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TITLE INFORMATION

CONFRONTING SEXUAL NIHILISM

Traditional Sexual Morality as an Antidote to Nihilism

Kielkopf, Charles F.

Tate Publishing (380 pp.)

\$26.99 paperback, \$7.99 e-book

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BOOK REVIEW

An elaborate, prudish philosophical program for combating the moral meaninglessness of modern life.

Kielkopf, in his debut, painstakingly analyzes the ways in which he views the sexual permissiveness of our modern era to be at the root of a great deal of anomie. Concentrating exclusively on matters of sexuality, he claims that humans reach their personal bests only when embracing what he refers to as “traditional morality.” Kielkopf is well-versed in Kantian philosophy and echoes some of Kant’s precepts in the realm of personal responsibility: “The power of our sexuality is our power and we use it well or poorly,” Kielkopf writes. At the crux of his thesis is something he calls the Paternal Principle, by which men exclusively have monogamous sex with a single female partner solely for the purposes of procreation; only through the Paternal Principle can humans maintain “a proper moral character.” Conversely, Kielkopf claims that all deviations from this principle—infidelity, masturbation, recreational sex and homosexuality among them—are “immoral” and lead to “sexual failing.” A good portion of the book centers on homosexuality, a moral deficiency that offends Kielkopf; he advocates a “keep it in the closet” approach in which the subject returns to never being mentioned or discussed in public. The book offers few facts about sexuality but many proscriptions, and despite the Kantian trappings of Kielkopf’s treatise, readers may recognize most of those proscriptions from an entirely different source: the Bible. “Strictly speaking,” he writes, “this is not a Christian book,” but in almost the same breath, he writes, “I am writing to prepare the soil for re-introduction of the Gospel.” In fact, Kielkopf expounds what could be construed as a close approximation of old-fashioned Roman Catholicism—the book is dedicated to Pope Benedict XVI.

A scrupulously intellectual but enormously conservative program for restoring “traditional morality.”

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