



2016 - Issue Four

The Ecological Disaster of Same-Sex Parenting

JOHN WATERS

Speaking in September 2011, in the Bundestag in Berlin, Pope Benedict XVI summoned up the concept of “the ecology of man” as a counterpoint to the more familiar concept of ecology of the natural world. The two elements must go together, he declared, if human freedom is fully to be realized: “Man too has a nature that he must respect and that he cannot manipulate at will”, the Pope elaborated. “Man is not merely self-creating freedom. Man does not create himself. He is intellect and will, but he is also nature, and his will is rightly ordered if he listens to his nature, respects it and accepts himself for who he is, as one who did not create himself. In this way, and in no other, is true human freedom fulfilled.”

The ecology of the human is defined by limits and consequences which become the blue lines in the notebook of existence—unerring and constant laws in which the human is defined against reality. In the modern world, we try to forget this, to imagine that limits are placed arbitrarily by tradition or tyranny, in which consequences can be pathologized or reattributed and new vistas carved out as though the “dead” God had overlooked them.

I have noticed a remarkable consistency in the patterns of concern expressed by human beings in regard to the two ecological categories. Rather than a harmony, we tend to see a divergence: those who express concern for the ecology of the natural world tend to be the same people who are least exercised by threats to the ecology of the human, or even to recognize this as a real phenomenon. It is not quite accurate to say that the obverse is also true, but there is somewhere a truth about it: those who concern themselves with the condition of humanity tend to place the natural environment somewhat down their scale of priorities, Pope Benedict being an interesting but rare exception.

In recent times, the most ominous threats to the ecology of the human have come from movements to promote abortion, gender theory, and initiatives to redefine marriage in the interest of so-called “marriage equality.” In these phenomena we can observe a globalized, determined attempt to defy the limits which define the human, and deny that consequences will follow from man arrogating to himself the redefinition and remaking of his own nature. It is to insinuate a new metaphysics in which man becomes not merely his own master but, in effect,

his own creator. In denying the sanctity of every human life from conception to death, or the difference and complementarity between men and women, man turns upon himself, attacking both his own humanity and the very basis of human organization.

Two years ago, in my country, Ireland, we introduced into our Constitution by way of referendum a provision which not merely provides for gay people to marry, but actually implicitly asserts that there is no legal or constitutional difference between a couple comprising two men or two women and a couple comprising one man and one woman.

On the face of it, the wording of the amendment appeared relatively innocuous. It read: “Marriage may be contracted in accordance with law by two persons without distinction as to their sex.” This low-key formulation was in harmony with the tactic of the gay lobby to present the matter as a simple “human rights” issue—identical, it was claimed, to the historical campaign for equal citizenship of black and colored people in the United States. It is perhaps unnecessary to state that this comparison is completely bogus. The extension of full citizenship to the black population of the United States was a matter of genuine “equality”, because it could be effected without any diminution of the rights of other people, not to mention the even more basic fact that it reflected the truth regarding the universality of human dignity that American positive law had violated. There was therefore no good or just reason why equality here should not be so defined and extended, and this, in turn, confirmed that there had indeed been a gratuitous and egregious denial of human rights.

The same circumstances did not obtain in respect of the LGBT demand for gay marriage, which really amounted to a sleight-of-hand—the usurpation of an institution which had belonged exclusively to couples who, in principle could procreate. Moreover, it was not the case that gay marriage, when accompanied by adoption rights and the authentication of potential claims over other people’s children, could be regarded as having no consequences for other categories of citizen. By extending full constitutional parenting rights to gay couples, Irish society would be acquiescing in a radical dilution of the parenting rights available to normative couples. This became inevitable because the amendment was placed in the article of our Constitution which provides not merely for marriage but for family and parenting rights. The net outcome—a constitutional time-bomb waiting to go off at some future point—was that there could no longer be any constitutional protection for the complementary procreative functions of men and women, or any special regard for their biological connections with their own children.

This radical reformulation of marriage was not the effect of a spontaneous eruption of interest in an overlooked “human right” or “civil right.” If it were either of these, one could expect to find a long history of campaigning, reasoned argument going back several decades as those in favour of the proposition sought to make their case. If you take the time to go through the archives of any of the “progressive” newspapers, which in recent times have been most vociferous in favour of this “right” (and equally so in condemnation of those who do not concur), you will find hardly any articles on the subject up until about five years ago. You will find a similar pattern in the speeches of politicians who have only recently been vocal on the topic and likewise condemnatory of anyone who does not agree with their new-found “enlightenment.”

This pattern provides a clue to the true nature of what has been happening. The push for gay marriage is part of an entirely new phenomenon: a remorseless ideological onslaught on public

values and norms, which brooks no dissent or even meaningful conversation concerning what is demanded. And what is under attack is the very essence of human reality, which is being attacked at the very unit of its molecular structure, the normative human family.

Throughout the campaign, the government claimed that the amendment was simply an add-on to the existing form of marriage, and that it had no ramifications for children or the constitutional definition of Family. This was dishonest nonsense. The inclusion of the wording into Article 41 of the Constitution, headed “The Family”, was bound to impact the meanings of other clauses within that section, so that the potential impact on both explicit and unenumerated rights was likely to be unpredictable even for experienced lawyers, since any individual change in the constitutional treatment of marriage and family was likely to have profound implications for the future interpretation of all related provisions. The word “rights” implies something fundamental, irreducible, inalienable, but these “rights” were not in fact derived from any natural basis, but amounted instead to the carving up of the natural, pre-existing and fundamental rights of others.

Article 41, headed “The Family”, begins: “The State recognizes the Family as the primary natural and fundamental unit group of society and as a moral institution possessing inalienable and imprescriptible rights, antecedent and superior to all positive law.” Did anyone seriously imagine that a Yes vote would not change the constitutional meanings of the words “natural”, “primary”, “fundamental”, “moral”, “antecedent” and “superior”? The Yes lobby and the government dismissed such claims out of hand, and yet refused to answer any specific question raised concerning this obvious danger.

The word “natural” in that context obviously referred to the fact that a family up to that point had in the main been defined as a mother, father and child/children, the children having been born as a result of the complementary biological functions of the mother and father. It was obvious that if you diluted this concept with the idea that a man and a man, or a woman and a woman, must be treated the same under the Constitution, you could not avoid abolishing the legal status of the biological connection between parent and child among the criteria for parenthood. Parents who were the natural parents of their children would have no special rights over same-sex couples, and, in the event of disputes, would not be able to plead such a special right on the basis of biology. There was, in other words, an unquantifiable, invisible constituency whose rights were greatly threatened by the amendment, but this constituency was being denied the right to a proper discussion on these vital issues by dishonest politicians and ideologically corrupted journalists. Voters were told that they had a duty to extend “equality” to gay couples, “reminded” of past intolerance towards homosexuals and asked to consider how they might feel if one of their own children turned out to be gay. They were not being invited to consider the amendment in the context of its overall constitutional ecology, or hear discussion of how it might play out in practice.

Those who promote the radical changes being pushed through in this context have also succeeded in characterizing all opposition in a particular way, insinuating that those who question the concept of same-sex marriage are invariably motivated by, at best, religious beliefs (which of course are simplified and caricatured out of all recognition) which are at the same time insinuated as being coloured by hatred and bigotry.

My own issues with the same-sex marriage campaign take primarily an anthropological shape. They derive from my experience and observations of matters relating to parenthood and family law over two decades as a journalist and a father, and to my own experience of the ecology of parenthood and related matters. Of course, they reflect also positions expressed in religious contexts, for example in Catholic teaching, but this is because the Church, likewise, has harvested the experience and observation of centuries of human ecology and arrived at conclusions which, unsurprisingly, are not dissimilar from the individual experience of observing reality and speaking about it truthfully.

What has happened to Ireland is actually beyond belief. For two years up to the referendum on May 2015, my country was subjected to cultural rape by propaganda, with the aid of foreign monies, with the objective of conducting a smash and grab raid on our Constitutional definitions of marriage, family and parenting. We were subjected to mugging by emotive bullying, scapegoating and moral blackmail—part cajoling, part coercing us to introduce a form of gay marriage which amounts to the most extreme in the world. Because it used to be a strongly Catholic country, Ireland was targeted by the international gay lobby as a “trophy country” whose acquiescence could be trumpeted around the world as “moral” leverage against larger, less ostensibly pious nations. Those within Ireland who threatened to present any obstacle to the agenda were targeted to ensure that the trophy could be carried off with a minimum of complication. The Irish model of gay marriage is now the Gold Standard by which every other country in the world will be measured in terms of its “tolerance” and “progressiveness”.

The net effect in actual cultural terms will be to achieve over time the shifting of legal protections from natural parents to a newly-defined concept of parenthood defined not by biology but by a legal instrument—guardianship. Guardianship would be entirely a gift of the State and could be withheld from a parent—and by extension the correlative right to be brought up by his natural parents from that parent’s child—for no clear reason in a process occurring in a secret court. Thus, parenthood will move inexorably towards becoming a matter for dispensation by the State, which will in due course arrogate to itself the function of “ratifying” each parent/child relationship as entitled to legal status before the parties may be deemed parent and child. Among the collateral effects of this change will be to place what is called “psychological parenting” — i.e. the role of nurturing, caring for, daily contact and interaction, companionship, on a par with biological parenting, and, indeed, rendering a biological nonentity capable of trumping the claims of a natural parent simply by virtue of having gained proximity to a child due to circumstances, such as, for example, having entered a relationship with one of the child’s natural parents.

And there is a more fundamental consequence: that the “marriage act”—the coming together of a man and a woman in sexual unity—can no longer have any legal significance whatsoever. The idea that there is a core category of marriage, defined as an exclusive commitment between one man and one woman, built around the idea of their conjugal union, open to new life and committed to the nurture and protection of their own children, has been banished to a legal graveyard—forever.

It is important to stress that this is actually the ultimate objective of the LGBT lobby. Although they may appear, in certain circumstances and contexts to settle for less than this outright

transformation of family law, this is always simply an interim tactic, the use of the “salami method” (one slice at a time) to make whatever incremental gains can be made in the first swipe. Once these gains have been made, they are capitalized upon and extended, ultimately to include adoption rights. The LGBT lobby will always come back for more, until it has achieved total victory.

In the dying days of our campaign, an eagle-eyed citizen drew my attention to a quite astonishing document hidden away on the website of “Yes, Equality”, the umbrella group established to coordinate the campaign in favour of the amendment. Not only did this document confirm all our worst fears as to the true intentions of the same-sex marriage lobby—it went much further than we ourselves had dared to go in spelling out the implications of what was being sought, and what was soon to be achieved. The document was a paper written in 2009 by an academic feminist and lesbian, entitled “Feminism and the Same-sex Marriage Debate”. Essentially the document amounted to an argument directed at extreme feminists who remained opposed to the very existence of the institution of marriage, telling them that the time had come to embrace gay marriage for the sake of “equality”.

The document proclaimed: “Same-sex marriage turns on its head the biologicistic and ‘natural’ cultural assumptions surrounding reproduction and the family; it carries the potential to subvert and overthrow the historical conception and implications of marriage. By so doing, the ideology and romantic myth of marriage that has long been critiqued by feminists is uprooted from its traditions.”

Here, finally, we had confirmation of the hidden intentions of at least the most militant and vocal elements within the LGBT lobby and their caravan—those actors who had taken the gay marriage issue from nowhere to the centre of the public square. Gay marriage, far from being part of some revolutionary programme of freedom, was really the Trojan Horse by which an entirely new concept of family life would be transported into the heart of modern civilization. It involved not so much a valorization of homosexuality for the sake of homosexuals, but a pretense of concern for “equality” for the sake of repudiating and dismantling the concepts and structures which had allowed human societies to cohere since humans first began to move upon the face of the earth. The objective of achieving same-sex marriage was not merely “equality” but subversion of the normative model of reproduction and family life, the overturning of the natural order (notice the way the word “natural” is given quotation marks in the quotation above) and the destruction of the “romantic myth” of marriage.

Had anyone on the anti-amendment side made a claim along these lines as to the intentions of the gay lobby, it is likely that the media would have placed their statement as the main headline on their front pages and at the top of their news bulletins, together with trenchant denials from the Yes side and the usual accusations of “homophobia”. Instead, although I personally read the passage out in the course of several debates with opponents on TV, not one word was uttered or written about it otherwise in the mainstream Irish media. Journalists simply looked the other way, and in doing so announced, finally, that they were no longer journalists, but ideological stooges in the service of a radical agenda to alter the very meaning of the most central and sacred human institution and to redefine the meaning of man’s place in his relationship with nature.

John Waters is a Thinker, Talker, and Writer. From the real source of religion to the infinite reach of rock 'n' roll; from the puzzle of the human 'I' to the true meaning of money, John Waters speaks and writes about his exhilarating, totally original reflections on the meaning of life in the modern world. He began part-time work as a journalist in 1981, with Hot Press, Ireland's leading rock 'n' roll magazine and went full-time in 1984, when he moved to Dublin. As a journalist, magazine editor and columnist, he has specialized in raising unpopular issues of public importance, including the repression of Famine memories and the denial of rights to fathers.

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