

Dehumanizing the Vulnerable When Word Games Take Lives

William Brennan

Book Review by Barbara Buzzard

“The act of abortion is called ‘choice,’ but somebody dies.”¹

This is one of the most powerful books I have ever read or reviewed. No review could do it justice. “If you read his gripping analysis, you will lose some sleep. But you will be the better for it.”² Amen and Amen. Dear reader, please allow God to use these words to impassion and embolden you to help save innocent lives.

Author and Professor Wm. Brennan demonstrates how those in power have used derogatory language to dehumanize Russian citizens, blacks, Native Americans, women, Jews, and the unborn. The unborn are the most recent victims of this twisted targeting. Name-calling is an indispensable component of oppression. We first vilify whatever category or race we choose to obliterate. *This allows us to think and do the unthinkable.* By our language we spread deception, illusions, and falsehoods; this is nothing short of semantic warfare. Examples from history include the use of words such as: defective, deficient, less than human, inferior, waste product, trash, rubbish, *nonperson*.

It has been observed that when war comes, the first casualty is truth.³ This is powerfully and tragically true in this war against the unborn.

The Big Lie

“Ever since 1970, the policy of semantic gymnastics has been propagated so often and with such fervor that it has become deeply embedded in the public consciousness. What once had been ‘the scientific fact, which everyone really knew that human life begins at conception’ has been—through countless repetitions—obscured and reduced to the suspect level of an outmoded, sectarian bias. Thanks to the power of ‘the big lie,’ no longer does everyone know that human life begins at conception.”⁴

If word games can be used to deny the humanity of the unborn, they can also be used to cover up the fact that abortion is killing. “The reason particular groups are earmarked for large-scale semantic devaluation and massive physical oppression is closely linked to ideology.”⁵ And as Solzhenitsyn writes: “Ideology—that is what gives evildoing its long-sought justification and gives the evildoer the necessary steadfastness and determination.”⁶

“...90 percent of the news media elite have assimilated ‘right to choose’ rhetoric as a prominent tenet of their social gospel.”⁷ This is a brilliantly evil choice of words as it allows us to name things without bringing to mind a mental image of what actually happens. Let us remember some of the euphemistic language used by the Nazis for their concentration camps: resettlement and rehabilitation. What a brilliant euphemism is the term “healthcare”! And yet 92 out of 97 Planned Parenthood centers refused prenatal care to mothers seeking it.⁸

¹ Judie Brown, Amer. Life League, Inc.

² Charles E. Rice, Prof. of Law, Univ. of Notre Dame

³ Phillip Knightley

⁴ William Brennan, *Dehumanizing the Vulnerable, When Word Games Take Lives*, p. 9.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12

⁷ Robert Lichter study, p. 17

⁸ The latest expose of Planned Parenthood, LifeNews.com, 1/24/17

Defined Out of the Human Race

If one can define a victim out of the human race by verbal contempt and rhetoric, by linguistic derision, and oppression, that becomes key to who will live and who will die. Justice Brennan shows that history is cluttered with barbaric acts: abuse, abandonment, burning, mutilation, suffocation, drowning, strangulation, slavery. These behaviors are not limited to primitive barbaric societies but in our own sophisticated contemporary one. For example: “Infanticide has been practiced on every continent and by people on every level of cultural complexity, from hunters and gatherers to high civilization, including our ancestors. Rather than being the exception, then, it has been the rule.”⁹

“...it is easy to lose sight of the immense tragedy inherent in each abortion: the life of a totally unique human being is irretrievably extinguished.”¹⁰

Global War on the Unborn

One of the most revolting ideas which Wm. Brennan reveals is this: “the acceptance of the attitude, basic in the euthanasia movement, that there is such a thing as a life not worthy to be lived.”¹¹ This attitude is now becoming more popular as it becomes harder and harder to deny the science of ultrasound which reveals a miniature human being. I assure you that this perverted thinking is real, i.e. “yes, it is a human being but not worthy to live.” And “it is a life worth sacrificing.”

Does this sound ‘out of this world’? We are reminded that in the Vietnam war, one of the justifications given for killing civilians was this: “It wasn’t like they were humans. You didn’t think you were shooting at a human.”

The degrading words used of human beings now and long ago have much in common. Contemporary portrayals of the unborn as female ‘property’ or ‘material’ for fetal research in combination with the ‘it’s my body’ argument are ubiquitous. The ‘it’s my body’ argument is very clever. However, there is a second body in question here and it’s that little body which is being denied the right to choose, and the right to life. The issue is: who lives and who dies?

“Of the numerous expressions created to denigrate human beings, ‘nonperson’ may well rank as the most devastating of all...the unique perniciousness of ‘nonperson’ derives not from its capacity to offend, but from the fact that it alone has been explicitly enshrined into law. And a ‘legal nonperson’ is an entity devoid of basic rights, including in many instances the most fundamental right of all, life itself.”¹²

Semantic Gymnastics

A *California Medicine* editorial acknowledges that “very considerable semantic gymnastics” are required to avoid “the scientific fact which everyone really knows, that human life begins at conception” and “to rationalize abortion as anything but taking a human life.” Such “a schizophrenic sort of subterfuge is necessary,” the editorial emphasizes, in order to obtain acceptance of abortion as “moral, right and even necessary.”¹³

Professor Brennan explains that lying in a way comparable to a psychiatric disorder is essential for approving of both abortion and euthanasia.

What are the devastating effects of words on deeds? Brennan argues that it is toxicity of thought and that this is pervasive, crossing generational lines. He sees it as semantic venom, calling what is a living, developing miniature human an entity with no rights whatsoever. The rhetoric of “lives not worth living” is being propounded on our college campuses and in our medical schools! “Today

⁹ Laila Williamson, anthropologist, p. 34

¹⁰ William Brennan, *Dehumanizing the Vulnerable*, p. 31

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 71

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 147

¹³ *California Medicine*, “A New Ethic for Medicine and Society,” 1970.

there is another kind of toxicity loose upon the land—an avalanche of dehumanizing expressions. This semantic venom contaminates the perceptions of many people and readily leads to multiple types of violence, including destruction on an unprecedented scale.”¹⁴ I note that some pro-abortionists seem to have a ghoulish enthusiasm for this killing and parade it as a badge of honor.

“The extermination of European Jews and the Soviet people owed much of its success to the imposition of subhuman terminology on the victims. Judges at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials considered the dehumanizing language and ‘obscene racial libels’ churned out over a twenty-five-year period...important enough to have perverted the attitudes of countless Germans toward and incited genocidal acts against, the Jewish people.”¹⁵

The Geneva Declaration

Because of the Nazi Holocaust the World Medical Association felt compelled to emphasize the fact that human life began at conception. They wanted to prevent any repetition of a ‘descent into savagery.’ But their “never again” intent has degenerated into “here we go again.” The Declaration reads: “I will maintain the utmost respect for human life from the time of its conception. Even under threat I will not use my medical skills contrary to the laws of humanity.” What has happened to us as a society in accepting anything less than this? We have gradually, drip by drip, overridden these ideals and allowed and even justified unimaginable acts of violence. Do we no longer *recognize* what murder is?¹⁶

Is This the Book of the Century?

As Bonhoeffer said: “The simple fact is that God intended to create a human being and that this human being has been deliberately deprived of his life. And this is nothing but murder...the unborn child is from the very first a child...not a thing, nor a mere part of the mother’s body.”

Bonhoeffer is joined in his passion by Mother Teresa: “...I feel that the the greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion. Because it is a direct war, a direct killing—direct murder by the mother herself.”

Some have called Brennan’s book the Book of the Century, a measure of its worth and importance. If one cares about Truth, one will courageously follow the facts wherever they lead, no matter what the costs to our own self interests.

I am deeply indebted to Wm. Brennan for these insights:

- Those who control language control thought.
- Verbal engineering always precedes social engineering. (Why do we oppose killing people at the end of life and not at the beginning? This is cognitive dissonance.)
- We have medicalized destruction.
- This is a schizophrenic assault on Truth.
- It is also fraudulent thinking. The use of nonperson is perhaps the best loved *hate speech* ever. And it has become the foundation for infanticide.
- We are reaping the far reaching effects of the lies we were told.
- Is not the taking of the life of one’s own child the highest crime in the land?

My humblest thanks to Professor Brennan for his brave and masterly witness to the power of Truth. May we ask forgiveness for our nation’s arrogance in assuming God’s authority over life and death and may we feel a burden to be a voice for those innocents who don’t have one.

¹⁴ Wm. Brennan, *Dehumanizing the Vulnerable*, pp. 185, 6

¹⁵ William Brennan, *Dehumanizing the Vulnerable*, p. 189

¹⁶ It is important to say that there is no condemnation for anyone who has repented of an abortion, or for anyone who has repented of being involved in any way with the abortion industry.