gandhi and Susan B. Anthony.

The question of violence is of course the fundamental question of politics. Politics is organized violence, the purpose of which is, in theory, to protect us from violence organized by others. The functions that most of us across the Anglo-American political spectrum regard as inherently governmental—police and military actions—are the ones most closely associated with open violence. The most solemn actions a government can take—sending a convict to death, sending a soldier to war—are violent. Many religious conservatives, particularly Catholic ones, have come around to what some call a “consistently pro-life ethic,” which makes itself most strongly felt on the question of capital punishment, less strongly on the question of war. The question of capital punishment probably is easier: There is no mercy in sparing those who do not deserve punishment, but in sparing those who do. On the other hand, there is no geopolitical version of life without parole in a maximum-security facility—“containment” has always been more of an aspiration than a fact—and, to sustain the metaphor, the nation threatening its neighbors is more like a criminal on the loose than one behind bars.

I myself am increasingly sympathetic to that consistently pro-life ethic, although every time I think I'm ready to sign off on being categorically opposed to capital punishment, somebody comes along presenting an excellent case for making an exception. I am willing to consider that the defect is in me rather than in the case against capital punishment. In that sense, I find myself in a familiar position: I've spent a fair amount of time with the Gandhi literature, and I still cannot read his arguments about the Holocaust without wincing. I understand his view, and I think a conventional Christian might find that view very familiar. But there remains, I think, a key distinction between being willing to make a martyr of one's self and standing by while others are martyred. I am in awe of Jesus's actions at Gethsemane, but I'm still with Peter, inclined to cut off an ear or two. The honorific by which Gandhi was known, “mahatma,” means “great soul,” and it is not so different from the English word “saint.” Something to aspire to, though we may decide to keep

our options open in case we find our *atmas* are less than *maha*. That blade didn't just magically show up in Peter's hand.

That is all worth considering, but the question of abortion does not require us to solve every question related to violence. It asks us to make a decision about a very particular kind of violence, a specific, well-defined act of violence: The intentional putting to death of unborn human beings in the womb—or at least mostly in the womb—is a reality for which we must account. Abortion should present at least as much a challenge for the Left as it does for the Right. If you are constructing an ethic based in some part on human solidarity, you must answer the question about whether we have seen that solidarity violently breached more than 1 billion times in the past 30 years in the name of your ethic. The socialist and the libertarian alike must ask whether their model of human solidarity applies to all of us or only to some of us. The history of ideologies that exclude some from the human family is not a happy one.

There are many religious people in the pro-life camp, but it is not a religious question. It is a question about the legal status of an entity that is under any biological interpretation a 1) distinct, 2) living, 3) human 4) organism at the early stages of development. Consider those four characteristics in order: There is no scientific dispute about whether an embryo is genetically distinct from the body in which it resides, about whether the tissue in question is living or not living, about whether the tissue in question is human or non-human, or whether it is an organism as opposed to a part of another organism, like an appendix or a fingernail.

The pro-abortion response to this reality is to retreat into mysticism, in this case the mysterious condition of “personhood.” The irony of this is that the self-professedly secularist pro-abortion movement places itself in roughly the same position as that of the medieval Christians who argued about such metaphysical questions as “ensoulment.” If we use the biological standard, the embryo is exactly what pro-lifers say it is: a distinct human organism at the early stages of development. If we instead decide to pursue the mystical standard of “personhood,” we may as well be debating about angels dancing on the head of a pin.

The main biological question at issue is the question of “viability.” But viability is a standard in motion, thanks in no small part to the fact that in every aspect of medical practice save abortion we prefer scientific standards to mystical ones. And the viability standard is in the end an intellectual dodge as well: You will never discover if an organism is viable by setting out intentionally to kill it.

There is a great deal of vacuity in the debate. The usual pro-abortion platitudes are so far from being intellectually respectable that they are answered only out of a sense of duty, not because they deserve to be answered. “I'm personally against abortion, but . . .” would rightly be laughed out of existence if it were “I'm personally against murder/slavery/robbery, but . . .” Which is to say, it is a statement that is defensible only if one assumes beforehand that abortion is not a species of homicide. Similar examples of begging the question include “It's the woman's body,” etc. We simply must answer the question—which is a biological question, not a mystical

one—of how many bodies there are in question. I count at least two in the case of abortion. “People will still have abortions, only they’ll be dangerous.” People will still commit homicides, and crime would be less dangerous if we disarmed the police and forbade victims to defend themselves. The statement, like the others, makes sense only if we ignore the salient facts of the case.

Even less intellectually respectable is the reliable feminist insistence that the desire to abolish abortion stems from an obsessive male desire to control women’s bodies out of undue respect for potential opportunities of reproduction. That would be a sensible argument if, for example, pro-lifers were working to forbid women to have tubal ligations. There are pro-lifers who also are opposed to such practices, and that critique, though perhaps not entirely accurate, could fairly be applied to them to the extent that they seek to use the law to impose the ethics of *Humanae Vitae*. But the fact that a person who makes Argument X also makes independent Argument Y is not evidence against X. Nor does the fact that a person is a member of one sex or the other, has this life experience or that, give special status to his or her argument. We have to answer X on its own merits.

There are competing values in the abortion debate, of course, and competing interpretations of the emotional and political contexts of the act, but at the core of the debate is not a question of opinion but a question of fact: What resides in the womb of a pregnant woman?

None of the other questions can be intelligently answered until that question is answered, and that question cannot be answered if we keep averting our eyes or hiding in the shadows of mysticism. And the very difficult questions attached to the debate—issues such as rape, incest, medical complications, and poverty—cannot be addressed until we have answered the fundamental question. A pro-life legal regime that makes exceptions for rape and incest surely would be preferable to the current open-ended abortion license, but it would be based on a contradiction. In fact, that position, popular though it is, invites the very critique that feminists would like to make. If we are going to protect unborn human lives, then we are going to protect them regardless of the circumstances of their conception. An ethic that makes exceptions because we find no *culpability* in the mother is uncomfortably close to the feminist caricature of pregnancy being used to punish women for their sexuality. If we have a human life at issue, then we do not permit it to be put to death for the crimes of others. We cannot ignore the ghastliness of a woman’s having to carry to term a child conceived in such conditions, but we cannot in good faith put that unborn child to death—not if we believe that an unborn child is what it is.

The Texas senate last week took a tiny step in the direction of civilization by voting to ban abortions after 20 weeks of gestation and imposing other restrictions. That vote did not take effect, because the actions of a mob disrupted the business of the legislature, and the vote was not recorded until after midnight, when the legislative session had expired. That was less of a loss for the pro-life cause than you might expect: The restrictions will no doubt be passed in a coming special

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session of the legislature, and they will no doubt be tied up in legal challenges for years or more. The delay, while unwelcome, is probably going to be trivial in real-world terms.

It would of course be better if Texas needed no such law. A law professor at Cornell points out that the United States has no specific law against cannibalism, and one has seldom been needed: We pass laws against things only when they are no longer unthinkable. What we do says a great deal about us, but what we are willing to do says more. It will take a more civilized people to render abortion unthinkable.

Encountering the architectural monuments and administrative sophistication of the Incans and Aztecs, the Europeans were confounded that such marvels could be done by cultures practicing human sacrifice. Huitzilopochtli may have faded away, but career, vanity, and sexual convenience are very much with us, and they, too, are jealous gods, who apparently insist on being served in the same way. The metaphysical explanations may be radically different, but the physical facts of the cases are not entirely dissimilar. If our descendents one day wonder that savages such as ourselves flew to the moon, it will speak well of them, even as they wonder that such brilliant engineers had so impoverished a conception of what it means to be human.



APPENDIX F

[William Murchison, a syndicated columnist and senior editor of the *Human Life Review*, recently covered the abortion fracas in the Texas Legislature for HLR's website blog (www.humanlifereview.com). The following is his post of July 15, 2013.]

Done

William Murchison

Done. And of course there wasn't more than the inevitable shadow of doubt—the one that hangs over all human enterprises—that the Texas Legislature was going to pass that abortion bill, as duly happened last Saturday.

A lot of unnecessary expense falls upon the taxpayers on account of Sen. Wendy Davis' showboating. Try convincing me Davis didn't suspect her last minute filibuster wouldn't lead to the convening of a special session to pass the bill she killed in order, apparently (I can think of no other purpose), to sell herself to the Ann Richards left, at home and elsewhere. On those terms, it sure worked. They loved her, over on the left: that feisty, indomitable woman in her pink sneakers, uncowed by jeers and heckling! The lonely stand for righteousness! The noble head, bloody but unbowed!

The left goes nuts sometimes over this stuff. It certainly did over Wendy Davis, who, for all her newfound fame, has about as much chance of winning statewide office in Texas as of getting her photo on the cover of the *Human Life Review*.

I said in a previous post there's something substantive to Wendy. She ascended from trailer park to Harvard Law School by dint of, I can only guess, ability and character. We often call such types meritocratic heroes. In a corner of her mind, nonetheless, seemingly flickers resentment of an "establishment" she credits with holding down everybody besides herself.

Too bad, but enough of that. What does Davis' defeat signify? Well, not exactly a Roman triumph, with trumpets and laurel wreaths, for the pro-life forces in Texas. The new law seems unlikely to survive Supreme Court review. But I don't think that was the point. The point was to build—slowly, slowly—public pressure for reform of the *Roe v. Wade* regime, shot through as it is with incoherencies, inconsistencies, and like signs of failure in terms of persuading the American people that doing away with your unborn child is no big deal.

An unrepentant Supreme Court majority has tried for 40 years to spread that impression, but millions still aren't buying: and not because the doubters take their marching orders from Cardinal Dolan. No other Supreme Court decision, not even the one in *Dred Scott v. Sanford*, has flopped the way this one has. It lacks wisdom; it lacks understanding, theological or secular either one; it divides society as with a knife: the Wendy Davis set over here, the lovers of life over there. The Supreme Court, in the great providence of God, needs a chance to wriggle out at least part way from the great legal disaster that *Roe* must necessarily be considered, 40 years later. The more numerous the lawsuits against anti-abortion laws, the larger the number of opportunities for the Court to reflect on the lameness—a nice, neutral

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word—of its handiwork.

It may not happen for 20 more years; it may not happen for 40. Who but God knows?

The point is to keep on plugging, not because it's fun or profitable or in some odd sense exhilarating. No: Because it's right, that's all.



*“Oh, please—my husband’s unfinished novel is in there.
Can’t you let it burn awhile longer?”*

APPENDIX G

[Wesley J. Smith is a senior fellow in human rights and bioethics at the Discovery Institute and the author of many books, including *A Rat Is a Pig Is a Dog Is a Boy: The Human Cost of the Animal Rights Movement (Encounter)*. He also hosts the “Human Exceptionalism” blog on *National Review Online* (www.nationalreview.com). Following are three posts from that blog concerning euthanasia in Belgium.]

Human Exceptionalism

Wesley J. Smith

Twins Euthanized in Belgium (JAN. 14, 2013)

In just ten years, Belgium has trumped the culture of death in the Netherlands that took some thirty years to poisonously flower. For example, there has been a joint euthanasia of an elderly couple, which was celebrated by a Belgian bioethicist in a news report. Belgian doctors also brag about coupling voluntary euthanasia with consensual organ harvesting—particularly targeted at the disabled who want to die, because they have “good organs.” And now, twins have been killed in a joint euthanasia. From the *Telegraph* story:

Identical twins were killed by Belgian doctors last month in a unique mercy killing under Belgium’s euthanasia laws. The two men, 45, from the Antwerp region were both born deaf and sought euthanasia after finding that they would also soon go blind. The pair told doctors that they were unable to bear the thought of not being able to see each other again. The twin brothers had spent their entire lives together, sharing a flat and both working as cobblers. Doctors at Brussels University Hospital in Jette “euthanized” the two men by lethal injection on 14 December last year.

In a morally sane society, the death doctors would lose their licenses and be tried for homicide. But Belgium no longer fits that description.

But, I must say, after fighting against this issue for twenty years, I am not surprised. This is the simple logic of euthanasia consciousness. Once killing is seen as an answer to human suffering, the meaning of the term becomes very elastic and the killable caste, like the universe, never stops expanding.

...

Belgium to OK Euthanizing Children Because Happening Anyway (FEB. 23, 2013)

Euthanasia guidelines are worse than meaningless, *they are pretense*. They exist to give the illusion of control. But once people come fully to accept the premise of euthanasia—killing as a remedy for suffering—it’s Katy bar the door. (That hasn’t happened yet in the USA. But if assisted suicide gets a firm grip here, it will.)

Latest example, Belgium is getting set to legalize euthanasia for children—since it is being done anyway despite the “guidelines.” From the AFP story:

Belgian legislators opened a debate today on whether to amend a decade-old law on euthanasia to cover minors, being told by experts that it was already taking place in practice without any set guidelines. Currently, the law applies to those over 18 but one expert told the upper house of parliament that it was clear that euthanasia was

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being carried out on younger people, the Belga news agency reported. “We all know it,” said Dominique Biarent, head of intensive care at Queen Fabiola Children’s University Hospital in Brussels. Faced with this reality, “doctors need a legal framework,” Biarent was quoted as saying by Belga.

How about just saying no and enforcing the law? Can’t do that? Well then, let’s legalize bank robbery.

If any media report ever again talks about “strict guidelines”—which aren’t strict and are ignored anyway—I’ll scream. Well, scream more than I already do, would be more accurate. But you get the point.

...

Another Belgian Double Euthanasia (July 15, 2013)

This is the third example of which I am aware of “double” euthanasia deaths in Belgium. The first were of an elderly couple. The second of disabled twins, who were going blind. And now the third, another elderly couple. From the Huffington Post story:

A Belgian couple that had spent the past 70 years together decided to end their lives the same way. Belgian newspaper *Het Nieuwsblad* reports Leopold Dauwe, 90, and Paula Raman, 89, were euthanized Monday, surrounded by their children and grandchildren. The husband and wife, who had known each other for 70 years and were married for 64 years, said neither could envision a life without the other. “Together we walked the road. Together we left,” reads the powerful note on the pair’s memorial card, according to *DeStandaard*.

Since 2002, Belgium has allowed suicide with medical help for terminally-ill adult patients subjected to intolerable physical or mental suffering. Dirk Uyttendaele, the couple’s son-in-law, told *DeStandaard* that his relatives were severely ill and that there was no treatment available. Raman was suffering from heart problems and Dauwe was slowly turning blind and had a lung condition. “Neither of them wanted to stay behind when the other would die first, and they did not have any prospect of a dignified death,” Uyttendaele said. “They were tied to their beds, and their death struggle would only become more difficult over time. They chose to act before that. The entire family supported their decision 100 percent,” he added.

Of course they did. If that doesn’t give you the chills . . .

This is what euthanasia consciousness brings. Culture of death, Wesley? *What* culture of death?

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The Human Life Foundation, Inc.

353 Lexington Avenue

Suite 802

New York, New York 10016

Phone: 212-685-5210

humanlifereview@verizon.net



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