

Out of the mouths of monsters

Generational genocide and designer genes

CONTRARY TO POPULAR MISCONCEPTION, Frankenstein wasn't a monster-- at least, not literally. Frankenstein was the monster's creator, a well-intentioned but fatally arrogant and ambitious scientist who sought to create life with his own two hands (and in movieland, the able assistance of Igor). It all goes horribly awry when Frankenstein's creation (a clever compilation of corpse components) does indeed come to life but develops a malevolent and murderous intelligence. The monster is a miserable, solitary creature who takes out his sufferings on the presumptuous humanity (embodied by Frankenstein) that dared spawn him so irresponsibly. Doc Frankenstein learns the hard way that, as the old B-movie cliché runs, there are some things man was not meant to tamper with. More significantly, the monster asks Frankenstein a question our society should ask of itself: who are we to sport with life?

As medical technology and methodology advance and the quaint notion of spirituality gradually recedes, people begin to think nothing of sporting with life, or the stuff thereof. Doctors toy with ways to genetically alter the very nature of unborn children, and self-proclaimed civil rights groups lobby for abortion to become commonplace. Life, in its earliest stages, is trivialized by science as manipulable-- and sometimes disposable-- and therefore, increasingly cheap.

The most disturbing element of some cultures' indifference to the sanctity of life is the killing of children, a phenomenon called to mind by the

recent discovery of a dead baby in the trash at a P.E.I. dump. Human beings are among the few creatures known to off their own offspring (though this child could just as easily have died naturally), and the line between expediency and immorality is often all-too-blurry when adults, in their finite wisdom, debate the rights of children-- both born and unborn. Children have been referred to by some as the last societal group whose oppression is regarded as acceptable, varying from culture to culture. In earlier years, and still in some places today, children would be killed because they were sickly, malformed, or simply of an undesired gender-- usually female. In many cultures, including North America, the termination of unborn children is becoming a more and more widespread practice, unborn life having been dehumanized as children and other types of people have been in the past-- and sometimes still are. Humanity has an unsettling capacity for rationalization.

Our tendency to selectively objectify life becomes all the more frightening in light of advances in genetics and reproductive technologies, as we gain the ability to reshape life as we see fit. Technology exists or is developing which allows doctors to determine the gender, physical

characteristics, even the probable sexual orientation of an unborn child. The temptation here is to tailor infants to our own subjective preferences, perhaps creating something better or worse than what they might have been, perhaps gradually phasing certain types of people out of society; if parents were told their child had a probable physical distortion or a

tendency to deviant sexuality, or if the child happened to not be the gender they wanted, it might soon be possible for them to alter (if not terminate) unborn children at their discretion. The potential for either quiet genocide or a cookie-cutter generation of engineered children is a darn scary concept.

It's generally unfashionable to have such qualms, though. The arguments for tampering with nascent life are hard to dispute: expediency, scientific discovery, and the freedom of adult individuals to act as they choose. It's difficult for people in authority (i.e. politicians) to dispute these concepts without fear of censure, the cold hard fact of it being that children-- let alone unborn children-- cannot vote. They hold no power. As women and certain racial groups once were, children are deprived of any control over their own destiny.

Some would argue that nascent life cannot be

proven to be life as we understand it, and as such is undeserving of life's privileges. As Frankenstein's monster asked, though, who are we to decide that? While no one can quantify or define life with indisputable exactitude, we are equally unable to determine what is NOT life. We tamper with creation, with existence itself, on the grounds of our own subjective and sadly limited perceptions-- and as such we play God, a role for which we are woefully inadequate. Exploring Europeans once deemed certain aboriginals they encountered to be animals, and hunted and killed them as such until they knew better. No matter how far we advance, are we in any position to arbitrarily define what life is and what forms of it should be respected?

Children are only among the most obvious and widespread victims of life's cheapening in the wake of scientific and social reforms. Abortion is rivalled in contentiousness by euthanasia (the "mercy-killing" of those deemed unfit to continue living) and the new issue of "doctor-assisted suicide." Everywhere you look, people are challenging the sanctity of life on the grounds of everything from individual freedom to cold expediency. Humanity should think twice before becoming too comfortable with playing God, lest we be called upon to accept the responsibilities of that role. Most importantly, we should respect and preserve the life we create. If society persists in the manipulation and termination of nascent life, we may discover too late that we have either become-- or created-- a monster.

Sean McQuaid,
Frankeneditor

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estimates off as fact. There is already enough inaccurate information passed off as truth by the press.

Rory O'Connor

X-Press,
Why is almost every xpress paper about gays, lesbians and bisexuals? I think you should leave these poor human beings alone. Although it may be a "hot topic" for your paper, enough is enough!!!

I also think that "queer" is a very offensive and rude word to use.
Just expressing my opinion!

Sincerely,
Tara

Dear Xpress Staff,
I read your last issue and, to say the least, found it very offensive. Lately your articles seem to center around gays, lesbians and homosexuals. I have no problem with this but the huge headlines reading "Queer" were a little much. Leave those poor people alone!

A concerned student,
Carla.

And in this corner...

In response to the GLBQ Supplement March 15, 1994.

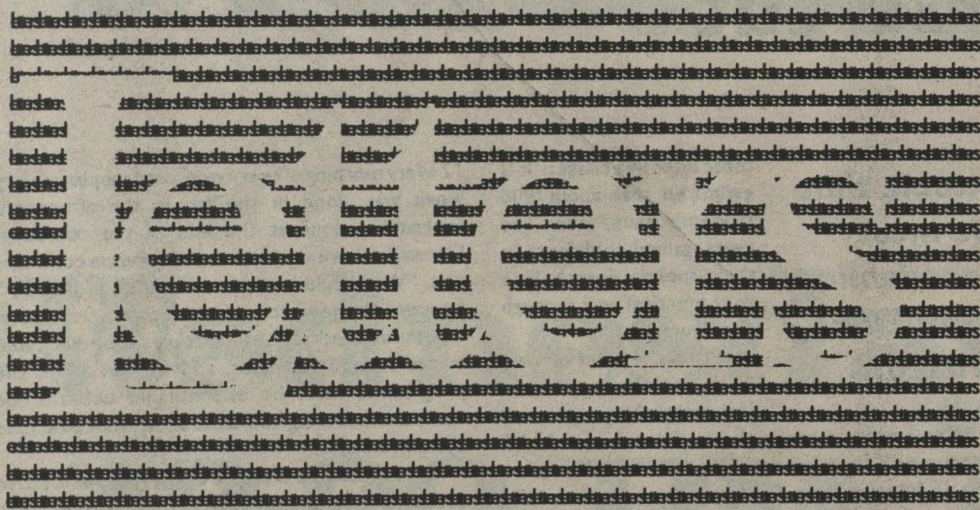
I am a white male homosexual. I am a senior attending UPEI. I can't possibly tell you how relieved I am that there is a feeling of acceptance regarding homosexuality throughout the University Campus.

I have never asked for anyone's acceptance regarding my sexuality. I do not and will not attempt

to justify who I am and/or what I do with my life. I do not need, nor am I asking for anyone's approval. I care very little what people think or have to say regarding any person's sexuality.

I do not condemn heterosexuals based on their sexuality, so I suggest to heterosexuals who bash verbally or physically that they should simply back off!!! Do heterosexuals have to explain why they are heterosexual? Do heterosexuals have to justify themselves or ask for acceptance because of their sexuality? When a heterosexual can explain to me why he/she is heterosexual, then I "may" attempt to explain why I am a homosexual. It appears that heterosexuals are often too willing to judge homosexuals. Who assigned them authority to judge? I suggest that heterosexuals clean up their own backyards before they judge homosexuals based on their lifestyles. It is not homosexuals who are responsible for the high rate of rape in our culture; it is not homosexuals who are responsible for the high rate of battered women in our culture; it is not homosexuals who participate in incestuous relationships with children. In fact, it is heterosexual men who are primarily responsible for these crimes. Heterosexual men rape, beat their wives and girlfriends, and molest their nieces, nephews, neighbouring children, and yes, even their own children. The next time "you" heterosexuals decide to judge homosexuals, "you" had better make sure that "your" own backyard is clean. It has been suggested in the GLBQ Supplement, that "Attitudes toward homosexuality proved to be quite tolerant." I ask, who cares? I don't. A quote from the article The Dominant and the Muted from Man Made Language, by Dale Spender, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1980, discusses tolerance. "Tolerance can only be exercised by those who are in power and it is often nothing but another means of protecting that power. Tolerance does not eradicate

continued on next page



"GLBones to pick"

TO THE "STAFF" OF THE XPRESS.
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON DOWN THERE??? A "QUEER" SUPPLEMENT??? AND THIS IS WHAT WE THE STUDENTS ARE PAYING FOR???

I HAVE SOME FREE ADVICE---GET A BLOODY LIFE-----QUICKLY! OR, BETTER STILL--RESIGN AND PUT UPEI OUT OF ITS MISERY.

THE X PRESS--THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER--WHERE???? THIS SO-CALLED EXAMPLE OF "STUDENT JOURNALISM" IS A CROCK!!!

P.S. YOU CAN PUBLISH THIS IN THE NEXT EDITION--PROVIDED THERE'S SPACE LEFT

AFTER YOU PUBLISH YOUR WEEKLY TRASH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Junior Gallant

Dear Editor,

I had one problem with your GLBQ supplement. Under the population section it is written that "The actual estimated population is between 13 and 15 thousand (using the fact that 10 per cent of the general population is homosexual)." I am sure the writer meant to use "estimate" as opposed to "fact". A fact is something proven to be true. The percentage of the population which is homosexual may only be estimated, based on results of surveys. Personal surveys are rarely accurate.

Perhaps in the future, writers will not pass