of Smith's philosophy by virtue, not of his training, but of his reliable human intuition. He has read about the principle of double effect from the writings of Rita Marker while seeming to be unaware that it is a time-honored principle that has been used by Catholic philosophers going back at least as far as to Saint Thomas Aquinas. Smith's personalism is a philosophy that is based on human rights, not on expediency.

Culture of Death includes a wide range of bioethical issues, including, organ donation, physician-assisted suicide, euthanasia, transhumanism, a detailed treatment of the Terri Schiavo case, Obamacare, the exploitation of human body parts, surrogacy, the myth of autonomy, and abortion. With regard to abortion, the author has come a long way since his original edition. In the introduction of that first edition he skips over the contentious abortion issue when he states the following:

Indeed, whether one is pro-life or pro-choice, it is my sincere hope that the book's readers will agree with me that, regarding born people, each and every one of us should be treated as an unqualified equal in the health care system. (xxv)

Fifteen years later, Wesley Smith is keenly aware that the political actions of pro-abortion advocates since *Roe v. Wade* have had a negative impact on the whole of society. Thus, he now writes the following:

Allowing an unlimited right to abortion that couldn't be struggled against would unleash a moral tsunami that would sweep away virtually all limits. If we are to have any chance of containing the culture of death in other areas discussed on these pages, the pro-life movement must

continue to prick the consciences of people about the morality of abortion and the intrinsic importance of nascent human life, an important task regardless of the legality of abortion. (264)

If one category of human life—the unborn—can be deemed worthless, so can other categories, such as the severely disabled, the elderly, and those who express a desire to die. Here is one of many examples of failing to treat a human being as a real, personal human being: A daughter asks her mother's doctor why he is refusing to prescribe antibiotics for the ninety-two-year-old woman. The doctor defends his position by stating that "an infection will kill her sooner or later. So it might as well be this infection." In another instance, a doctor remarks, "If anyone so much as whispers cortisone [a palliative agent] or 'uncertain diagnosis,' I'll hit him" (136). This latter comment brings to mind the infamous words Hanns Johst, a Nazi propagandist: "Whenever I hear the word 'culture,' I reach for my revolver."

Culture of Death is strongly recommended. Some reviewers have labeled Smith's thought as "conservative." It is a shame to situate the author's thinking on a political spectrum. It is a well-documented, fair-minded, and true-to-life expose of what is going on today in the field of bioethics that includes a sensible moral corrective based on the dignity of the human being and the sanctity of life. Open the book to any page, and the reader will find something of interest. Smith has done his homework and does not allow his passion for ethical reform to interfere with his good judgment. It will do the reader no harm to read this important work.

Making Gay Okay: How Rationalizing Homosexual Behavior Changes Everything. By Robert Reilly. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2014. xvi + 234 pp.

Reviewed by: Dale O'Leary, Florida, USA.
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In January of 1973 some may have assumed that the Supreme Court's decision *Roe v. Wade* settled the issue of abortion; however, four decades later the issue still divides the country. Some believe that Donald Trump's promise to appoint pro-life judges may have tipped the election in his favor. While some may believe or hope that the Supreme Court's

2015 *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision has settled forever of the definition of marriage in favor of those who believe that two persons of the same sex can marry, the conflict has just moved into a new phrase. The law may have changed, but the opinions of many and teaching of religions have not.

Robert Reilly's book *Making Gay Okay: How Rationalizing Homosexual Behavior Changes Everything* meticulously reviews the history of the campaign to normalize homosexual behavior. He offers a comprehensive review of how we arrived at this point and offers suggestions for more effective future strategies. In order to move forward it is necessary to look at where the

defenders of marriage failed to make their case and to understand why the truth about marriage failed to convince activist justices.

Early in the struggle to pass state referenda defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman, the defenders of marriage focused on the positive aspects of marriage and essentially ignoring the problems inherent in the gay and lesbian lifestyle. Reilly views this strategy as seriously flawed;

Unfortunately, the pro-natural family movement largely forswore pressing the 'hard, ugly realities' of homosexual behavior on the conscience of the American people. Now the current retreat to the position of defending religious freedom means that the issue of the immorality of sodomy and other homosexual acts has most likely been abandoned for good. This is, and was a terrible substantive and strategic error. It basically gives the whole issue away—because if sodomy is not wrong, then not allowing it to serve as the basis of marriage must be bigotry.

Reilly's book is divided into two sections, the first dealing with the radical philosophical change in judicial reasoning from decisions based on protected inalienable rights founded on the laws of Nature and Nature's God, to a judicial system under which everyone has a right to make up their own morality. Reilly reviews the Supreme Court decisions that paved the way for the undermining of the foundation of the Constitution. In the 1965 *Griswold v. Connecticut*, the Supreme Court discovered a right to privacy. This invented right became the foundation for series of radical decisions: *Eisenstaedt v. Baird* (1972), *Roe v. Wade* (1973), and *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003). In the 1992 *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pa. v. Casey* decision, the majority opinion stated, "At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence of the meaning of the universe, and of the mystery of life." This statement highlights the shift in judicial philosophy from one based on natural law to one based on radical autonomy. Reilly also points out that it is not enough to defend marriage, it is also important to challenge the claim of judges to have a "divine right" to ignore the plain meaning of the Constitution.

Reilly points out that the law must be based on a shared belief that some things are right and some are wrong. In case after case, activist judges have chipped away at the idea of rights are based on the laws of Nature and Nature's God. If, as most societies have held, homosexual acts are wrong, then,

according to Reilly, such acts cannot be the basis for the contract of marriage.

The second half of the book deals with the effect of the gay agenda on children, science, education, the military, and foreign policy. When arguing before courts and legislatures for legal protection, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) activists insisted that they were victims and acceding to their demands would protect them from abuse, and would not negatively affect anyone else, Reilly catalogues how, as the title of his book claims, making gay okay and rationalizing homosexual behavior changes everything and not for the better.

The LGBT activists argued that, when it came to sexual ethics, one group should not be allowed to impose their morality on others. However, nature abhors a vacuum. The moment the LGBT activists obtained the right to legally marry, they sought to impose their moral vision on others, insisting that it was immoral not to accept their right to marry. They demanded that everyone not only accept their pseudo marriages, but that Christian-owned businesses service LGBT wedding rituals. The LGBT activists now insist that, because persons identified as LGBT have suffered discrimination in the past, hurting their feelings is a hate crime. According to LGBT's new morality, religion does not allow you to discriminate.

Unfortunately the LGBT morality is based on a denial of reality. Surgery and cosmetics cannot make a man into a woman. A birth certificate naming two women as parents does not change the reality that every child has a biological mother and father. Two persons of the same sex cannot complete the only act that consummates a marriage. The problem caused by the legal acceptance of the LGBT agenda is that the denial of reality is never partial. The LGBT activists label all those who do not accept their agenda as homophobic and transphobic bigots, who need to be reeducated, punished, or silenced.

Reilly traces the shameful history of how the American Psychiatric Association (APA) was manipulated by gay activists, surrendered to protesters and allowed a rigged referendum. The LGBT activists had targeted the APA, because as homosexual activist Franklin Kameny explained, "I feel that the entire homophile movement . . . is going to stand or fall upon the question of whether or not homosexuality is a sickness" (119). The decision to remove homosexuality from the APA's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* was not based on well-designed published studies. None were cited. Since then numerous large well-designed studies have found that persons who self-identified as LGBT are

more likely to experience psychological disorders, suicidal ideation, and substance abuse problems. The APA ignored the massive evidence that the LGBT were not born that way and some of those who sought therapy could change.

While Reilly presents an excellent review of the real dangers of the LGBT agenda, one has to question whether his solution—namely focusing the sinfulness and unnaturalness of sodomy (anal intercourse)—is the answer. He touches on what may be a better strategy, stressing that the LGBT are not born that way and change is possible. Those who

might question these claims would do well to read the very well-documented special report in a recent issue of *The New Atlantis* journal titled “Sexuality and Gender” by Lawrence Mayer and Paul McHugh. The article references numerous well-designed studies, which show that the LGBT claims are not supported by scientific evidence.

Reference

Mayer, Lawrence S., and Paul R. McHugh. 2016. Sexuality and Gender: Findings from the biological, psychological, and social sciences. *The New Atlantis* 50: 4–143.

Death Before Dying: History, Medicine, and Brain Death. By Gary S. Belkin. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. xxvii + 288 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-989817-6

Reviewed by: Stephen Napier, PhD, *Villanova University, Villanova, Pennsylvania, USA.*
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If a person *is* dead in the medical setting, two consequences follow. First, if the patient has elected to be an organ donor, it is permissible to extract a vital organ that is still functional from the patient. Such an action would not kill the donor since the donor is already dead. A second consequence is that further life-sustaining measures may be withheld or withdrawn even over the objections of the surrogates or family members. The reason is that they are no longer in truth life sustaining. We would no longer be caring for an existent person. Consequently, *accurately* determining death is important so as to avoid kill-ing a patient for transplant or to avoid providing futile interventions.

Because of the advancements in medical technology, however, patients can be kept “alive” in conditions where it may be difficult to discern whether or not the patient is dead. For example, patients who have lost whole brain function irreversibly, may still retain a heart rate without medical supports. It was precisely in the setting of these advancements that spurned Henry Beecher at Harvard Medical School a committee to address the diagnosis and prognostic significance of brain death. The committee published a report in 1968 (Harvard Medical School 1968).

According to Gary Belkin, the prevailing historical characterization of the Report is that it was “ethically unsophisticated, problematically focused on transplantation, and lacking a conceptual

justification and empirical basis for this way of understanding and defining death” (xv). Belkin takes on two tasks, the first of which is to challenge the prevailing historical characterization. The second is to explain why challenging these characterizations is important. On this second task, Belkin wants to say that these characterizations rest on distinctions between 50 “medical knowledge, and ethical expertise over its use; [and] between medical facts . . . and the values implicit in them” (xv). In reply, Belkin wants to argue for a pragmatic epistemology. “Keeping pace with the walking biological creatures that we are requires . . . a pragmatic point of view of medical knowledge, as well as of medical values” (xvii). Belkin seems to endorse a generic pragmatism according to which the goal is “whatever works.”

The chapters that follow, aim to defend the two tasks in rough order. Chapters 1–5 aim primarily to accomplish his first task, and Chapter 6 aims primarily to defend the second. I say primarily because the latter task is scattered throughout, for example, pages 36–40, and 197–200.

The first chapter, titled “Strange Business,” aims to provide a broad setting within which discussions on brain death would occur in the late 1960s. The issues addressed are the developing discussion around what counts as extraordinary versus ordinary treatment; the discussion surrounding truth telling in medical practice; and the developing discussion on research ethics. (It was unclear to this reader how the issues of truth telling and research ethics contribute to Belkin’s overall narrative.)

The second chapter, titled “The Justification . . .” serves, in my opinion, as the heart of Belkin’s first task. He aims to outline the justification for convening the committee in the first place, and in some places he justifies the specific content of the report. Belkin’s skills as a historian of science are on display