

Book Reviews

Slanted: How the News Media Taught Us to Love Censorship and Hate Journalism, by Sharyl Attkisson, 320 pp, hardcover, \$17.39, ISBN-13: 978-0062974693, New York, N.Y., HarperCollins, 2020.

In the introduction to this book, Sharyl Attkisson aptly quotes several passages from George Orwell's *1984*. Readers will recall from that book that Winston Smith is a government records editor at the Ministry of Truth, the agency that is really all about lies that must be protected by depositing records of the past into the "memory hole."

She writes, "Our 'memory hole' is found in growing efforts to 'curate' or censor information in the news, ban certain facts, declare selected viewpoints illegitimate, cleanse media of particular accounts, and judge people and events of the distant past using today's evolving and controversial standards." Attkisson leads the reader through the degradation of journalism, beginning with selective omission of facts and circumstances to overt "spin," providing only that information that powerful interests see fit for the public to receive.

These actions have birthed "The Narrative." The goal of The Narrative is to embed chosen ideas into society to the point at which those ideas are no longer questioned, and when they are, the questioner or dissident is attacked and delegitimized. As many reading this review have experienced, we have seen this in printed, televised, and social media contexts. The hydroxychloroquine controversy is a case in point.

Regardless of issue, the powerful interests behind any given Narrative share several common beliefs: that they are smarter than you, they have a higher purpose than you do, and they don't trust you to draw your own conclusions, as they might be inconsistent with The Narrative.

In a remarkable ending to her introduction, Attkisson again invokes *1984* with examples of "doublethink"

and "doublespeak," citing the Ministry of Peace conducting war, the Ministry of Love deploying cruel punishment, and the Ministry of Truth falsifying historical records. She launches into current examples: "Fact Checkers codify slanted opinion, Myth Busters dispel truth, online *knowledge* is shaped by *agenda* editors, free speech is controlled by censors, the news isn't really the news, and you aren't the consumer, you're the product."

Attkisson is an award-winning journalist who hosts the Sinclair Broadcast Group TV show "Full Measure with Sharyl Attkisson." She resigned from CBS News in 2014 after 21 years with the network, and subsequently wrote *Stonewalled*, a book in which she alleges that CBS failed to properly cover President Barack Obama's scandals or controversies. *Slanted* starts in the late 1990s when she was an investigative journalist and began noticing that assignments were given with a preconceived conclusion, such as "Do a story on why Steve Forbes' flat tax won't work." This editorializing progressed to entire pieces, such as her in-depth research into the impact of the minimum wage rates being edited, cut, and ultimately not run, as her reporting didn't fit The Narrative.

Central to the book are its examples of verbiage and phraseology the reader should recognize as slanted, and the desired effect they invoke. Prime examples are the words "lies" vs. "gaffes." Attkisson quotes articles using those words when commenting on statements made by now former President Donald Trump, and now President Joe Biden. Trump tells "lies." Biden suffers from "gaffes." Besides "lies," other words used in The Narrative against Trump were "without evidence," "in spite of evidence," "unsubstantiated" when there were supporting documents, and "in an effort to..." when leading into a report of an action.

The book has summaries of shocking examples of media malpractice, such as spinning the Russia-Trump collusion story; lack of coverage of Clinton

Foundation funds, Biden's questionable interactions with Ukraine, the Horowitz report on the FBI, and falsified use of polls in order to shape opinion.

Her conclusion is that today true journalism is hard to find, and media have devolved into "character assassinations, assaults on factual reporting, dishonesty, and attempts to silence entire lines of thought." One can substitute the word propaganda for narrative, and the implications for an informed and free society become evident for any student of history. Orwell's *1984* is here with increasingly bold corporate and government strokes.

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S.N.A.F.U.: A Medical Satire, by Brian D. Kent, M.D., 296 pp, paperback, \$18.95, ISBN 978-1-63302-164-8, Total Publishing, 2020.

S.N.A.F.U. is a contemporary novel declared to be medical satire as written by Brian D. Kent, M.D. The story takes place in the fictitious Snaford University Jewish Hospital, a name well chosen for the kind of historically altruistic institutions now transitioning under the modern corporate structure of market dominance.

The story line exemplifies the contemporary physician-adverse medical corporate developments possible under corrupt administrators, who self-servingly negate the founding altruistic humanitarian services once provided under independent physician, university, and religious foundation leadership. Dr. Kent is a plastic surgeon who draws upon decades of personal medical practice experience to produce a thought-provoking expose of hospital corporate and despotic administrative power usurpation. This megalomania commonly results in degradation of humanitarian

medical services in order to serve profit and power.

The engagingly realistic storyline, with many sub-plots, focuses on the power of corporate hospital administrators as “physician employers” whose paychecks buy leadership and loyalty, and who disrupt physician control by proxy manipulation of hospital bylaws.

One criticism may be the novel’s failure to delve into the multiple additional, very significant corrupting factors in modern corporate-controlled medical practice, such as government controls, constraints imposed by state medical boards, non-physician “provider” practices, and the certification industry’s influence.

While Dr. Kent describes this book as a medical satire, he clearly draws his material from the reality of his specialty practice. He places heavy emphasis on corporate control, exposing their interlocking board directorships’ intrusions upon patient-physician relationships. The book is so reality-based that if it were not fiction, it would need to “change names to protect the innocent.”

Particularly relevant is Dr. Kent’s description of the organized-crime-style slanders, and the physical attack arranged by the hospital administrator on one independent physician who had the courage to oppose the administrator’s programs. This aspect of the story line is closely based on the real story of Dr. Michael Fitzgibbons,¹ who was actively and illegally attacked by a corrupt hospital administrator, threatening his livelihood and his very life. Despite the \$5.7 million awarded to him in Orange County, California, his practice and years of life were still taken from him.

The book’s sub-plots are very like those I experienced during my many years of hospital-based anesthesia practice. Medical student applications, residency training, and retirement are all here, and thought-provoking for anyone considering going into medicine in 2021. These topics make *S.N.A.F.U.* a must-read for pre-med students to help them prepare for the modern “business of medicine.” They won’t find this in their regular medical training.

The book provides a starting point to foster needed discussion of the economic, political, and moral intrusions on medical practice that significantly affect physicians and patients in 2021. I recommend

this book to every politician, patient, and physician, especially physicians considering relocation of hospital affiliations or becoming hospital employees. This book is hard to put down until you’ve read all its 284 pages.

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REFERENCE

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False Positive: A Year of Error, Omission, and Political Correctness in the New England Journal of Medicine, by Theodore Dalrymple (Anthony Daniels), 239 pp, hardcover, \$25.99, ISBN 9781641770460, New York, N.Y., Encounter Books, 2019.

This survey by one of the great physician writers/philosophers/social commentators of our time opines that the *New England Journal of Medicine* is a purveyor of politically correct and scientifically unreliable articles on a regular basis.

Psychiatrist Anthony Daniels, who writes under the pen name Theodore Dalrymple, has authored more than 30 books and more than 1,000 essays on medical, cultural, legal, philosophical, and foreign affairs issues.

Dr. Daniels explains: “I was encouraged to write this book after my nephew, who is a medical student in Paris, asked my help before the examination that he was about to take in the proper, critical way to read a medical research paper.”

Dr. Daniels says that the sources of medical journal errors are “multitudinous and range from carelessness to dishonesty, from wishful thinking to outright corruption, with everything in between.”

The goals of his project were to “alert readers to the sickly self-righteousness that seems to me to have infected the *New England Journal of Medicine*, contracted no doubt from the wider culture,” and also “to attune them to the ambiguities of the medical research that are inescapably ethical in nature.” He says he hopes that

readers “will come to see how complex and difficult medical research is, and how they should remain skeptical of medical findings reported in the general media.” Here are some highlights of his reviews of articles published in 2017.

In January issues, *NEJM* failed to identify the known cause of the cholera epidemics in Haiti in 2010 and 2011 that killed 10,000 people. Nepali troops introduced the disease as members of a UN rescue mission. In a follow-up, Dr. Daniels relates that the actual mortality figures for the Haiti cholera event were underestimated by as much as eight times. Also in January, an article failed to clearly identify relative versus absolute benefits of colonoscopy in identifying colon cancer and preventing colon cancer deaths. This basic methodological failure resulted in exaggeration of benefit, no doubt because the authors were advocates of colonoscopy screening.

A February article contained poorly developed discussions about opiates and the problem of opiate addiction and overdose deaths in the context of the obligation of physicians to manage pain. Another promoted the justification of cannabis use based on what Dr. Daniels considers inappropriate advocacy of the idea that the goal of life should be self-indulgence.

A March article features the precautionary principle, which Dr. Daniels criticizes as an irrational approach to risk management, and the ever present plaintiff attorneys who advocate a public policy that accepts zero tolerance for risk. Considering an article on drug dependency and rehabilitation, Dr. Daniels criticizes addiction and rehab “expertise” as being too much loaded up with “psychobabble.” A third article, a critique of the advocacy of prostate-specific antigen (PSA) screening, revisits the questionable outcome benefits of PSA screening and the resultant commitment to treatment.

Dr. Daniels takes down an April article on “global warming” health effects, which commits the usual scaremonger deception of ignoring the health and mortality benefits of warmer weather and emphasizing a set of exaggerated claims about how warming will harm.

From May issues, the author exposes three articles: one advocating the transgender agenda, and two providing

inappropriate and poorly framed discussions of treatment of asthma and heart failure. Dr. Daniels shows that much of what is published is advocacy that ignores the uncertainties of the claims and the evidence.

He takes on June articles with political agendas on addiction, socioeconomic factors in health, the advantages of primary care as opposed to specialty access, and health benefits for the incarcerated. He also revisits his criticisms of researchers in matters of air pollution, and exposes the junk epidemiology that supports the air pollution campaign. He explains the deceptions of researchers who claim air pollution deaths in the service of politics while ignoring basic epidemiological rules on proof of causation.

Dr. Daniels dissects a July article on obesity effects and the costs of marginally beneficial treatments.

August articles are the subject of an excellent discussion on the assessment of the literature and researchers' claims about the reasons for the decline of rheumatic heart disease, and the problem of good medical and public health policy for lifestyle diseases like Hepatitis C.

September articles feature the widely promoted claims by proponents of socialized medicine about the inferiority of American medical care, which Dr. Daniels debunks.

For October *NEJM* articles, Dr. Daniels provides a sensible discussion of questions about drug trials, the corporatization and bureaucratization of medicine, and gun control promoted as a medical rather than a political matter.

He discusses the flaws in two November articles—one on heart valves, the other on screening athletes.

For December issues, Dr. Daniels reviews and criticizes the continuing problem of cheating on epidemiology in medical research and the widely promoted and applauded claims of the genome project researchers.

Dr. Daniels concludes: "Insofar as the *Journal* expresses social attitudes they are all...politically correct.... The *NEJM* seems to me to be a manifestation of a dangerous tendency in our society, that of self-enclosure in an ideological laager."

The book debunks the medical chattering class in an erudite and scholarly manner. Dr. Daniels clearly shows that

medical journals, the bullhorn of academic and politically active medicine, function as another propaganda tool of the Left, and that they are not to be underestimated. Their biases are intentional, and they make a difference in the cultural battle. They deceive and promote bad public health and medical policies for political reasons. Plato called this "the noble lie," used by oligarchs to influence public opinion. In our time, it's Big Brother's thought control that Orwell called "newspeak" and "goodthink."

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The Camp of the Saints, by Jean Raspail, 6th ed, translated by Norman Shapiro, 341 pp, softback, Kindle, \$9.99, ISBN-13:978-1881780380, Petoskey, Mich., 2018.

This apocalyptic novel, originally published in French in 1973, tells of the surrender of Western Civilization to an unarmed invasion by shiploads of migrants from the Ganges. They are truly described as tired, poor, huddled masses, and wretched refuse. People who call for a stiffer enforcement of immigration laws have been referred to as having a "Camp of the Saints mentality."

Much of the book reads as though it could have been written from current publications in 2018, when it was re-released. A fictional pope took the name Benedict XVI, and is from South America, although from Brazil, not Argentina.

The book contains the author's foreword to the 2011 French edition with some very concerning comments. Evidently, the publication of the book just made it under the wire before the passage of a law that criminalized publication of any material that might be construed as "inciting discrimination, hate, or violence toward any individual or group of persons for reasons of their origins."

The author writes: "The world is controlled, so it seems, not by a specific single conductor, but by a new apocalyptic beast, a kind of anonymous, omnipresent monster, and one that, in some primordial time, must have vowed to destroy the Western world. It has no set plan. It seizes whatever occasions arise.... The phenomenon,

hard to believe, is a good two centuries old. Dostoevski analyzed it once upon a time."

In the novel, a French newspaper editor, whose tiny publication is apparently allowed to survive as a token of free speech, understood what was happening. He printed the progress of the Last Chance Armada of 99 ships as if it were on a battlefield, with pins placed to mark its advance. Egyptians had not allowed it to enter the Suez Canal, so that it had to turn south and make its way slowly around the Cape of Good Hope. The editor declined to use the word "war." "Truth" is the word that counts, he said. "Nowadays, nothing is as frightening as the truth. It's such a mysterious word. No one knows what's behind it. No one wants to. They avoid it. But it frightens them all the same."

The assault on the West, which had been proceeding long before the Armada set sail, was mostly nonviolent, except in a few instances, in which extenuating circumstances were always found so that the perpetrators went free. "Opinion was shaped to believe that racism in the cause of self-defense is the scourge of humanity."

Western nations, which ordinarily treated South Africa with contempt, tried for a time to persuade the Last Chance Armada that they should stop at that paradise. But the South Africans, who at the time still considered themselves to be a white nation with a black majority, refused to let the fleet land there, so it steamed on toward Utopia in the south of France. As the fleet headed north, the South Africans in a fit of charity brought it tons of provisions. The starving masses dumped them all into the ocean.

Raspail writes that the public was constantly assaulted with guilt. "Take the films, for example, all those films seen by millions and millions, based on massacres long since forgotten, and dug up after a hundred years for the sake of a cause. Blacks, Indians, Arabs, biting the dust, scene after scene. Wars of survival, but changed for the occasion into merciless attempts to impose the white man's rule. Even though, in the long run, the West lost them all." When there were no more flesh-and-blood soldiers left to hate, "they fell back on phantoms from the past."

Raspail's 1973 description of the

media certainly fits today: "Let's just talk about the media, so called, and the shameless way certain people, under the guise of freedom, took a tool meant for mass communication, twisted and warped it, and used it to bully the minds of the public."

Today, as then, Western Civilization is often conflated with the white race. But Western virtues and values can be embraced by people of all races. In one of the last chapters of the book, a small band of resisters is joined by a dark-skinned man from India, who said: "You don't know my people, the squalor, the superstitions, the fatalistic sloth they've wallowed in for generations. You don't know what you're in for if that fleet of brutes ever lands in your lap! Everything will change in this country of yours. My country now, too. They will swallow you up."

The man continued, "To my way of thinking, being white isn't really a question of color. It's a whole mental outlook. Every white supremacist cause—no matter where or when—has had blacks on its side. And they didn't mind fighting for the enemy, either. Today, with so many whites turning black, why can't a few 'darkies' decide to be white? Like me. I decided, and here I am."

While most people who lived in the south of France fled north as the Armada approached, contingents of what today might be called "social justice warriors" rushed to offer the migrants a brotherly welcome. The migrants were uninterested. They simply swarmed in and took over, trampling anything in their way, including a small band of confused monks who had long ago lost the faith.

This edition concludes with an afterword written by the author on the 25th anniversary of the book's publication. He writes: "What I cannot understand and which plunges me into an abyss of sorry perplexity, is why and how so many informed Frenchmen... contribute knowingly, methodically...—just say cynically—with the certain immolation of France...on the altar of an aggravated Utopian humanism." He continues: "I ask myself the same question in connection with all these omnipresent associations of rights to this, rights to that, and all these leagues, these think tanks, these subsidized headquarters, these networks from

manipulators insinuated into all the wheels of State (political education, judiciary, parties, trade unions, etc.), these innumerable petitioners, these correctly consensual media and all these 'clever' folks who day after day and with impunity inoculate their anesthetic substance into the still healthy body of the French nation."

A review in *The Atlantic* called this "one of the most disturbing novels of the late twentieth century." I believe that it is one of the most important books of our time, and is essential to read and to understand, although these days it is difficult to acquire in paper form. France is a little ahead of the United States, but perhaps not very far, in the loss of the faith and of the virtues that make Western Civilization possible. Its blessings to all mankind include reason, science, unparalleled prosperity, and the freedom that makes the flowering of all the arts conceivable.

Rudyard Kipling wrote: "East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet." But if the West stands down and merges into the "multicultural" flood, this book makes the case that the result will be the annihilation of the West.

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Darwin's House of Cards: A Generalist's Odyssey through the Darwin Debates, by Tom Bethell, 293 pp, paperback, \$21.46, ISBN-13: 978-1-936599-41-7, Seattle, Wash., Discovery Institute Press, 2017.

This extensively footnoted and indexed book is a highly readable discussion of the philosophical and scientific issues that have accompanied Darwinism since the beginning. It highlights logical fallacies such as assuming the truth of what the theory is supposed to prove.

I thought the most interesting chapter in the book was the one entitled "Common Descent: Fact or Theory?" Common descent from a single ancestor, Bethell writes, is mostly accepted as fact within the academic world. This means that there is a tree of life, and that life originated only once. As Richard Dawkins once said, we are the distant cousins of turnips.

Bethell quotes Dawkins: "The evidence...is that the genetic code is universal, all but identical across animals, plants, fungi, bacteria, archaea, and viruses. The 64-word dictionary, by which the three-letter DNA words are translated into twenty amino acids and one punctuation mark, which means 'start reading here' or 'stop reading here,' is the same 64-word dictionary wherever you look in the living kingdoms (with one or two exceptions to undermine the generalization)."

Dawkins wrote that if some weird creature were discovered that used a triplet code but not the same 64-word dictionary, it would suggest that life had originated at least twice. Any mutation in the genetic code itself would have an instantly catastrophic effect by specifying a different amino acid in just about every protein in the body.

J. Craig Venter, the biochemist who was the first to sequence the human genome, disputes the idea of a common ancestor. He points out that the bacteria mycoplasma has a different code; in fact, many exceptions to the code have been found.

"The tree of life is an artifact of some early scientific studies that aren't really holding up" Venter said. "So there is not a tree of life."

Topics that Bethell explores include the question of whether variation is indefinite or limited, the possible causes of homology, and the conundrum of convergence.

He discusses at some length the allegation that humans are causing the "Sixth Great Extinction." It is claimed that species are now being lost at 1,000-10,000 times the background (non-human-caused) rate. But as Bethell points out, the estimates of the number of species alive today range from 8.7 million to 1 trillion, and that 99 percent of all the species that ever lived may now be extinct. Details don't seem to matter. Bethell writes: "The great drive to indict the human race seems unstoppable."

Bethell believes that the widespread public acceptance of biological evolution in Darwin's day was probably a product of faith in Progress, of which Darwin himself was a leading apostle. But as the belief in Progress is rejected, faith in Darwinian evolution is likely to decline along with it. The worldview of Progress,

the belief that things are improving, is “disparaged by the environmentalists, the most extreme of whom think that humans are a plague on the planet.”

However, the pervasive acceptance of materialism, the “belief that mind is reducible to matter and that the universe consists of molecules in motion and nothing else,” still supports Darwinism, he writes. This idea, which began with the Greek philosopher Democritus and his Roman popularizer Lucretius, never died out and “was strongly revived by Charles Darwin and Karl Marx in the 19th century.”

Bethell does not mention the Amazon bestseller and popular book club selection *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern* by Stephen Greenblatt, published in 2012, a history of the revival of Lucretius’s book *On the Nature of Things*. The basis of philosophical modernity, in this view, is belief in the ancient notion that the universe is explained by the eternal random motion of particles. There is no need to explain the beginning if there was no beginning.

Bethell writes, “if materialism is true, then Darwinism—or something very much like it—must also be true.”

“At the moment, I believe the science of Darwinism amounts to little more than the ‘wedding’ of materialism and Progress.... But materialism is highly implausible and has been widely challenged. At the same time, it only takes one partner to break up a marriage, and as we now know, Progress has wandered off the straight and narrow. As a result, the breakup of Darwinism seems likely in the years ahead.”

So far, Darwinism seems to be prevailing, but this book at least shows that its dogma is by no means noncontroversial, and that its very foundations have been challenged, both scientifically and philosophically.

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Heretic: One Scientist’s Journey from Darwin to Design, by Matti Leisola and Jonathan Witt, 257 pp, paperback, \$16.06, ISBN-13:978-1936599509, Discovery Institute, 2018.

Matti Leisola is a bioengineer and former Dean of Chemistry and Material

Sciences at Helsinki University of Technology, who has published 140 peer-reviewed articles. He is an expert in enzymes and rare sugars.

Leisola began his career as a believer in *The Descent of Man* author Charles Darwin’s theory of the evolution of species. He reports becoming very angry when someone loaned him a book written by an Indian scientist who was critical of evolution theory, but the book raised questions that demanded answers not to be found in Darwin.

Much of Leisola’s attention is focused on theories of chemical evolution. For example, he critiques the “RNA world” in which ribozymes that not only store genetic information but can serve as biological catalysts led to a new origin-of-life scenario. The RNA world was supposed to be an important early step on the way from dead chemicals to living cells. However, he notes that there is no credible route to the formation of ribose in prebiotic conditions, and that once formed, ribose is a very delicate sugar. It reacts easily with proteins and tends to form chemical bonds with enzymes. In an unguided chemical evolution scenario, chemical reactions between ribose and amino acids would destroy any imagined proteins.

One problem with the famous Stanley Miller origin-of-life experiment, Leisola points out, is that the amino acids formed under presumed prebiotic conditions were a racemic mixture, with a roughly equal mix of left-handed and right-handed components. Evolution somehow needs a trick to get essential amino acids to form with all one orientation, through a blind natural process.

Leisola writes that for more than 40 years he has had numerous discussions both within and without the scientific community concerning the origin of life and the origin of species. “Practically all of the hundreds of scientists I know admit in private, confidential discussions that science does not have a clue where genetic language, proteins, cell membranes, metabolic pathways, cell control systems, and the basic body plans of organisms came from.... In spite of that, the only acceptable creation story is materialistic evolution.”

Leisola’s attempts to stimulate dis-

ussion in universities have constantly run into roadblocks. He writes: “The atmosphere in our universities is now completely different from that of the open discussions that were common in the ‘70s and ‘80s. Today, naturalism controls universities so completely that debates about the problems of evolution are rarely tolerated.” In 2000, Leisola translated *Evolution: A Critical Textbook* by Reinhard Junker and Siegfried Scherer from German into Finnish. One genetics professor declined the offer of a copy, stating that he did not read heretical books.

Even the Christian church, specifically Finland’s Lutheran Church, is unwilling to discuss the problems in evolution theory, apparently having surrendered the whole field of rational thinking and research to materialism. When Leisola spoke before the Finnish Bible Institute in the mid-1990s about the evidence for design, the rector of the institute said that in these matters, he preferred to listen to “scientists,” placing Leisola, despite his extensive work as a scientist, outside the field of science. The church even has a “lavish campaign” to attempt “to put a religious face on modern evolutionary theory,” calling it “theistic evolution.”

This thinking has consequences, he writes. For example, a survey found that “43% of Americans now agree that ‘evolution shows that no living thing is more important than any other,’ and 45% of Americans believe that ‘evolution shows that human beings are not fundamentally different from other animals.’” This clashes with the Judeo-Christian belief that humans are made in the image of God and possess inherent dignity and rights.

Leisola compares the theory of evolution to the concept of phlogiston, which was foundational to chemistry education from the 15th to the end of the 16th century, although the problems associated with it were observed a century-and-a-half before belief began to waver. The theory held that a mysterious substance called phlogiston was released from a burning substance. But as early as 1630, James Ray wondered why the oxide of tin was heavier than the starting material if burning had released phlogiston. Supporters of the theory reasoned that in some cases phlogiston could have a negative weight.

Antoine Lavoisier, the father of modern chemistry, observed: "Chemists have made phlogiston a vague principle which is not strictly defined and which consequently fits all the explanations demanded of it. Sometimes it has weight, sometimes it has not; sometimes it is free fire, sometimes it is fire combined with an earth; sometimes it passes through the pores of vessels, sometimes they are impenetrable to it. It explains at once...transparency and opacity, color and the absence of colors. It is a veritable Proteus that changes its form every instant!"

Like the phlogiston theory, the Darwinian theory of evolution is festooned with a myriad and growing number of patches, Leisola observes. "Evolution is slow and gradual, except when it's fast. It is dynamic and creates huge changes over time, except when it keeps everything the same for millions of years. It explains both extreme complexity and elegant simplicity.... It diverges except when it converges; it produces exquisitely fine-tuned designs except when it produces junk. Evolution is random and without direction except when it moves towards a target. Life under evolution is a cruel battlefield except when it demonstrates altruism. Evolution explains virtues and vice, love and hate, religion and atheism."

Leisola contends that faith is inescapable, as both the intelligent design of nature and the theory of the evolution "reach beyond the seen to the unseen, and each of us trusts in something that cannot be proved in the way one might prove that a person is hiding in the closet, or that a square one meter wide has a circumference of four meters."

"It is misguided and unfortunate," he concludes, "that in many universities, one can freely use theological arguments mixed with science to speak for atheism, while scientific arguments that count in favor of theism are considered to be insulting and bad for the reputation of the university."

Beyond the discussion about philosophical issues, I found that the book had much fascinating material about biochemistry and molecular biology.

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Live Not by Lies: A Manual for Christian Dissidents, by Rod Dreher, 240 pp, hard-back, \$27, ISBN-13: 978-0593087398, Sentinel, 2020.

Americans are very familiar with the huge genre of self-help books designed for the challenges and stresses of what we now consider normal living. This book is about how courageous people endured under the soul-crushing tyranny that Americans have been told about but believed could not happen here. This is the book you might need soon.

The title comes from Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's great call to "live not by lies"—to refuse to affirm anything one knows to be untrue—even at the price of exile.

Rod Dreher, a senior editor at *The American Conservative*, interviewed many people who once lived under totalitarianism. He asked them what they thought of an old Czech woman's statement that events in today's U.S. reminded her of when communism first came to Czechoslovakia. They all agreed with her. For decades, AAPS has been hearing the same warning from many immigrants from former communist countries.

"What makes the emerging situation in the West similar to what they fled?" Dreher asks. The most unnerving feature is that "elites and elite institutions are abandoning old-fashioned liberalism, based on defending the rights of the individual, and replacing it with a progressive creed that regards justice in terms of groups." Good and Evil are defined as a matter of power dynamics between groups—racial, ethnic, sexual, and otherwise. Progressives "seek to rewrite history and reinvent language to reflect their ideals of social justice."

In our "pre-totalitarian culture," he writes, the revolutionary vanguard is made up of young, educated, alienated social justice warriors (SJWs), wracked with guilt and anxiety over their own privilege. Unlike the hardened Bolshevik revolutionaries, they get their way, with some exceptions, by shedding tears instead of blood, but there are many parallels such as a belief that smashing old forms will liberate humanity. They are cultists devoted to the Myth of

Progress, and progressivism has become a religion.

For the sake of peace, it seems easy to accept the supposedly well-intentioned progressive prescriptions. Dreher quotes disillusioned Czech communist Heda Margolius Kovály: "Once you relinquish your freedom for the sake of 'understood necessity,'...you cede your claim to the truth. Slowly, drop by drop, your life begins to ooze away just as surely as if you had slashed your wrists; you have voluntarily condemned yourself to helplessness."

The transition from the soft totalitarianism of political correctness to a Soviet-style police state can be breathtakingly rapid, Dreher warns. "It only takes a catalyst like war, economic depression, plague, or some other severe and prolonged crisis."

The Bolsheviks hated the "Philistines": "the deplorable people who live out their daily lives without thinking of anything higher or greater." In contrast to them, the radicals were filled with a sense of purpose, community, and hope.

Once they become aware of the threat, what can Americans do? Dreher advises us to look for heroes, not victims—to study the insights of former Christian prisoners. He stresses the importance of believing in the evidence of your own experience, not in the imaginary world constantly portrayed by the media. The summary from his chapter headings is: "value nothing more than the truth"; "cultivate cultural memory"; remember that "families are resistance cells" and that "religion is the bedrock of resistance." The most important sanctuary for dissidents, he writes, was small communities—more important than samizdat or the ability to speak publicly.

Perhaps proponents of the "Great Reset" have studied this book: to keep us "safe" from COVID-19, authorities are limiting family and other gatherings, destroying churches, and enforcing "social distancing."

Americans must not be complacent, but heed Solzhenitsyn's warning: "All the evil of the twentieth century is possible anywhere on earth."

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