

An evening in Cork: *Telos* on the run in southwest Ireland

Anthony McCarthy

Introduction

On Monday 1st October, I had the honour of participating in a debate on same-sex marriage organised by University College Cork's Philosophical Society. The motion put before the house was, Should Marriage for Same-Sex Couples Be Legalised? Proposing the motion were Max Krzyzanowski of LGBT Noise and Senator Katherine Zappone, a lesbian seeking to get her Canadian same-sex marriage legally recognised by the Irish State.¹ Opposing were myself, representing the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) and Brendan O'Neill, editor of Spiked Online and self-declared Marxist, atheist and libertarian.

In a healthier age, no such debate would, of course, have taken place - least of all in Catholic Ireland. But we do not live in such an age, nor in the age when even Sigmund Freud recognised that the 'polymorphous perverse' could be antithetical to civilization itself (Herbert Marcuse and Wilhelm Reich were to move the goalposts further, and help form subsequent generations in living out a sexual revolution that had devastating consequences).

Nor do we live in the more remote age of the founding of the city of Cork. My Slovakian taxi driver reminded me that it was St Finbarr in the 6th century and his monastic settlement that began Cork, which in turn reminded me that in the early Middle Ages, it was the Catholic Church that was largely responsible for rebuilding the social order when European civilisation was threatened with permanent dissolution. Part of that rebuilding work was promoting and defending the framework of Christian marriage. While the Church's aim was spiritual, it bore rich fruit in the temporal sphere. As GH Joyce points out in his book *Christian Marriage*, "By giving the world the Christian family, she provided the basis of a new and better social order. She rebuilt society from its foundations. Indeed she did more than rebuild: she re-fashioned the very material of its construction."

The Debate: Max Krzyzanowski

With these thoughts in mind, I came to the beautiful campus of University College Cork. There was a good-sized crowd of students and the organisers had gone to some effort to gather in speakers prepared to argue the topic at length.

First up for the Proposition was Max Krzyzanowski. A likeable and charismatic former winner of Mr Gay Ireland, he was eloquent and passionate and knew how to work a crowd. The argument was, as it always is, simple. Homosexual people should have equal civil rights to heterosexual people. Present civil union arrangements in Ireland do not amount to an equal right to marry (if it isn't called marriage, it isn't equal). Equality is good. Discrimination against gay people is bad. We learnt that people who oppose 'equal marriage rights' are *necessarily* bigots, even if they mask their bigotry in fine sounding phrases (had Max K. been reading Foucault on masks?) He added that gay parents were discriminated against and that 'bigots' were out to lie about gay parenting and use "sordid arguments" which were "hysterical" (he named no arguments nor gave any examples). He further accused opponents (and remember, *all* opponents are *necessarily* bigots thus presumably at risk of such behaviour) of exhibiting "malice" and "hatred" and engaging in the "slander" of homosexuals. These points were repeated emphatically and elicited cheers from the audience (I am told the talk will be available on YouTube soon, so the reader may check the accuracy of my account). Max K. went on

¹ http://www.marriageequality.ie/download/pdf/2006_high_court_judgment.pdf.

to claim that homosexuals had always been oppressed and drew parallels, as parallels are always drawn, with the civil rights movement in the U.S.

Not long ago in Britain, Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg had apparently planned to call opponents of same-sex marriage ‘bigots’; he quickly apologised for his office saying what he himself in all probability thinks. In Cork, there was no such obfuscation – and it was good to hear exactly what our opposition thought of us. For Max K., if you were not for him you were not only against him but also despised him as a human being - even if you thought you didn’t.

Max K. sat down to sustained and seemingly universal applause. Both myself and Brendan O’Neill were rather taken aback by the atmosphere, even at this early stage. How would such a crowd react to actual arguments which attempted to tackle the meaning of marriage: arguments that were more than name-calling and sought to unearth the philosophical assumptions undergirding the Proposition?

My response

I began by expressing sorrow at Max’s ‘those against me are necessarily bigots’ speech, not least as we had had a friendly chat just before the debate. I then moved on to quote some supporters of ‘gay marriage’, beginning with film director Nick Cassavetes who said, “Love who you want, isn’t that what we say? Gay marriage – love who you want...If it’s your brother or sister it’s super-weird, but if you look at it, you’re not hurting anybody except every single person who freaks out because you’re in love with one another.” The quote was met with what can only be described as an aggressive - perhaps outraged - silence. I carried on, quoting same-sex marriage supporter Carrie Nelson, “Opening marriages and expanding what makes a marriage... may well end up saving relationships as a whole...Believe me I’m not some undercover agent trying to bring down the institution of marriage from within. If anything, I feel so strongly about marriage equality including polygamy because I love marriage.” I added that a judge in Sao Paolo, Brazil had recently registered a three-person ‘stable union’. On the same theme I quoted Austin Nimmocks of the anti-gay marriage Alliance Defending Freedom, who had said that if marriage is “about adults and not the kids that flow from procreative relationships, then from a policy standpoint you have to ask the question, then why can’t three or more adults be just as loving and committed to each other?...If it’s about the procreative relationships that produced and raised the next generation and we keep it a child-centered institution, then the risk of polygamy and plural marriage does not exist.”

Having read out these statements, I mentioned that one of the most distinguished supporters of same-sex marriage, philosopher and classicist Martha Nussbaum, not only has no moral problem with brother-sister incest, but also in her influential paper “A Right to Marry” reflects as follows:

“And what about the name “marriage”? It is so divisive today, and it is also so capricious in its meaning...Might a good solution be for the state to back out of the expressive domain altogether, offering civil unions for both same-sex and opposite-sex couples?”

Apparently moving out the ‘expressive domain’ is possible, and is not itself expressive, in Nussbaum’s view. I mentioned Nussbaum in part because one of the speakers for the Proposition, Senator Zappone, is on record as being a great admirer of Nussbaum. Did she, I wondered, make the logical leap to the privatisation of marriage that Nussbaum makes – and if not, why not? Although Martha Nussbaum has shown herself quite ready knowingly to make false claims to a court on the historical question of homosexuality², she has, it seems to me, been honest in following this argument where it leads.

² <http://web.archive.org/web/20060327151702/http://www.mugu.com/cgi-bin/Upstream/finnis-shameless>

So much for quoting one of the more logical supporters of same-sex marriage. Silence and accusatory headshaking directed at me were the only reactions to the above.

I was, however, to get one other reaction from Senator Zappone, who spoke next. She agreed that she was a huge admirer of Martha Nussbaum but simply stated that Nussbaum was in favour of 'equal marriage' until such time as marriage should be privatised. Zappone did not, of course, tell us whether she herself favoured the privatisation that Nussbaum correctly sees as a logical consequence of same-sex marriage.

Marriage

It was time to get to the nub of the issue. In doing so I was aware that for many in the audience, human social life is reducible to the State and the Individual alone. To talk of pre-political institutions in such an environment is a seemingly thankless task. Nevertheless, the State can no more define marriage than it can friendship or pleasure. As the sexual ethicist David Crawford points out,

“the idea of family as root and foundation could mean that society owes something to the family, that the family is more *fundamentally* human than civil society, and that while there is real mutuality of function and end, the family has priority over civil society, and that one of civil society's roles is to provide the stability of conditions and resources necessary for the family to flourish.”

Crawford goes on to say:

“In modernity, we are reticent to declare that there is any inherent form to natural human communities such as marriage or the family. To do so seems to run contrary to human freedom and choice. It seems to impose something extrinsic that threatens a subtle oppression. Rather, we want to make whatever form emerges depend entirely on voluntary relations.”

The arguments I deployed against proposals for same-sex marriage legislation can be found in SPUC's own documents on same-sex marriage³ and in many other places, including my more detailed philosophical paper on marriage in the recent book *Fertility and Gender: Issues in Reproductive and Sexual Ethics*. The arguments do not presuppose any religious position and are in fact concerned with marriage as a natural institution 'from the beginning' – something that would have existed even had there been no Divine Revelation. Indeed, some religious conceptions of marriage themselves presuppose that marriage is a natural institution: unless it is understood as such, the significance of Christian marriage, in particular, will be lost.

In brief, marriage exists because some sexual acts between a man and a woman can produce biologically-related offspring. The particular kind of institution marriage is – not just any kind of friendship, or even close friendship – is specified by the fact that as an institution marriage is aimed at procreating and educating children, even if this 'fertile structure' does not always have a 'fertile result'. Sexual fidelity is necessary not just because love, loyalty and support are good things for any friendship, but because strict fidelity is necessary for fulfilling marriage's specific nature and design as a society for the procreation, protection and maturation of children. Patrick Riley in his book *Civilizing Sex* captures how this plays out in life:

“The intrinsic natural purpose of marriage is offspring, though husband or wife or both may be very imperfectly aware of it until that purpose presents itself in a stunning epiphany, the birth of a child.

³ *Position Paper on Same-Sex Marriage, Background Paper on Same-Sex Marriage and SPUC Briefing on Equal Civil Marriage*, all available at www.spuc.org.uk.

From that moment they know. In that child they see the incarnation of their love. In him they descry their destiny. They live for him and work together for him, finding a mutual reliance, mutual esteem, and mutual gratitude that give their marriage - both the founding act of wedding and the continuing institution of wedlock - transcendently fuller meaning and correspondingly fuller satisfaction..."

But where does this leave the infertile couple? Of the 'married couple alone' Riley correctly points out:

"There is no such thing. The very act of marrying implies children as the purpose and perfection of the state created by the act...man and wife 'by themselves' constitute a family, since in reality, if only in potency, there is no such thing as man and wife by themselves. When you say husband, you say father; when you say wife, mother."⁴

Marriage, then, has never been 'just about the couple', understood in some restricted sense: to reduce it in this way is to remove its essence and sunder its intimate relationship with the good of individuals, especially the most vulnerable. It is to undermine the common good of society.

Roger Scruton captures the 'social' nature of marriage when he writes, with regard to the link between sexual desire and marriage:

"...the connection between desire and marriage has both a subjective meaning and a social role. Its subjective meaning lies in the exaltation and ennobling of our sexual urges, which are lifted from the realm of appetite and reconstituted as rational commitments. Its social role is to facilitate the sacrifices on which the next generation depends. Marriage is not merely a tie between man and woman; it is the principal forum in which social capital is passed on. By tying sexual fulfillment to the bearing of children, marriage offers a double guarantee of a stable home: the guarantee that comes from erotic love, and the guarantee that comes from the shared love of offspring. It offers children durable affection, a secure territory, moral examples, and moral discipline."

He further asks,

"Can marriage retain its privileged place in our moral thinking when so effectively severed from the process of social reproduction? Already the secularization of marriage has led to easy divorce, serial polygamy, and growing insecurity among children. But marriage in its fundamental meaning is a form of lifelong commitment, in which absent generations have a stake. If marriage can be celebrated between homosexual partners, then it will cease entirely to be anything more than a contract of cohabitation, and the legal and fiscal privileges attached to it will seem both unjustified and dangerous, so many openings to litigation."

Senator Zappone

The attempt to make natural institutions conform to our personal desires, however deeply felt these may be, is always a grave error – one which Senator Zappone was unfortunately all too prone to make. For Zappone, marriage was, of course, an 'evolving concept' – which meant that, for her, it had no essence and was in no way pre-political. Given that all and any conditions of entry to the institution are necessarily inegalitarian, presumably they *all* should be removed at some stage, as constituting unjust discrimination. At present, Zappone appears not to advocate for polyamorous or incestuous marriages – so apparently with regard to these she is, by her own standards, a 'bigot' who restricts marriage in a way that excludes some people (either that or she is on a logical trajectory to

⁴ See here <http://www.mercatornet.com/conjugality/view/11296> for what will happen to the terms 'pere' and 'mere' under the proposed French law on same-sex marriage.

abolishing marriage entirely, but hasn't got around to telling us yet). Reading Zappone's somewhat turgid writings,⁵ we learn that:

“One of the primary challenges of the 21st century is for lawmakers to catch up with how humans are living their lives...wouldn't it be visionary if lawmakers might think about their job as making law that embraces the full continuum of humanity, so that no one person is shamed by the lack of law, such that she, he, yo, ye, ze or they hide from who they are, from 'the inside of me'.”

Note how the function of law is apparently to act as a kind of therapy for the groups Zappone promotes (as opposed to those, like polyamorists, whom she does *not* currently promote). This is irrespective of what that means for natural institutions which the law – or so some of us believe – has no business re-defining. But see also how the fundamental sexual polarity of male and female is reduced here and made arbitrary. We, as apparently disembodied beings, now decide on what we 'are' and wish to be, and the law must be made to fit our desires (desires that are readily manipulated, however, by those with power). Against the grain of real biological differences is constructed a vision of the world in which the human body is drained of meaning, and mere 'orientation', not the body, is all. This new vision of the person is radically anti-familial insofar as it denies the very polarity, with all its rich meaning, that our bodies have from our conception.

Before reflecting further on this, let us turn to an astute earlier advocate of sexual revolution, who rightly saw that there was no middle ground when it came to competing notions of sex and the family.

The family as State rival

Wilhelm Reich, a follower of Freud and Marx, notes in his book *The Sexual Revolution* that there are various options for the family – some of which options were offered, in their own ways, by the two Proposition speakers. Reich, like the Proposition, sees the family as a purely social construct having no root in human nature. He tells us:

“According to [late] Marx, one of the chief tasks of the social revolution is the abolition of the family...What Marx had deduced theoretically from the social process was later confirmed by the development of social organisation in the Soviet Union. The old family began to be replaced by an organisation which had certain similarities with the old clan of primitive society: the *socialist collective* in school, youth communes, etc....If the compulsive family [Reich's term for the family formed by traditional marriage] is upheld ideologically or structurally, the development of the collective is inhibited. If the collective is incapable of overcoming this inhibition, it is destroyed by the family structure of its members...”

For Reich, the married biological family must be abolished to make way for the 'economic collective'. He – and in this he is disastrously joined by at least one Catholic spokesman on marriage⁶ – subscribes to the absurd thesis known as the 'evolutionary theory of marriage': a theory which denies that there can ever have been a time when marriage properly so-called was universally recognised as the sole form of sex-relationship appropriate to man (even if the obligations of monogamy and indissolubility may often still have been ignored). Of course, had man's primitive condition been one of complete sexual promiscuity, he could never have emerged from it. Moreover,

⁵ available here: <http://senatorkatherinezappone.ie/>

⁶ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVKadiN0eIU>. Note that this view is impossible to square with Christ's words concerning Genesis and the indissolubility of marriage "from the beginning" (Matthew 19.6-9) or with the idea that marriage is a genuinely natural institution – part and parcel of man's rational nature. See also the Catholic Encyclopaedia on this.

why all the prohibitions on incest in primitive societies? Yet on this understanding, ‘primitive man’, without any teaching or natural law precepts of marriage, suddenly by means of ‘pair-bonding’ comes up with, against some of the most powerful passions known to man, traditional marriage! This theory, I am thankful to say, was not defended by the Proposition.

Gay parenting

In essence, Senator Zappone is attempting, along with her powerful financial backers, to have Irish society embark on a momentous social experiment – one at least as momentous as the one attempted by the sorry figure of Wilhelm Reich. For while Zappone does not link marriage intrinsically with children, in her talk and summing up she was quite open in praising ‘gay parenting’ (as was Max K.) and in telling us how children of same-sex couples are in no way deprived compared to children of opposite-sex couples to both of whom they are biologically related. Both she and Max K. cited the kind of ‘evidence’ on which the recently debunked American Psychological Association briefing on the matter relied.⁷

Patricia Morgan has noted that the scholarly discourse concerning gay and lesbian parenting poses a challenge to the purported benefits of being raised in biologically-intact, two-parent heterosexual households. She writes, “If, despite the diminished context of kin altruism, homosexuals are able to raise children efficiently then it means that homosexuals are able to do something that heterosexuals in step-parenting, cohabiting and lone adults contexts have themselves not been able to do...” Even adopted children’s outcomes inevitably deviate to some extent from those of biological offspring of intact families.

But of course, the evidence does *not* support the claims of gay parenting promoters, as Morgan herself does much to show. Underlying all the propaganda and citation of methodologically worthless papers is, in fact, a deep rejection of the biological family. Sometimes this will take the form of supporting, not gay adoption, but the use of donor eggs or sperm to produce a child. On the latter, the philosopher J. David Velleman notes that the new ideology of the family has been developed for people who want children but lack the biological means to ‘have’ them in the usual sense. The new ideology says, in Velleman’s words, “that these children will have families in the only sense that matters, or at least in a sense that is good enough.” However, he points out, “it has turned out to be less than enough for any adopted person who goes in search of a biological family.”

Velleman notes that the new ideology of the family damages children⁸, for with gamete donation where a child will not be parented by one or both of its biological parents this is not

⁷ See Loren Marks’ article in *Social Science Research* at <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0049089X12000580>, and also Patricia Morgan’s forensic exposure of the egregiously low academic standards of propagandistic ‘peer-reviewed’ papers claiming that ‘gay parenting’ can replicate the optimal childrearing environment of married, biological-parent homes (*Children As Trophies: Examining the Evidence on Same-Sex Parenting*, at www.christian.org.uk/pdfpublications/childrenastrophies.pdf). It is also necessary to ask whether same sex marriage necessarily involves the same intentions of exclusivity as heterosexual marriage. The fact that same-sex couples are more promiscuous than heterosexual couples is noted by therapist Rick Fitzgibbons: “one of the largest studies of same-sex couples revealed that only seven of 156 couples had a sexual relationship which was totally monogamous. Most of these relationships lasted less than five years. Couples whose relationship lasted longer incorporated some provision for outside sexual activity.” http://www.mercatornet.com/articles/view/same_sex_adoption_is_not_a_game. We should also note that gay marriage campaigner Andrew Sullivan has written that gay partnerships, with their “necessary honesty” and “flexibility” (i.e. tolerance of infidelity) could “positively influence” the “stifling” norms of heterosexual married couples.

⁸ On the effects of gamete donation on the offspring conceived, see the accounts in *Who Am I? Experiences of Donor Conception*, and also the report *My Daddy’s Name Is Donor*, available at www.familyscholars.org.

“a disadvantage that its custodial parents volunteer to mitigate; it was the desideratum that guided them in creating the child, to begin with. Not being attached to a partner with whom they could be fertile, they needed a child who was correlatively unattached, a child already disowned by at least one of its biological parents. Rather than adopt a child whose ties to its biological parents had been ruptured after conception, they intentionally created one for whom those ties were ruptured antecedently. This choice would be morally problematic if biological ties were genuinely meaningful. Hence the need for an ideology that denies their meaning.”

Of course, gay parents who use gamete donors *don't* seem to think that biological ties are entirely meaningless. After all, usually one or other partner wants to ensure precisely that they have a biological tie with their social child – even as they deprive that child of a social tie to the other biological parent. As with gay marriage, the rights of adults here are, it seems, what ultimately matters.

Student reactions

None of these points - not one - was actually addressed by the Proposition or by the crowd of young Irish students who overwhelmingly supported the Proposition. The latter, befuddled by the sexual revolution of yesteryear, failed not only to understand the analogies, but even to understand what analogies are. Yet the anger in the hall and the hostility expressed toward the Opposition (even more vehemently toward Brendan O'Neill than toward myself) was something to behold. Being young Irish students they had, however, no malice - and in fact outside of the auditorium I found the formerly outraged students courteous and pleasant and charming.

What was behind their reaction? In the end, as I said in my speech, we are faced with a new image of the person – one where sexual differences and biological ties are robbed of all meaning, and marriage and the family lose their status as the foundational unit of society. As David Crawford puts it:

“the liberal model effectively shifts the ground of society away from the sexual correspondence of man and woman (and all that their sexual difference implies) and toward a system of “alternative orientations.” But the anthropological dualism implied by this shift, as well as the reduction of “sexual orientation” to indifferent alternatives, belies the fact that the liberal model entails a basically “gay” (and disintegrative) anthropology. It merely grafts the possibility for “heterosexuality” onto the anthropology as one of its variations. Thus, the anthropologically fundamental starting point of the sexual otherness of man and woman is in fact no longer available; it is replaced by one of the possible “orientations” – so-called “heterosexual marriage” or “opposite-sex marriage,” which has at its core the very amorphous concept of “emotional commitment.” The liberal movement for an extension of the right to marry to “same-sex partners” is therefore a tacit step toward the anthropological nullification of sexuality and gender altogether. Whatever the new right to marriage would be, the one thing it cannot be is a mere extension of the same right...the liberal model is inherently unstable because it contains an internal contradiction: first, it asks for assimilation into the existing institution of civil marriage, but, second, its basic anthropology radically subverts or evacuates the meaning of that institution.”

Given such a situation, it is perhaps unsurprising that those seeking to impose a new and incoherent anthropology are violently intolerant of opposition to their cause. Brendan O'Neill gave a depressing

list of examples of the intolerance of the gay-marriage advocates⁹ and did so with wit, verve and a certain amount of bravery. As someone not committed to traditional sexual morality or Christianity (he is, for example, an advocate for highly permissive laws on abortion) he nevertheless identified how the same-sex marriage campaign has denigrated various parties in the name of Identity Politics – the kind of politics that never explains and always ends up persecuting. For O’Neill, the whole campaign is elitist – supported, for example, by people like Lloyd Blankfein of Goldman Sachs - and effectively flattens the cultural landscape, making impossible a real diversity of lifestyles.

He told an astonished audience of:

“the indifference to ordinary people’s experiences. We often hear that gay marriage is about elevating gay relationships – but it is far more obviously a denigration of traditional marriages.

You can see this most clearly in the government’s proposal to airbrush certain words from official documentation: words like husband, wife, father, mother. Yesterday we learned that the NHS is excising the word “father” from a policy document, so as to not offend same-sex couples. But these words have profound meaning for millions of people. They are longstanding cultural and social identities that people have invested entire lifetimes in. What message do we send to mums, dads, husbands and wives when, Orwellian style, we cavalierly cast aside their titles?

The gay-marriage issue is giving the state extraordinary leeway to interfere in married and family life, which have traditionally been considered no-go zones. Yes, the state brokers marriage, but it does not define its meaning and its purpose – that is a social, communal, cultural creation. Gay marriage is allowing the state to redefine and rename our relationships, to flatten out and homogenise every human relationship and turn us all into “partners” – that soulless word which is never used by normal people to describe their relationships, only by cut-off bureaucrats.

What we have in the gay-marriage issue is elitism disguised as equality. Strip away the self-flattering civil-rights garb, and you can clearly see a top-down campaign which demands conformism, which demonises cultural difference, and which invites the state further into people’s private lives.”

O’Neill ended by reminding the audience that the early gay rights activists were against things like gay marriage, but that now, in an era where Identity Politics has replaced the politics of ‘liberation’, there has been a shift from demanding *freedom* from the State to demanding *recognition* from the State. In closing he said, and the audience throughout the evening bore out every word of it, that there now seemed to be a kind of therapeutic neediness, a clinginess, born of the insatiable demands of lifestyle identity cultivation.

Brendan O’Neill’s analysis of what was going on the audience, and perhaps amongst Irish youth more generally, was spot-on. Although the philosophical, and even some historical, differences between us two opposers of the motion ran deep (I would urge O’Neill to read writers like Ann Farmer on the top-down imposition of abortion, for example), O’Neill certainly possessed a good historian’s sense of some of the main forces in operation in conformist crowds. His speech, a breath of fresh air, was met with an anger and bafflement that surprised even him – yet his central points about the same-sex marriage campaign were amply demonstrated by the Proposition speakers and the vast majority of the

⁹ For a summary of a learned assessment of likely outcomes of gay marriage legislation for conscientious objectors see <http://www.c4m.org.uk/downloads/legalopinionsummary.pdf>. The indifference of gay marriage advocates to the fate of conscientious objectors is, of course, to be expected when we are dealing with an attempt to abolish an institution in the name of a new conception of man.

audience (which he later, quite accurately and again bravely, accused of being in the grip of “adolescent narcissism”).

It had been a long evening and the organisers had done a grand job. I spoke at some length with Max K. afterwards over drinks with him and his gay partner. When I mentioned the ‘meaning’ of pregnancy and the importance of biology I was asked if I had empirical research backing up what I was saying. This is where the new anthropology leads us. The idea that pregnancy might be a beautiful natural thing which has an inherent meaning expressing a remarkable and intimate bond was suddenly discounted, or seen as no more important than test-tube conception (a student who insisted on categorising himself as bisexual was later upset with me for saying that surrogacy was about being paid to bear and give away your own children!)¹⁰ Travelling around Ireland one often sees images of Our Lady with her infant Son Jesus. A world which denies such a fundamental bond any natural meaning (let alone a supernatural meaning) is one which cannot survive much longer – nor, perhaps, does it deserve to. For to deny these bonds, cast them off, means we live only horizontally, in the world of ‘partners’, devoid of those ‘trees of history’ on which new babies grow within their natural habitat. Destroy that habitat and your country dies. Destroy marriage and, in the words of that prophetic non-Christian DH Lawrence, someone who believed that we have ‘been there before’:

“you will go back to the overwhelming dominance of the State, which existed before the Christian era...Christianity made marriage in some respects inviolate, not to be violated by the State. It is marriage, perhaps, which has given man the best of his freedom, given him his little kingdom of his own within the big Kingdom of the State, given him his foothold of independence on which to stand and resist an unjust State....It is true freedom because it is a true fulfilment, for man, woman, and children.”

The youth of Ireland, so fresh and so vital, are swiftly losing their religion, and with it a large part of their reason. Casting off marriage will also, in one way or another, mean casting off the Church. And replacing the distinction between Creator and Created with a radical Manichean distinction between ‘spirit’ and ‘matter’, where sterile and unnatural sex is elevated and fruitfulness despised and persecuted, the youth of Ireland end up following those at war with the natural order, not dissimilar in some ways to the usurious bankers that have ruined their country.

As I moved to leave the charming students in the pub, an attractive and kind female student called me to one side and told me she had agreed with everything I had said. She struggled with her faith but still retained it. She had not voted on our side, however (indeed, only three students publicly identified themselves as on our side!)

Perhaps one day this student will marry and have children, in the way her Church so powerfully supports, or otherwise keep faith with a vision of life that understands the difference between being a parent and being a gamete donor, and in which the love and nurture of young human lives is seen as

¹⁰ I was also told that thanks to ‘homophobia’ (which of course includes opposition to gay marriage) “bodies were piling up” from the suicides of homosexual youths. There is no serious evidence for this kind of claim, and no effort to investigate complex causes of youth suicide, including in societies with very liberal attitudes towards homosexuality. There is, however, much evidence of the appropriation of various youth suicides, presented as the result of ‘homophobia’, to the cause of denaturing marriage. For evidence of how gay marriage activism can be combined with startling unconcern for the welfare of young people, I recommend reading the words of one of the most admired of all gay activists – someone held in the highest regard amongst the gay lobby: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-1311193/PETER-HITCHENS-Question-Who-said-Not-sex-involving-children-unwanted-abusive-Answer-The-Popes-biggest-British-critic.html>. With regard to the Church scandals condemned by Peter Tatchell, a female student from the LBGT group told me that the collapse of Church influence in Ireland had left a “moral vacuum” and that she saw a connection between this and the behaviour of that other group in rebellion against nature, the usurious bankers who have ruined Ireland.

more important than adult 'sexual rights'. Today, she is the exception among her peers – and we to whom much was given, have allowed this to happen in the country many of us think of as our spiritual home.

Postscript

The following week, the Society voted for a pro-abortion motion. That famous atheist Karl Marx once said to his daughter, "We can forgive Christianity much, because it taught us to worship the child." Even the old-style Marxists had their children.