

Terminology to Assault Human Life and Life-Affirming Responses

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Technology Then and Now

<i>Decade</i>	<i>Technology of the time...</i>	<i>...surpassed by...</i>	<i>...technology now</i>
1960s	Willke slides		PowerPoint
1970s	printing and telephone resources		blogs, email, robocalls
1980s	TV ads		YouTube
1990s	Internet		
2000s	social networking		

Agenda

- I. Scholarly Commentary on Terminology Used to Assault Human Life
- II. A Pro-Life Study of an Instance of Anti-Life Rhetoric
- III. Life-Affirming Responses for Future Instances of Anti-Life Thinking
- IV. Questions and Audience Dialogue

I. Scholarly Commentary: Leo Alexander (1949)

“Whatever proportions these crimes finally assumed, it became evident to all who investigated them that they had started from small beginnings. The beginnings at first were merely a subtle shift in emphasis in the basic attitude of the physicians. It started with the acceptance of the attitude, basic in the euthanasia movement, that there is such a thing as life not worthy to be lived.” (44)

I. Scholarly Commentary: Jean Garton (1979)

“[M]aking sound moral choices requires that we use language to describe reality (not create it), to communicate factual information and to aid understanding. As we conclude what may well be catalogued in history as the Sensuous Seventies, we recognize that for an increasing number of people, moral choices are being made on the basis of feelings apart from facts or truth. Ignoring evidence, indeed not even seeking it, many have embraced the maxim of the sensual Frenchman Rousseau who said, “Don’t think. It hurts. Just feel.” As a result, the decision-making process is not located in the intellect but in the pit of the stomach, in the shifting sands of human emotions.”
(16-7)

I. Scholarly Commentary: William C. Hunt (1994)

“[T]he dominant themes of our technological world are in conflict with what we have hitherto known as our moral world. This stems mainly from a tendency to look upon human organizations in terms of machines and to understand human interactions primarily by way of a mathematical methodology. As a result, it is difficult, if not impossible, for someone immersed in the technological world to act morally in any traditional sense of the word. Quite literally, technological themes demoralize decision making and diminish responsibility.” (256)

I. Scholarly Commentary: William Brennan (2008)

"On the one hand, the Pontiff employed sometimes graphic but always authentic terminology in stripping away the litany of euphemisms constructed to obscure the destructive practices used against the victims. On the other hand, he exposed the defective, degrading definitions of the human person spawned by utilitarian, reductionist ideologies and replaced them with a wealth of life-affirming designations founded on the Judeo-Christian ethic of equal and intrinsic value for all human lives whatever their status, condition, or stage of development." (vii)

When does a human being...



...become a zucchini?

“Schiavo” and “Vegetable”

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Wednesday, February 23, 2005

Terri Schiavo A Vegetable? No!

By: Deacon Keith Fournier
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February 23, 2005 will be a day that all people of good will in America remember for however remaining years are left for this Republic. It should be remembered as “Terri’s Day”; the day when truth and goodness triumphed or the day when perfidy, intentional lies and evil disguised as a “right”, led to the execution of Terri Schiavo by starvation and dehydration.

I awakened to the headline in my morning newspaper: “Two Rulings Leave Fate of “VEGETATIVE WOMAN” Undecided”. Since it was an Associated Press Release, I am sure millions all over America - and beyond - were greeted with the same horrible headline! This marks the triumph of “verbicide” in this advance of death disguised as a “right.” That phrase was coined by the late, great C.S. Lewis to refer to the “murder of a word.” We should insist on calling such polemical monstrosities “Oxy-Morons”, with the emphasis on moron, for the one who wrote this horrid headline.

A person cannot be a “Vegetable”.

Response Posts to Fournier

“You ask is Terri schiavo a vegetable? YES SHE IS!! She will never be like you and I again!! NO THERAPY WILL EVER DO ANY GOOD!!”

“Too many people don't value the life of a person who seems to be inconvenient. Indeed, we are killing ourselves off. The people who labeled unborn children as embryos and fetuses (strictly scientific terms) or products of conception to make their execution seem more acceptable are the same people who are labeling Terri and others like her as vegetables. These same people may well be the ones who later live only by (younger) people who are healthier and stronger than they are—people who have no more of a conscience than they do.”

A Final Thought on “Vegetable” (Neal 1988)

“I lay in a coma like an immense vegetable. No one detects any movement in a vegetable except, perhaps, the shrewd gardener who knows its roots are reaching deep into the earth. So, perhaps, was my unconscious body reaching into the wellhead of raw existence.” ([254])

III. Life-Affirming Strategies: Weaver

“After all, there is nothing but sentiment to bind us to the very old or to the very young. Burke saw this point when he said that those who have no concern for their ancestors will, by simple application of the same rule, have none for their descendants. [....] There was a time when the elder generation was cherished because it represented the past; now it is avoided and thrust out of sight for the same reason. Children are liabilities. As man becomes more immersed in time and material gratifications, belief in the continuum of race fades, and not all the tinkering of sociologists can put homes together again.” (30)

III. Strategy of “Authentic Terminology”

The phrases

*“embryonic
reduction”*

*“pregnancy
reduction”*

*“selective
termination”*

are “translated” as...

“In this procedure
poisonous substances are
injected into the hearts of
unborn children of women
pregnant with more
offspring than desired as a
result of taking fertility
drugs.” (Brennan, *John
Paul II*, 3)

III. Life-Affirming Strategies

- Stigmatize certain words
 - “Abortion” is virtually always negative
 - “Infanticide” is the killing of the (usually handicapped) newborn
 - “Euthanasia” is a similarly negative code term for denying food and water rights to the dying or the elderly
- Use apposition (redefinition of a previous statement)
 - Abortion as “legal throughout the nine months of pregnancy for any reason whatsoever”
 - A person in a PVS state is “someone resting in a persistent vegetative state” or “someone resting in a coma”
 - Terri Schiavo “was not terminally ill but was starved to death”

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