

SALVO

Issue 47 Winter 2018

Made Up



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The Contradictory Worlds of Today's Teen Girls (p. 30)

by Heather Zeiger

• Pro-Choice America & the Dissolution of a Generation (p. 17)

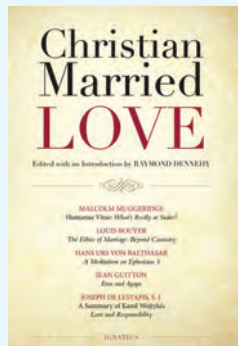
• Why #MenAreBeasts! (p. 18)

by Terrell Clemmons

PLUS: Timothy J. Burberry, Paige Comstock Cunningham,
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GREAT BOOKS & FILMS ON LIFE, LOVE & MARRIAGE



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Edited by Raymond Dennehy

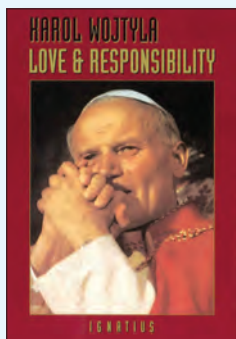
Five brilliant essays give a powerful witness to the beauty and truth of love, sex and marriage illuminated by *Humanae Vitae*. Essays by **Hans Urs von Balthasar**, **Malcolm Muggeridge**, **Louis Bouyer**, **Jean Guittou**, **Joseph de Lestapis, S.J.**

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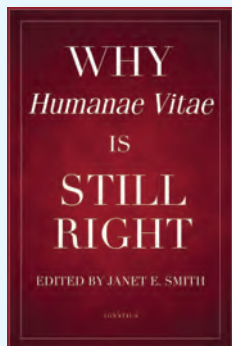


◆ LOVE AND RESPONSIBILITY

Karol Wojtyla (St. John Paul II)

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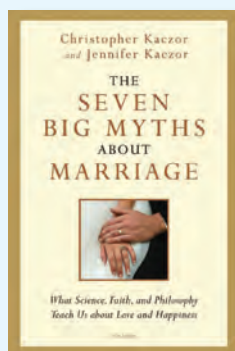
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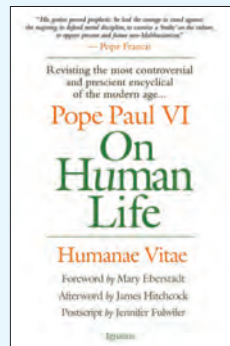


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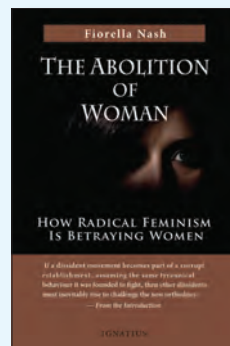


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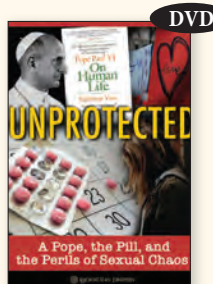


◆ THE ABOLITION OF WOMAN

Fiorella Nash

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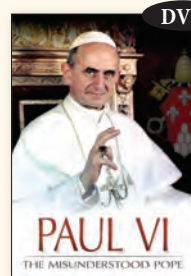
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◆ PAUL VI: The Misunderstood Pope

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PAVIM . . . 55 minutes, \$14.95



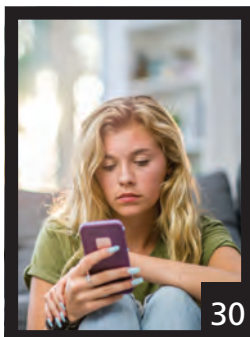
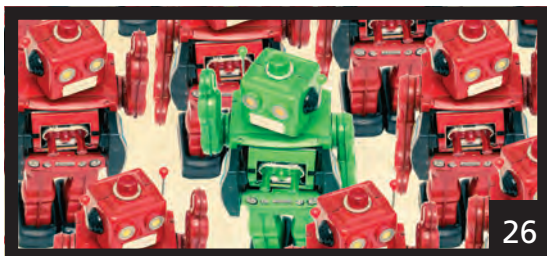
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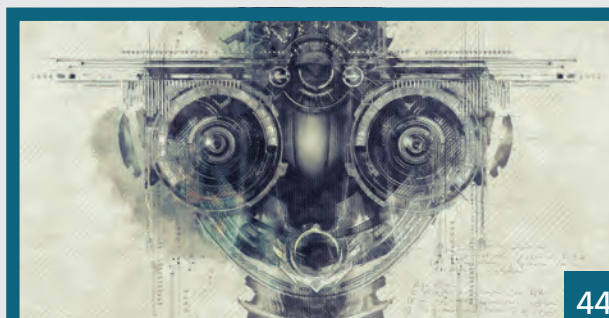
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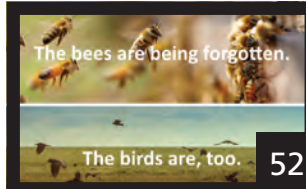
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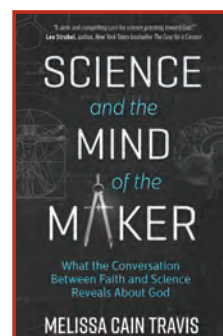
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salvo n. (să'l'vō)

1. A mental reservation
2. An expedient for protecting one's reputation
3. A forceful verbal or written assault
4. A group of shots fired simultaneously for effect

A publication of The Fellowship of St. James (www.fsj.org), *Salvo* is dedicated to debunking the cultural myths that have undercut human dignity, all but destroyed the notions of virtue and morality, and slowly eroded our appetite for transcendence. It also seeks to promote the Christian worldview. The opinions expressed by individual contributors are not necessarily those of the editors or publisher.

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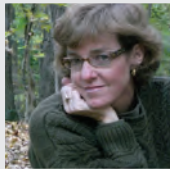
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Winter 2018

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To Be or Not to “Be a Man”

Proper Manhood Is Within Reach

by James M. Kushiner

Legend has it that radical feminists once proclaimed, “A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle!” This could be a stand-up comedienne’s punch line in a joke about a blind date with a jerk, but as a statement of human needs, it is laughable. Granted, it reflects the attitude of some women, including some who have had very bad experiences with men, but how true is it for all women, including many happily married wives and mothers?

Since many women do seem to need men, the new target for rejection by feminists is manhood or masculinity. A 2015 documentary, *The Mask You Live In*, claims that “Be a man!” are the three most destructive words you can say to a boy because they promote “toxic masculinity.”

Mask was made by the founder of the Representation Project, which “inspires individuals and communities to create a world free from gender stereotypes.” The film promotes the view that gender is socially constructed. It sidelines innate biological differences between males and females and is welcoming of homosexuality and transsexuality.

Similarly, Brown University is now offering a new course: “Masculinity 101—a weekly discussion group for students to unpack and unlearn toxic masculine norms.” The course website claims that “rigid definitions of masculinity are toxic to men’s health.”

So, what are masculine “norms”? In *Mask*, what is called masculinity is associated with violent behavior, sexual aggression and promiscuity, domination, bullying, alcohol abuse, and so on.



A gang member may be told to “Man up!” to impel him to commit a felony. But this is an appeal for him to use an endowment, a faculty, to do wrong. These behaviors are all abuses of true masculinity. Masculinity and manhood can be exercised for good or for ill, just as femininity and womanhood can be. But the totalitarian impulse is to condemn masculinity itself.

Young men should be encouraged to embrace healthy masculinity, to pursue manly virtues, like persevering at school or on the practice field and treating women

with respect and self-restraint. They should be taught that “being a man” means taking responsibility for their sexual powers and stepping up to take care of their offspring.

Many women say it’s hard to find “a real man” to marry. The most attractive kind of man is one who has been properly taught how to “be a man,” who is ready to become a responsible husband and father. It’s the growing scarcity of such men that is “toxic” for society, and this scarcity arguably can be chalked up to secular views of sex and gender.

Most tellingly, *Mask* and similar efforts to create a new world devoid of gender stereotypes are themselves devoid of references to faith. Their undergirding is pure secularism. In a world where there is no role for religious faith in character formation, the creation of a new world can only be undertaken by people who think they know what the rest of us should do and think.

The admonition to “be a man” can be destructive if said threateningly by an abusive father to his son. But it can also be what even a grown man needs to hear at times. According to an eyewitness account, the second-century Christian Polycarp, upon entering the arena to face martyrdom, was told by a heavenly voice, “Play the man!” The elderly bishop stood firm for his faith and has been revered ever since.

Contrary to what radical feminists claim, every woman needs a Man; every man does, too. We are all drowning in a sea of the failures of both manhood and womanhood, in need of the helping hand of Jesus Christ.

Those who want to protect society from the toxicity and dangers of degraded masculinity but who don’t look upward for that helping hand will only make things worse. *Salvo* insists that both men and women need to keep looking up if they wish to be truly saved. ☉

Argentina: #ToxicAbortion

After a 16-hour legislative session that lasted into the early hours of August 9, Argentina's Senate rejected a bill to legalize elective abortion in the country. The vote was 38–31 against, and with that result, the bill, which narrowly passed Argentina's House of Representatives in June, was killed for the current legislative year, although it could be reintroduced in 2019.

The legislation would have allowed abortion for any reason through 14 weeks' gestation, and for

certain specific reasons, including a diagnosis of fetal non-viability, through all nine months. It also would have allowed minor girls as young as 13 to get an abortion without their parents' knowledge, and would have prohibited health-care institutions from opting out of providing abortion for reasons of conscience. The current law in Argentina prohibits abortion except in cases where the mother's life or health is deemed to be in danger and in cases of rape.

Despite wet weather, thousands of Argentinians spent the night of August 8–9 outside the National Congress building, awaiting the results



of the vote. When the final tally was announced, pro-lifers celebrated with cheers and fireworks, while some abortion advocates lit fires and threw rocks at police. •

(Source: catholicnewsagency.com/news/argentina-senate-rejects-bill-to-legalize-abortion-81872)



Tennessee: No Constitutional Right to Abortion

In 2014, Tennessee voters approved Amendment 1 to their state constitution, which reads, in the main, "Nothing in this Constitution secures or protects a right to abortion or requires the funding of an abortion. The people retain the right through their elected state representatives or state senators to enact, amend, or repeal statutes regarding abortion."

Just days after the vote, several plaintiffs, including a Planned Parent-

hood official, challenged it and demanded a recount. After two judges issued

contradictory rulings, the case was appealed to the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, which in January 2018 upheld the original vote tally and, by extension, the amendment. This prompted Planned Parenthood to make a last-ditch appeal to the Supreme Court to take up the case. The High Court refused to do so, however, letting the Sixth Circuit decision stand. The amendment is thus now firmly established in the Tennessee constitution. •

(Source: lifenews.com/2018/10/01/supreme-court-wont-hear-challenge-to-tennessee-amendment-that-eliminated-right-to-abortion)

US: #ToxicCompelledSpeech

On June 26, 2018, by a 5–4 vote, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a 2015 California law that forced pro-life pregnancy centers to promote abortion by posting abortion ads on their websites and waiting-room walls.

The case, *NIFLA (National Institute of Family and Life Advocates) v. Becerra*, centered on free-speech issues, meaning that, although the Court's ruling technically applied only to the California law, it signaled that similar statutes in other states

and localities would be unlikely to withstand a First Amendment challenge.

So we move to Baltimore, which passed an ordinance in 2009 requiring pro-life pregnancy centers to post signage saying they did not offer or refer for abortions. The Greater

Baltimore Center for Pregnancy Concerns brought suit, and although a federal court ruled in 2011 that the city's ordinance indeed violated the center's First Amendment rights, Baltimore did not accept the decision and filed an appeal, dragging the pregnancy center—and the city's taxpayers—through another six years of expensive litigation. Finally, in January 2018, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ordered Baltimore to "lay down the arms of compelled speech." And in September, three months after the *NIFLA* ruling, Baltimore's spending board voted to pay \$1.1 million to the Greater Baltimore Center to cover its legal fees. •



(Source: <https://pregnancyhelpnews.com/baltimore-to-pay-1-1-million-to-pregnancy-center-after-losing-first-amendment-case>)



California: Free Abortion Drug Vetoed

To the surprise of many, California Governor Jerry Brown, a pro-abortion Democrat, on September 30 vetoed a bill that would have forced state colleges and universities to provide free abortion drugs to students on campus. Brown vetoed the legislation because, he said in a statement, since "the services required by this bill are

widely available off-campus, this bill is not necessary."

Senate Bill 320 would have required state universities and community colleges to dispense free abortion drugs to women up to 10 weeks pregnant at their student health centers. Pro-lifers were strongly opposed to bringing "dangerous abortion drugs to college campuses," as Kristan Hawkins of Students for Life of America put it, but even some who were not pro-life were con-

cerned about the bill, pointing out that college health centers were not prepared to deal with complications from drug-induced abortions, which include excessive bleeding, infection, and incomplete abortion requiring surgery. Thus, though unexpected, the veto was a victory for both women and babies in California—and for taxpayers, too, as they would have footed most of the bill for the program. •

(Source: lifenews.com/2018/10/01/california-gov-jerry-brown-vetoes-bill-mandating-free-abortions-at-all-college-and-university-campuses)

Hungary: #ToxicGenderStudies

In August, the Hungarian government announced that it was discontinuing programs in gender studies at state-run universities. Bence Rétvári, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Human Resources, said that university degrees should be rooted in a scientific basis, whereas gender studies, "like Marxist-Leninism," are based on "ideology rather than science," and so comprise inappropriate matter for university-level education. Moreover, said another government spokesman, "there is no economic rationale for studies such as these," since they do not "furnish students with skills that can be readily and directly converted on the labor market."

Few university students were affected by the decision, since only two universities in Hungary, the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest (ELTE)

and the Central European University, offered gender studies at the graduate level, and they had admitted only eleven and two students respectively for the upcoming academic year. The spokesman said that programs with such low student numbers "take away valuable resources from other programs," a relevant factor to consider since "state universities [are] operated from public funds," and since "the purpose of these institutions of higher education is to meet genuine social and labor market needs."

In 2017, Lőrinc Nacsá, leader of the Christian Democrat party's youth wing, wrote a letter to the president of ELTE arguing that gender studies programs "are doing nothing to lift up our nation. In fact, they are destroying the values-centered mode of thinking that is still present in the countries of Central Europe." •



(Source: breitbart.com/london/2018/08/10/hungary-discontinues-gender-studies-programs-ideology-not-science)

Sex-Work-Study Program in UK?

The Sex Workers' Outreach Project Sussex (SWOP), a pro-prostitution group in England, set up stalls at the annual "freshers' fairs" at two universities in September. Claiming that "1 in 6 students does sex work or thinks about turning to sex work," SWOP announced that it would be "out during Freshers Week letting students know how we can help if they're sex working

to help pay their fees and expenses." From booths at Brighton University and Sussex University, the group offered condoms and leaflets, and invited students to "come and play" on a "wheel of sexual wellbeing."

SWOP's presence at the fairs evoked considerable criticism, prompting officials at Brighton to issue a statement saying that the student union was responsible for inviting SWOP, and that the university "does not promote sex work as an option to students." •



(Source: birminghammail.co.uk/news/uk-news/university-probe-after-freshers-fair-15219457)

Over 900 Canadian Babies Killed After Birth



According to data released in August by the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), there were 766 late-term, live-birth abortions in the five-year period from 2013/2014 to 2017/2018. This total does not include figures from Quebec, where a separate study done in 2016 "found the number of infants who were born alive and died after an abortion jumped from one per 100,000 in 1986–1999, to 19.4 per 100,000 between 2000 and 2012. Those accidental live births totaled

218 babies." So the actual total for Canada is even higher than the CIHI's figure.

Because Canada does not have any abortion laws, in the vast majority of abortion cases, the fetus's demise is not documented. Hence, what little information is out there concerning the circumstances surrounding late-term abortions, and what happens to babies born alive, is anecdotal and therefore uncertain. But what is certain is that such abortions do happen—and given the average rate of more than 150 per year over the past five years, they are not rare. •

(Source: lifenews.com/2018/08/17/766-babies-in-canada-born-alive-after-failed-abortions-and-left-to-die)

UK Gender Confusion Skyrockets

The large number of British children wanting to change sex prompted an inquiry by government officials in September. The figures are alarming: In the past decade, there has been a 4,400 percent increase in girls being referred for transitioning treatment—from a total of 40 girls referred for such treatment in 2009/10 to 1,806 by 2017/18. Referrals for boys rose from 57 to 713 in the same period. Last year, 45 children referred for transitioning treatment were age 6 or under, with the youngest just 4. These very young children were not given drugs, but some 10-year-olds were among the 800 children given injections to

stall the onset of puberty, and some were also given cross-sex hormones.

Among the things officials planned to look into is whether doctors are too readily offering drug treatment to children, without duly

considering the long-term side effects of such drugs—which can include infertility and osteoporosis—and without fully understanding what lies behind the child's desire to change sex. A recent study, for instance, found that almost two-thirds of children and teens who say they want to change

sex have previously been diagnosed with serious mental health disorders. There is also the concern that the promotion of transgenderism in schools has "sown confusion" in children's minds. Dr. Joanna Williams, author of the book *Women vs Feminism*, says that schools are "encouraging even the youngest children to question whether they are really a boy or a girl." •



(Source: telegraph.co.uk/politics/2018/09/16/minister-orders-inquiry-4000-per-cent-rise-children-wanting)

US Doctors OK with Self-Harm for Kids?

Meanwhile, in the United States, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) issued a policy statement in September calling for “comprehensive” and “gender-affirming” health care—including puberty blockers and surgery—for minors who do not identify with their birth sex. In “Ensuring Comprehensive Care and Support for Transgender and Gender-Diverse Children and Adolescents,” the group states that “transgender identities and diverse gender expressions do not constitute a mental disorder,” but are “normal aspects of human diversity.” The statement also claims that any mental health issue associated with gender confusion “most often stems from stigma and negative experiences rather than being intrinsic to the child.” Thus, while deriding reparative therapy as “unfair and deceptive,” the AAP encourages parents “to listen,

respect and support their child’s self-expressed identity.”

Though presented as the position of the AAP as a whole, the policy was formulated by a mere handful of its members—specifically, the 30 or so members of the LGBT subcommittee—and it was never presented to all 67,000 members for a vote. Pediatrician Michelle Cretella of the independent American College of Pediatricians called the statement “a hard left propaganda piece, not science.”

In 2017, the AAP said children under age 14 are not cognitively capable of crossing a busy street safely. The group has also warned teens against getting tattoos, because they are essentially permanent and can cause scarring. Yet it now says that young teens are cognitively able to decide they are transgender, and that mutilating surgery in the service of “changing” their sex is no problem. •



(Source: lifesitenews.com/news/american-academy-of-pediatrics-new-guidelines-support-gender-change-for-kid)

ESCAPING THE STORM

by Peter John Cooper

Marie Stopes on the Isle of Portland

“Powerful, affecting, surprising, and provoking: don’t miss this show!”
Deborah Rees, AD, *The Roses Tewkesbury*

“Thought provoking, original and everything I hoped it would be.”
Mark Tattershall, AD, *Dorchester Arts*

www.asonetheatre.co.uk

UK’s New Heroine Loved Hitler & Eugenics

In October the Dorset-based AsOne Theatre Company announced that it had received funding from the British government to produce a play celebrating the life and work of Marie Stopes, who in 1921 founded the “Society for Constructive Birth Control and Racial Progress” in London. Entitled *Escaping the Storm*, the play will portray Stopes as a pioneer who “transformed how we think about sex” and who engaged in “bitter battles with the Catholic Church” over birth control. AsOne also announced plans to take its play into schools.

What AsOne won’t tell its audiences is that

Stopes was an ardent eugenicist and admirer of Adolf Hitler, to whom she once sent a book of her love poems. Like her American contemporary and counterpart Margaret Sanger, Stopes favored the sterilization of those she deemed “the inferior, the depraved, and the feeble-minded,” and she made a point of locating her family planning centers in the poorer areas of London. She was also a racist, harboring a particular hatred for Catholics, Jews, and Russians. Today, the organization she founded, now called Marie Stopes International, is present in 37 countries and commits three million abortions a year. •

(Source: lifesitenews.com/news/british-govt-funding-play-about-eugenicist-marie-stopes-who-sent-love-poems)

A Plea for the Truth About Same-Sex Attraction

Avera Maria Santo, a 22-year-old woman who experiences same-sex attraction, wrote an open letter to the bishops of the Catholic Church about the topic of homosexuality, slated to be discussed at the Youth Synod in Rome in October. As her letter speaks for itself, we quote it at length here without further comment:

Dear Bishops of the Holy Catholic Church,

When I was made aware of the efforts being made by pro-LGBT groups trying to persuade Catholic Bishops to change Church teaching on homosexuality, specifically at this year's Youth Synod, it devastated me.

As someone who has not only grown up in the Church, but has also come to love her and her teachings for myself, I would hate to see her teachings altered in any way, especially in a way that could cause such a grave amount of damage.

I wish then to lay my heart bare, and to . . . plead with you to keep the Church's teachings on homosexuality good, true, and beautiful.

I am a 22-year-old young Catholic woman that experiences same-sex attractions. While I was growing up, I heard very little, if anything at all, on homosexuality, even though I attended Catholic school from Pre-K [through] 12th grade.

When I finally came to terms with the fact that I was romantically interested in other women, it terrified me. I didn't know where to turn, who to speak to, or if I could speak about it at all! The fear paralyzed me into silence for quite a while.

As time went on, I began to learn more and more about the teachings of the Catholic Church

on homosexuality, and for some time, I didn't understand them. I wasn't sure what the words "objectively" and "intrinsically disordered" meant, and truth be told, I had the feeling that I didn't want to know. It wasn't until I was around the age of 20 that I finally began to understand.

I'll admit, I didn't like what I heard, but I knew it was what I needed to hear. . . .

I [used] to want to be in a same-sex relationship. The desire was overwhelming at times, to the point where I could see no other way to get through the day. But I know now, from the good and gracious teachings of God through His Church, that such a relationship hinders not only my freedom to love authentically, but also my ability to achieve holiness.

Taking it a step further, being in such a relationship could ultimately block me from spending my eternity with my one true love, Jesus.

My dear Bishops, there is no one on this earth that isn't called to a life of chastity, [and] that includes my brothers and sisters

who experience same-sex attractions. This is not because the Church is oppressive and wants us to be miserable and passively submissive to her, but because each and every one of us is invited to enter into the Divine Life of our Creator, a life where no sin can remain. . . .

Telling me that my cross of same-sex attraction is too heavy for me to love as Christ calls me to, is not just degrading, it is also a lie. God did not abandon me when man first sinned in the beginning, and He will not abandon me now.

He has called me, and each and every one of us to Himself, and I intend to return back to Him, no matter how burdensome my cross may be.

Like Christ remembered me from the cross, I pray that you would remember me, and my brothers and sisters like me, dear Bishops, as you pray about and discuss how to help young people in matters of faith and vocation, especially in regard to the topic of homosexuality. . . .

Yours in Christ,
Avera Maria Santo

(Source: lifesitenews.com/news/22-year-old-with-same-sex-attraction-pleads-to-synod-dont-change-church-tea)





Bathroom Lies & Scorn at Middle School

Administrators at Rotolo Middle School in Batavia, Illinois, without giving advance notice to parents, allowed a boy who claims to be a girl to use the girls' restrooms and locker room with no restrictions. At the first school board meeting after this policy became known, three parents and two girl students voiced objections to allowing a biological boy to use the girls' facilities. Board member John Dryden responded by incorrectly claiming that federal law Title IX gives students the right to use restrooms and locker rooms that match their "gender identity." In fact, Title IX makes no mention of gender identity, but specifically permits schools to maintain separate facilities for the two sexes. Yet none of Dryden's fellow board members corrected him.

Later, in a Facebook post, Dryden characterized the three parents and two students who spoke up at the meeting as "an anti-transgender lynch mob" and said that it had been "really hard not to launch myself over the table and strangle [them]." When asked if Dryden would receive any censure for his post, board president Cathy Dremel weakly replied that the board "has no role in monitoring individual member's personal social media or the opinions shared in such a forum."

(Source: <https://illinoisfamily.org/education/batavia-middle-schools-presumptuous-and-ill-informed-leadership>)

A Tale of Two Countries: Two Kids Required or Too Many?



China:

After decades of brutally enforcing a one-child policy, the Chinese Communist Party, now worried about its deleterious effects, including an aging population, a shrinking workforce, and diminishing economic prospects, has done a complete about-face with plans to implement a Comprehensive Two Child Policy. While a draft of the new policy includes such incentives as free hospital delivery of a second child and expansion of childcare facilities, the plan's coerciveness is plain to each of the country's 90 million Communist Party members, who are being told to have two children themselves and then to "guide the masses to be responsible and follow the [new] birth plan by having a second child." The Chinese Party-State, which once forced young women to abort second children, is now mandating that they have them.

(Sources: lifesitenews.com/opinion/china-begins-mobilizing-the-masses-to-give-birth-after-decades-of-forced-ab; pop.org/nearly-125-indian-members-of-parliament-back-petition-to-introduce-a-two-child-policy)

India:

Even as China—albeit coercively—attempts to undo the harm caused by population control, India seems bent on repeating its northern neighbor's mistake. In August, 125 lawmakers, representing both houses of India's Parliament, delivered a petition to President Ram Nath Kovind calling for a law that would impose a two-child limit on families. Arguing that population growth threatens to outpace development, policymakers propose stiff penalties for couples who have more than two children, including loss of government benefits and voting rights. Ironically, while several Indian states, out of that same fear, initiated two-child policies during the 1990s and the early 2000s, at least five such states have since repealed them. Compounding the irony is the fact that the rate of population growth in India has slowed considerably in recent decades: in the early 1960s, its fertility rate stood at 5.89 births per 1,000 women of reproductive age, but by 2013 the rate had declined to 2.3, and it is expected to fall to 2.28 this year. The UN Population Division projects that the country's population will peak at 1.68 billion in 2060 and then begin to contract.





19.7

million children

and teens in America—or **27%**—

are living without a father figure

in the home. This includes biological, step, or adoptive fathers.¹



Fatherlessness

Absent Dads & Present Hardships

by Heather Zeiger

Fathers play an important role in their children's lives. Since the 1990s, studies have consistently shown that children from fatherless homes are over-represented among high-school dropouts, pregnant teens, and suicidal teens. The vast majority of adult males who have committed violent crimes come from homes without a father figure. Girls without a father present or whose father is disengaged tend to take more sexual risks and become sexually active earlier.²



Child Poverty Rate:
 In **mother-only** homes
41%
 In **father-only** homes
25%
 In **two-parent** homes
9%

Demographics:

The three states with the highest percentage of children living in homes without a father (in 2013):³

Mississippi Louisiana
36.2% 34.4%

Alabama
30.7%

Percentage of children living in mother-only households, by race:⁴

Black	Hispanic
56%	31%
White	Asian
17%	10%

Crime & Incarceration:

- Number of children with a parent in prison: **2.7 million**
 - Percentage of incarcerated parents who are fathers: **92%**
 - Between 1991 and 2007, the percent by which the number of children with a father in jail increased: **79%**
 - Percentage of fathers released from prison who are likely to be arrested again within 3 years: **66%**
- Home circumstances of youth in juvenile custody prior to arrest:⁵
 - Living with one parent (typically the mother): **45%**
 - Living with two parents: **30%**
 - Living with no parent (i.e., with foster parents, in a group home, or other residential arrangement): **25%**

Father Involvement:

Comparison of fathers who live with at least one of their children vs. fathers who live apart from their children⁶

- **Children under 5 years old:**
 - Eat meals daily with their children: **72% vs. 8%**
 - Bathe, dress, or diaper their children on a daily basis: **58% vs. 8%**
 - Play with their children every day: **81% vs. 10%**
 - Read to their children every day: **29% vs. 5%**
- **Children between 5 and 18 years old:**
 - Eat meals with their children daily: **66% vs. 3%**
 - Take their children to or from activities every day: **21% vs. 4%**
 - Talk to their children about their day: **65% vs. 16%**
 - Help with or check their children's homework every day: **30% vs. 6%**
- **Fathers' Self-Perception:**
 - Said they were doing "a very good job" as a father: **44% vs. 21%**
 - Said they were doing "a not very good or bad job" as a father: **0.6% vs. 24%**

Notes

1. National Fatherhood Initiative: fatherhood.org/fatherhood-data-statistics.
2. Danielle J. DelPriore and Sarah E. Hill, "The effects of parental disengagement on women's sexual decision making: an experimental approach" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (2013): http://personal.tcu.edu/sehill/DelPrioreHill_JPSP2013.pdf.
3. National Fatherhood Initiative, note 1.
4. National Center for Education Statistics: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cce.asp.
5. A. J. Sedlak and C. Bruce, C., "Youth's Characteristics and Backgrounds: Findings from the Survey of Youth in Residential Placement" (2010): <https://rhyclearinghouse.acf.hhs.gov/library/2010/youths-characteristics-and-backgrounds-findings-survey-youth-residential-placement>.
6. Jo Jones and William D. Mosher, "Fathers' Involvement with Their Children: United States, 2006–2010," *National Health Statistics Reports* (Dec. 20, 2013): cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr071.pdf.

What About Mothers?



Data on the adverse effects of fatherless homes also demonstrate the strain placed on mothers. Most single moms with two or more children at home have to work more than one job or put in extra hours to provide for basic needs and pay the bills. When dad is out of the picture, mom must pick up the slack.

Even before children are born, father uninvolvedness takes a toll. The National Fatherhood Initiative (fatherhood.org/fatherhood-data-statistics) reports that among teenage mothers, pregnancy loss due to abortion, miscarriage, or stillbirth occurs at more than twice the rate for girls who do not have the support of the baby's father as for girls who do—48.1% versus 22.2%. Girls without support are also more likely to have a baby with a low birth weight. •

The Rise & Fall of LGBTx-ology

Sexual Identity Fraud & the Restorative Potential of Reparative Therapy

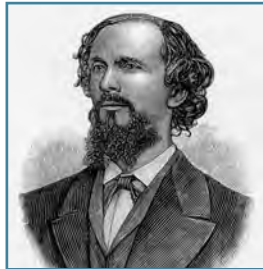
by Terrell Clemmons

Last May, Mirjam Heine delivered a TEDx talk titled “Pedophilia Is a Natural Sexual Orientation.” “Anyone could be born a pedophile,” said the German medical student. “Pedophilia is only the sexual preference for pre-adolescent children.” It is “a thought, a feeling,” an “unchangeable sexual orientation just like, for example, heterosexuality.”

Heine’s primary message was that, since pedophiles cannot act on their desires without creating “a disaster,” our attitude toward them must change. We should differentiate between pedophiles who feel sexual desires toward children but don’t act on them and pedophiles who sexually abuse children. We must do this, she said, so that pedophiles will feel accepted in society and be less likely to act on their desires.

Unsurprisingly, the talk provoked a firestorm of backlash, prompting TEDx to remove the video. “After reviewing the talk, we believe it cites research in ways that are open to serious misinterpretation,” read the tepid explanation. “This field of science is developing, and the definition of the condition is just one of many points that are in debate across the global scientific community.”

It was a mindless punt to the global scientific cloud, but it provides the rest of us an opportunity to examine the pedigree of this “developing” field of science. It’s a story that begins, interestingly, in Germany.



Karl Heinrich Ulrichs

The LGBTx Shot Heard Round the World

The first public coming-out in modern history took place on a bright August morning in 1867,

when 42-year-old Karl Heinrich Ulrichs spoke before more than five hundred jurists, including members of the German parliament and at least one Bavarian prince. He spoke of a certain “class of persons” (he called them “*urnings*”) who were suffering persecution solely because “nature has planted in them a sexual nature that is opposite of that which is usual.”

Ulrichs’ objective was the repeal of Paragraph 175 of the German Penal Code, which criminalized sodomy. He was eventually shouted down, but historian Robert Beachy compares him to Martin Luther in that he challenged prevailing beliefs and launched a revolutionary movement. (If you find that a stretch, Ulrichs compared himself to Jesus, interpreting the shouts as “a call to: ‘Crucify, crucify!’”)

Ulrichs, a lawyer and open

homosexual, advocated prolifically for “*urning* emancipation” until his death in 1895. With no supportive data or evidence, he asserted his theories as the initiation of “a scientific discussion based on facts.” But who needed evidence? Until Ulrichs, medical science had explained sodomy in moral terms—as a willful perversion and the product of sexual excess. Beginning with Ulrichs, wrote Beachy, “it became possible now to imagine that certain individuals were attracted innately to their own and *not* the opposite sex.” And so, on little more than persistent raw gumption, Ulrichs prepared the way for an imagined medical understanding of sexuality.

The Invention of Sexology

In 1896, one year after Ulrichs died, Magnus Hirschfeld founded the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee (SHC), widely regarded as the world’s first gay rights organization. Hirschfeld, too, maintained without evidence that sexual orientation was innate, but he posed same-sex attraction as a congenital defect, analogous to a harelip or cleft palate, that should be tolerated and accepted. Like Ulrichs, his primary objective was political change, but his approach added medical “scholarship” to the discussion, as reflected in the SHC’s founding motto, “Through science to justice.”

It was the SHC that hatched the “science” of sexology. A physician and avid nudist, Hirschfeld conducted research, beginning with surveys to determine the size of the homosexual population. This, of course, precipitated debates about the traits and behaviors to be tabulated. Did effeminate mannerisms count? Feelings of attraction? Or only same-sex sexual activity? Beachy doesn’t make clear which criteria won out, but Hirschfeld’s results,

published in 1904, estimated that about 2 percent of German men were exclusively *homosexual*—a new term coined during this era.

With the help of SHC co-founder Max Spohr, a Leipzig-based publisher, the SHC engaged in direct political activism and popular “education” through its “Propaganda Commission.” By 1914, Hirschfeld had mailed nearly 100,000 “enlightenment brochures” to cultural influencers in the press, the legislature, the academy, and the church. He produced journals of sexology and opened a library “to serve the enlightenment.” He expanded the concepts of gender and sexual fluidity, eventually working out a schema of at least 43 million distinct subjective combinations of identity. Somehow, he simultaneously maintained that all of them were congenital, a mammoth conundrum apparently lost on the activists.

Though Hirschfeld did hold a medical degree, his science was little better than Ulrichs’. To both men, if the phenomenon of same-sex attraction could be observed

to occur, then the occurrence itself constituted, *ipso facto*, evidence that the behavior was *natural* and *non-pathological*. For Ulrichs, the

reports the historical details behind all this in his fascinating 2014 chronicle, *Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Identity*.

“[The Germans] are not satisfied simply being pederasts, like the rest of the world. They have to invent homosexuality,” wrote French journalist Octave Mirbeau. “They study pederasty, just as they study epigraphy.” Berlin was “full of buggers from America who bought boys cheap,” wrote lesbian author Djuna Barnes. Weimar Berlin, says Beachy, became a city of “ambient prostitution.”

reasoning went like this: “I feel it. Therefore, it is natural and good.” Hirschfeld simply culled his data from a larger sample and effectively concluded the same thing: “Many people feel it and do it. Therefore, it is natural, good, and biologically determined.”

Obviously, those are paraphrased summations, but Beachy

The Subjective, Self-Affirming Science of Sexology

The only science Beachy reports on that might qualify as empirical is a 1912 experiment conducted by Austrian physiologist Eugen Steinach. Called “distortive experimentation,” it involved transplanting the gonads of rats and guinea pigs—implanting ovaries into males and testicles into females. When each animal developed behaviors and characteristics associated with the opposite sex, Hirschfeld took it as “solid evidence of the biological basis for sexual behavior.” (If TEDx wants an example of misinterpreted science, this would be a good place to start.)

We have no way of knowing if it ever occurred to Hirschfeld that the experiment merely *confirmed* the biological link between sexuality and the sex organs themselves, which actually *are* biologically determined. Even Beachy, a friend of the LGBT movement, betrays a hint of skepticism toward all this new science, noting frankly in his introduction “the ‘feedback loop’ that connected the ‘homosexual



Berlin in 1900

street' and the medical professionals, a circuit of subjective self-avowal and medical study that fashioned a new sexual identity." One of his primary theses, in fact, is that the modern concept of an inborn condition with a corresponding identity was a German "invention" (his term).

Pedophilia Central

The most disturbing aspect of Berlin sexology brings us tragically back, full circle, to the disaster of pedophilia. "Berlin meant boys," wrote Christopher Isherwood in his memoir. As the new "cultural canon" (also Beachy's term) supplanted the old, boys were sexualized in literature and film, while criticisms of the depictions were met with charges of "moral narrowness." As early as 1886, Berlin was such a common destination for voyeuristic sexual tourism that police commissioner Leopold von Meerscheidt-Hüllessem himself gave tours of the city's nightspots. The police department kept a special *Päderastenlist* (list of pederasts), and a 1908 newspaper article wrote about a *Päderastencub* (club of pederasts). And it's not clear that law enforcement prioritized curbing the practice.

"[The Germans] are not satisfied simply being pederasts, like the rest of the world. They have to invent homosexuality," wrote French journalist Octave Mirbeau. "They study pederasty, just as they study epigraphy." Berlin was "full of buggers from America who bought boys cheap," wrote lesbian author Djuna Barnes. Weimar Berlin, says Beachy, became a city of "ambient prostitution."

Returning to Heine's talk, I suppose one could spin all this into a sunny progressive narrative whereby society no longer harbors pedophilia but rather accepts pedophiles to prevent pedophilia. But there's still a disastrous dilemma here for modern sexual

liberals. If sexual orientation is an inborn trait that determines one's identity, pedophiles are "born that way," too. The logic of LGBT demands applies equally well to LGBTP.

Better Alternatives for Men & Boys

With an alternative approach, though, there is a way one can see clear through to a hopeful resolution of these conundrums. It begins by asking a reasonable but unpopular question: *What if sexual orientation is not innate or fixed?*

In 1980, Dr. Joseph Nicolosi (d. 2017) opened a counseling practice in Encino, California, where he soon found himself specializing in helping men who were troubled by their same-sex attractions. A man of facts, Nicolosi came to see that the whole gay narrative was built on lies—the biggest two being that people are born gay and that they cannot change. Once convinced of this, he maintained against fierce opposition that "gay" was a make-believe, inauthentic identity—"an identity that is a simple answer for a complicated, psychological problem."

At the very time when mainstream psychology was capitulating to a sexology untethered from sound science, Nicolosi took a more compassionate, person-centered approach to sexual identity disharmonies. Trained in psychoanalytic theory, he drew instead upon reparative drive theory, which dates back to the early 1900s and finds its grounding in the classic view that healthy human sexuality harmonizes with the design of the human body.

According to this school of thought, same-sex attraction is taken as a cue that *something*, usually some kind of trauma, has caused the homosexual person's sexual identity formation to go

awry. As a result, he has become defensively detached from other men emotionally and is trying to make up for this loss through sexual contact.

LGBT activists vehemently oppose reparative therapy, portraying it as an attempt to "repair" the homosexual. But this is not what it is, says Nicolosi. It is called reparative therapy because the homosexual behavior is understood as a man's attempt to *repair himself*—to get that masculine connection he never got in his formative years. In reparative therapy, the therapeutic relationship itself is an effort to establish a healthy, nonsexual attachment with the male therapist. In reparative therapy, the focus is not on sexual behavior, but on *thoughts and feelings*.

The first step is simply to *inquire: What are you looking for? What's motivating you?* Nicolosi "provided a clear framework for understanding the gaps in . . . development that contribute to the sexualizing of unmet emotional needs later on in life," said Andrew Comiskey, a former client and subsequent founder of Desert Stream Ministries. "He was a well in the desert, if you will, of [sexually 'enlightened'] Southern California."

The activists say that reparative therapy is harmful, but Nicolosi's research actually showed the opposite. As clients seeking change began to understand where their homosexual feelings came from and to address the underlying trauma, they felt better and reported improved well-being in statistically significant numbers.

Although it's crystal clear, now, that sexual orientation is not innate, there's little chance that LGBTx activists will drop their opposition to reparative therapy. But the rest of us can love them in the face of their opposition by getting educated and spreading the word about its restorative healing potential. ☺



Screams, Memes & Obscene Ice Cream

NARAL Pro-Choice America & the Dissolution of a Generation

by Terrell Clemmons



Background:

The National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws (NARAL) was officially born in February 1969 at Chicago's posh Drake Hotel, but its origin traces back a few years earlier to a duo of white, upper-class, New York men—atheist Marxist Lawrence Lader and abortionist (later a pro-life convert) Bernard Nathanson. Lader, the driver and spearhead, had been publishing fabricated "facts" about abortion law and statistics for years, and at great length had persuaded newly minted NOW president Betty Friedan, formerly an adamant opponent of abortion, to adopt abortion as a women's cause. It was Lader who created the slogan, "No woman can call herself free who does not control her own body."

After the *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973 granted the two men their goal, NARAL changed its name to the National Abortion Rights Action League, and then in 2003 dropped the specific reference to abortion and became NARAL Pro-Choice America.

Today NARAL comprises multiple organizations. NARAL Pro-Choice America Foundation

focuses on policy and education; NARAL Pro-Choice America, Inc., is a separate nonprofit; and NARAL Pro-Choice America PAC is a political action committee. All of them zealously guard liberalized abortion law. NARAL also has affiliates in 22 states.

Reason for Surveillance:

Although the word is no longer a part of its name, NARAL is all about abortion, and in a similar vein, its highhanded rhetoric is rife with Orwellian euphemisms. "Reproductive rights" are "fundamental human rights." A woman must have at her disposal "the full range of reproductive healthcare options," including her "right to choose if and when to have children," and to make other "private reproductive-health decisions." Otherwise, she "can never be equal."

During the Supreme Court confirmation hearings under Donald Trump, the rhetoric escalated to borderline hysteria. Pro-life pregnancy centers are filled with "anti-choice extremists [who] will stop at nothing." If Brett Kavanaugh is confirmed, he will

"strip your bodily autonomy and criminalize abortion as fast as he possibly can." "Imagine a country in which women are trapped, in which the government has more control over their bodies than they do." "We will NOT let anti-choice extremists turn back the clock."

You read these raving rants and just want to say, *Really, NARAL? Is this what you have become?* NARAL's most recent tagline says, "Every woman should be able to decide if, when, how, and with whom they start or grow a family." Okay, fine. Nobody in America disagrees with that. It seems NARAL is the one actually living in the past. Or in a web of deception so dense it can no longer see the truth.

Most Illuminating Disclosure:

And so it gets worse. After abortion became something we had to accommodate as undesirable but necessary because of hard cases, it morphed into something casual to #Shout or celebrate. While Judge Brett Kavanaugh's confirmation hearings were underway, NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon partnered with an ice-cream parlor to feature a custom flavor. "What's the Scoop?" read the cutesy little meme advertising "Rocky Roe v. Wade." Yes friends, for \$9.50 a pint, you, too, can help "save Roe."

In Judeo-Christian theology, sin is devastatingly progressive. Idols become cruel masters that demand ever-increasing sacrifices. When Betty Friedan sacrificed her moral integrity to push abortion on behalf of women, she delivered up a generation of children to Molech, and their mothers to their own undoing, in *just this kind* of degenerate trivialization of human life. For the sake of fundamental rights and equality, America would do well to ignore NARAL and choose to abort Roe. ☹

Homes over Playgrounds

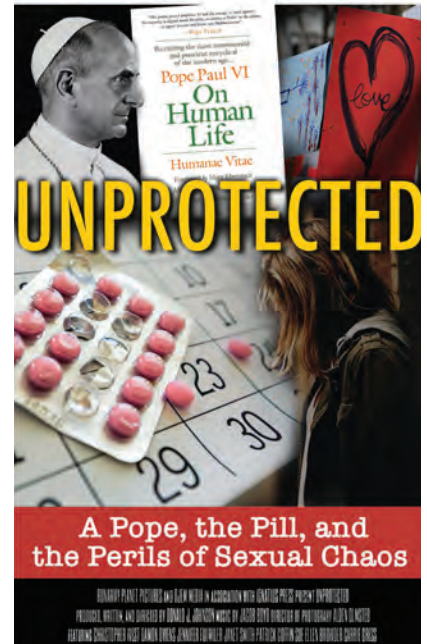
How Feminists' Happiness Pill Made Beasts of Men

As a father, filmmaker Don Johnson saw the massive objectification of women in our culture, along with the alarming data on sexual assault and harassment, even among children, and asked, *How did we get to this place?* In researching the history of the sexual revolution, he found a major answer to that question lying at the intersection of three feminist icons from the last century. He traces their ideological lineages in the opening segment of his new film, *Unprotected: A Pope, the Pill, and the Perils of Sexual Chaos*.

A Feminist Trifecta

In the years following World War II, Betty Friedan, a married mother of three, took issue with the portrayals of happy homemaking women she saw in popular media. The so-called "American Dream" was not making *her* happy, and as best she could tell, it wasn't making other women happy, either. Real satisfaction, she decided, was to be found in a professional career, serenely away from the chaotic, day-in-day-out demands of home and children. About this same time, Helen Gurley Brown, author of *Sex and the Single Girl* and up-and-coming editor of *Cosmopolitan* magazine, was preaching a salvation message of women "having it all" by forgetting all that traditional morality bunk and going for career and casual sex, in whatever combination a girl might prefer.

Friedan saw Brown as an "anti-feminist" and thought *Cosmopolitan* quite "obscene" and "horrible," but Brown's message nevertheless overlapped with hers, and the timing was such that both of their messages converged with the fifty-years-running crusade of Margaret Sanger, whose life-long mission of implementing fertility control had recently culminated in the introduction of the Pill in 1960.



At first, Johnson thought all this was just an interesting coincidence, but then he realized that the Pill was actually an essential component to all three women's respective goals. In their eyes, by

severing the inherent link between having sex and having children, the Pill would free up women to pursue happiness—whether that lay at the office, in casual sex, or anywhere else. Although Friedan was not given to promiscuity as Sanger and Brown were, access to contraceptives became one of the establishing principles of the National Organization for Women (NOW), which she founded in 1966.

Sex Without Babies

From our twenty-first century vantage point, it's hard to grasp how radical a concept contraception was at the time. Up until the 1930s, nearly all churches had held that contraceptives were morally problematic, but it wasn't just the churches sounding cautionary warnings. T. S. Eliot had said that widespread contraceptive use would be "an experiment upon civilization that was bound to fail," while Theodore Roosevelt characterized it as "the one sin for which the penalty is national death." Birth control "made beasts of men," said Mahatma Gandhi, because it enabled men to use women for their own purposes. And even Sigmund Freud (no moral paragon) observed that "the abandonment of the reproductive function is the common feature of all perversions."

Nonetheless, at the behest of this feminist vanguard, women did indeed begin entering the workforce in higher numbers. There's nothing inherently wrong about that, but then some curious trends emerged. Studies began showing significant declines in women's happiness relative to men's. Fifty years into this revolution, the most stressed-out demographics in America, according to the American Psychological Association, were the millennials (the generation following the shift) and women, particularly working mothers.

Might there be a connection? Hold that thought.

Babies Without Sex

Ironically, after sex without babies became a thing, a new trend emerged: babies without sex. Growing up, all Alana Newman knew about her biological father was that he had been donor #81. Clearly, he had no interest in her. Was it strange, she wondered, that she felt a deep interest in him?

She looked for him in her teens to no avail, but later learned from her mother that he was Catholic and of Polish descent. Overnight, she became sensitive to these new identities. She started reading Catholic writings and found herself drawn to Pope John Paul II, the pope at the time. She even started to think of him as her father.

In *The Sexual Revolution: 50 Years Since Humanae Vitae*, another recently released film, Alana takes a look at the post-



Take a moment to ponder how one man predicted (fifty years out!) exactly the trends we are seeing (and suffering) today, right down to forced abortions and #MeToo. **It's a joyless vindication, to be sure, but honestly, could he have been more right?**



sexual-revolution years through the lens of her life story—not out of parental concern like Don, but because of the void in her own life where a parent should be. She covers some of the same social data he covers. Divorces are up, and abortions are up—both of which can be devastating in themselves but both of which can also leave unsettling after-shocks for others. Porn use, furthermore, is nearly pandemic, producing addicts and distorting the relations between the sexes, and college campuses have become veritable minefields for incoming freshmen.

Is it any wonder, then, that women, the more sensitive and vulnerable of the two sexes, are feeling the effects of stress? If free love meant sex without babies, Alana says, the free love movement has led to a generation of people looking for real love. Though drawing lines connecting causes to effects gets complicated when we're interpreting social data, as a woman and a mother of daughters, I think it takes a benighted ideologue to call the sexual revolution a win for women.

Humanae Vitae

But feminist ideologues still exist, and they would probably be dumbfounded to discover that all of the above had been predicted by one of the unlikeliest (to them) of figures—Pope Paul VI. Here's how that came about.

By the 1960s, most churches, but not all, had dropped their criticisms of contraception. The Catholic Church established a commission in 1963

to look at the matter, and Catholics were divided. When word got out that the pope would issue a statement, many people assumed the Church would fall in line with the rest of the world.

And so, when *Humanae Vitae* came out in 1968, reaffirming traditional Catholic teachings on marriage, sexuality, and artificial contraception, it was met with shock and criticism in both secular and Catholic circles. It was “the most derided, mocked, ignored, unread thing that ever existed,” said Patrick Coffin, author of *The Contraception Deception*. People read *Cosmo* instead, Johnson quipped drily.

But *Humanae Vitae* was not just restated doctrine. According to Janet E. Smith, author of *Why Humanae Vitae Is Still Right*, the season of deliberation over the matter was a very agonizing time for Pope Paul VI. He reflected deeply on the meaning of embodied human life (“*humanae vitae*” means “on human life”) and on the created context and natural processes by which human life is transmitted. He also reflected on the long-standing teaching that God loves babies and that the created order was such that sex and babies went together. *Would it be wise to artificially break that connection?* The answer, he concluded, was *no*.

Humanae Vitae opens on these themes, and then goes on to forecast certain consequences that would follow widespread use of contraception in a society:

- **Prediction 1:** There would be an increase in marital infidelity. “[H]ow wide and easy a road would thus be opened to conjugal infidelity.”
- **Prediction 2:** There would be “a general lowering of morality.”
- **Prediction 3:** There would spread an overall devaluing of women in the eyes of men, resulting in men using women as objects for their own pleasure. “[M]an . . . may in the end lose respect for his wife, and no longer caring about her physical and psychological wellbeing, will come to the point of considering her a mere instrument of selfish enjoyment, and no longer his respected and beloved companion.”
- **Prediction 4:** The world would see a rise in coercive government action to control people’s fertility. “Consider also the dangerous weapon that would be placed in the hands of those public authorities. . . . Who will prevent rulers from favoring, and even imposing upon their people, the method of contraception they judge to be the most effective, if they should consider this to be necessary?”

Newman points out an additional warning that touches on complexities relevant to her as a donor-conceived child. “He warned that people would

develop a notion of total dominion over their own bodies, and even the bodies of others. [And with] transgenderism, euthanasia, and reproductive technologies, you can see how right he was.” “The way I was conceived,” she continues, “corrupted my entire understanding of marriage and family and human sexuality—because I was taught that you use people to get what you want, that people are disposable. You can just throw them away and never see them again.”

It would appear, then, that respect for the human body and its natural functions calls us to recognize certain limits on the power we exercise over them. We transgress those limits at our own peril.

Joyless Vindication

Take a moment to ponder how one man predicted (*fifty years out!*) exactly the trends we are seeing (and suffering) today, right down to forced abortions and #MeToo. It’s a joyless vindication, to be sure, but honestly, could he have been more *right*?

Many of the reasons *why* Pope Paul VI was able to predict these outcomes so presciently can be found in the writings of one of his successors, Pope John Paul II, whose *Theology of the Body* grew out of a series of lectures begun in 1979. The upshot of both works and both films (which are well worth seeing) is that, when sex becomes untethered from procreation, it also becomes untethered from relational continuities, from families, and from commitments to anything “weighty” that might place demands on us. In short, sex becomes selfish. And selfish sex hurts people.

It is precisely that natural link between having sex and having children that makes sex so weighty and binding. Rightly entered into, natural sex accords deep respect to the constitution of the woman’s body. It carries with it an implicit statement saying, I’m willing to have a forever connection with you; *I’m willing to have a child with you*.

The feminist trifecta said infertile sex would make women happy. Now women just want their bodies to be respected and not treated like infertile playgrounds. As it turns out, says Newman, “the right order of things was good. We’d have a much better chance at happiness if we’d just go along with gravity—gravity meaning, love lead[ing] to marriage, marriage leading to sex, sex leading to babies, and then babies leading to more love.”

Isn’t it ironic that two Catholic men spoke clearer truth and gave deeper respect to the unique beauty and dynamics of the female body than the feminists did? It’s ironic, yes, but not surprising. An accurate worldview gives one just that kind of vision. ☉

“I’m Just the Messenger”

Healthcare Professionals, Unexpected Test Results & Moral Distress

“What the parents do with the information is not for the sonographer to determine.”¹ So stated Jodie Long, CEO of the Australasian Sonographers Association, when questioned whether sonographers should provide information about the baby’s sex when conducting a prenatal ultrasound, even if they know the parents plan to abort the baby if it is the undesired sex. Long answered affirmatively, saying the sonographer should provide the information in a neutral manner if asked.

Long had the same advice about sonograms that show any kind of fetal abnormality. If the sonographer has some level of confidence in what the sonogram reveals, he or she must tell the parents, but do so in a neutral manner. Then the parents, not the sonographer, “will decide what to do with that information,” she said.

The reason for maintaining a neutral stance when communicating test results to patients is to promote patient autonomy. But is it really possible to both maintain professional neutrality and promote patient autonomy in the context of disclosing unwelcome information?

It turns out that the expectation of neutrality as an aid to patient autonomy is a fiction. Communication is an essential element of giving information to patients, and it can be shaped by tone of voice, facial expression,

eye contact, and word choice. Even while attempting to remain neutral, a sonographer—or nurse or doctor—may subconsciously or unwittingly telegraph his or her views about terminating a pregnancy because the baby is the “wrong” sex, for instance, or because the child has Down syndrome.

Non-directive Counseling

An oft-repeated guideline for genetic counseling (and other counseling scenarios) is to make it “non-directive.” This model assumes that counselors will provide medical and physiological information in a neutral manner, helping patients exercise their autonomy, and then remain neutral about the patient’s decision. But even though it claims to be neutral, the non-directive model is actually value-laden, because making individual autonomy the primary objective is itself a value, one that ranks “freedom of choice over protection from risk.”²

Moreover, despite the claims of neutrality, and professional allegiance to non-directive counseling, what actually happens in a clinic office is often at odds with those standards. Whether coming from a sonographer, a doctor, or a geneticist, the choice of words can have a powerful influence on the patient’s decision. For example, one study showed that when doctors asked, “Would you like CPR if your



loved one's heart stops?", most family members responded "yes." But when the question was framed in terms of "allowing a natural death," support for CPR decreased dramatically.³

"Directive" Counseling

On the one hand, sonographers must avoid influencing parents about their decision to abort a healthy child because of the baby's sex, while on the other hand, physicians and other healthcare professionals feel free to assume that parents will want to "terminate the pregnancy" if the child has Down syndrome or another genetic anomaly.

Many friends have related their own prenatal experiences to me. One typical encounter occurs when a wife comes to a prenatal appointment with her husband: she will be shepherded into a private room without him and asked questions like, "Is your husband forcing you to continue this pregnancy?" and "Is he preventing you from getting prenatal testing?"

In one study, parents of children with Down syndrome and other disabilities volunteered that their experiences with physicians were negative, by a 2.5-to-1 margin.⁴

These parents complained that the doctors lacked compassion, perpetuated negative stereotypes about people with Down syndrome, and pressured them to have prenatal testing. This scenario plays out again and again, regardless of the patient's level of education or moral beliefs.

Writer Jillian Benfield recounted on her blog how her doctor delivered the news that her baby would have Down syndrome. In an imaginary letter to her doctor, she wrote:

When I asked you what Down syndrome meant for our child's life, you said this: "At worst he will never be able to feed himself. At best he will mop the floors of a fast food restaurant some day."

That was it. The entire talk about his actual diagnosis was made up of arbitrary limitations, deemed by you.⁵

A negative initial encounter can sour the physician-patient relationship, and undermine the trust that is essential to good patient care.

Eroding Trust

Some doctors are aware that physician-patient trust is eroding, which can compound the difficulty of communicating an unwelcome diagnosis. One

physician lamented that the burdens of fulfilling government-imposed mandates often interfere with providing good care. For instance, requirements to document "meaningful use" and to use electronic health records (EHRs) often force a doctor to pay more attention to the computer screen than to the patient:

Patients take this lack of eye-to-eye contact as a sign that we are more interested in their digital record than [in] them. They feel we are no longer listening to them. They don't realize that we don't want to be doing this. It has been imposed on us from on high, and we will be penalized if we don't.⁶

External pressures that interfere with patient care and trusting relationships take their toll on both patient and physician. In addition to the problem of eroding trust, scholars are also drawing attention to the growing problem of moral distress.

Moral Distress

Moral distress was first identified in the nursing literature back in 1984 by Andrew Jameton, who described it as occurring when a nurse "knows the right thing to do, but institutional constraints make it nearly impossible to pursue the right course of action."⁷ The term has subsequently been broadened to apply to other health professionals, and it can include moral conflict, dilemma, or uncertainty.⁸

The shining quality that Christian doctors and nurses can offer patients and their families is hope.

Paint a picture of an alternative future. What if Jillian Benfield's physician, instead of describing her child as a future floor-mopper, had said, "This diagnosis only tells us what chromosomal problem your baby has; it tells us nothing about who he will become."

Healthcare professionals make dozens of complex decisions throughout the day, some of which can affect the life or death of the patient. Doctors and nurses who know what is the right thing to do, but are prohibited by institutional, legal, or other factors from doing it, can experience moral distress.⁹ Such distress can cause negative physical, psychological, and emotional responses, and can even trigger burnout and the abandonment of one's profession.

What if, for instance, institutional rules prohibit a physician from suggesting a positive outcome for parents of a baby with Down syndrome? Or from urging parents not to rush into irreversible surgery and hormone treatments for their gender-confused child? Mandating "neutrality" may satisfy institutional imperatives, but it may also undermine the very nature of medical professionalism. Good medicine includes caring for people when they are at their most vulnerable, whether in the womb or in a hospital gown. Some doctors have had enough, and are walking away from their profession.

For Those Who Don't Quit: Hope

The shining quality that Christian doctors and nurses can offer patients and their families is *hope*. Paint a picture of an alternative future. What if Jillian Benfield's physician, instead of describing her son as a future floor-mopper, had said, "The test indicates that your child has Trisomy 21, or Down syndrome. I know that this is disappointing news for you, and



that it may take some time to absorb. Remember, this diagnosis only tells us what chromosomal problem your baby has; it tells us nothing about who he will become. Would you be willing for me to share some options about your baby's future?"

Rather than inflicting moral distress on both patient and physician, genuine care, compassion, and hope-filled honesty can build a trusting relationship. The "hands off" pretense of neutrality places the entire burden on the patient. But the compassionate communication of difficult news signals a shared burden, a willingness to walk alongside the patient, helping him or her come to terms with the unexpected. Communicating hope benefits both the patient and the professional.

Empathic health professionals seem to persist longer in their profession.¹⁰ "I'm just the messenger" undermines that desirable quality. Requiring health professionals to suppress moral values and genuine concern is unhealthy for them, for their patients, and for society. ☺

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Suffering Elderly

Putting Heart & Soul in End-of-Life Care

In April 2002, the Netherlands became the first country in the world to legalize assisted death—what we term “euthanasia” and also assisted suicide—under a very specific set of conditions: unbearable pain, incurable illness, and a request made in the patient’s “full consciousness.”¹ Later that year, Belgium followed suit.

In both countries, instances of assisted death have gone up markedly each year. In Belgium, 235 people were killed in 2003. In 2013, there were 1,807 cases, representing an almost eight-fold increase.² In the year 2016–2017, there were a startling 2,309 cases reported.³

The Belgian and Dutch laws are similar in that both allow doctors who carry out euthanasia and assisted suicides to self-report, which seems to leave the door wide open for abuse—i.e., cases of ques-

tionable legality may go unreported. Hence, it is impossible to know how many people really die via euthanasia or assisted suicide each year. One independent study of assisted deaths in the Netherlands, for example, indicated that there were 7,254 such deaths there in 2015, while the country’s official report showed only 5,561 deaths—a discrepancy of 1,693.⁴

Belgium also became the first—and so far, mercifully, only—country to allow the assisted death of a minor. To date, three adolescents have died by this method. Both the Netherlands and Belgium (and many other countries where euthana-

sia is legal, including Canada) have been wrestling with outcries at the growing numbers.

Two Key Factors

What’s going on here? Why are so many people now choosing to end their own lives? There are a couple of relevant, albeit depressing, factors to consider.

First, within these rising numbers is an increase in the number of people dying in nursing homes. While the age of most of those whose death is “assisted” is still over 80, the percentage of younger people dying this way is steadily increasing. For more and more of the elderly, dying swiftly, via a method they can “control,” seems better than a long, protracted death in an impersonal setting, such as a nursing home or hospital. Overall, old people are lingering longer, but not as well, increasingly spending their final days in institutions instead of in their own homes with their own families. In the U.S. for instance, according to some estimates, only about 20 percent of people die at home; another 20 percent die in nursing homes, and 60 percent die in acute care hospitals.⁵ The “birth dearth” in most developed nations also means that there are fewer and fewer young people to care for the elderly.

The second factor that plays into these decisions is the modern world’s general abhorrence of suffering and loss of autonomy. Key in the discussion of assisted death in Belgium is the term “polypathology”—a set of conditions or illnesses (blindness, deafness, incontinence, disability) that combine to make life “unbearable” for an individual. In other words, a patient doesn’t actually have



to be dying to be considered a good candidate for assisted death. Suffering is tacitly regarded as taboo, something to avoid at all costs—even the cost of death—rather than as a part of the human condition, which the grace of God gives us the strength to endure.

Disservice Done

In centuries past, there were widely recognized limits on what medicine could do for the feeble and elderly: the technology capable of prolonging life for years via medication and mechanical means didn't yet exist. Moreover, most people died at home, in the arms of their loved ones. Today, we are terrified of suffering because we so rarely see it. Instead of caring for the suffering in our own homes, we send them to nursing homes to be cared for. We don't carefully feed grandma, bathe her, tenderly read the Word to her, or sing hymns to her when she is in pain. Instead, we send her away, and leave it to professionals to see that she dies comfortably.

No wonder grandmas the world over are beginning to take matters into their own hands. Because we don't see suffering in our homes and families,

Christ has told us we will suffer: “In this world, you will have trouble,” he assures us (John 16:33). Yet **suffering can be good for the soul, both the soul of the one suffering and the soul of the one caring.** It may also sometimes involve great pain, both emotional and physical. But **by seeking death as a means to end suffering sooner, we deny both ourselves and others the opportunity to become more Christ-like.**



and have not had to devise ways of coping with it, we can't fathom how anyone whose life has been blighted by illness or disability could possibly wish to remain alive. We don't understand how even a suffering individual, someone who has lost autonomy and depends upon others for daily care, may impart great wisdom to a child, or great comfort to an adult.

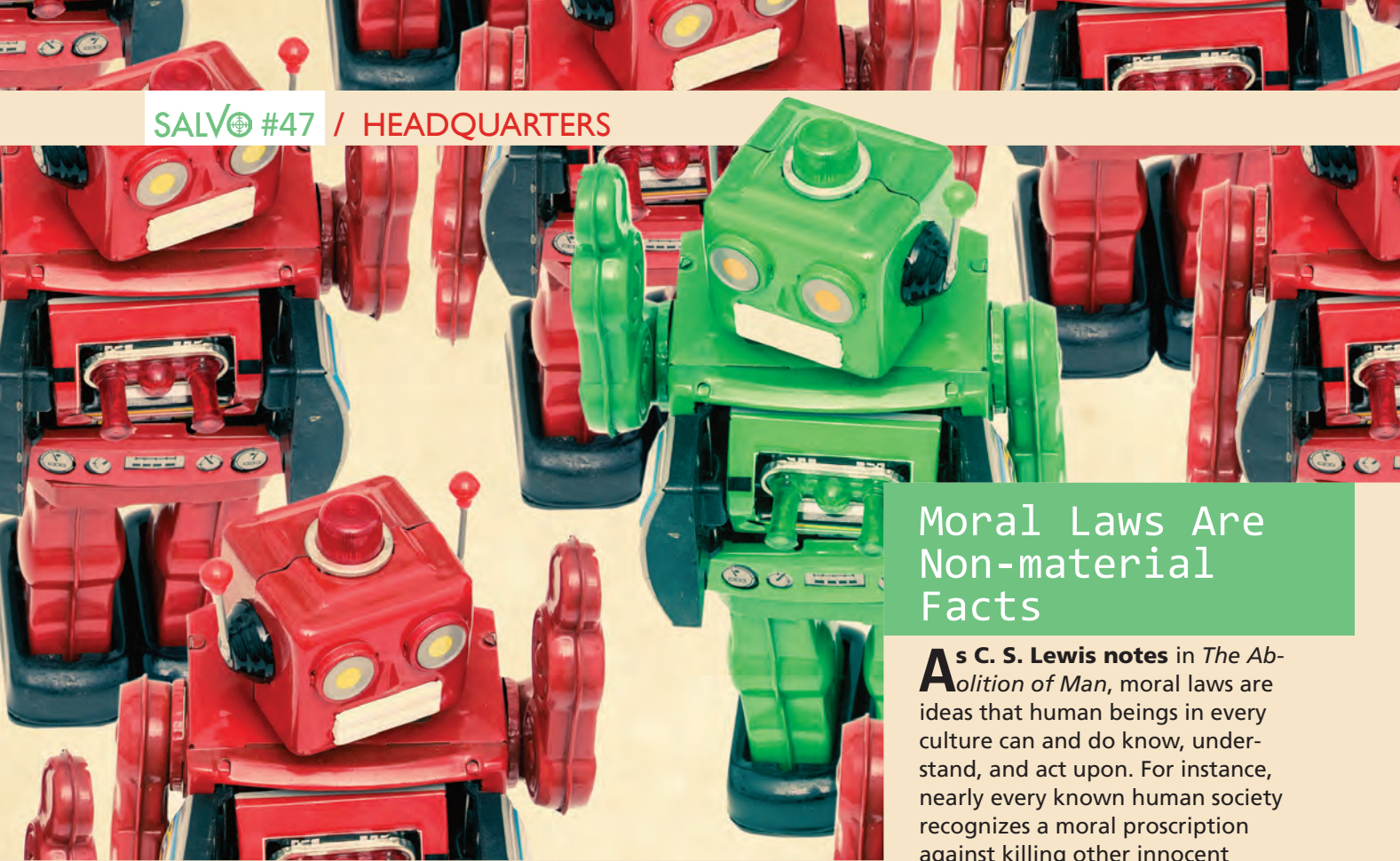
In turning death out of the home and away from the family, we do both ourselves and our loved ones a great disservice. Part of each individual's divine call is to accept the station he or she has been given, even when that station requires the humility to accept care from others.

Christ has told us we will suffer: “In this world, you will have trouble,” he assures us (John 16:33). Yet suffering can be good for the soul, both the soul of the one suffering and the soul of the one caring. It may also sometimes involve great pain, both emotional and physical. But by seeking death as a means to end suffering sooner, we deny both ourselves and others the opportunity to become more Christ-like.

And suffering does not have the final word. “But take heart!” Christ continued. “For I have overcome the world.” ☪

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Moral Laws Are Non-material Facts

As C. S. Lewis notes in *The Abolition of Man*, moral laws are ideas that human beings in every culture can and do know, understand, and act upon. For instance, nearly every known human society recognizes a moral proscription against killing other innocent human beings. Such a moral law stems from a “moral value,” in this case the understanding that human life has intrinsic value. We commonly recognize this value and so try to deter or destroy external threats to human life.

Moral laws, and the moral values underlying them, are non-material ideas. That is, they are not physical materials or forces. They are uniquely found among human beings with minds. As Thomas Nagel writes in *Mind and Cosmos*, “Conscious subjects and their mental lives are inescapable components of reality not describable by the physical sciences.” Moral ideas cannot be described or quantified in material terms.

Nevertheless, we can put the idea of moral laws into a concrete form by imagining *what technology is required* to enable a being to follow such laws. When moral laws are understood in technological terms, the concept of a moral lawgiver makes perfect sense. To see how, let us consider the “morality” of robots.

Moral Law Argument 2.0

Objective Evidence for God

by Richard W. Stevens

If God exists, there should be some confirming evidence we can perceive. Cosmological and design arguments for God rest upon physical realities. But the moral law argument for God’s existence uses philosophy and intuition about human thoughts and relationships—nothing we can demonstrate in physical form.

Isaac Asimov’s famous Three Laws of Robotics and our knowledge of computers can help us see that the ability to evaluate situations and distinguish right from wrong requires information and programming from an outside source. Moral laws must have an outside intelligent source, and a good candidate for that source is God.

Consider the standard moral law argument for the existence of God in its simplest three-element form:

Premise 1 >>> Every law has a lawgiver.

Premise 2 >>> There is a moral law.

Conclusion >>> Therefore, there is a moral lawgiver.

(Of course, the term “law” here refers to rules of human behavior, not to physical laws like gravity.) The logic is valid, but it rests upon our intuitions about laws as guides to thinking and behavior. Modern knowledge about “thinking machines” can illustrate this.



Asimov's Robot Morality

The late Isaac Asimov's science fiction classic *I, Robot* contains a story about robots built to employ sophisticated intelligence as they work serving humans. The designers of the robots installed the Three Laws of Robotics into their electronic brains:

1. A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.
2. A robot must obey orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.
3. A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law.

Because the Three Laws of Robotics define what is "right" and "wrong" robotic behavior, they are moral laws. They will guide the robots in planning and carrying out actions in the future. Underlying the Laws are the moral values they are designed to protect, in a specific order of precedence: human life preeminently, then human liberty and authority over the robot, and finally the robot's own worth.

The Three Laws themselves could not be mechanical devices. Therefore, they must be *software*.

In 1942, when Asimov first formulated the Laws, and into the 1950s when they became well-known through the *I, Robot* stories, the notion of there being intelligent machines that required behavioral rules seemed mysterious and fantastic. Today, humans

daily interact with and operate computers and other machines that contain intelligence. So we understand the distinction between *hardware*, the physical equipment manufactured using material elements and directed forces, and *software*, the information and sets of instructions stored in the hardware to direct its operations and enable it to perform calculations.

We also easily grasp *how* the rules of operation exist in physical devices like robots and computers: they are installed in the devices by programmers who design and write software specifically for them. In Asimov's stories, the Three Laws are software program elements installed by the robots' designers.

McCauley writes that programming moral laws into robots would entail the "encoding of the abstract concepts implied in the laws within the huge space of possible environments," which he considers an "insurmountable" task.

A Practical Impossibility

Writing software to implement Asimov's Laws in real, actual robots, however, would be extremely difficult, if possible at all. That is because the software written for the robots (the hardware) would have to enable them to:

- > acquire and process sensory data;
- > identify and recognize the significance of that data;
- > compare the data with previously stored information about situations and their likely future consequences;
- > prepare possible action plans;
- > consider the potential results of each plan;
- > estimate how they would react to unexpected changes in conditions and new input;
- > choose the plan most likely to accord with their directives and yield the optimal result; and
- > carry out the chosen plan.

Computer scientist Lee McCauley once polled professors working in artificial intelligence (AI) on the feasibility of writing software that would give Asimov's Laws any real life in machines. In his 2007 article, "AI Armageddon and the Three Laws of Robotics," he reported the results: they said that writing such software would border on the impossible. A fatal problem occurs in the very wording of Asimov's laws, which, while humanly comprehensible, is too abstract and ambiguous to guide a robotic "mind." There are no single, clear definitions of such terms as "come to harm," "inaction," "orders," "protect existence," and "conflict with other laws" that a robot could neatly apply to all situations.

McCauley writes that programming moral laws into robots would entail the "encoding of the abstract concepts implied in the laws within the huge space of possible environments," which he considers an "insurmountable" task. In Asimov's fiction, it is assumed that the robots not only fully understand the Laws and how to apply them in any context, but also that they know everything the lawgiver (programmer)

knows about the relevant universe of information and possibilities. But in real life this is hardly the case, says McCauley. Since “a word encountered by a robot as part of a [human’s] command . . . may have a different meaning in different contexts,” he writes,

a robot must use some internal judgment in order to disambiguate the term and then determine to what extent the Three Laws apply. As anyone [who] has studied natural language understanding could tell you, this is by no means a trivial task in the general case. The major underlying assumption is that the robot has an understanding of the universe from the perspective of the human giving the command. Such an assumption is barely justifiable between two humans, much less a human and a robot.

Asimov’s Laws seem quite basic, almost simple, to humans who already work daily under rules, principles, and guidelines. But installing such basic moral laws into even the most “intelligent” computers or robots presents an overwhelming challenge to the smartest human designers using all available methods. If the task overwhelms human designers, it hardly seems possible that purposeless, undirected material forces such as operate in the context of Darwinian evolution could achieve it.

Morality Is Software

If we think of the human body as biological “hardware,” we can see right away that without a brain directing and interacting with them, the hardware components, such as organs, limbs, eyes and ears, and so forth, can do nothing. With a brain connected to them, these components *can* do things—but *only* if the brain has been programmed with software enabling it to direct operations. An inert lump of “gray matter” would be useless. Hence, if the brain is the “computer” needed to operate a biological body, that computer must contain software—stored information and a set of instructions for operating the hardware. Otherwise, the hardware will either malfunction or not work at all.

There is no known physical way for such operating software to come into existence by purposeless, undirected means. There is no logical way that undirected and purposeless materials and forces can produce software that *does* have a purpose and *does* direct hardware to achieve future goals. Nowadays, we know that software is needed to decode and process information, to perform calculations, and to direct hardware. And we know that software can only be produced by intelligent designers.

The Three Laws of Robotics, which are moral laws governing the robots’ behavior, are software elements that had to be programmed and installed into the robots’ hardware. The giver of the Laws is an intelligent programmer.

For human beings, the analogy applies directly. Human biological hardware—i.e., the human body—contains no moral laws and harbors no moral values. Ideas about morals and values reside in the human mind. We can assume that the mind resides in the human brain. But it is the mind that contains procedures for receiving data, processing it,

developing plans, and directing further thinking and action. Those procedures are software elements. Moral values and moral laws exist as data and procedures—that is, as software.

Software Needs a Giver

Understanding the necessity of software makes it easy to understand moral laws as necessarily springing from an intelligent designer. Morality software must be installed into any thinking system from an external source—there must be a “giver” of that software.

With this understanding, we can explain the conclusion of the moral law argument as follows: Moral laws and their underlying moral values exist as abstract ideas until they are written into software. To make or modify any software requires a programmer, i.e., an external intelligence that designs and installs the software to operate in the future (given whatever inputs and circumstances occur). Thus, a moral law for a human being, just as for a robot, must come from the “giver” of the software that implements the moral values and moral laws.

The Process of Preference

Where traditionally the moral law argument rested only upon abstract philosophy, it is now reinforced with the concrete reality of software. Consider Dr. Ravi Zacharias’s philosophical explanation of the moral law argument in a 2011 speech to the C. S. Lewis Institute:

I have often been asked the question on the problem of Evil:

>>>



>>>

How can a Good God allow such suffering and Evil in this world? And when we talk about Evil, we assume Good. When we talk about Good, we assume a Moral Law. When we talk about a Moral Law, we assume that there is a Moral Law Giver. You say, why do you have to assume that? . . . Because every time the problem of Evil is actually raised, it is raised either by a person or about a person, which means it attributes intrinsic worth to personhood. The intrinsic value of personhood is indispensable to the validity of the question, and naturalism cannot give you that bequest.

A crucial element of Dr. Zacharias's argument points to the concepts of Good and Evil as referring to persons and things that are considered to have *value*. When we *give something value*, we are preferring one state of facts (State B) over a different state of facts (State A). So, when we prefer State B over State A, we are comparing data stored in our minds about the two states and applying thinking procedures to generate a resulting conclusion. The stored data and the programming of those procedures can only exist as software.

How do we know that "giving value" is a software function? When we evaluate State A, for example, we compare that state of facts to other possible states or to remembered states, using stored information about the states of facts and stored criteria for evaluation. We do the same for State B. Next, to compare State A to

State B, we use a computation procedure (an algorithm) that produces a result. That result is our evaluation.

All of the foregoing steps involve stored data and stored procedures. Both of these categories are *information*. For any robot or digital computer, such information is stored in coded form. When needed, the information is fetched from storage and decoded for computation.

Feeding the computation process is the code system, with its matching encoding and decoding features. Code system features exist in computers only after an intelligent programmer has created and installed them. Without the symbolic code and its encoder and decoder mechanisms, the information could not be encoded, stored, or decoded; i.e., the foundational elements needed for computation would not exist. At every stage of the process of "giving value" there is software: data and procedures.

Moral laws are software. Therefore, moral laws come from an external intelligent source, which we call the moral lawgiver. These objective truths about software bolster the moral law argument in a way that was unavailable to thinkers in previous eras.

A Bolstered Argument

Let's apply all of these facts to the robot example. Operating under Asimov's Three Laws, a robot must: observe the current state of facts (State A), calculate the values of other possible states, develop and analyze its own possible next actions, compare the imagined future results of the possible actions with each other, and choose one action. All of these computations take place in software. Since the Three Laws define robot morality, it is clear that robot morality resides in software.

Human morality must reside in software as well. Dr. Zacharias's concise formulation would gain by the addition of this paragraph describing the reality of software:

There is no physical hardware that can perform any of the evaluation computations entailed in judging good and evil without accessing stored data and executing stored procedures. Human moral analysis takes place by using data and procedures, that is, by using software. Software can only be made by a higher intelligence external to the hardware. Naturalism offers no method by which morality could be programmed into human beings. The making of moral law software requires a designer external to the material world. God is the most likely candidate to be that designer.

Moral laws are software. Therefore, moral laws come from an external intelligent source, which we call the moral lawgiver. These objective truths about software bolster the moral law argument in a way that was unavailable to thinkers in previous eras. Like the other theistic arguments grounded in observable reality, the moral law argument finds support in external evidence now widely understandable in the twenty-first century. ☺

Do You Like Me?

The Contradictory Worlds of Today's Teen Girls

by Heather Zeiger

An estimated three million young girls per year are subjected to a practice called female genital mutilation (FGM).¹ It involves removing, altering, or injuring female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is a means of social control and is often done to prevent a woman from having any sensations during sex. In certain parts of northern Africa, if a young woman does not have it done as a child, she will have to undergo the procedure before marriage or risk being rejected by her future husband.

The United Nations has condemned the practice both because

it is a human rights violation that denies women their inherent dignity and because it poses several physical risks. The UN has launched efforts to eradicate FGM, and people worldwide have

condemned the practice.²

In the past five years in the United States, gynecologists have reported an 80 percent increase in the number of requests for cosmetic vaginal surgery among girls under 18 years old. Researchers attribute this trend to the widespread viewing of pornography, thanks in part to its easy accessibility on mobile devices. Cosmetic vaginal surgery, or labiaplasty, can result in the loss of sexual sensation, numbness,

pain, and permanent scarring. Yet, according to one researcher, girls are willing to risk losing their ability to enjoy sex if it means they will not be rejected by boys whose tastes are based on what they see in pornography.³

In both FGM and labiaplasty, young girls are pressured by cultural forces to have themselves surgically altered so that they will be more sexually desirable to men. But attitudes toward the two kinds of



Social media, texting, and messaging allow teen girls to be more connected than ever. Yet girls today report higher incidences of loneliness, isolation, anxiety, and depression than did pre-smartphone generations.

While girls may indeed be more connected than ever, their connections are about performance, recognition, obtaining likes, and backstabbing.

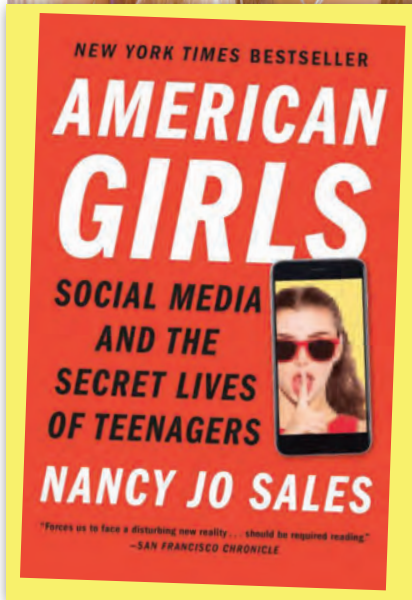
procedure are markedly different. In the U.S., for instance, opponents of FGM will vociferously stand up for the dignity of young girls half a world away, some of whom willingly undergo FGM, yet will say nothing about the dignity of young American girls who undergo labiaplasty purely to appease the porn-based aesthetics of boys.

Contradictory Worlds

It is as though teen girls today lived in two contradictory worlds.

In one world, they have more opportunities than women of previous generations ever had. They can pursue higher education in almost any field and work in almost any occupation. They can ascend to the upper tiers of academia, the corporate world, government, medicine, and the arts. They can become Supreme Court justices or launch their own start-ups. They can run the Boston Marathon or run for public office.

But in the other world, girls willingly sexualize themselves to get likes and follow-



ers on Instagram. They aspire to become internet-famous, with the Kardashians serving as the exemplars of success. Boys don't ask them on dates; they ask them for "nudes" (nude pictures) instead. They are called "prudes" if they don't participate in the game and "sluts" if they do. Gifts and abilities are secondary to breasts and curves, because in this image-driven world, it's what is on the outside that counts.

As we will see, these two disparate worlds did not spring up overnight. While one values women's gifts and abilities, the other is a result of a secular worldview whose consequences are being played out on social media and the internet.

The Medium Is the Model

Nancy Jo Sales, in her 2016 book *American Girls: Social Media and the Secret Lives of Teenagers*, reveals a darker side to the social media world that the Kardashians and many teens inhabit. In this world, validation in the form of "likes" and "followers" is the currency, and admiration and fame are the rewards. Girls will post numerous pictures of themselves in order to create a personal brand. But, writes Sales, always being on display comes at a price:

The constant seeking of likes and attention on social media seems for many girls to feel like being a contestant in a never-ending beauty pageant in which they're forever performing to please the



Where did these standards come from? Neil Postman in his 1982 book, *The Disappearance of Childhood*, describes the "adultified" child, a type that is particularly evident in the depictions of young girls on television and in magazines.

judges—judges who have become more and more exacting.⁴

Teen girls today are not expected merely to look nice or pretty. They must be “flawless,” according to the standard established by cosmetic companies and Hollywood. It is no longer enough to Photoshop one’s images. Now girls feel pressured to Photoshop themselves.

Where did these standards come from? Neil Postman in his 1982 book, *The Disappearance of Childhood*, describes the “adultified” child, a type that is particularly evident in the depictions of young girls on television and in magazines. The adult world, at one time, was kept separate from the child’s world because it was generally acknowledged that some things should be reserved for adults. Television, says Postman, ushered in the disappearance of childhood by making the things of the adult world, like sex and violence, readily accessible to children.⁵

But the problem is deeper than children being exposed to material that is not age-appropriate. Television, which was the predominant

visual medium in 1982, served as a model for all interactions off-screen. Postman says that Americans no longer talked to each other; they entertained each other instead:

They do not exchange ideas; they exchange images. They do not argue with propositions; they argue with good looks, celebrities and commercials. For the message of television as metaphor is not only that all the world is a stage but that the stage is located in Las Vegas, Nevada.⁶

Today, the internet has supplanted television as the primary visual medium. The easy accessibility of pornography on the internet has further eroded the distinction between adulthood and childhood, and porn now serves as the model for interactions between teen boys and girls. Certainly, there is nothing new about girls wanting to attract boys, but the expectation that they must look and act like porn stars in order to do so is new.

Sales interviewed dozens of teenage girls for her book, from various regions across the U.S. and from different socio-economic backgrounds. She quotes one sixteen-year-old girl’s comment about the online culture that exemplifies Postman’s point: “It’s depressing because guys have come to recognize women

While in reality interactions like these constitute harassment and blackmail, they are instead considered simply “part of the dating ritual” by those who see sexting as another form of sexual liberation.



from images on the Internet. Guys look at [pictures of girls on social media] as like a different kind of porn, almost. It’s self-generated porn.”⁷

Sexting & Child Pornography

If the internet is the new model for how we interact with each other, then we need to consider how women are portrayed on it. A recent survey showed that 35 percent of all downloads were of pornography, and one of the largest pornography websites reported that people watch more than 4.6 billion hours of porn in a single year.⁸ The majority of this content shows violence or aggression towards women, and the most popular role for porn actresses to play is that of an underage girl.

Teens often share provocative or sexually explicit pictures or videos of themselves with each other, a practice called sexting. Some boys will “ask a girl out” by saying she is hot and asking for “nudes.” Sometimes a boy will send a girl a picture of his penis and then ask her for nudes. This brings a dark context to Postman’s idea of exchanging images rather than ideas.





Sometimes a girl will send a boy a provocative picture to see if he's interested in her, or she'll post a suggestive selfie on Instagram to see who likes it. Some boys don't want to look at explicit images of their peers and would like to have a healthy relationship with a girl. But in some circles, to admit this is to risk being bullied and ostracized by other guys or by the shunned girl. A boy's masculinity may be called into question

if he does not participate in the game.

Strangely, while our laws penalize people who create, distribute, or purchase child pornography, many parents and school officials turn a blind eye to underage girls sending nude or sexually explicit pictures to boys. And boys who post or send around pictures of girls are not penalized for distributing child pornography. At most they are reprimanded for not obtaining consent from the girl.

There is a certain brand of feminism that considers these interactions empowering, but it is a feminism that contradicts itself. On the one hand, girls Sales interviewed said they were over-sexualized and objectified by a sexist culture, but on the other hand, when they

Sexting is heavily skewed toward girls sending salacious images to boys. According to the girls Sales interviewed, many feel pressured into sending such pictures to a guy because they're afraid that if they don't, the guy will spread sexually explicit rumors about them. Some girls fear that a guy will post a picture of her that he found. Oftentimes after a breakup, a guy will post sexually explicit pictures of his ex-girlfriend online as revenge.

While in reality interactions like these constitute harassment and blackmail, they are instead considered simply "part of the dating ritual" by those who see sexting as another form of sexual liberation.

To be clear, boys are not always the instigators in these interactions.



"self-sexualize," they are considered feminist because they are engaging in self-expression.⁹ Nancy Pearcey characterizes this new type of feminism as one in which girls learn to disengage their emotions from their bodies. The less they care, the more empowered they are, at least in theory.¹⁰

As Pearcey explains it, this theory stems from a secular worldview that splits the person in two, into an "upper story" and a "lower story." Materialism (the belief that matter is all there is) resides in the lower story, and Gnosticism (the belief that the mind is all that matters) in the upper story. This worldview denigrates both body and mind, seeing the former as nothing more than a conduit for physical pleasure and reducing the latter to emotional impulses.¹¹ Right and wrong are based on what feels good. If rejection feels bad and validation feels good, then why not employ one's body, which is just flesh, bones, and hormones, to achieve validation?

Depressed, Alone & Always Connected

Social media, texting, and messaging allow teen girls to be more connected than ever. Yet girls today report higher incidences of loneliness, isolation, anxiety, and depression than did pre-smartphone generations.

The first smartphone, the Apple iPhone, launched on June 29, 2007, and soon thereafter, mobile

Teen girls' declining mental health is a symptom of a larger problem whose roots lie in the fundamental assumptions of the current culture. Contrary to the two-story theory of feminism, women (and men) are integral beings, whose bodies and minds are not severable from their whole being.

versions of social media sites were developed: Instagram was launched in 2010 and Snapchat in 2011. Since 2010, according to the CDC, suicide attempts and cases of depression among teenagers, girls especially, increased markedly.¹² The American Psychological Association does not find this timing coincidental; it links the rise in depression to the increase in social media use among teen girls.¹³

In 2017, the U.K.'s Royal Society for Public Health published the results of a "Status of Mind" survey of 1,500 young people between the ages of 14 and 24. According to the survey, Instagram and Snapchat ranked as the worst platforms for teen mental health and wellbeing, but all of the social media platforms received negative marks for sleep quality, bullying, body image, and FOMO (fear of missing out). All but YouTube were associated with increases in depression and anxiety.¹⁴

So while girls may indeed be more connected than ever, their connections are about performance, recognition, obtaining likes, and backstabbing. Their social media communities are built on competition for validation, particularly sexual validation, and commodification of the body.

Teen girls' declining mental health is a symptom of a larger problem whose roots lie in the fundamental assumptions of the current culture. Contrary to the two-story theory of feminism, women (and men) are integral beings, whose bodies and minds are not severable from their whole being. We are also social beings who crave healthy interactions with others. And because we are whole beings, what we do virtually affects who we are in real life.

Quest for Control

In her book *Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age*, MIT Professor Sherry Turkle

reports that hyper-connected teens are unable to make eye contact when they are face-to-face with a person and that they usually prefer texting because they are unable to have a real-life conversation.¹⁵ Teens whose primary social interactions are online tend to see people as a means to an end and seldom exhibit empathy, either online or in person. One teacher Turkle interviewed said it was as though everyone in her hyper-connected middle-school class had Asperger's syndrome.¹⁶

Texting and messaging allow teens to control their relationships. Many teens will intentionally ignore someone for a while in an effort to manipulate the other person's feelings, or they will wait to answer a text so they do not seem too desperate. Teens analyze the nuances of exactly how, when, and where to respond to a message in hopes of crafting exactly the right response. Many prefer being able to edit a message before sending it, and they want to have "a record of what was said" just in case a controversy should arise later. Their social interactions can sometimes look more like power plays than friendships.

With social interactions that are predicated on manipulation and control, it is no wonder that anxiety, self-harm, and depression

are on the rise, especially among teenage girls. Even girls whose interactions are not to this extreme report having "trust issues," which is understandable considering that anything they say can be used against them.

Ironically, teens want increasing control over their conversations and their online image, but this comes at the cost of completely losing control over their ability to live without their phones. They obsessively check their phones for fear that they have not responded to something at the right time, or to make sure no one has said anything about them.

Today's girls are told that they are living at a time when women have more freedoms and more rights than ever before. At the same time, they are losing their childhoods, being expected to start looking sexually attractive at younger and younger ages. Technology reflects the things a culture values, and the internet is no exception. Our culture has done away with standards for age-appropriate materials, sexual mores, and treating people with respect for their inherent dignity. But these very things provide protective boundaries that allow people to grow, flourish, and form healthy relationships rather than vying for power in a no-holds-barred world. ☉

Notes

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THE GAME
EVERYONE
IS TALKING
ABOUT!



FAMILY
FUN FOR
ALL
AGES!

WILL YOU SURVIVE IT?

Take turns rolling the 12 dodecahedron dice
to accomplish increasingly difficult combinations.

Can you get all twelve numbers to turn up in one roll?

CONGRATULATIONS! YOUR ADVENTURE BEGINS!



**BANG! LIGHTNING
STRIKES THE POND!**



WHAT ARE THE
ODDS!? **YOU'VE
REPLICATED
YOURSELF!**



**YOU'RE OUT OF THE
PRIMORDIAL SOUP!**



**YOU'VE GOT A NEW
POWER! TIME TO
LEG IT!**



SIMIAN SUCCESS!
NOW THINGS WILL
REALLY GET HAIRY!



**YOUR MONKEY'S
GONE
NEANDERTHAL!**
BUT DO YOU HAVE
THE TOOLS TO
REACH THE NEXT
LEVEL?



**YOU'VE REACHED
YOUR FINAL FORM!**
DARWIN HIMSELF!



**YOU BOARD THE H.M.S.
BEAGLE A HERO AND
WIN THE GAME! ON TO
ENGLAND TO RETIRE IN
STYLE IN YOUR VICTORIAN
COUNTRY ESTATE!**

Dreadful & Designed

Mystery & Theology in the Ancient Helicoprion

by Timothy J. Burbery

Dinosaurs have long been immensely popular in mass culture. T. Rex is the rock star of the reptiles, in no small part, perhaps, because its name can be so satisfying to pronounce. As noted by paleontologist Robert T. Bakker—himself something of a scientific rock star—the very words “Tyrannosaurus Rex” are “irresistible to the tongue.”

Not far behind in fame are Brontosaurus and Stegosaurus; indeed, the former is making a comeback of sorts. Featured in films such as the original *Lost World* (1925) and beloved classic books such as *Danny and the Dinosaur*, the Brontosaurus has nevertheless long been dogged by the charge that it is a mere fiction, based on faulty classifications of nineteenth-century scientists. Recently, however, paleontological studies have judged it to be real after all.





A Jaw-Dropping Fish

Less well-known than their land-based cousins, but equally remarkable, are the prehistoric fishes. One of the most bizarre, confounding, even jaw-dropping—the last term is difficult to avoid, as will soon be evident—was the shark-like Helicoprion, which lived between 290 and 250 million years ago and may have reached lengths of 40 feet. Its most distinctive feature was a wheel-like tooth whorl, which was probably set in its lower jaw.

The name “Helicoprion,” bestowed on it by a Russian geologist in 1899, means “spiral saw.” The teeth may have functioned like such a tool, enabling this predator to slice its prey—probably boneless creatures like squids and true sharks—with an almost industrial efficiency. According to museum curator Leif Tapilla, when

it swallowed, the jaws would close and the teeth would rotate backwards.

For most of its history, the Helicoprion appeared to be the ultimate survivor, somehow weathering the mother of mass extinctions, the End Permian, when about 96 percent of all living creatures were obliterated. It eventually died out, however, during the Early Triassic epoch. Its nearest living relatives are the *chimerae*, which include both deep-sea denizens with delightfully macabre names like the ghost-fish,

the spook-fish, and the rat-fish, and the more familiar rays. (Their species name derives from the fact that tissues that look like seams appear on their skin, suggesting an assemblage of different animals stitched together like the mythic Chimera.)

Like many such creatures, the Helicoprion had no bones, only cartilage, and nearly all that survives of it are the petrified tooth whorls. The rest of its form is a matter of conjecture, aided by comparative study of sharks and other selachians. The fossil

The Fearful Helicoprion

Scientists have struggled to understand where the tooth whorl fit in the fish’s morphology. Did it loll out like a massive tongue and curl downward, as in this depiction? Or did it extend upward from its snout in a curlicue? Might it have been fully contained within the lower jaw? Or, oddly, was it appended to the dorsal fin or tail? The most recent research indicates that it was situated in the rear of the Helicoprion’s mouth. Whether this theory, or any other, will win widespread acceptance remains to be seen.

remains are lovely, graceful things, and have inspired a number of artistic reconstructions, including those by the noted paleo-painter Ray Troll, who has been obsessed with the fish for over two decades.

Startlingly Mechanical

Scientists have struggled to understand where the teeth fit in the fish's morphology. Did the coil loll out like a massive tongue and curl downward? Or did it extend upward from its snout in a curlicue? Might it have been fully contained within the lower jaw? Or, oddly, was it appended to the dorsal fin or tail? (This last suggestion was offered by the *Helicoprion*'s namer, Alexander Kapinsky.) All these models, as well as others, have been explored by scientists.

The most recent research on the fish involves computerized tomography imaging and virtual reconstruction of its body; it indicates that the tooth-whorl was situated in the rear of the *Helicoprion*'s mouth. Whether this theory will win widespread acceptance remains to be seen. What is clear, however, is that the teeth, regardless of where or how they were positioned, look startlingly mechanical, like a proto-buzz saw or pizza cutter. It would be scarcely less jarring to discover, for example, a pulley operating T. Rex's colossal jaws, or ball bearings in the tail of *Stegosaurus*.

Yet the seeming contradiction of an apparently mechanized structure in a primordial creature is not the only paradox informing the *Helicoprion*; the second, related to the first, is the surprising intricacy and elegance of its dentition. This is a point that has perhaps been lost on television and online productions that have featured the fish, in what might be called the "Animal Planetization" effect. Given their constituency, such shows have



Helicoprion "Whorl"

(Utah Field House of Natural History, Vernal, Utah)

concentrated, inevitably, on the creature's fearsome hunting prowess, an approach evident in titles such as "Ancient Buzzsaw Killer," "Deadly River Monster," and this gem, "Chainsaw Face." While the approach is understandable, it's only part of the story.

The Wondrous Spiral

Of the extant fossils of the whorl, some are clearly articulated, while others are faded. But while each is characterized by dagger-like incisors, each also closely approximates a logarithmic spiral, a wondrous curve dubbed, appropriately, *spira mirabilis* by the mathematician Jacob Bernoulli (1654–1705). What impressed him about the shape is the fact that as a logarithmic spiral grows, it maintains the exact same arc, even as the spaces between the curves increase. It thus embodies self-similarity; that is, one could isolate

and measure portions of the spiral at any point, whether near its center, its middle, or its periphery, and in each instance find the exact same degree of curvature.

Bernoulli was so enchanted by this arc that he coined a personal motto based on it: *Eadem mutata resurgo* ("Though changed, I arise the same"). He thereby echoed and extended Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 15: "We shall be changed . . . and this mortal body must put on immortality." Changed, that is, yet retaining our essential selves. Bernoulli ordered that his tombstone be inscribed with both the aphorism and the spiral; unfortunately, the mason only got it half-right, engraving the requested saying—along with an assertion that the deceased was "awaiting the resurrection"—but etching instead an Archimedean spiral. This is an attractive but less complex curve seen, for example, in cinnamon rolls, coiled carpets,

duct tape, and circular mazes. It, too, maintains the same degree of curvature, but far less interestingly, growing merely by unvarying accretion, since the distance between the layers always remains the same.

A number of elegant natural objects follow the sinuous, mesmerizing pattern of the logarithmic spiral. They include such icons as the chambered nautilus and the Pinwheel and Whirlpool galaxies, as well as less famous examples, such as the beaches rimming Half Moon Bay.

The stunning nature of the logarithmic spiral is also evident in the fact that some of them constitute what is known as the Golden Spiral, a shape based on what is often regarded as the most exquisite number, the so-called Golden Number, an irrational number that in decimal form approximates to 1.618. While not all Golden Spirals are logarithmic ones, they serve to configure a number of natural objects; among these are certain nautilus shells and, strangely, the corneal cells of mice.

Beauty & Menace

Still, it is one thing to thrill to the influence of logarithmic spirals in lovely things like mollusks, stars, and flowers, and quite another to appreciate them in the maw of the Helicoprion, a creature that

gives the phrase “killing machine” fresh, almost literal purchase. Ruthless efficiency, not aesthetics, would seem to be the sole reason for the sweeping arc in the fish’s jaws. Indeed, according to paleontologists, as the fish matured, the coil would grow larger. Smaller, older teeth would rotate through and descend into its jaw while newer, more sizable ones emerged from the back.

Yet the Helicoprion is not the only creature that embodies this paradoxical blend of menace and beauty. It’s worth noting that logarithmic spirals are also approximated in the flight paths of Peregrine Falcons when they descend for a kill: the looping pattern allows the raptors to use their eyesight more effectively than a direct dive would. Moreover, the spirals inform the name and shape of one of our planet’s most devastating natural disasters, that is, the cyclone, from the Greek *kykloma*, for “wheel” or “circle.”

Modernity often likes to think of itself as having discovered nature’s darker secrets, especially the blend of elegance and horror in the lives of animals and insects. This epiphany is voiced in touchstones such as William Blake’s framing of the tiger’s “fearful symmetry”; in Darwin’s revulsion at the parasitic wasp, feeding on the living bodies of its victims with appalling efficiency; and

in one of Robert Frost’s most exquisite poems, the ironically titled “Design,” which reflects on the killing of a moth by a spider. One can easily imagine the Helicoprion evoking similarly horrified fascination.

But in fact, such truths were

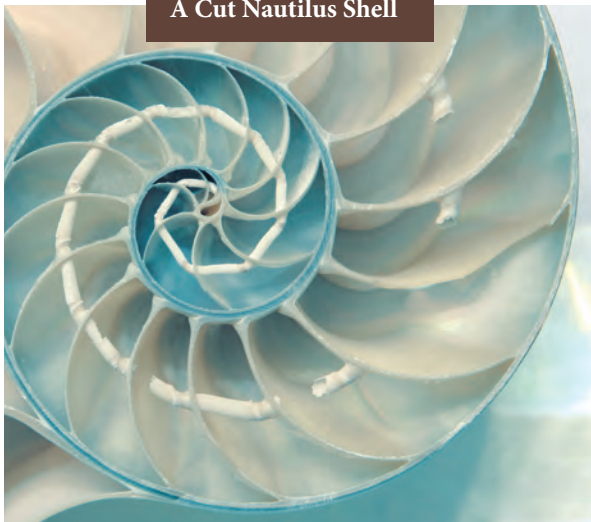
recognized, indeed celebrated, much earlier by at least one pre-modern author, himself something of a naturalist as well as a poet. He depicts God speaking to Job out of the whirlwind, upbraiding him for his lack of knowledge, and limning breathtaking creatures such as the Behemoth and the Leviathan. If the Helicoprion had somehow survived into Job’s day, it is not difficult to imagine it being included in the divine blazon of nature’s splendors. Indeed, one of God’s questions about the Leviathan could apply equally well to the Helicoprion, when God demands of Job, “Who can open the doors of his face?” and then declares, “His teeth are terrible round about” (41:14).

A Higher Logic

In seeking to open the doors of the Helicoprion’s face, as it were, scientists have labored for decades, and we are still uncertain about precisely what it looked like. But God knows; indeed, he has always known, because he is the Creator of all things, both lovely and dreadful. In Isaiah’s words, he “makes woe and weal,” forming, among other things, this fish’s remarkable wheel, and setting it turning in a beguiling circle. The rotation would have enabled this marine creature to dominate its environment.

Yet the logarithm informing the whorl suggests as well a higher logic, even a rhythm; perhaps we could call it the rhythm of the Logos. For this fossil and its curve might serve as an unlikely reminder of the hope of the resurrection. The long-dead fish has been “resurrected” today, but only through fossils and 3-D imaging. Yet by contemplating these reconstructions, we can anticipate a different and better course; with Bernoulli and all the saints, we can confess, *Eadem mutata resurgo*. ☉

A Cut Nautilus Shell



Seeing Stars

Hazy Early Earth Affirms the Bible's Account of Creation

by Hugh Ross

When I first arrived in Pasadena for post-doctoral research at Caltech, the haze from Los Angeles smog was so thick that it was several weeks before I realized that a range of 5,000–10,000-foot-high mountains lay just three miles to the north. Now, thanks to air pollution abatement, I see those mountains clearly every day, and I even see a few hundred stars at night.

A research study published recently in *The Astrophysical Journal* affirms that a thick haze was at least partly responsible for the pervasive translucent skies that shrouded Earth during the first part of its history.¹ Researchers have demonstrated through a

series of experiments how Earth's atmospheric haze lessened greatly as its atmospheric oxygen content rose. This work affirms Genesis 1 and other biblical passages that describe the early atmosphere as being so hazy and clouded that it was not possible for creatures on

Earth's surface to recognize the astronomical bodies responsible for the incident light.

What Genesis 1 Says About Earth's Early Atmosphere

I was taught the steps of the scientific method in every grade of my public-school education in Canada. When I began to seriously investigate the world's major holy books at age 17, I applied the scientific method to test the reliability and trustworthiness of these texts.

When I finally picked up the Bible, I was stunned to discover that right there on the first page it meticulously followed the scientific method. Many years later I discovered why. As I explain in appendix A of my book *Navigating Genesis*,² the scientific method has its origin in the pages of the Bible.

Step 1 of the scientific method enjoins the researcher to resist the natural inclination to immediately interpret a phenomenon before first establishing the frame of reference for that phenomenon.



Genesis 1:2 explicitly states that the frame of reference for the account of the six days of creation is from the viewpoint of an observer on Earth's watery surface (see Figure 1): "the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" of "the surface of the deep."

From this viewpoint, "darkness was over the surface of the deep" (Genesis 1:2, NIV) because God "made the clouds its [the sea's] garment and wrapped it [the sea] in thick darkness" (Job 38:9, NIV). So even though God had already created the "heavens" (Genesis 1:1, NIV), including our Sun, the Moon, and the stars, the light that pervaded the universe had not yet reached Earth's surface. On creation day 1, when God said, "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3, NIV), he transformed Earth's atmosphere from opaque to translucent. The atmosphere remained overcast (much like on a rainy day), but light could finally reach the planet's surface.

Later, on creation day 4, when God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky. . . . They will serve as signs for seasons

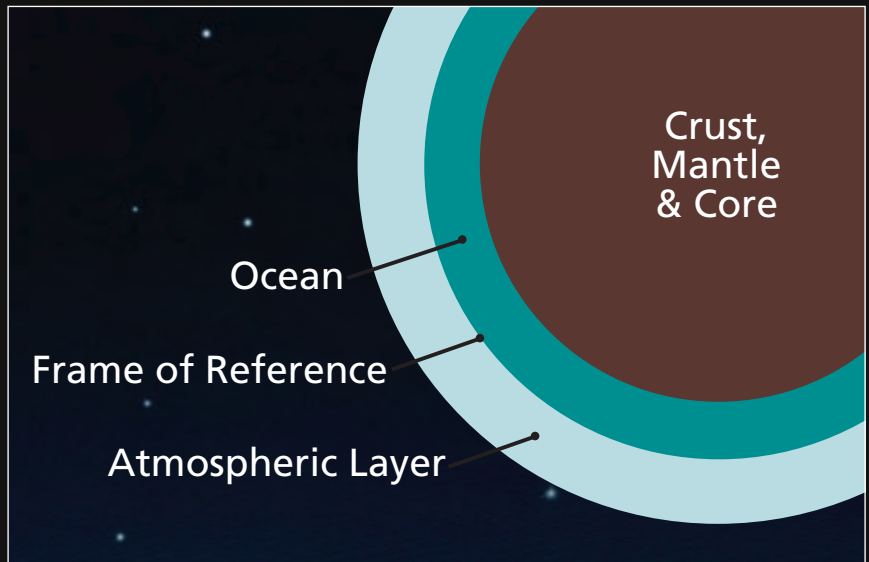
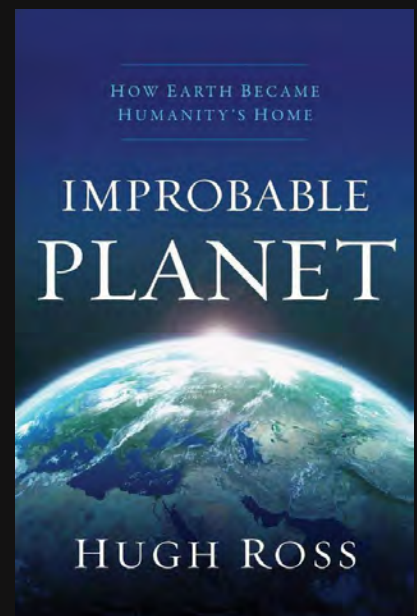


Figure 1: Frame of Reference for the Genesis 1 Creation Days

and for days and years" (Genesis 1:14, CSB), he transformed Earth's atmosphere from translucent to (at least occasionally) transparent. This would allow the animals God created on creation days 5 and 6 to see the positions of the Sun, Moon, and stars in the expanse of the sky and to use those positions to regulate their complex biological clocks.

What Science Now Says About Earth's Early Atmosphere

As I document in my book *Improbable Planet*, the history of Earth's atmosphere is one of gradually diminishing amounts of methane and carbon dioxide.³ Since methane and carbon dioxide are powerful greenhouse gases, this gradual decline was crucial, in order to compensate for the ongoing brightening of the Sun.



The quantity of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and perhaps that of methane also, correlates with the degree of cloud cover. More carbon dioxide and more methane mean more clouds. Thus, the much greater quantities of these greenhouse gases in early Earth's atmosphere may, by themselves, have made the sky completely translucent from the viewpoint of an observer on Earth's surface.

The new *Astrophysical Journal* study was performed by a team of scientists from a variety of fields. They uncovered another cause of early Earth's atmospheric translucency—the lack of oxygen. The team performed laboratory experiments on gas mixtures of molecular nitrogen, carbon dioxide, methane, and varying amounts of molecular oxygen designed to mimic the composition of Earth's atmosphere during its first four billion years. They noted that oxygen concentrations greater than 20 parts per million “resulted in a decrease in [the] aerosol production rate with increasing O₂ concentration.”⁴ The quantity of aerosols in the atmosphere correlates with the degree of atmospheric haze. Thus, the team showed that for atmospheric concentrations greater than 20 parts per million, the less oxygen

there was in Earth's atmosphere, the denser the atmospheric haze would have been.

As Figure 2 shows, the oxygen content in Earth's atmosphere did not get high enough to prevent a pervasive haze until 580 million years ago, just before the first appearance of animals. Also, as the researchers noted in their paper, atmospheric hazes serve as cloud condensation nuclei (cloud seeds).⁵ Therefore, the denser the atmospheric haze, the thicker the cloud cover would be.

It does not take much haze to obscure the positions of the Sun, Moon, and stars from animals on Earth's surface sufficiently so that the celestial bodies cease to be useful to regulate the animals' biological clocks. Even today, with the atmospheric oxygen level at 210,000 parts per million, there are cities in Asia where even on a cloudless night it is not possible to see any stars and the Moon is visible only when it is near the full phase and situated near the zenith.

The combination of denser haze and greater cloud cover prior to 580 million years ago means that although light from the Sun and Moon would have penetrated to Earth's surface, it would not have been possible for surface-dwelling creatures to



discern—with sufficient accuracy and frequency—the positions of the Sun, Moon, and stars in the sky. However, this circumstance would have posed no problems for creatures living prior to 580 million years ago, since the only creatures that would have been around then (microbes, algae, fungi, bryophytes) do not need to be aware of the positions of the Sun, Moon, and stars anyway.

Genesis Affirmed

Thus, the new research study affirms the creation chronology in Genesis 1: Earth's atmosphere transitioned from translucent to frequently transparent on creation day 4, just before God created Earth's first animals on creation day 5. The study provides yet more evidence that the more we learn about nature and its record, the more we accumulate sound reasons to believe that the Bible is the authoritative, inspired, inerrant Word of God. ☉

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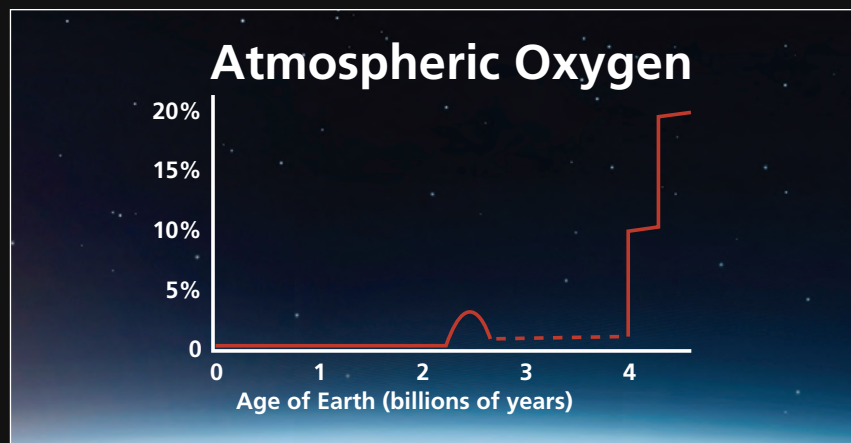


Figure 2: Oxygen in Earth's Atmosphere as a Percentage of the Total Atmosphere

It Comes Naturally

Real Intelligence Can Never Be Matched by the Artificial

Conscious machines? But we don't even know what consciousness is . . .

In *Salvo* 46, we looked at the artificial intelligence doomsdays prophesied by media magnates like Stephen Hawking (1942–2018) and Elon Musk (“more dangerous than nukes”).¹ Media do not, as a rule, examine such claims carefully. There is a market for them, after all; why damage the brand? Debunking thus falls to comparatively obscure sources.

But what a land of opportunity awaits! The AI industry faces major, open, unsolved problems with the dream of replicating human intelligence. Some insights from ID thinkers and sympathizers can help us unpack the breathless claims.

First, what is intelligence? Intelligence enables us to know things. But what does it mean to “know” something? We know things in the sense that our “selves” are aware of them. When we talk about knowledge, we assume a “knower,” a self to which the information is apparent. Absent a self as the subject of the experience of knowing, knowledge—in the sense in which we usually use the word—does not exist. As neurosurgeon Michael Egnor says, “Your computer doesn’t know a binary string [of code] from a ham sandwich. . . . Your cell phone doesn’t know what you said to your girlfriend this morning.”²

Could a very sophisticated machine develop such a self? That’s a tough question, though not for the reason some would think. Our sense of a self is bound up with our consciousness. But there is no generally accepted theory of consciousness.

A Messed-Up Field

There are theories, yes. For example, Darwinian philosopher Daniel Dennett argues that consciousness is an illusion that perpetuates our species.³ Many naturalists (materialists) don’t find his answer viable. But what are their options? Cognitive computing professor Mark Bishop outlines a dilemma in *New Scientist*: If we can develop a sophisticated machine that experiences consciousness, “then an infinitude of consciousnesses must be everywhere: in the cup of tea I am drinking, in the seat that I am sitting on.”⁴ Bishop presents this as



an impossible view, but serious thinkers, not cranks, do attempt to resolve the issue in precisely this way, by claiming that everything, even inanimate objects, is conscious to some extent (panpsychism).⁵

Apart from untenable theories, the field as a whole is a mess. In June 2018, Tom Bartlett attended an academic conference on consciousness on behalf of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and summarized it by asking, “Is this the world’s most bizarre scholarly meeting?”⁶ If that is a key question, we can infer that consciousness studies will shed little light on artificial consciousness. We are left with no way to define what we are even talking about, let alone aim for it.

Outside the Range

Software programmer Brendan Dixon of the Bio-Logic Institute illustrates some of the limitations created by the absence of an actual self: Computers outstrip humans in games like chess and Go, he notes, because these games are “perfect information” environments with inviolable rules. Programmers can take into account everything that could happen. But what about language? “Language is anything but a ‘perfect information’ environment. Words are vague. Meaning is unclear. (And arguments thus ensue.)”⁷ That is a strength of human language, not a weakness, because it helps us capture reality on the fly. But it is simply outside the range of what computer algorithms can do.

One recent project is MIT’s Moral Machine, aimed at getting self-driving cars to make correct ethical decisions. About that, Dixon (who has played some rounds) says,

To solve problems in a computer requires that we encode the problem into terms the computer can manage. That means reducing the shades of grey into a selection of discrete choices. MIT’s researchers replaced those shades of grey with a binary choice between gruesome outcomes. . . . But, in moral choices, it is the immediate circumstances, the thousand little details we handle holistically with our minds, that do matter.⁸

We may not know what consciousness is, but we can be pretty sure that it is not a series of 1 or 0 gates—and that the reverse is also true.

Searching for the Homunculus

Or is it? One end run around consciousness and its artifacts is to insist that the human brain is itself a

Those who have the technology can rule over those who do not via constant management and surveillance at a depth never before possible. Whether it emerges here depends on which social and political philosophies prevail.

highly sophisticated computer, differing from its current artifacts only in complexity. Thus, once we understand how our brains work, we can build computers that do likewise. To that notion, mathematician David Berlinski responds,

It is hardly beyond dispute that the human brain is a computer, except on the level of generality under which the human brain is like a weather system. . . . It is possible to embed the rules of recursive arithmetic in a computer, but how might embedding take place in the brain? If this question has no settled answer, then neither does the question of whether the brain is a computer.⁹

The standby response, “We just need more research!”, is not much help if we don’t know what we are trying to research.

Bill Dembski likens the search for a machine self that would enable the machine to think creatively to the early modern search for the “homunculus,” the tiny human that was once thought to animate the early embryo: “We have no precedent or idea what such a homunculus would look like. And obviously, it would do no good to see the homunculus itself as a library of AI algorithms controlled by a still more deeply embedded homunculus.”¹⁰

Positive Views

Probably because ID theorists do not see AI as an emerging alien intelligence, they tend to view it positively, at least in principle. Brendan Dixon suggests,

Let’s use Deep Learning machines to assist radiologists in analyzing MRIs and mammograms. Let’s use self-learning machines to monitor for fraudulent transactions (to

be reviewed, in turn, by humans). Let's use pattern-matching machines to ferret out possible plagiarism (to be addressed, in turn, by a human editor). Let's capture, as best we can, what others have learned and make it available for others to use. But let's stop fooling ourselves: AI is not the emergence of another intelligence.¹¹

Baylor computer engineering professor Robert Marks offers,

A.I. will continue replacing workers and changing our world. Algorithms are replacing travel agents, tollbooth workers, bank tellers, checkout clerks and brick & mortar stores. But the growth of A.I. has also created jobs like specialists in information

technology, bloggers, data analysts, programmers and webmasters.¹²

The Real Peril

In reality, artificial intelligence will continue to be an extension of the intelligence of programmers. And that, precisely, is the peril. Those who have the technology can rule over those who do not via constant management and surveillance at a depth never before possible. Something of the sort is emerging in China.¹³ Whether it emerges here depends on which social and political philosophies prevail.

As it happens, many of our political, media, and academic elites are drifting toward philosophies that accommodate authoritarian rule. In *Salvo* 48, we will look at some risky trends and some strategies for preventing abuses. ☹

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Meaningful Gifts

The Transcendental Treasury of Truth, Beauty & Goodness

If you want to cultivate a spirit of gratitude this winter, I'd like to suggest that you spend some time in meditation on truth, beauty, and goodness. They each represent gifts to us, things that make life possible, intelligible, and worth living. They are such essential qualities that we call them transcendentals. They transcend our everyday knowledge and point toward a source that is at least *capable* of truth, beauty and goodness.

Why do we value them?

1. They are the foundations on which a life worth living is built.
2. They enable discovery, creation, and nurturing of others.
3. They are not wishful thinking.
4. They are transformative.
5. They are indicators that the world is rich, purposeful, and meaningful.
6. They are the product of a designer who knows truth, beauty, and goodness.

Truth, beauty, and goodness are abstract concepts that nonetheless correspond to our deepest desires. They are not likely to have evolved by a neo-Darwinian process. Rather, from neo-Darwinism I would expect an absence of beauty or a denial of

it—an inability to appreciate it. The same for truth. What about goodness? If selflessness and generosity are taken as signs of goodness, should we expect goodness from the natural world? Let's hold that thought, and return to it later.

Beauty

In our current society, the idea of transcendent values seems unreal. We are told that everything is subjective—there is no clear standard for beauty. Everything is conditional—my viewpoint versus yours. Displays in art museums now resemble the contents of my closet piled on the floor, or an abandoned parking lot, or something appalling like a crucifix immersed in urine.

What happened? Have we forgotten what beauty is? In rejecting the past of the “oppressive white male cultural hegemony” of the Christian West, we have abandoned many beautiful things. I have no problem with including beautiful things from other civilizations or peoples—just don't throw out the treasures of millennia from *our* culture.

Michelangelo's *David* is a perfect example of that beauty. Larger than life, standing in a relaxed pose, he seems to breathe. Though made of marble, his skin glows. He is physical beauty exemplified.

Another example of beauty is Vermeer's classic painting, *Girl with a Pearl Earring*. The girl is looking back over her shoulder, her head wrapped in a blue and gold scarf. Her eyes focus on us, as if waiting for something, and a single pearl hangs from the ear we can see.

A more practical kind of beauty is seen in architecture. So, for example, Gothic cathedrals draw the eyes upward to meet the light; Baroque palaces communicate extravagant exuberance; and the stately avenues of Paris display a nation's pride. In America, contrast a white, high-steepled

church surrounded by white frame houses in New England with the humble, earthy, adobe walls and low arches of a California mission, or with white-columned plantation houses in the South, with their wide verandas and high ceilings. Each style of architecture is distinctive, reflecting a different part of the American experience.

Truth

Have we lost sight of truth? In our modern world everything is subjective; there is no sense of absolute values, of right or wrong, true or false; and life is a maelstrom of personal demands and denials of the rights of others. Civil liberty becomes uncivil riot. Whatever a person desires, no matter how far from the truth, becomes his or her right. Freedom becomes license. A moral choice to preserve life becomes a crime. We have fake news everywhere. No one knows whom to believe, and decades-old debauchery engaged in by people living a lie destroys trust.

Truth has been on trial for a long time.

We can have no trust without truth. It is the basis of a civil society. Truth must be both spoken and heard if a community is to be kept working and honest, and if people's needs are to be met. Families also need truth tempered by love in order to function. Teachers must base their lessons on truth, and business and politics must be conducted in its light.

Without truth we enter into a world of unreason and illogic. Truth, objective truth, underpins all of mathematics and science. Logic is an absolute requirement to do either, and the basis of all logic is truth. Consider the following:

1. If a statement is true, then it is true.
A thing is itself. It is not something else.
2. Contradictory statements cannot both be true in the same sense at the same time.
It cannot be true that a cat is black and not black at the same time.
3. A statement is either true or false. It is not something in the middle. There are no half-truths. Either it is raining or it is not raining.

Known respectively as the law of identity, the law of non-contradiction, and the law of the excluded middle, these three laws form the basis of classical logic. Did you notice the repeated use of the word 'true'?

The Christian philosopher and apologist J. P. Moreland has this to say about the laws of logic:

These fundamental laws are true principles governing reality and thought and are assumed by Scripture. Some claim they are arbitrary Western constructions, but this is false. The basic laws of logic govern all reality and thought and are known to be true for at least two reasons: (1) They are intuitively obvious and self-evident. Once one understands a basic law of logic, one can see that it is true. (2) Those who deny them use these principles in their denial, demonstrating that those laws are unavoidable and that it is self-refuting to deny them.¹

Prejudice is a form of untruth. When individuals or groups are denied access to resources, opportunities, or the chance to contribute based on who they are or what views they hold, they suffer unjust discrimination.

Was there ever a time when truth was the norm? Not since Eden, I guess.

Goodness

Beauty and truth are essential, but so is goodness, our last transcendental value. It is possible to imagine a land where the truth is always scrupulously told but where kindness, compassion, and tenderness do not exist. Such would be a terrible place to live in.

Goodness is perhaps the hardest transcendental to define. It can be thought of as being excellent, beneficent, valuable, helpful, and selfless. This description is apt:

[Goodness] results in a life characterized by deeds motivated by righteousness and a desire to be a blessing. . . . The Greek word translated "goodness," *agathosune*, is defined as "uprightness of heart and life." *Agathosune* is goodness for the benefit of others, not goodness simply for the sake of being virtuous.²

It is hard to find unmixed examples of goodness. We generally associate it with saints, like Mother Teresa, or with heroes, like Florence Nightingale. People who put their lives at risk to care for victims of plague or who live simple lives in order to have more to give to the poor may also be called good. People who care for the sick, the orphans, widows, prisoners, and homeless people exhibit this transcendental value of goodness. But so does a mother who lovingly cares for her children, or a father who pours himself out for the sake of his family.

The Question of Altruism

So now, to face the evolutionary question: Did we evolve our appreciation for goodness, truth, and beauty? Evolutionists used to think that by sacrificing oneself for one's close kin, a person could ensure the survival of the genes he shared with his kinsfolk. But in 2010, kin selection, as this theory is known, was abandoned as a model by its author, E. O. Wilson.³ The replacement theory, group selection, has fared no better.⁴ Instead, it is now argued that standard natural selection and careful population genetics may be able to do the job.

The traits and behavior of bees and other eusocial insects can be taken as a model of the evolution of "goodness" in more primitive creatures. These insects live very social lives. Yet while their "altruism" has been extensively studied, no plausible path for its development via evolution has been demonstrated.⁵ The sticking points are the number of mutations required for each new altruistic trait and the length of time required for insects to acquire these traits and have them spread throughout the population.

The question of altruism in humans has also been studied from an evolutionary standpoint. The most careful outlining of the problem I have come across actually focused on a smaller-scale problem, the evolution of cooperation. The authors of the study catalogued behaviors that might lead to cooperation, looking as they did so for experimental confirmation as well as theory. Reciprocity was identified as a key feature. We call it "You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours."

The problem is, studies like this one show *that* humans exhibit altruistic behaviors, but not *why* we do. Even if we have neural regions dedicated to this behavior, that does not mean the neural regions or the behavior evolved without guidance.

What's the problem with these arguments? First of all, they assume (1) that the usefulness of the transcendentals is tied to a gene or genes; (2) that there is some sort of survival value or reproductive value to recognizing transcendentals or acting on perceptions of them; and (3) that there is at least enough survival or reproductive benefit to get this ability preferentially passed on to succeeding generations. More fundamentally, they assume that truth, beauty and goodness are not things in themselves, but are merely signals that allow us to make good evolutionary choices. Taking these assumptions into account, I would like to see someone set a rigorous number for the additional survival value of a group due to its members' ability to recognize truth, beauty, or goodness, and then get it past the population genetics lottery.



No Match

Scientific materialism is no match for beauty, truth, or goodness. These *immaterial* transcendentals give meaning to our lives. I hope that all those reading this have had some experience of goodness, truth, and beauty in their lives. If you have not, seek them out as guides to wisdom and as gifts given to us to help make life worth living.

That which you create in beauty and goodness and truth lives on for all time to come. Don't spend your life accumulating material objects that will only turn to dust and ashes.

—Denis Waitley

Truth, beauty, and goodness have their being together. By truth we are put in touch with reality, which we find is good for us and beautiful to behold. In our knowing, loving and delighting, the gift of reality appears to us as something infinitely and inexhaustively valuable and fascinating.⁶

—Thomas Dubay ☺

Notes

1. <https://arcapologetics.org/objections/three-laws-logic>.
2. gotquestions.org/fruit-Holy-Spirit-goodness.html.
3. [nature.com/articles/nature09205](https://www.nature.com/articles/nature09205)
4. <https://evolutionnews.org/2017/05/no-controversies-about-darwinism-try-this-one>.
5. [nature.com/articles/nature09205](https://www.nature.com/articles/nature09205).
6. Thomas Dubay, *The Evidential Power of Beauty: Science and Theology Meet* (Ignatius Press, 1999), 23.



Fateful Intersections

Symphony of a Life at Parker & 38th

by Terrell Clemmons

David Scotton grew up in Metairie, Louisiana, the only son of Susan and Jimmy Scotton. He always knew he'd been adopted, and every once in a while, he would wonder about his birth parents: *Why did they put me up for adoption? Do they ever think about me?* But then he would put it out of his mind. He was happy with his life, and besides, he didn't want to be different from any other kid.

About the time David turned eighteen, the Scotttons received a phone call from their adoption agency. David's birth mother had updated her contact information. Would they like to update David's?

At that point, David freaked out. He'd always tried to hide his emotions surrounding his adoption so as not to upset his parents, and he walked outside to catch his breath. But after some time, he decided he *did* want to make contact, and he wrote to his birth mother, Melissa, and asked her to friend him on Facebook. After communicating that way for more

than a year, David felt ready to meet in person.

But there was a twist to David's backstory that would complicate this reunion.

Prelude

When Melissa Coles found out she was pregnant at age eighteen, she was both scared and excited at the thought of being a mom. But neither she nor her boyfriend, Brian, had a stable life. Sometimes they didn't even eat. How on earth could they care for a child?

When they arrived at the abortion clinic, Melissa was swept

in by clinic escorts, a blanket over her head and radios at each ear to shield her from pro-life protestors on the sidewalk. But the words of one activist broke through. "That baby has ten fingers and ten toes, and you're going to kill it." Once inside and prepped, as the doctor sat down to do his work, Melissa heard the echo of those words.

"I can't do this!" she said and jumped off the table. The doctor rolled his eyes but didn't force the issue, and Melissa left the clinic still pregnant.

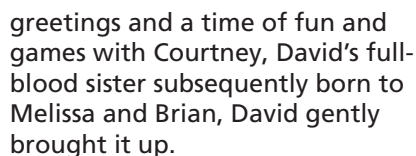
Meanwhile, Susan Scotton had lost two children, both born with a fatal genetic abnormality. Jimmy Scotton, her second husband, promised to make life different for her, and they began the adoption process. When Jimmy received the call that their baby boy had been born in Indiana, he was so shocked at first that he forgot to call Susan. But the two of them quickly gathered their wits and hit the road.

And so it came about that while Melissa wept bittersweet tears in one part of the hospital—she knew she was doing the right thing, but she desperately wanted to keep him—Susan and David cried tears of gratitude at the ultimate joy of holding their son for the first time.

Crescendo

Nineteen years later, about a year and a half after David's and Melissa's first contact, David, his parents, and his grandparents traveled to Indiana to meet Melissa and Brian. When Melissa saw David approach her door, a tall, broad-shouldered young man with a smile on his face and his arms open for a hug, nineteen years of suppressed emotion gave way to sobs as she got the hug she'd been hoping for all his life.

But it was still a complicated joy. At this point David knew his backstory, and she knew that he knew. After all the hugs and



"I just wanted to thank you for your decision nineteen years ago," he said with remarkably few stammers.

Melissa broke down again, her hand covering her face. For so long, she'd feared he would hate her. Guilt had plagued her, and here he was, thanking her for his life. No anger whatsoever. Just gratitude.

Next came David's meeting with Brian. Brian, too, had long believed that, were this moment ever to come, his birth son would hate him. But David's easygoing warmth started its disarming work right away. After an evening in Brian's back yard—to all appearances any ordinary summer family gathering—Brian made a few poignant comments about it all.

First, he was shocked at how much David looked like him. One might wonder why that would be a shock, but more important, seeing that David held no grudge helped him "move on." "It was like a load lifted off my shoulders," he said.

Astute Christians will recognize here the transformative effects of forgiveness.

Climax

At Melissa's request, David returned to Indiana three months later. She wanted to take him somewhere "for closure." And so it came about that David stood near the corner of Parker Avenue and 38th Street in Indianapolis, his ten toes planted at the very spot from which an unknown voice called out in defense of his life.

Melissa broke down again, another face-in-hand moment. "I'm so sorry."

"No, don't be sorry," David



said, drawing her into another hug, literally embodying Christian grace.

But there was more. He had a surprise for her. "I brought some people with me that want to thank you as well. They're pulling up right now in that white car."

And then out popped Susan, Jimmy, and the grandparents, Susan cradling in her arm a large book—a scrapbook filled with letters to Melissa from special people in David's life, a veritable cornucopia of fruit born of David's life. "They wanted to thank you for your decision nineteen years ago."

And this time, Melissa and Susan shared tears of joy.

Coda

All these moments are captured in *I Lived on Parker Avenue*, an experientially indescribable short film available for free on YouTube. There's no preaching, agenda, or even messaging. It just captures one strain of the symphony of David's life to date. People will take away different things from it, and for some it will be hard. But everyone should see it. Yes, *everyone*. ☺

—This article first appeared in the summer 2018 issue of American Life League's Celebrate Life magazine.

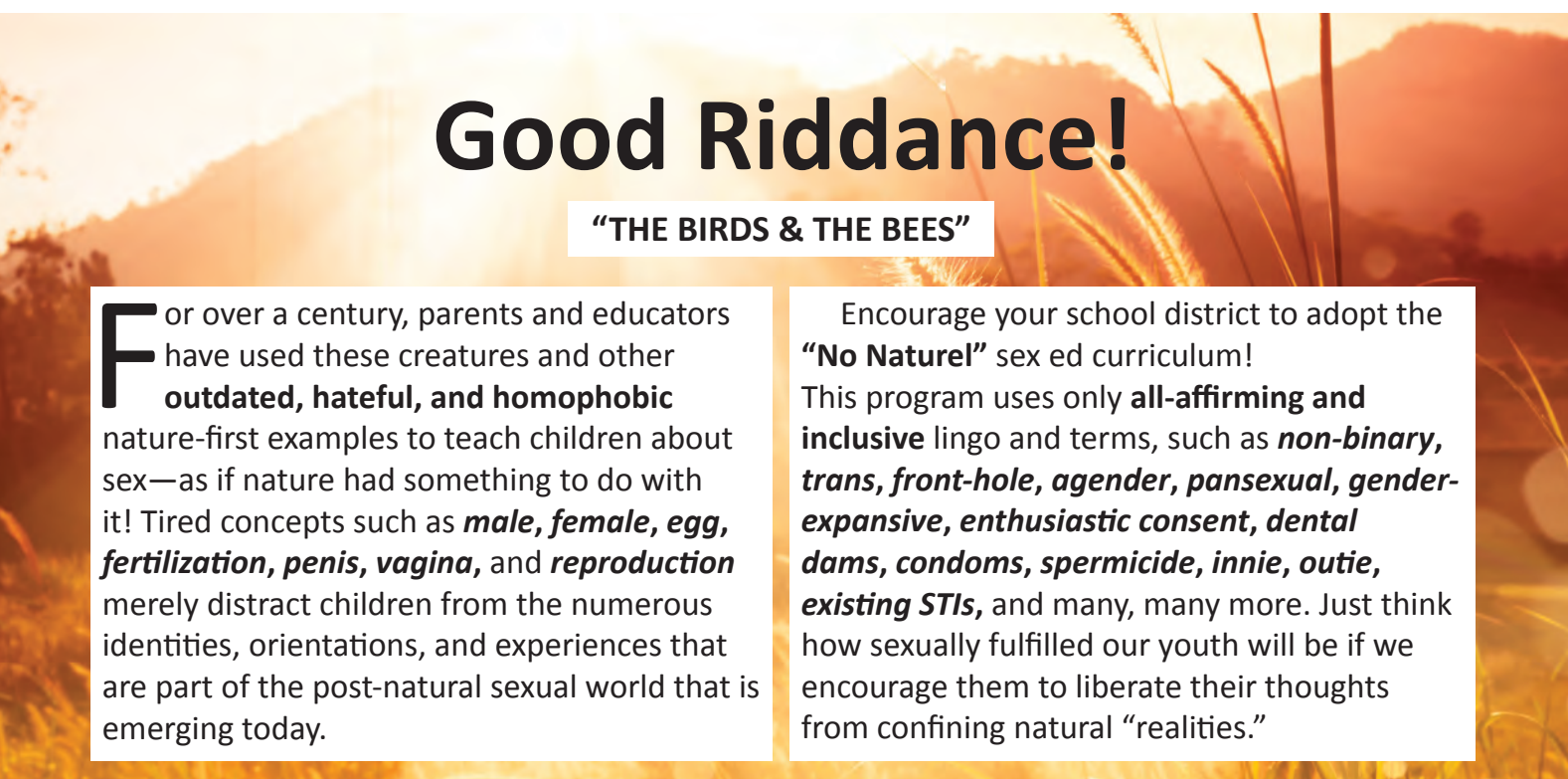




The bees are being forgotten.



The birds are, too.



Good Riddance!

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For over a century, parents and educators have used these creatures and other **outdated, hateful, and homophobic** nature-first examples to teach children about sex—as if nature had something to do with it! Tired concepts such as *male, female, egg, fertilization, penis, vagina, and reproduction* merely distract children from the numerous identities, orientations, and experiences that are part of the post-natural sexual world that is emerging today.

Encourage your school district to adopt the “**No Nature!**” sex ed curriculum! This program uses only **all-affirming and inclusive** lingo and terms, such as *non-binary, trans, front-hole, agender, pansexual, gender-expansive, enthusiastic consent, dental dams, condoms, spermicide, innie, outie, existing STIs*, and many, many more. Just think how sexually fulfilled our youth will be if we encourage them to liberate their thoughts from confining natural “realities.”

Visit our website for more details: www.no-naturel.com

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Mere Creation

A Review of Science and the Mind of the Maker: What the Conversation Between Faith and Science Reveals About God, by Melissa Cain Travis

by Terrell Clemmons

Despite the tireless efforts of intelligent design scientists and the game-changing work they've put forth, the idea persists in the popular mind (helped along by people who should know better) that science has eliminated any place for reference to a transcendent being to explain the natural world. The idea also persists that, notwithstanding a few minor gaps here and there, science is fully capable of eventually (*soon and very soon!*) providing a full understanding of the whole of knowable knowledge. And thus, in far too many venues, a lion's share of information is reduced to a propaganda-laden, either/or proposition: science or religion?

Into this morass of intellectual gross negligence steps Melissa Cain Travis with the refreshingly clarifying *Science and the Mind of the Maker: What the Conversation Between Faith and Science Reveals About God*. "Instead of asking whether or not science *proves* God," she suggests in the opening chapter, "the correct question to ask is whether or not his existence makes better sense of the available evidence."

After explaining scientism and parsing out the self-defeating logical fallacy at its root, Travis introduces what she calls "the Maker Thesis." The Maker Thesis puts forth two hypotheses: (1) that discoveries in the natural sciences support the inference of a Mind behind the universe with whom we share kinship, and (2) that discoveries also suggest that this Mind intended the success of

the natural sciences. "In other words," she explains, "the origin and structure of nature, as well as the existence of the scientific enterprise itself, are best explained by a divine Maker who made us in his image and desired our awareness of him."

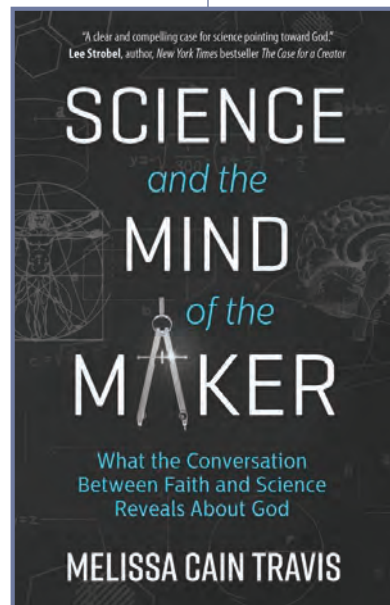
Travis then strings out an exquisite array of evidence, drawing from developments in cosmology, biology, and the earth sciences. And to round out a fitting philosophical treatment of this timeless subject, she also covers historical figures and currents in science, beginning with the Greeks and continuing through to such contemporary voices as John Lennox, Thomas Nagel, and Sam Harris.

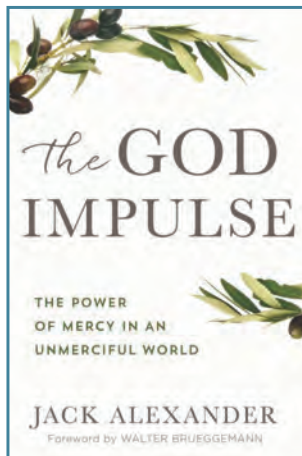
All of it adds up to a most helpful resource for people who prefer to evaluate evidence for themselves, as well as for Christians who want to equip themselves to engage with skeptics on terms they can relate to.

The entire endeavor is an exercise in what has historically been called *natural theology*, which from ancient times has held that the Maker of the world reveals something of himself to mankind through the world he has made. This is consistent with both Old and New Testament Scriptures, which tell us that all people have access to *some knowledge* about God because God has revealed it to us in creation. Think of the Maker Thesis as a tenet of "Mere Creation." It sets aside in-house debates between Christians, such as the age of the earth or how evolution may figure into origin narratives, yet goes beyond basic theism to include certain claims about

humanity's special status in the world because of our relationship to the Maker.

"It has been said that the business of science is taking things apart to see how they *work*," writes Travis, "while the business of philosophy and theology is putting things together to see what they *mean*." With *Science and the Mind of the Maker*, she has expertly woven these disciplines into a formidable contribution to the science-and-religion discussion. For the sake of science *and* faith, don't pass this one up. ☺





The God Impulse: The Power of Mercy in an Unmerciful World

by Jack Alexander

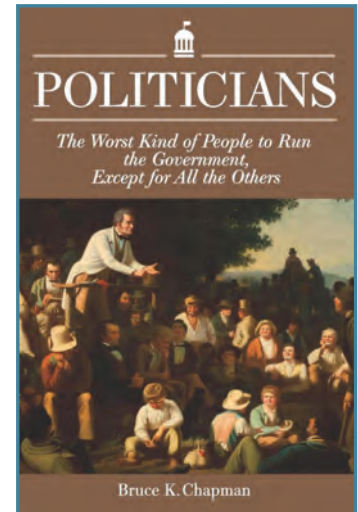
A businessman with a heart for the world's less fortunate souls expounds on Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan. Alexander defines the "God Impulse" as "rushing into the breach to help and heal and hold" our fellow men: to see their need, *go* to them, *act* for them, and faithfully *stay with* them until the need has passed—for our own benefit as well as theirs. This is an especially good read for people in secular workplaces.

Politicians: The Worst Kind of People to Run the Government, Except for All the Others

by Bruce K. Chapman

After a long career spanning all levels of American politics, Bruce Chapman wants good people, the young especially, to go into political life. Ev-

everyone knows something is seriously wrong with American politics. This book—part memoir, part coaching manual, and part insider's guide to the halls of power—offers insight for the politically inclined on how to make the systems work better.



Gay Girl, Good God: The Story of Who I Was and Who God Has Always Been

by Jackie Hill Perry

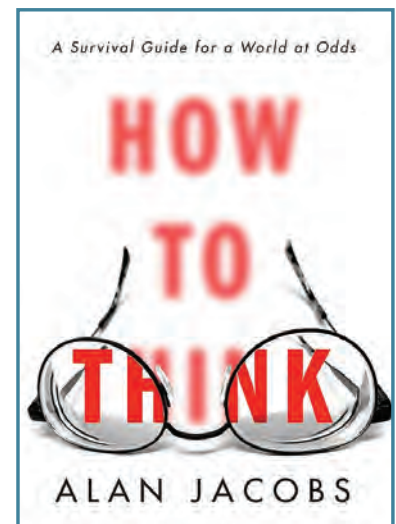
Jackie was a nineteen-year-old stud lesbian when God interrupted her life to invite himself in. Molested as a child and rejected by an indifferent father, she'd always preferred girls, but found herself drawn to this beautiful God more than to the love of women. Even so, the attractions didn't go away. This is her story to date—beautiful, raw, and told with the punch that only a hip-hop artist could pull off.

How to Think: A Survival Guide for a World at Odds

by Alan Jacobs

Jacobs explores the powerful forces that inhibit thinking and the emotions those

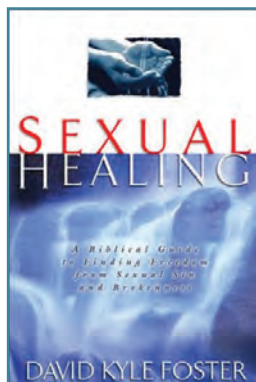
forces generate. At times anecdotally, at other times circuitously, he ponders over habits that can help us better practice this most important and delicate of arts. This is a little gem of a book for those who would think clearly, not only for the sake of *knowing* truth, but also to be able to serve as human bridges across ever-widening ideological and social chasms.



Sexual Healing: A Biblical Guide to Finding Freedom from Every Major Area of Sexual Sin & Brokenness

by David Kyle Foster

An updated and significantly expanded edition of Dr. Foster's 1995 work, this comprehensive reference covers the most common causal factors for every major area of sexual brokenness, including homosexuality, gender confusion, child sexual abuse, sexual addictions, and more, making it a go-to resource for both strugglers and those who would minister to them so that they might move toward the healing available as their inheritance in Christ.



Joseph Nicolosi—A True Friend: Celebrating His Legacy

Joseph Nicolosi specialized in counseling men with unwanted same-sex attraction for more than thirty years until his death in 2017. Shut out by a politicized APA, he published widely and founded the National Association for Research & Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH). This tribute from VoicesOfTheSilenced.tv features commentary from former clients and colleagues, together with footage of Nicolosi discussing his life's work.



#BigFertility: It's All About the Money

The latest from the Center for Bioethics and Culture, *#BigFertility* centers on Kelly Martinez, a young mother and three-time gestational surrogate. She thought surrogacy would be a good way to earn extra income for her family while helping infertile couples have children,

but instead found herself repeatedly exploited to her own great cost by an indifferent commercial industry. This is an important film about both the dignity of human life and women's health.

Same Kind of Different as Me

This feature drama tells the true story of wealthy art dealer Ron Hall, his wife Deborah, and Denver Moore, a homeless man they met at a local shelter. At length, the three transcend racial and socioeconomic divisions to become friends and forge transformative relationships that extend into their wider family and community. It's a beautiful story about service, friendship, and true riches.



Over 18

In the internet age, it's no secret that porn is predatory, and that porn use is always progressive, ever devolving to the more vile and violent.

Over 18 includes inter-

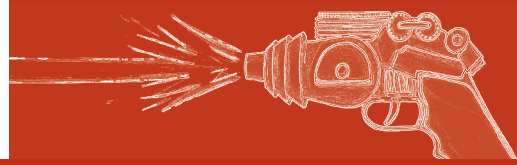
views with recovered porn addicts (including one homeschooled student hooked at age nine), former porn actors and actresses, and former and current porn producers. Two important takeaways are: (1) how porn preys on youth, and (2) how it desensitizes everyone it touches to pernicious effect.

Sheep Among Wolves: Chronicles of the Persecuted Church

Islam is the global Goliath of our day. Where are the "Davids" who will rise to this challenge? Rather than look for political or military responses, Frontier Alliance International missionaries plant and serve underground churches in the Middle East, in full confidence that the gospel *and only the gospel* can truly change a region. *Sheep Among Wolves* is an inspiring, if not convicting, report on their work. Free at FAIMission.org.



Film Clips



Peer-Reviewed Pranksters

Their Fake Papers Reveal an Open Opportunity

by John Stonestreet

The joke was played on academic journals, but the politically correct corruption of higher learning is no laughing matter.

Twenty years ago, mathematician Alan Sokal set out to prove that postmodernism in academia was “fashionable nonsense.” So he wrote a gibberish paper combining post-structuralist lingo with physics terms, and submitted it to the journal *Social Text*. Not only was his deliberate drivel accepted, but over 1,500 papers have cited it as source material.

Fast-forward to 2018: Three other professors decided to see if they could get past the peer-review process and reveal that fashionable nonsense lives on. Professors James Lindsay, Helen Pluckrose, and Peter Boghossian—all professed liberals—wrote and submitted baloney research to academic journals specializing in a brand of social activism these highly credentialed pranksters call “grievance studies.”

Their mission? To demonstrate how simple it is to get “absurdities and morally fashionable political ideas published as legitimate academic research.” Or to put it more simply, they wanted to show that journals with itching ears will accept any work—no matter how ridiculous—as long as it validates trendy ideas about race, sex, and oppression.

These renegade scholars were rewarded spectacularly for their efforts. One gender studies journal accepted and published a paper that paraphrased a 3,000-word section of Adolf Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* using feminist terminology.

Another published a mock paper arguing that dog parks are “rape-condoning spaces” . . . for

reasons I’ll leave you to figure out. Reviewers at the same journal requested only a slight rewrite of another paper proposing that so-called “privileged students” shouldn’t be allowed to speak in class. Instead, suggested the authors, such students should learn in silence, and even pay “experiential reparations” by “sitting on the floor, wearing chains.” Incredibly, the reviewers thought that the fake proposals were *too soft* on privileged students.

After seven of their journal submissions were accepted, the three authors revealed their ruse, prompting a little soul-searching—at least from those already sympathetic with their complaints.

Writing at *Quillette*, fellow academics bemoaned the state of their profession (quillette.com/2018/10/01). One lecturer at the University of Surrey wrote that for many journals, “ticking off buzzwords” now seems to “stand in for checking the quality of scholarship or the coherence of arguments.” A philosopher at Ox-



ford wrote, “The editors and peer reviewers who handled [these] papers have revealed their true, vicious attitudes.”

Now, in some ways, this proves what we already know. As the professors behind this hoax explain, “making absurd and horrible ideas sufficiently politically fashionable can get them validated at the highest levels of academic grievance studies.”

Whole swathes of higher learning are captive to left-wing ideology. Schools and journals are run as searches for oppression and power dynamics instead of truth. But this whole saga reveals more than the nakedness of the academic emperor. It also reveals how ripe the moment is for Christians to offer the educational world an alternative.

Most of the top universities in the West were not only founded by Christians, but were chartered to teach a universal vision of truth. Almost all of them lost that vision,

but it doesn’t mean the task of educating young people, or of conducting and publishing solid research, is over.

These things are part of our heritage as Christians. Wherever Christians went throughout history, education followed. And Christian educators are always at their best when they educate as if learning points us to God. To learn is, as Johannes Kepler said, “to think God’s thoughts after Him.”

My point is, we’ve done this sort of thing before. Let’s do it again. With mainstream academic journals going to the dogs, now’s not the time for Christians to lose our educational souls to fashionable nonsense. Now’s the time to recommit to truth. ☺

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