

Body Worship

BY ROBERT AND MARY DARDEN

Behind the silicone breast implant industry and America's obsession with breasts, behind the dying women and industry cover up, is spiritual idolatry. Many men and women worship the false idol of an artificial sense of female beauty and a need for a culturally-mandated desirability. Christians should have no more part of it than we would of worshipping a golden calf.

In "I Sing the Body Electric" Walt Whitman writes, "If anything is sacred the human body is sacred. "Perhaps if someone today were to write such a poem it would be titled "I Sing of the Body Silicone."

A few years ago, we undertook a journey into the heart of darkness—to write an exposé of the silicone breast implant industry and America's obsession with breasts. Our agent soon found a publisher and we went to work.

We went places where we shouldn't have gone and talked to people we shouldn't have talked to. We discovered a 40-year cover-up of a very simple fact: silicone causes a long list of horrific problems when implanted in the human body. We also discovered how far some corporations will go to protect that information. Every doctor who reluctantly agreed to be interviewed by us was fired or forced to leave within six months—with one exception, and to this day that person is picked up each morning in a bullet-proof car. Our primary interviewee was twice driven off the road by unmarked cars, her house ransacked, her phone tapped, her children followed and videotaped.

We talked with dozens of dying women, each cursing their implants, their bodies wracked with silicone-induced Multiple Sclerosis, ALS, Lupus,

extreme chemical sensitivity, migraines, memory loss, behavior changes, scleroderma, and more.

We saw plastic surgeons made enormously wealthy by implanting silicone-filled bags into the chests of 16-year-old girls for birthday presents from their families. With his money, one surgeon built a giant swimming pool in the shape of a breast, with a Jacuzzi for the nipple.

We saw the ferocious backlash against the few organizations daring to speak out against this mad practice. Chemical companies spent billions in lawsuits and funding bogus studies. Major American medical journals abruptly quit printing articles on the harmful effects of silicone. Legitimate researchers, understandably, began to steer clear of the subject. No one was willing to fund additional studies in the face of such determined opposition. While many manufacturers were willing to fund “research” that indicated positive results, no one was standing in line to expose the truth about implants, silicone or “saline.” The truth that had first been exposed within the companies themselves was covered up again and again.

In the end, just weeks before publication, our book was scuttled, the victim of lawyers and multi-national corporations and that most basic of all human frailties, greed.

In trying to get the book printed, we spent seven years in litigation. We felt we owed it to the two million women in this country desperate for someone to believe them. We failed.

When it was all said and done, this is what we learned: America’s obsession with the size of the female breast is a corporate sin that damages and demeans not just a woman’s self-esteem, but often destroys her health as well.

If, as Christians, we are supporting even in the smallest way this preoccupation with one portion of the female anatomy, then we are part of a national problem.

Each time a Christian man comments admiringly on the size of woman’s breasts—whether she is walking down the street, appearing in a film or modeling in a Victoria’s Secret advertisement—he places unrelenting pressure on the women and girls in his life to aspire to an unreachable ideal. Each time a Christian woman buys an unrealistic doll for her daughter, she creates a subtle shame in the 99.99% of all women who don’t look like adult Barbies. The obsession negates terrific minds, wonderful personalities, and life-affirming senses of humor.

In short, we have fallen prey to a cult that worships a false idol.

The female breast is a wonderful thing. The worship of it in the popular culture is idolatry.

A Christian should have no more part of it than he or she would of worshipping a golden calf. And yet somehow we manage to force this practice to fit into the “acceptable” column. In doing so, we unconsciously

align ourselves with the few remaining cultures of the world who mutilate the female body for some perverted sense of power or control.

During the course of writing our book, we saw things we wished we'd never seen. We saw photos of surgeons extracting deflated implants (100% will leak within nine to eleven years) from chests covered with a powdery

“He has made everything beautiful in its time.” EVERYTHING. If men would remember this, they would not support women having their bodies mutilated. If women would remember this, they would not succumb to the pressure to tamper with God’s beautiful creation. We must teach our children well—boys and girls alike—so they will not become victims of this mad, obsessive idolatry.

green mold. We saw women with their fingertips amputated because the leaking silicone migrates to the extremities and causes gangrene. We saw shattered women refuse to talk to men because it was a husband who shamed her into getting implants, a male doctor who inserted the flimsy bags of silicone and ignored the pain and disease caused by the silicone, and a male doctor who eventually took them out, all at great cost.

We saw wonderful, witty, wise women fall into a state of chronic illness, paranoia and depression, *all because of breast size.*

Time and time again we asked ourselves how this could happen. In an educated, supposedly compassionate society, why is this allowed? Obviously, many people are still unaware of the profound health impact of silicone in the blood stream.

And as long as the chemical companies wield so much influence, this (and many other such insidious threats) will continue to tempt people.

Fortunately, the defense against such exploitation is in the Bible. Psalm 139:14 says, “I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”

Hear this: YOU are fearfully and wonderfully made. Every part of you.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 says, “He has made everything beautiful in its time” (NIV).[†]

EVERYTHING.

If men would remember this, they would not support women having their bodies mutilated for some artificial sense of beauty or need for a culturally-mandated desirability. If women would remember this, they would not be ashamed of their bodies and not succumb to the pressure to tamper with God’s beautiful creation. We must teach our children well—boys and

girls alike—so they will not become victims of this mad, obsessive idolatry.

On *Still on the Journey*, Sweet Honey in the Rock recorded a spiritual titled “No Mirrors in Nana’s House.” Our favorite lines tell how the singer felt beautiful in Nana’s house and saw beauty in all of God’s creations because she was beautiful to Nana. She didn’t need flawless skin, perfect teeth, or bleached blonde hair.

Perhaps there are too many mirrors in our society.

But more than likely, it’s not the mirrors that are the problem. The problem lies within us. Because we have focused on one aspect of the female frame, we have been caught in Satan’s oldest and craftiest snare. We have obsessed on a lesser good and let the greater good pass unnoticed.

The female breast is a wondrous thing. But so is every other part of the woman and the female anatomy—every part of the person—just as she was created.

Celebrate the breast, yes. But it is far more important to celebrate the heart that beats behind it and the person, chosen for eternal life, whom God loves more than life itself.

Sing the “body electric.”

But sing the *whole* body, the whole person, as it is fearfully and wonderfully made—the temple of the Holy Spirit, of God Almighty.

NOTE

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