Theology, and the Bible begins to fill a gap in Christianity's reflection on God's plan for our bodies, and is a significant step toward asking the initial questions in a vital conversation that is just warming up.

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1. Ruth Padawer, "The Humiliation Practice of Sex-Testing Female Athletes," *New York Times*, June 28, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/.

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Human Dignity and Bioethics: From Worldviews to the Public Square

edited by Stephen Dilley and Nathan J. Palpant

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What is dignity? Does it exist or not? Is it intrinsic or extrinsic to persons? Universal and constant, or relative? Culturally bound or independent of time and place? Can dignity be defined? Can it be adequately grounded only in a religious conception, or can there be a broad secular understanding available to everyone? These are only a few of the questions raised in *Human Dignity and Bioethics: From Worldviews to the Public Square*, a book that can serve as a model for respectful dialogue on this contested issue.

Stephen Dilley, associate professor of philosophy at St. Edward's University, and Nathan Palpant, senior research fellow at the University of Washington's Institute for Stem Cell Research and Regenerative Medicine, present contributions that touch on several major aspects of the bioethical tradition. Well written and balanced, this collection offers multiple views on the nature of human dignity and its role in bioethics.

The book is divided into three sections: (1) "The Source and Meaning of Human Dignity in Worldview Context" examines various perspectives on dignity; (2) "The Politics, Law, and Science of Human Dignity" considers law and policy and concludes with the influence of Darwin's work on conceptualizations of dignity, and (3) "The Rhetoric of Human Dignity in Bioethics" turns the reader's focus to specific issues, including reproductive technologies, human embryonic stem cell research, end-of-life issues, and psychotropic drugs.

In the book's introduction, "Human Dignity in the Throes?," the editors lay out some fundamental ethical issues: "In the end, this volume faces hard questions. Is dignity a vacuous notion? Or is it an inviolable feature of human nature? How do the nature, scope, and meaning(s) of human dignity change when contextualized in postmodern, naturalistic, or theistic worldviews, respectively? Is dignity a crucial ethical concept that ought to govern bioethical policy? Or is it simply a distraction that is best cast aside?" (7).

The essays that follow present cogent responses to these questions, and for most of the authors in this volume, the answer to the question about the existence and importance of dignity is a formidable yes.

David Calhoun's "Human Exceptionalism and the *Imago Dei*: The Tradition of Human Dignity" traces the concept of dignity from the ancient world to the present, showing how

its interpretation has changed and deepened over time. He begins with the ancient Roman *dignitas* of social rank and Aristotle's "great-souled" man (20–21), before moving through the Judeo-Christian understanding of human exceptionalism and the *imago Dei* (25) as well as Aquinas's linking of personhood, agency, and dignity. The essay then turns to the more secular definition of dignity that emerged during the Renaissance and came under attack in modernity. Calhoun finishes with an examination of contemporary efforts to reclaim dignity and institutionalize it in international codes in the wake of the atrocities committed during the Second World War.

Part 1 begins with "A Catholic Perspective on Human Dignity," by Christopher Tollefsen, which relates the Roman Catholic tradition of dignity to the need for a comprehensive philosophical and theological anthropology. Tollefsen cites both the social justice encyclicals, beginning with that of Leo XIII, and the more recent writings of John Paul II, which ground dignity in our source, nature, and destiny (50). He addresses specific bioethical issues from a Catholic perspective, including life issues, reproductive technologies, and the right to health care.

Striking a similar tone, Paul Copan's "A Protestant Perspective on Human Dignity" also begins with the creation of persons in the *imago Dei* and explicitly addresses the metaphysical foundations of dignity, identifying biblical theism as "the most fruitful metaphysical grounds for affirming human dignity" (67). Copan taps into an ecumenical tradition, citing Aquinas, the Second Vatican Council, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Max Stackhouse. Noting that we are divine image bearers, he characterizes suffering not as an absolute evil to be avoided at all costs but as a vehicle for redemption to be born with Christ when we cannot avoid it.

Mark Dietrich Tschaepe's "Postmodern Perspectives on Human Dignity" approaches the question of dignity from a perspective that rejects all grand narratives but insists that dignity need not be dismissed in a postmodern worldview. Tschaepe draws attention to the vital importance of empathy when confronted with suffering. Not surprisingly, he concludes with a pluralistic view of dignity as a functional concept revealed in local narratives.

Richard McClelland takes a different secular approach in "Dignity for Skeptics: A Naturalistic View of Human Dignity." Reviewing both general biological, neurological, and behavioral research, he seeks to bring dignity out of the philosophical realm in order to understand and define it in biological terms. He writes that dignity "is not some mysterious property of individual human beings but rather a shorthand term for a complex dynamical reciprocity that subserves the primary biological aims of promoting social cohesion and cooperation" (119).

Part 2 moves from the theoretical to the pressing practical issues of dignity at the national and international levels. In "International Policy and a Universal Conception of Human Dignity," Roberto Adorno examines how the concept has come to be enshrined in international law and considers the "cultural challenges that arise from the adoption of universal or transcultural understandings of human dignity" (127). Tracing the influence of major documents, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Nuremberg Code, Adorno charts the manner in which "human dignity acquired the status of an *overarching principle*, that is, of an ultimate and general standard that is called to guide the normative regulation of the whole biomedical field" (132, original emphasis). This chapter is particularly valuable when discussing cultural diversity and the allegation that dignity and rights are predominantly Western notions imposed on Eastern cultures. Adorno explicitly addresses claims of a cultural relativism that would deny the universality of human rights as ultimately incoherent.

Carter Snead, in "Human Dignity and the Law," moves the legal discussion from the international arena to American soil in his discussion of the nature of American public bioethics (143). He explicates the common distinction between dignity as *contingent* (present when certain human functions

are present, such as consciousness and rationality) and *intrinsic* (present at all times regardless of functional activity, an "absolute property possessed by individuals simply by virtue of their status as human beings" [146]). In doing so, Snead shows how this distinction influences American jurisprudence on abortion, embryonic stem cell research, and end-of-life decisions.

The last chapter in this section, "Prospects for Human Dignity after Darwin," by David Calhoun, addresses how the Darwinian heritage has been marshaled to attack human dignity at its roots by replacing traditional philosophical anthropology with an atheistic evolutionary perspective that defines human beings as merely highly evolved animals on an evolutionary *continuum*. Calhoun describes these positions and considers how human dignity might be conceptualized after Darwin, either through a wholesale rejection or segregation of Darwinism, on the one hand, or through a reconceptualization of Darwinism that is not beholden to materialistic thought. He argues that the best approach acknowledges the facts of evolution and "is some form of emergentism; an acknowledgment that human beings are indeed animals, but animals of a very special sort. Principle-apprehending animals, philosophizing animals, science-doing animals—that is to say, *human* animals" (186, original emphasis).

Part 3 takes the reader into the trenches, addressing specific bioethical conflicts. Audrey Chapman's "Human Dignity and the New Reproductive Technologies" examines the different positions on human embryos and reproductive autonomy. She argues that a better-defined notion of human dignity is needed and presents Martha Nussbaum's capabilities approach as a useful tool for considering dignity in this domain.

Scott Rae's very helpful contribution, "The Language of Human Dignity in the Abortion Debate," clarifies the manner in which dignity and rights language have been employed by both sides of the abortion debate. He reviews Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and nonreligious perspectives on dignity, examining how these views have been employed in legal arguments, including *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* in 1992 and *Gonzales v. Carhart* in 2007.

Nathan Palpant and Suzanne Holland begin "Human Dignity and the Debate over Early Human Embryos" with an overview of stem cell research, and apply Lennart Nordenfelt's four types of dignity to the debate on embryonic stem cell research. They ultimately argue that the rhetoric of human dignity is more divisive than helpful and should be abandoned. Instead, they establish the duty to heal (260) as a common starting point for dialogue, and encourage the examination of complicity and agency in moral actions where the fundamental question is, "When, if ever, is a moral agent complicit in the destruction of embryos that are used for stem cell research and therapeutics, and what does this do to an agent's self-respect?" (261). The authors seem to take it for granted that embryos will continue to be used and destroyed to obtain stem cells. Consequently, they turn attention away from any consideration of the moral status of the embryo, focusing rather on those who conduct and benefit from stem cell research. They ignore the Church's more nuanced approach to cooperation with evil, both in clinical medicine and in health care institutions

In "Human Dignity in End-of-Life Issues: From Palliative Care to Euthanasia," Thomas McCormick traces the struggle between human dignity and autonomy that has arisen in the end-of-life debate, concluding that "even though a theoretical appeal to dignity alone is inadequate to resolve differing opinions about clinical choices at the bedside or policy disputes about the range of options that should be allowed, we may nonetheless intuitively agree and tacitly accept that dying patients possess (universal) dignity and deserve respectful care at the end of life. One aspect of respectful care is an openness to support patient choices about the nature of the care they desire as life comes to an end" (281). Ultimately siding with patient autonomy, he leaves the door open to the possibility of endings other than natural death.

John Loike conceptualizes "The Evolving Bioethical Landscape of Human–Animal Chimeras" through species identity and

dignity. He also includes an extensive discussion on the ethical, legal, and scientific dimensions of human–animal neural and reproductive chimeras.

In the final chapter, William Cheshire considers the effects of contemporary neurotechnology on our understanding of dignity. In "Psychotropic Drugs and the Brain: A Neurological Perspective on Human Dignity," he examines the therapeutic power of psychotropic medications—anti-anxiety agents, antidepressants, mood stabilizers, and antipsychotics—to alter brain function. He also explores the expansion of this practice into cognitive enhancement, such as the use of neurostimulants like those prescribed for attention deficit disorder to enhance cognitive functioning in normal individuals, and the use of acetylcholinesterase inhibitors—Aricept (donepezil) and other medication for Alzheimer's disease—to enhance the memory of persons who do not have dementia. Here too the author points to the elusive nature of dignity (304) and the need for its further clarification. He enumerates several problems that arise when healthy people use these medications, including philosophical and neurochemical reductionism, questions of authenticity, and the medicalization of normal human functionality. He argues for the inclusion of dignity in neuroethical debates and cautions that "glimpses of human dignity will be ever present to those who search for them, oftentimes at moments of greatest human limitation and vulnerability" (321).

Among the book's strengths is its attempt to enter into constructive dialogue with the different opinions on dignity by highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of each perspective. Moreover, the authors' lucid presentation of complex scientific issues ensures that even readers who are new to the subject will come away with a basic understanding of key concepts.

Definitions of dignity have ranged from Ruth Macklin's famous dismissal ("Dignity Is a Useless Concept," 2003) to the living and enduring reality encoded in international human rights documents created after the Second World War. A related issue that the editors and authors do not take on directly, but that stands as a kind of shadow text, is the nature of science itself and its interaction with philosophical and religious tradition. This emerges in the preoccupation of many authors with defining human dignity. This notion of definition is ultimately a scientific one, the attempt to clarify a phenomenon and operationalize it in a manner that allows empirical measurement and study. Beginning discussions of dignity with attempts to define it places the argument on scientific turf, and those who argue for its existence and importance, particularly in religious terms, are saddled with a burden of proof if their positions appear to conflict with scientific rationalism. Before discussing dignity, however, we must begin with the nature of persons, those beings in whom dignity inheres and who, by their very existence, call forth our respect. Adorno writes, "It is true that human dignity is never clearly defined in international law. Such a thing would be as difficult as trying to define freedom, welfare, solidarity, or any other key social value. In any case, this lack of definition does not entail that dignity is merely a formal or empty concept or a purely rhetorical notion. It is not because it is too poor but because it is too rich that it cannot be encapsulated into a very precise definition" (130).

The conceptual richness of dignity reflects the infinite fullness of human beings, which, unlike chemical or physical concepts, can never be captured in a single, closed definition. Persons can be described in great detail, but never completely, partly because we do not know the future. Those seeking a clear-cut, closed definition of dignity set themselves up for ultimate disappointment. While some features of personhood are knowable by all who have access to reason, and more so for those who have access to faith, there remains an open-endedness that will forever defy closure. New technologies solve problems while simultaneously creating new ones, and only robust notions of the human person and his dignity can help us negotiate our way through complex aspects of bioethics.

The numerous authors in this collection have done us a great service by painting a nuanced picture of persons and ethics. In doing so,

they encourage us to explore bioethical issues in our own tradition and to be willing to listen to insights from others. Even if Catholicism ultimately rejects such insights, the Church's understanding of the person, bioethics, and her own mission will deepen in the process.

Adorno's conclusion on international policy will resonate with all who recognize the existence, importance, and value of human dignity:

> Precisely because bioethics is close to the most cherished aspirations of people, and since people are essentially the same in the United States and in Guinea, in France and Japan, it is not that difficult to identify some minimal standards that are valid worldwide. Human dignity plays in this regard a unifying role by reminding us that there are certain things that should not be done to anybody, anywhere (negative requirement) and that all human beings are entitled to some basic goods (positive requirement). From this perspective, human dignity is not only the ultimate conceptual ground for the recognition of equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family, but also the most valuable bridge between cultures that we have (141).

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The Great Partnership: Science, Religion, and the Search for Meaning

by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

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Many books reaffirm religious faith despite attacks waged in the name of science. *The Great Partnership*, by contrast, *unites* science and religion, showing how understanding the meaning of our lives depends on their compatibility.

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks was chief rabbi of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth from 1991 to 2013.The important distinction he makes at the outset of the book is this: "Science takes things apart to see how they work. Religion puts things together to see what they mean" (2). Hence we need *both* religion and science. "They are the two essential perspectives that allow us to see the universe" (2). Sacks frequently notes the ways in which contemporary atheists miss that fundamental compatibility; the straw men they knock down are nothing like the unified, coherent perception that derives from valuing both religion and science.

The Great Partnership is organized in three major parts: (1) God and the search for meaning, (2) why it matters, and (3) faith and its challenges. Sacks opens with two distinct stories of creation, one scientific and the other religious. He then explains that the different interpretations are not about scientific facts but about meaning. "The search for God is the search for meaning. The discovery of God is the discovery of meaning. … To be human is to ask the question 'why?'" (25). The opposition between atheism and religious belief is established very clearly: "Only something or someone outside the universe can give meaning to the universe. Only belief in a transcendental God can render human existence other than tragic" (30). Sacks goes on to say that *proving* anything is not the point, because "meaning is always a matter of interpretation" (32). "Science does not yield meanings, nor does it prove the absence of meanings" (38). An individual can live without meaning, but a society cannot. Sacks cites the example of Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl, who retained an element of human freedom and