

The Irregularity of God's Creation

"All things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

I have often wondered why God created such an imperfect world. Why are our physical bodies so imperfect, especially those with major congenital defects? Why are our mental capacities so limited? Why do our bodies age and die? Why do our brains process information so imperfectly, resulting in so much sin and evil? Why is there so much irregularity, ugliness and contrast in nature? Why do animals kill and eat one another? Why are there so many natural disasters? I'm sure each of you could come up with a list much longer than mine.

After much reflection, I have come up with two answers: (1) regularity is extremely boring, and (2) ugliness provides the seeds and fertile ground in which beauty can take root and grow. Without irregular shapes, it would be impossible to distinguish one beautiful person from another beautiful person. Without contrast, beautiful objects could not be distinguished from so-called ugly ones and be recognized as beautiful.

Here's a simple example. A curved line, some would argue, is more beautiful than a straight line. What creates this beauty is the bending of the line into an irregular shape. The irregular shaped grain of sand planted into the oyster provides the seed around which a more regular shaped pearl can form. The pearl looks all the more beautiful to us when contrasted with the irregular shape of the grain of sand from which it originated.

In my view, our earthly existence is like the irregular grain of sand from which our existence in heaven takes shape. It is counterintuitive, but true on many levels, that the ugliness of earth provides a backdrop that enhances and makes possible the beauty we experience heaven. This is not only true of physical beauty, but moral and ethical beauty as well. The trying and difficult circumstances of our lives enable us to develop moral and ethical qualities such as kindness, generosity, sacrificial love, gratitude, thankfulness, joy, peace, and patience. I'm sure each of you could come up with a list much longer than mine.