

THE QUAD

Spring 2008

of Grove City College



THE QUAD

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DEAR READERS,

We are pleased to present to you this, the second issue of The Quad. A great deal of hard work went into this publication, and we extend our most sincere thanks to all the faculty and student contributors who made it possible. We are also very grateful to the Grove City College administration for their continued support.

The variety of pieces in this magazine, whether essays, reflections, stories, or reviews, all express an earnestness towards living. We hope that you find them challenging and edifying but also enjoy them.

So it is with great pleasure and anticipation that we present the Spring 2008 issue of *The Quad*.

SINCERELY,



Rachel Lloyd
Senior Editor



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FAMILY LEGACY

SEAN O'ROURKE

The car engine hisses and ticks as my father and I make our way up the porch of our lime green cottage. It's late spring, but the air blowing off the lake is sharp and cool. We unlock the back door, greeted by the familiar worn furniture, old linoleum, and the faint smell of wood. When we finally reach the front porch and unlatch the storm shutters, we see that they have reached the end of their usefulness after twenty years, maybe more. Yet the failure of these shutters is no surprise: this is why we've come.

Since my grandmother and grandfather were married, my family has always had two things: this cottage and a determination to complete any task set before them. While my college mates are enjoying this break from exams by relaxing, I am here on the shores of Lake Erie to work. In one sense this is the way I've always known: the expectations of my family often kept me from joining my friends. When I was younger, my father dragged me through project after project, and though my hands are not nearly as skilled as my father's, they have shed the amateur's clumsiness. Admittedly, I would rather be somewhere else. I enjoy working with my hands, but my own attachment to ease and comfort often distracts me.

While I think jealously of my friends, probably out toasting their freedom from studies, my father and I share a heavy dinner of spaghetti and Labatt Blue. We eat mostly in silence with only short bits of conversation. In times like these I wish my father was more conversational, or that I was, or that we had more to talk about. Soon after we finish the meal, we head to our bedrooms—even if we are not yet tired. We have a lot of work waiting for us in the morning.

Before I drift off to sleep I start to think about my relationship with my father. When I was young we did many of the standard father-son activities—playing catch, learning to fish, batting practice, par three—but there was always some disjunction, a disharmony. I think now that my father felt out of place in many of those situations; he had no real interest in baseball or fishing and no great skill. So as I grew older my interest in those things waned. I developed a knack for wrestling, a sport that balances ferocity and finesse, but my father knew only the basics of the sport, though he always came to watch me compete.

We rise early and eat hastily, anxious to begin our job. With coffee still on our breath, we unload the tools and the new shutters that my father built to replace the old ones. They are skillfully made: sturdy, well-sanded, and painted with meticulous care. I run my hand over an edge, feeling the smooth finish. We climb up the scaffolding below the porch windows and begin to drop the old shutters from their hinges. They are surprisingly heavy, and as they fall and dig deep into the sand below, my father tells me that the cottage has not had new shutters since his father built these ones many years ago.

We lift the unwieldy shutters into place, slowly and carefully, and attach the hinges. Not only are the shutters bulky, but they become sails when the slightest breeze rolls off the water. My father and I talk casually about whatever comes to mind, but mostly we work.

By noon the next day we have hung the shutters. My father now busies himself with painting the window sills of the porch. He has left another job for me. Next to the storm shutters is the storm door, battered and beginning to

rot, though not quite as decrepit as the shutters. It's my job to restore this door. I begin by digging deep into the rotting sections of the wood, prying up moist and moldy pulp. This door has guarded our cottage for over three decades, but it needs work. Next I fill each hole, dent and scratch, making sure to wipe them clean, to make them as flush as possible to the original wood. Then I sand, sand, and sand some more. I listen to the sound of the sand paper and feel the cool air coming from the lake. I begin to fall into a rhythm. Every hour my father puts into scraping and painting, I match, polishing the surface of the wood, stripping it bare of all its imperfections, its peeling paint, its splintered surface.

My father moves from his painting to resize some of the shutters that were too snug or too loose. He was never bright in school, but he stores measurements in his head, subtracting, dividing, figuring angles with keen eyes and a steady grip. His hands are deft and quick, handling tools with familiarity and ease. He is intent upon his task, and for the first time I realize that, at his core, my father is a craftsman.

After wiping even the finest grain of sanded wood from its surface, I paint the cottage door.

When I finish, my father and I carefully hang the door back in its place, then walk to the water's edge. We stare north, to Canada, straining our eyes against the horizon, though we will never see land. The lake is calm today and we skip some stones across its surface before turning toward our cottage to admire our work. With the new shutters and door, our cottage is restored. I have spent another spring here, working against the slow progress of time and nature. As we walk back toward the cottage, leaving deep foot prints in the moist sand, I no longer envy my friends. **Q**

Sean O'Rourke will graduate from Grove City College this May with a degree in English secondary education. He plans to spend this summer travelling through the wilderness of the American West. He hopes to commit the next several years of his life to teaching students the fine art of reading and writing.

COLD AND GAUNT

TYLER ESTES

There are kids younger than me, and old men,
Old enough to be my father, with snow
Dancing on hats and scarves and smoke-scented
Coats, drawing intermittent puffs from cigarettes
And blowing intermittent puffs of savored warmth
Into their hands. They are posted outdoors in
What is only labeled a designated smoking spot
Because No Fumar Por Favor is posted indoors.

It happens more often in the cold.
The colder the day, the more accented
The smoke flowing from
Their mouths, the more ubiquitous
The young boys and old men.

There are women in dresses, brides, in their
Last moments of being single, perhaps for
The second or third or fourth time.
(And perhaps were these their first last moments
Of life as a bachelorette their mascara would run.)
But the indentation of their cheeks as they
Smoke remains after they exhale, and *gaunt*
Aptly describes the complicated awkwardness
Of rushedly puffing one last drag and avoiding
Ashing on one's dress, all to the opening bars of
Beethoven's Fifth, or Canon in D.
Ashing in one's coffee is bad enough.

I shrug my shoulders. I turn up my collar. I walk.
The tickling snowflakes that trickle down
My nape delight me for the same reasons
I adore the words *snowflake* and *adore*,
And, I suppose, for the same reasons
Thrice-divorced brides have a smoke
Before walking down the aisle.

Tyler Charles Estes is a freshman English and Christian Thought major at Grove City College. He's a fan of literature, language, and music.

LA DOLCE VITA

AMANDA M. GRISWOLD

*ora conosce quanto caro costa
non seguir Cristo, per l'esperienza
di questa dolce vita e de l'opposta*

("now he has learned the price one pays for not
following Christ, through his experience
of this sweet life and of its opposite.")
~ Dante, *Paradiso* XX, 46-48

I lived in Florence a month before I could unlock my own apartment door. It's a complicated sequence of twists and jolts requiring a delicate blend of persuasion and compliance, patience, and brute force. First, one lures the ancient bolts forward (counting complaints with each rotation) and then drives them against their own bases with a satisfying clang. There is no fixed number of turns. Instead, the wood grants one sigh of defeat amid a mounting succession of metallic clicks. My first key snapped at the neck before I learned to hear that barely audible sigh of surrender. It took twenty minutes every day in a dark stairwell, praying under my breath and memorizing the key grooves with my fingertips.

It is hard to reconcile *la dolce vita*—my romanticized memory of life in Firenze—with those daily struggles to unlock an unfamiliar language and culture. Florence builds its future on the foundations of its past and then periodically confuses the two. I watched a hotel rise from the ruins of a medieval tower and walked modern streets curved to accommodate the Roman amphitheater still forming its skeleton. Plucked from its narrow alley, any one of the frescoed buildings on the way to market could be a national treasure in America and yet is only an old woman's apartment, or a *rosticceria*, or one of the thousands of cafés scooped out from another era. Somehow tradition and change coexist, and although *Il Duomo* consumes its skyline, the glory of Florence's past doesn't overwhelm its present.

Time has romanticized my memory of Florence. Last

spring, I studied in one of the most beautiful cities in the world and, as a result, it's increasingly difficult to recall those less-than-ideal experiences abroad. My nostalgia for mountain train rides, Michelangelo, castle wine tours, and Tuscan sunrises color my memories of crass men, language barriers, missed trains, and broken keys. That's hardly surprising. What does surprise me is my struggle to retain every hardship and disappointment I can glean from homesick journal entries. I find I prefer those "imperfect" photos of my adventures which didn't make any photo albums. I didn't just tour Florence, I lived there.

I remember how the streets of Florence look just before dawn, in the hours of the hopeless and homeless. Once I spent them wandering—rolling my luggage behind me, arms numb, lost, alone, and with disturbing rumors of anti-American protests in *Piazza Repubblica*. I remember that twilight in fragments. A few discarded prostitutes, devoid of expression, lean against buildings similarly devoid of expression, exuding a gray facelessness. An Anarchist symbol bleeds down the wall of an unfamiliar street. Two Gypsy girls pretend to sleep, watching me from beneath fluttering eyelids. Men slump in crumbling doorways, leering. *Ciao bella, bella, bella*. An African vendor slips from a side street, shouldering his illegal wares, then pads beside me in threadbare sandals. A drunken woman squats in the street. *Bella, bella, bella*. Shards of glass, like broken teeth, grin from decapitated beer bottles.

Some sunrises are beautiful and anticipated and others are mandated. That dawn found me shivering and praying on a park bench. It's not a story I've often told but it's one I chose to remember and struggle to retain. When I returned to America, few people asked to hear about my trying Italian experiences and fewer listened. The abundant pleasant ones were much more popular. Amid all of my romanticized memories, I suppose a few hours of perfect failure are inexplicably valuable. They exist in fragments, remnants of both my daily struggles and of solitary incidents—a walk at twilight, fever in Venice, another month of inestimable frustration, a key snapped off at the neck. Q

Amanda Marie Griswold is a junior English major at Grove City College. She studied 14th Century Literature at Scuola Lorenzo de' Medici in Spring 2007 and plans to return to Europe for further education and adventure.

DIRT FROM ALABAMA

BARTON WILLIS

is red, and sticks to the bottoms of your shoes.
the even pines, still in the heat
keep the muggy heat suspended
low and heavy
always about to rain.

the sun is diffused as
though through condensated glass;
thick light laid over the world
which allows no Shadows but
under the rigid pines—
a weird unhaunting, like an empty
impotent battlefield—
there was an anger,
death, burial,
and a diffusion into thick air.

They only come out at night
when the porchlights
draw moths and locusts
large on the grass
as the sedated crickets scrape out
the silence—in the outer
dark you can't see
every thing is dyed
a deep dirt red.

Barton Willis is a junior English major at Grove City College with roots in the deep south. After graduation, he plans to be an interesting hobo, which is to say, a southern writer.

RED AND YELLOW, BLACK AND WHITE

ELIZABETH McRUER

After applying for sixteen different job positions last summer, I accepted one at the first establishment to respond to my attempts: Red Robin Gourmet Cheeseburgers. Working in the food industry would be easy, I reasoned, and there was the added incentive of what I imagined would be fantastically large tips from customers charmed by my cheerful attitude and selfless desire to give them a pleasant dining experience. I walked into the interview with the optimistic mindset of the disastrously naïve.

Arriving at the restaurant before my interview, I was directed to a vacant booth in the corner. I observed the tacky decorations while waiting for the general manager. A giant statue of the restaurant's robin mascot leered at me from on top of a pedestal, his face molded into a glaring plastic grin.

"Hi, there!" A middle-aged woman sat down across from me in the booth. "I'm Susan, the general manager. I'm just going to ask you some quick questions." She glanced down at my application forms. "It says here you've worked in food services before?"

"Last summer." This was a slight exaggeration; I had actually worked the concessions stand at a pool making snow cones for dripping wet children. I imagined work in a restaurant to be somewhat similar, except this time the customers would be less sticky and have more money. I hedged around the details and attempted to make my position as "Head of Concessions" sound more important. My claim that this qualified me to be a server, however, failed to impress Susan. She hired me as "hospitality", handed me a two-inch notebook, and told me to report back the next

day for my 12-hour training course, "How to Seat Guests."

Later that night, I flipped through my notebook. In bold-face print, it told me how important *my* attitude was to the success of the entire team. Apparently my goal to be promoted to the desired position of a tip-earning server was entirely dependent on first proving myself to be a vital member of Team Red Robin Hospitality. After completing my training, I became a full-fledged team member. I was awarded with a plastic nametag engraved with my name, signifying my permanence in what Susan liked to call the "Red Robin family." As a family member, I was now required to gather with all my coworkers before each shift so the lead server could encourage us to remember the core values embroidered on our sleeves ("Honor, Integrity, Seeking Knowledge, and Having Fun!") as we busied ourselves in the important task of serving our valued guests. The term customer, I gathered later, was too impersonal for our family-friendly atmosphere and incorrectly calling a guest a customer resulted in a temporary banishment to the dish room to sort through dirty silverware, a task disgusting enough to impress on me the intended lesson and simultaneously discourage me from eating restaurant food ever again.

I adapted quickly. In my little hospitality niche of college dropouts, high school students, and one recovering meth addict, I even excelled, at least in the sense that I organized better and made faster decisions during the critical lunch overflow. My positive attitude earned me a shining recommendation from a secret shopper and an equally shiny pin for my collar that marked my customer service as "100%". I

smugly assumed promotion to the high paid world of server was forthcoming.

Yet June rolled over into July without the expected promotion. To encourage the process, I entered Susan's office. "I would really like to grow as a team member. You know, become an *older* family member so I can seek more knowledge." And, of course, get much deserved tips.

She looked at me uncertainly. "We don't really have any server positions open at the moment...And you've been doing such a good job in hospitality, we really can't lose you during our busy season, but I'll see what I can do."

Two days later, one of the other managers, pulled me aside to tell me they had an opening in "promotions." When I asked what exactly that involved, he muttered something about me helping with mailing coupons and broadcasting our presence in the mall. I was thrilled.

"I'm being promoted. To *promotions*." I gloated to one of my friends later that day. After congratulating me, he inquired,

"But what does that mean?"

"I don't know yet. Talking to other businesses and getting the word out, I guess." He laughed.

"Hey, what if they make you wear the *bird* costume? That's getting the word out!"

I was horrified. That I would be forced to parade around disguised as a giant red bird had never occurred to me. I imagined myself encased in the costume, peering through the nostrils of the huge scarlet head as I navigated my way through the mall handing out flyers and fending off crazed children.

The next week, I reported to Scott, the new head of "promotions."

"Well, I'm going to be handing out coupons and I'm going to need Red as backup." He examined me with some disappointment. "You're too tall to wear the costume." Thank goodness, I thought with the sensation of having dodged a feathery red bullet.

"Oh...man. Rats." He brightened.

"Well, someone else can wear it and you can be, like, protection for them." Ah, yes. Protection from the deranged children.

"Good idea." I would have agreed with anything that kept me out of the fluorescent yellow tights that made up Red's bottom half.

But, as it turned out, the entire situation was moot. Bianca, a previous hostess short enough to portray Red, had stolen the costume before she was fired. With great relief, I returned to my job as a greeter and seater. My hopes of being (safely) promoted were dampened and as the days passed, the hospitality job and my attitude began to sour.

My Red Robin is located in the middle of an upper-class mall in Newport Beach, California, which consequently meant we attracted a wide variety of guests. Southern California is a fascinating mix of cultures with thousands of immigrants, legal and illegal, struggling to assimilate as quickly as possible or frantically avoid assimilation altogether, depending on their perception of America. More than half of my friends in high school were of a different nationality or religion. Growing up surrounded by such diversity, I tended to be blind to it and all its implications. I took for granted that, for the most part, everyone is exactly the same on a fundamental level. I assumed that every race was looking for the same basic requirements: friendship, love, acceptance, successful lives and careers. Truth be told, I was a little self-righteous at what I perceived was my special ability to see past a person's culture to who they really are.

That being the case, it took me half the summer to detect the hints of discrimination. It was subtle. My coworkers were from different races and backgrounds themselves, but we had no difficulties working together. We saw ourselves as being part of the same team, united in the disheartening job of pandering to rude people while making minimum wage. When it came to our valued guests, however, the situation was different.

My first encounter with it occurred when I asked one of the servers, Ashley, to pick up an extra table. "Come on," I pleaded. "It's four guys. You'll get a great tip." She

rolled her eyes, before going over the table. After taking their order, she walked back and dumped a stack of menus on the host stand.

"There is no way I am getting a tip from that table."

"Mess up the drink order?" I asked her, sorting through the menus.

"No. They're *black*." This accusation bothered me.

"So?"

"So black guys never tip."

I informed her that this was a narrow-minded generalization. We are beyond that sort of stereotyping, we are equal, we are the same. Tips are not dependent on the color of the guest, but on the character of the server. They left Ashley a standard tip and I basked in the triumph of shared enlightenment.

But I soon discovered this was not always the case. As I became more familiar with my coworkers, I would get requests to refrain from seating particular types of people, not just minorities, in their sections. Servers make most of their money from tips, but they are required to return part of that money in proportion with their sales. Big sales and little tips mean significantly less money, and some kinds of people did not tip as frequently or as much as others. This was prejudice from the servers, undoubtedly, but more than that I had to admit it was raw, unvarnished capitalism. Servers are focused on the maximum tip amount per table and per shift and, however unseemly, they fought to have me seat the best prospective tippers in their sections. No one wanted to serve Indians, no one wanted African-Americans, Asians were hit or miss, Mexicans and Europeans were definitely out, and everyone hated teenagers of any race.

This did not leave me many options. Every server wanted only middle-class American business people and preferably ones who would order drinks. I had to start being careful in the way I directed people. Section seven already had two undesirable tables, better move them to section four.

Sometimes it was unavoidable and servers would come

to me to complain. My heart would sink as yet another "unwanted" guest would enter the restaurant. Attempting to remain true to my ideals but wishing to please my coworkers, I descended into judgmental cynicism. The guests faded into dollar signs, each one followed by a different amount, and they came into the restaurant solely to make my job more miserable.

By August I had had enough. I was unhappy with my job, and worse than that, I was unhappy with the way I acted when I worked there. I had foolishly assumed that prejudice, and even racism, were outdated. At the restaurant, biases my coworkers held were not overwhelming, or even completely obvious, but the negative atmosphere was enough to wear on me. The previously loathed dish room became my escape from everyone's constant demands.

Sorting through the dirty silverware, I realized that at some point over the summer I had lost my character. I had given in to pessimism and allowed my coworkers' attitudes to affect how I interacted with people. I thought gloomily that I would have been better off wearing the bird costume. The loss of my dignity was a far less serious price than the erosion of my ideals. Perhaps the barrier of Red's grinning face would have prevented my descent into cynicism.

Hiding behind a giant bird head, however comforting it may be, is hardly practical. But Red offers a peculiar shred of wisdom nonetheless. Everyone who enters the restaurant, or our lives for that matter, should be treated as though he is wearing a bird costume. Under the mask, everyone is unique, but regardless of the individual characteristics of each person, our loving mindset toward them should not change. Odd as it may sound, if we view everyone as though they are Red, we may hesitate in making judgments and act with more integrity and compassion. 

Elizabeth McRuer is a junior English major at Grove City College. She is the junior captain of Women's Varsity Water Polo, a member of Women's Varsity Swimming, and a sister of Phi Sigma Chi sorority. In her free time, she enjoys running, reading, and eating sushi.

THE SUN SETS

JONATHAN FREY

I've stopped counting the number of heads that have passed me. Time spent on a front porch in a rocking chair on the front porch, some say, never changes. Not for me. The heads of corn rushed passed me in their hectic life, in their hectic efforts to be harvested before summer expires. I sat. They fell to the harvester.

Everywhichway I turned I saw corn. Corn in the fields, corn in the forests, corn in the house, in my bedroom, under my covers, in my dreams. Unavoidably ready to be taken by the giant machine made for taking corn from the quiet observer's eyes, my eyes.

I wish I had the right calculations to evaluate my chair. If I rocked it a little harder would I fly into the red setting sun? Would it vomit me if I went inside? Is it accepting any more patients? I have the cure in sight, but no one will give me money. "It's no good, George. No, not here." Why? Why does my son look at me with vacant eyes? "It's no good, George. No, not here."

We killed the dog two weeks ago. For three days my son looked at me with the kind of joy that says, "Daddy, I'm ready to die. My tummy is happy, and that's enough for me." Son, if my tears could feed you, I'd bottle them up every night.

The mice don't even bother with our house. I know because I pulled up the floor boards. My son's scared of the mice. But I needed his help to pull up the floor. Right before a board was about to come up, he'd run the other way and scream like his mama. Sometimes I'd pretend to see one, then he'd scream but realize I was kidding and hammer my with fists. I couldn't help but laugh, neither could he. "Son, I'm ready to die. My heart is glad, and

that's enough for me." But I can't die, nor has he.

Three years ago, three years ago she left, escaped, died. We couldn't afford a proper burial. Couldn't get one of those stones that would tell me everyday she's been taken. She's been isolated. We're exposed. I hate her for it. No, not hate, George. Just a misery I wish my son didn't have to go through, a misery made worse by nothing. He should have died, not her. She and I could have just been. Not having to look at him when he begs without words.

Everywhichway I turned I saw corn. Corn in the fields, corn in the forests, corn in the house, in my bedroom, under my covers, in my dreams. Unavoidably ready to be taken by the giant machine made for taking corn from the quiet observer's eyes, my eyes.

"It's no good, George. No, not here. It seems to be that men like you can't buy on credit anymore." I have no horse, no ass, no automobile, just a rocking chair that I hope takes me and my son away from hell to the setting bliss of the red sun. Time spent on a front porch in a rocking chair on the front porch, some say, never changes. Not for me. I can't seem to make it stay the same.

We took a walk today. We wanted to see how far we could go till we found something edible. I have no gun, no arrows, just a dull knife that can't even cut my skin. I've tried. The yellow sun shone on us. I wanted to believe we were passing under the shade of maples next to a creek that breathed on us a fresh breeze that smelled of her. A breeze that carried our tired legs to a place made for kings and princes. We passed barren fields, not even any grass for us to eat and vomit later, just sand. It blew in our faces. No shade. His tears I hoped would produce a crop for us.

The red dust on the road followed us the rest of the way home. I can't comfort him anymore. Words have become only words.

"But why not?" I asked. "It seems to be the economy has gone to pot. Say, George, how'd you get here with no automobile?" "I walked." "But that's thirty miles!" "But she's dying."

I sat a little longer rocking myself with what little strength the sun afforded me, what the air allowed me to swallow, what her memory gave to me. The moon soon half-heartedly came up. The wind blew. I pretended it was all just an empty sea. Maybe some ship will blow in to save us from this island. It took me three tries to get up.

I went inside to find him sleeping, each breathe his lungs struggled to grope for more air. Then no more struggle, no more, no more, no more no more no more.

He lay there on the re-boarded floor. I lay next to him. I dreamed of her, then him, then me, then food.

I woke up and dug two graves next to hers. I thought it be easier if when they found me, they could just lay me down next to my friends; friends for as long as I can. I went to the front porch and barely climbed the three steps. "How are you rocking chair?...That's good to hear....And me you ask? Oh, I've been better." I wish I had religion, some God instead of this. Someone to hear my prayers, someone to tell me something other than sunshine. To tell me it never changes, to tell me they fell to the harvester. But so far it's just been time spent. Q

Jonathan Daniel Frey is a senior history major. He aspires to one day write terribly boring books about Spanish Church History that would only appeal to an overly specialized, lackluster few.

PICKING UP PROZAC AT RX EXPRESS

PHIL GROSS

Puddles form a Rorschach test under my sneakers.

He says "No," to the headset,
"that's 'V' as in 'Victor'."

Behind orange plastic a crane sorts prescriptions alphabetically.

Along the wall:
ORGANIC MOTHER'S MILK
THROAT COAT
ORGANIC NETTLE LEAF
METABOLIC WHEY

"Is someone helping you?"

Philip Gross graduated from Grove City College in December and is currently pursuing a full time High School English or Social Studies teaching position. The subject of his poems is nearly always depression; Phil is either a one-trick-pony or expert in the field.

CONVENIENCE AND EXTENSION IN THE NEW CENTURY

ESTHER HARCLERODE

Car Wash advertisements, haggard mothers, unctuous inventors, and corporate banks promise us convenience. They lure us with it—into automatic car wash lairs, lure us into buying robotic vacuum cleaners, lure us into a trial 30-day-money-back-guarantee, lure us into “green checking” and paperless loaning—all with the heralded deified utterance of “convenience.”

And, why not?

This twenty-first century of ours is obsessed with convenience—justify it anyway you like. But beneath the topical safety blanket lies a darker, far more menacing ailment. The mode of our existence has become a warding off of the very content of our existence. So afraid are we of life that we have invented devices to rush us through the process. We have created layers of repellent between you, me, and the rest of the world. In short, we have resorted to extension as the mode of our existence. We have produced intermediary devices to touch and interact with our dirty world of experience.

The “Real” kicker, however, is the paradoxical essence of our twenty-first century extension. Now more than ever we strive to permeate the corners of the globe in our conversation, our information, and our entertainment. We so desperately want to have our fingers deep in the porridge pie of every situation—wanting to take over as much as possible, but not touching the conquest with our human hands. How do we execute our mission? You got it, extend. So involved are we in the world, and yet our involvement depends entirely on intermediary devices, be it a cell phone, the internet, or any other device that serves to buffer our contact with the “Real” world.

Consider our “conversations.” Text messaging for example: the entire cellular world at our fingertips. And what’s more—we can abbreviate our messages so as to communicate with as many people as possible wasting not one moment of realized text potential. Filling the void between us and other people, we rattle off what looks like Scrabble tray combinations of random letters. These conversations—are they really conversations? Could it be that we are really communicating with not “Real” people, but two dimensional, abbreviated projections of our own invention? In what way does a text message designate a three dimensional human being? Extension comes into play here through our torpid use of abbreviations. With so much to say, so much with which to fill the void, we utilize convenient catch phrases and sassy flip phones. Instead of talking (using spoken language) we peck out one-line e-mails, abbreviated text messages in an involuted extension. In reaching out to communicate with the masses, we are also curling up into the fetal position of communication. Text messaging is a model example of the isolation that comes with extension. Communicating has never been as isolated as it is today.

The World Wide Web serves a similar function. Thanks to the omniscience of deities such as Google Earth and Yahoo Maps we now have the option of viewing nearly any point on the globe through satellites in space. On the information highway we can hitch a ride to any location; we can read travelogues of every continent, “meet” people thousands of miles and lives away. In short, the world is ours at the bay of our keyboard. Extension? That keyboard, that monitor—the very extensions of our lives that enable us to commandeer the world—allow us to peek into the niches

of unknown lands and introduce us to the wonders of the world. As real as it may seem, we still only see pictures, and watch videos. We are not coming into physical contact with the Saharan sands, the catacombs of Rome or whatever else we uncover online. The physical existence of the computer creates the device of extension by which we pack our pipe dreams. On the internet we have the opportunity to view life while we forfeit living it in favor of modem, monitor, and mouse.

The saddest part of all this extension is that we forget the “Real” world. The “Real” world consists of three-dimensional people and the very facts of our existence. The profusion of cleaning wands and automatic scrubbers removes us from dirt and waste—real aspects of the “Real” world. Not wanting to touch the grime of real living, we place six inches of plastic between the filth and us. The dirt, the scum, the lint of our lives—these are the things grounding us in our experience as humans on this earth. We are wasteful creatures and yet we hide our faces from the very “Real” result of our day-to-day lives.

For example, crying babies have automatic rockers to put them quietly back to sleep. But little girls can play

with plastic babies that “poop” like real babies. The “Real” baby is fit for machines, but a toy can simulate a “Real” baby—we’re okay with that. At what point does the simulation become the reality? Hunting for any way to reduce our contact with the “Real”, we shun it and embrace our simulations in the same way we embrace our hallowed text message conversations and our internet discoveries in lieu of the “Real” thing.

It is at the altar of convenience that we raise our disposable dusting wands, our text messaging packages, and our Google Earth explorations. So afraid are we to confront the “Real”—what we must deal with—that we separate ourselves. Keep at arm’s bay real interaction with people, places and things—the characteristic of our existence as citizens of the twenty-first century is extension. But we allay our qualms by lifting our eyes to the glittering signs and murmuring, “convenience, convenience, convenience.” 

Esther Harclerode is a junior English and philosophy major and member of Women’s varsity soccer.

SLAVERY IN AMERICA'S BACKYARD

LAUREN VANDER HEYDEN

So enormous, so dreadful, so irremediable did the Trade's wickedness appear that my own mind was completely made up for Abolition. Let the consequences be what they would, I from this time determined that I would never rest until I had effected its abolition.

~William Wilberforce

Three sets of unresponsive, dark, vacant eyes stared out from the front page of my hometown newspaper. The three women were Thai and had been trafficked into the States to serve as forced prostitutes in a "massage parlor" down the road from my blissfully quiet, middle-class, midwestern neighborhood. Unable to speak the language of the land, clueless of their whereabouts, and psychologically and physically abused; these women were slaves in the thriving global sex industry. Human trafficking (modern day slavery) is not just a problem in exotic and underdeveloped places such as Asia and Africa. It is a problem in our backyard.

Slavery is as old as mankind itself. Although the trans-Atlantic slave trade was officially abolished by the British Empire more than two centuries ago, slavery has morphed into modern forms. Today, human trafficking is the world's second largest organized criminal industry. Larger than arms trafficking and second only to drug trafficking, it often eludes the general public's awareness despite its occurrence in highly visible settings. The United Nations estimates that the total number of people trafficked annually is around 12 million. Seventy percent are female and fifty percent are children, the majority of whom are forced into prostitution. In the United States alone, the Department of Justice estimates that 14,500 to 17,500 internationals are trafficked through the borders annually.

Third world populations, however, are not the only people groups trafficked. The Department of Justice estimates that 200,000 American children are at risk of being trafficked into the sex industry every year. Many times those "Missing Children" photos in Wal-Mart or the Post Office are faces of children forced into prostitution. The tragic story is all too familiar. A child runs away from an abusive home and ends up selling their body for food and a place to stay. Soon they find an older boyfriend, pimp, or madam that will capitalize on their low self-esteem and need for love. Almost without exception these children become drug addicts and become trapped in this brain-washed, manipulative world. They are lured by the false hope of a better life.

In order for human trafficking to be profitable for the traffickers, especially in the case of trafficking for sexual services, those whom are trafficked need to be marketed. In the case of forced prostitution, the services must be advertised by easily accessible people, such as bartenders, taxi drivers, and valets, and promoted in common places such as hotels, phone books, internet social networking sites, and newspapers. This accessibility allows for easier detection and action on the grassroots level through education and heightened awareness. Many first responders, especially social workers and law enforcement agencies, are not familiar with the indicators of possible trafficking

situations. Moreover, they are often understaffed and unable to process trafficking claims, or are not versed in immigration laws protecting trafficking victims. IN addition, recent studies indicate churches are the primary facility to which trafficked victims, especially those forced into prostitution, will turn for help. Through educating these first responders and their communities, effective steps may be made towards abolition.

As with any other commodity, an increase in trafficked people is fueled by demand; without buyers there is no market. Because there will always be a supply of potential human trafficking victims, the most effective policy for stemming this slave trade is addressing the domestic demand for it here in the United States. Over the last decade the US government has taken pointed action to combat human trafficking in this way. A significant piece of legislation, The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) was signed into affect in 2000 and created a Trafficking in Persons (TIP) office in the State Department and established trafficking as a federal crime. Very few traffickers, pimps, and johns are actually prosecuted, however. A revision of the TVPA was passed in the House this past December in hopes to close many of the loopholes which allow these perpetrators to escape unpunished. Currently the revised TVPA is sitting in the Senate waiting for a vote. If it is passed through

the Senate with the same wording as the House version, the TVPA will modernize current anti-pimping laws to create a new criminal standard for traffickers, pimps, and johns. Then, law officials and communities alike will be empowered to combat this modernized slave trade.

One of the fundamentals of the Christian faith is that every human life has inherent dignity and worth. Human trafficking, the practice of trading people like disposable objects, is an assault on this value. Such conviction alone, however, is insufficient. In the words of Leonardo da Vinci, "I have been impressed with the urgency of doing. Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Being willing is not enough; we must do." Conviction must be balanced by purposeful and reasoned action. Tackling human trafficking is not solely a responsibility of our law enforcement system, it is our responsibility as well. If this modern-day slavery is to be abolished, it cannot be achieved by federal legislation or law enforcement alone. Abolition will only be accomplished in conjunction with societal action. **Q**

Lauren Vander Heyden is a senior political science major. She first became interested in the human trafficking issue her freshman year and wants to continue working on the problem at the grass roots level in communities.

CHARTING NARNIA

JEFFREY COLEMAN

Planet Narnia: The Seven Heavens in the Imagination of C.S. Lewis
 Michael Ward
 Oxford University Press, 2008. 384 pp.
 \$29.95

Michael Ward makes his intentions clear from the start. In his book about the *Chronicles of Narnia*, he seeks to solve three problems, summed up in the question, “How is it that seven such stories, authored by an unlikely novice and possessing little apparent coherence in design, should have become some of the best-selling and most influential fables in the world?” (4). Although the book is Ward’s revised dissertation, he writes with humility as well as confidence. His subtle humor also makes the book interesting. But what is most intriguing is the nature of Ward’s discovery. His book, says Armand M. Nicholi, Jr. “reads so much like a detective story that it’s difficult to put down.” Ward dons the detective hat, slowly unveils the implicit purpose and structure, and ultimately shows us how to enjoy the *Chronicles of Narnia* in a new way: through the conscious contemplation of Lewis’s imagination.

Most readers sense a hidden meaning in the Narniad. But up until now no one had given a thoroughly convincing argument. Books abound that enumerate the obvious allegorical elements connected to the Christian faith, but most lack depth. They see the resemblance between Aslan’s death in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* and Christ’s crucifixion, or they compare the creation story in *The Magician’s Nephew* to the Genesis account. Such explanations are overly simplistic and leave the reader unsatisfied. Studies of a more scholarly nature have tried to link the books to Spencer’s *Faerie Queene*, the seven Catholic sacraments, or the seven deadly sins. Ward confesses an earlier attempt he himself made to connect them with Shakespeare’s plays.

But the apparent incoherence in the *Chronicles of Narnia*, about which J.R.R. Tolkien complained, remained inadequately explained.

In *Planet Narnia*, Ward gives a better interpretation. He believes C.S. Lewis deliberately imbued the seven *Chronicles* with a hidden ‘atmosphere,’ which readers feel explicitly as well as implicitly. Lewis made the books correspond with the seven heavens of the medieval imagination—Jupiter, Mars, Sol (the Sun), Luna (the moon), Mercury, Venus, and Saturn. To make his point, Ward uses a “reading between” technique. As is well-known, Lewis taught and studied medieval literature and culture extensively. Along with his interest in the historical subject, he had an interest in the pre-Copernican conception of the universe. He preferred it to the modern solar system (which he admitted came closer to the scientific truth) because he thought the medieval conception gave more room to the imagination. His passion for the medieval conception of the planets certainly pervades the rest of his writings, whether of literary criticism, poetry, novels, or children’s stories. Ward traces the literal and imaginative influence of medieval and classical planets on Lewis’s writing and then uses it to prove that each *Chronicle* exudes a particular planetary sense.

For *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, the planet is Jupiter. Why Lewis chose to evoke Joviality in the first and most popular book of the Narnia series is easy to explain. As Ward shows, Jupiter was Lewis’s favorite medieval planet-god. Lewis also felt that modernist melancholy—the angst expressed in Modernist art and literature—had dominated

the scene for too long. To combat their scientific certainty and philosophical disillusionment, Lewis presented twentieth-century Europeans with a mythical god, a jovial god, a god of festivals and a god of power, a god named Jupiter. In an accompanying article to his poem "The Planets," Lewis wrote, "Of Saturn we know more than enough, but who does not need to be reminded of Jove?"

The concept of kingliness and the change from winter to spring are the most obvious 'reminders' in *The Lion*. Oak trees and minotaurs, both associated with Jupiter in mythical lore, appear as well. This also explains why Lewis includes Father Christmas. With his smiling, red face, his magnificent size, and his festal cheer, Father Christmas brilliantly illustrates Joviality. Moreover, Ward contends these planetary elements do not simply "ornament the story"; they "comprise" it (62).

Throughout his lifetime, Lewis kept his overarching plan a secret because if he had revealed his purpose within the books themselves, readers would, in consciously contemplating the planets, forget to enjoy them. Or so we might assume. So how can Ward feel justified in revealing Lewis's hidden plan to us today? Does that not take away their magic?

Ward believes that it is simply a matter of trading one sort of delight for a deeper, more mature sort. Understanding the hidden purpose with which Lewis wrote, the reader can better appreciate the complex structure and the diverse imagery in the *Narniad*. For example, everything in Lewis's third story, *Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader,'* revolves around the Sun. Knowing this makes clear why a magical pool of water that turns everything into gold and why an albatross seen flying in a shaft of sunlight are included in the same book. For the same reason, the crew intends to sail to "the very eastern end of the world," toward the rising sun. Ward's study also clarifies the less obvious elements in the story that would otherwise seem haphazard and unconnected. Apollo being the Greeks' name for the god of the sun,

Ward notes that one of Apollo's epithets was 'Sauroctonus,' Lizard- or Dragon-slayer, which illuminates the reason Lewis chose to include so many dragons in the story. Ward does not, however, reveal every instance of donegality, a word he coins to describe the planetary atmosphere one experiences in each book. Ward invites readers to do some investigating of their own. He also realizes "the more minutely I trace the links, the more debatable certain small connecting points will inevitably become" (62).

Besides intending to foster a greater appreciation for *The Chronicles of Narnia* among scholars and laity alike, Ward's book reveals a link between Lewis's interests and beliefs and those of postmodernists. Ward hints at it in his subtitle, "The Seven Heavens in the *Imagination* of C.S. Lewis" (emphasis is mine). As already mentioned, Lewis preferred a myth's vitality to the deadness of cold fact. He valued imaginative stories more than scientific explanations. He also believed, as Ward informs us, "that 'a scientific fact' is not necessarily the immutable, universal truth that it is popularly believed to be" (27). Many today would agree with Lewis.

Lewis also recognized the power of stories to influence, like stars, the course of one's life. When one looks at the stars, one can say they are just large balls of plasma millions of miles away, or one can tell how a valiant hunter, with three stars to his belt, slew a raging bull. As to which is true, that largely relates to which story one prefers and which one finds more beautiful. For Lewis, the Sun was more than just the center of our galaxy. It was a spirit whose bright rays critically influenced the lives of mice and men. He was one who tore apart dragons, saved queens from dark magic, and called warriors to their home. Thus, Lewis wrote *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* to express his imaginative vision of the world, and he hoped it would inspire, or influence, both children and adults to live heroically. He agreed with Plato: "Children should hear good fables and not bad" because those fables had the power to shape a

person's life. In this sense, Lewis anticipated certain aspects of postmodernism and thus remains deeply relevant to our contemporary world.

I believe Ward's apt treatment of Lewis's *Chronicles* will gain the attention, and perhaps even admiration, of secular and Christian academics, both for Ward as a literary critic and for Lewis as a writer of fantasy. Ward forces us to step back and contemplate the hidden message and motive in the *Narniad*. And subsequently, we understand better what

Lewis is trying to communicate—life's luminous halo and the music of the spheres. **Q**

Jeffrey Coleman is a sophomore history and English major. He enjoys reading books and traveling. Last spring, while doing both these things, he met Michael Ward. The encounter encouraged Coleman to read more Lewis and later to read Ward's first book. As for the planets, Coleman's favorite is the Sun.



VIEWING AN ELEPHANT

JOEL DAVID MUSSER

<p><i>The Parallax View</i> Slavoj Žižek MIT Press, 2006. 528 pp. \$24.95</p>

One morning I shot an elephant in my pajamas. How he got into my pajamas I'll never know.
~Groucho Marx

There's a joke with fundamentalist Christians: since liberals either hedonistically don't have children or they are homosexuals, just be patient and eventually they'll all die off. The joke has also been philosophized: let the postmoderns deconstruct everything until they deconstruct themselves away and eventually the world will return to traditional values. What's funny is not how stupid 'liberals' are, but how similar the ignorance of the fundamentalists is to their *bête noir*; both find the other intolerably idiotic. They hate each other for what they themselves are, like heads of a coin hating the tails. They're the same coin.

Slavoj Žižek takes it upon himself to fulfill the fundamentalists' and the relativists' goal: make the other seem ridiculous. However, he does this without an agenda. He makes no heads or tails about it: if the coin's counterfeit, it's counterfeit. It's hard, therefore, to pin him down. He's not into ideologies, he's into Truth, whatever it looks like and wherever it lies.

This treasure hunt mentality makes Žižek enjoyable to read because, like Indiana Jones, you never know where you'll end up, and you sometimes wonder if there's even a plan, but he always comes through in the end. His maverick approach to philosophy and his frantic personality have led to people calling him the "Elvis of cultural theory." Truly, he invigorates his writing with a wit and spontaneity which is exceeded only by his analytic prowess and seemingly infinite knowledge base. He pulls familiar instances from

pop culture, especially film, to elucidate his cultural theory and philosophy. He also enjoys shocking the reader into comprehending theory, either with surprising, yet insightful assertions and questions, or with simple vulgarity.

But as seemingly exhibitionist as his ingenuity or indecency may appear, however scatterbrained his method, behind it all lies the pursuit of Truth. His methodology, in fact, coincides with his argument. Truth lies *not* down a road of thought, discovered by clearing the path of reason; Truth lies at the intersections of different roads of thought and approaches. Properly speaking, though, there is no intersection, no proper synthesis of thought. Truth lies at the impossible intersection of different roads—at the parallax gap of the parallax view.

A parallax is the difference between two (or more) views of an object, such as the views of your two eyes looking at this paper. Close one, then open it and close the other. Keep doing this and note how the paper seems to move and, more to the point, how everything around it seems to move. The best example of a parallax shift is found in quantum physics: light can be viewed as either a particle or as a wave, depending on how you look at it, but it can't be thought of simultaneously as both. Žižek applies the parallax to philosophy. He considers multiple parallax perspectives on three main issues in *The Parallax View*: ontology (the "Real" meaning of things and words versus their "Symbolic" representation and "enunciation"),

MY THTUNG TONGUE

BRITAINI WATTERSON

When I wath laying on the gground
without a thingle care,
I opened up my mouth and yawned,
when thomething thlew in there.

Oh goth! Oh gee! It wath a bee
that thlew into my mouth.
It thtung my tongue, I gave a cw, y
and wan into the houth.

Britaini Watterson is a junior marketing management major with Studio Art and History minors. She appreciates the simple things in life.

cognition (the scientific view of the mind and the psychoanalytic perspective), and politics (various perspectives such as Marxist, feminist, religious).

The cognitive parallax is the easiest to understand (though the hardest to read about). When we think about the human mind, we can either think of it scientifically (in terms of evolution, genetics, deterministic “nature,” etc.) or psychoanalytically (in terms of “nurture,” subconscious drives, free will, etc.). Both of these perspectives necessarily imply that the other perspective is false or at least misleading. For example: aren’t subconscious drives explainable by genetics, hormones—science? and isn’t determinism refuted by our experience? Likewise both perspectives seem to be lacking in themselves: doesn’t science seem to lack something essential to what the mind is? and doesn’t psychoanalysis seem to be too subjective? We inherently understand the cognitive parallax and Žižek merely explicates (with expert reference to the latest advances in both fields) what we already know. The mind is that which cannot be entirely or adequately explained by science or psychoanalysis. It is the Real of being human, the gap that we recognize only by the incompleteness of any parallax view.

Žižek explains the ontological parallax in Lacanian terms (Jacques Lacan was a French psychoanalyst who reformed Freud’s theories and was an influential intellectual during the 1960s and ’70s.) Lacan, according to Žižek’s interpretation, discusses ontology in three interrelated “orders”: the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real. The human experience is that of longing for the Real (which is unattainable) but being bound by the Symbolic order (that of language, logic, our physical bodies) which is the human realm, and using the Imaginary order (fantasies, ideologies, and other things) to stand in for the Real in the Symbolic order. The Real is that which is beyond our human grasp, the sublime, the extreme, which we come close to approaching through intense experiences of things such as death, sex, and tragic events. We approach it by shifting parallax views, hoping to discover the Real. But there is always a gap between the parallax views. The goal of poetry, art, philosophy—all of life—is to attempt to bridge that gap. This cannot be done, however, and we cope by using the Imaginary order as a fantasy stand-in for the Real.¹

Consider the old Indian parable about some blind men and an elephant: each man feels a different part of the elephant and falsely concludes that it is a pillar (the leg), a wall (the body), a brush (the tail), and so on; only the composite perspective reveals the real elephant. For Žižek, though, with his philosophical parallax, *there is no composite perspective*, no real elephant. The “Real” elephant is precisely the difference between perspectives. It is a “parallax gap” defined by its absence in the same way that a cup is defined by its emptiness. The Real elephant is the void, the gap, between perspectives. By shifting perspectives—a “parallax shift”—we see the incompleteness of the previous perspective, which is bound by the Symbolic order. Often, though, we make a composite Imaginary elephant to stand in for the void of the Real elephant.

¹ As Žižek’s points out, this is what makes Christ’s incarnation so significant. Jesus is only instance of the Real’s actual presence in the Symbolic order, God became man, *logos* became flesh.

Political agendas are one such Imaginary elephant, a fantasized Real in the (Symbolic) political order. An ideology, however, remains in the Symbolic order and so is still only one perspective on the (political) Real. In fact, each political movement requires an opposing parallax gap from which to define itself. Feminism requires an oppressive patriarchal society; Marxism requires a class struggle. More simply, when defining one's political position, it requires juxtaposing that position against its opposite. If you are on the left of the political spectrum, being liberal only has meaning in comparison to the political right. You can define what you stand for (social justice, etc.), but this only has political meaning when opposed its opposite (in this case, the right, personal responsibility) in much the same way that you can only define an electron's position if you don't know its velocity, and when you know its velocity, then you can't know its position.

Since Žižek is a pure theorist, he isn't really interested in how to integrate knowledge of the political parallax into

practice. Nor is he entirely interested in how cognitive science and psychoanalysis should proceed, or how we should cope with the frustration of the ontological gap. He doesn't distinguish between the Truth found in Tamagotchi pets or Abu Ghraib, or care where Vladimir Lenin was right and Pope John Paul II was wrong. To Žižek, we're all blind men at a circus. Although we may experience an elephant—feel it, perhaps even ride around on top of one, waving to our smiling parents—we can never view the Real elephant. We are still blind. Shifting between error-ridden parallax views, however, like drawing only outside the lines, allows us to sketch a strange outline of what must be a Real elephant. 

Joel David Musser is a junior English major with an interest in philosophy and cultural theory. He enjoys reading this postmodern atheist not just for his fascinating ideas on culture and ontology, but also for Žižek's remarkable insights into Christianity.

INFIDEL: WHEN ISLAM AND MODERNITY CLASH

ESTHER HARCLERODE

<p><i>Infidel</i> Ayaan Hirsi Ali Free Press, 2007. 353 pp. \$26.00</p>

Perhaps I could start by telling people that values matter.” From this simple statement, Ayaan Hirsi Ali crafts a telling memoir that vividly depicts her childhood in a Muslim family in Somalia, Kenya, and Saudi Arabia, and traces her journey to the Netherlands and her rise to becoming a member of Dutch Parliament. But more than just a memoir, *Infidel* is a fresh and unconventional take on culture and tolerance. A writer and a politician, she has been labeled a feminist and an atheist. Her bold critiques of Islam have led to both controversy and a fan base at each gradient of the political spectrum. Liberals applaud her disdain for denominational schools and her fervent belief in the freedom of speech, not to mention her sparkling feminism. Conservatives adore her harsh stance on terrorism, her stark criticism of Islam, and her admiration of the Western World. And in between, Hirsi appeals to common sense by extolling the virtues of progress, modernity, and individual expression.

In *Infidel*, Hirsi recounts what she sees as the turning point in her view towards Islam. On September 12, 2001 a co-worker mentioned how sad it was that people were saying that the attacks of the previous day had something to do with Islam. Hirsi replied, “But it is about Islam. This is based in belief. This is Islam.” Her remark stemmed from her experience growing of up in a violent Muslim community, and more importantly, her knowledge of the Qu’ran and her understanding of the cultural practices of Islam.

While she does admit that “the Prophet did teach us a lot of good things,” among them, “the Quranic injunctions to be compassionate and show charity to others,” Hirsi refuses to overlook the larger cultural contexts of Islam: “True Islam, as a rigid belief system and a moral framework, leads to cruelty.” Hirsi elaborates: “When people say that the values of Islam are compassion, tolerance, and freedom, I look at reality, at real cultures and governments, and I see that it simply isn’t so. People in the West swallow this sort of thing because they have learned not to examine the religions or cultures of minorities too critically, for fear of being called racist.” This process of critical examination allowed Hirsi to leave her beliefs and enter into a modern world with values she could commend.

Summarizing her own transition to the modern world, Hirsi writes, “I moved from the world of faith to the world of reason—from the world of excision and forced marriage to the world of sexual emancipation. Having made that journey, I know that one of those worlds is simply better than the other. Not because of its flashy gadgets, but fundamentally, because of its values.” Life is better in the West, Hirsi states. Human relations are better due to the fact that, “life is valued in the here and now, and individuals enjoy rights and freedoms that are recognized and protected by the state.” Hirsi’s message, then, is that it is the West’s responsibility to elevate cultures full of bigotry and hatred toward women to the stature of respectable alternative ways of life.

Hirsi places the responsibility for change on the shoulders of the West based on her belief in freedom. Be it freedom of expression, the freedom to marry whom one chooses, or the freedom to live under a government that supports the freedom of its citizens, Hirsi credits these freedoms for her belief in change, "For those of us who were brought up with Islam, if we face up to the terrible reality we are in, we can change our destiny." It is precisely this belief in change and transition that makes *Infidel* more than a story about a Muslim childhood in Somalia. With her story Ayaan Hirsi Ali profoundly challenges our twentieth century belief in all-encompassing toleration while prodding an already sensitive subject in America: Islam.

But rather than isolating her criticism to Islam specifically, readers of *Infidel* ought to gain her critical approach to all areas of life. Hers is a message for every citizen of the modern world and not specifically for Christians or Muslims, Americans or Europeans. In an age when the culture lines are increasingly blurred and yet protected, we must

remember what Hirsi states simply: values matter. Even in the twenty-first century values matter. The values that have shaped the civilized world ought not to be forgotten in lieu of a tolerant yet blind eye to violence, bigotry, and hatred. Is religious and cultural tolerance a founding principle of Western civilization? Yes, but Hirsi would not have the injustices of insular and oppressive cultures hide under the beneficent canopy of tolerance. It is with hope that she writes, "We could hold our dogmas up to the light, scrutinize them, and then infuse traditions that are rigid and inhumane with the values of progress and modernity. We could come to terms with individual expression." For Hirsi, the combination of freedom and critical examination signals the transition from submission to emancipation, from the "static tyranny" of Islam, to the freedom of modernity. To this effect, Hirsi closes *Infidel* remarking "It is possible to free oneself—to adapt one's faith, to examine it critically, and to think about the degree to which that faith is itself at the root of oppression." Q

REGAINING THE IMAGINATION IN A POSTMODERN WORLD

BY JUSTIN R. OLSON

The Postmodern Imagination of Russell Kirk
Gerald J. Russello
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It's hard to refrain from cynicism when defining an ideology. As soon as someone makes a concerted effort, proponents cry foul because something was either left out, or too much was said. Samuel P. Huntington refers to conservatism as "that system of ideas employed to justify any established social order . . . against any fundamental challenge to its nature or being." Others have defined it as "an 'authoritarian personality' that is inherently irrational." Any word that has as many definitions as it does adherents presents us with this kind of problem. Ideology by its very nature demands that we maintain a rigid set of policies, which manifest our deepest convictions. Yet, Gerald J. Russello allows us to resolve this problem by reminding us that according to Russell Kirk, who is in many ways the father of twentieth-century conservatism, rigid ideology is antithetical to the very essence of conservatism.

Kirk stated, "the diversity of ways in which conservative views may find expression is itself proof that conservatism is no fixed ideology." For conservative ideologues, this statement may come across as grating, and it's for this reason that most of the discussion around Kirk has emphasized his "core principles": broad values which shaped conservative thought from Edmund Burke to T.S. Eliot. Kirk explicitly outlines these principles in his most famous book, *The Conservative Mind* (1953). Values such as "a belief in a transcendent order . . . a conviction that society requires orders

and classes that emphasize 'natural distinctions' . . . a belief that property and freedom are closely linked . . . [and] a faith in custom" represent only a portion of the core. Many critics of Kirk have argued that if his work had centered on these principles Kirk may have become something like the Rush Limbaugh of the 1950s. But there's a reason why Kirk never became Reagan's political commentator. Kirk wasn't trying to rejuvenate a political party; he was trying to change the modern mind.

In *The Postmodern Imagination of Russell Kirk*, Gerald J. Russello presents a view of Kirk that goes far beyond the core principles. He emphasizes that for Kirk the problem with liberalism wasn't that it wanted a big government. Liberalism was a product of a greater disparity: the modern mind. Russello begins the untold story of Kirk by highlighting his foundational observation, that post-enlightenment thought had virtually eliminated the power and significance of imagination and sentiment. Kirk used the term "diabolical imagination" to describe the modern mind, which only accepted the physical and tangible as real. This kind of imagination rejected all pre-modern forms and traditions and sought to establish an ideal society based upon science and materialism. The modern myth of the "new golden age," which would one day realize itself as western society progressed to utopia, only promised one thing for Kirk: bondage to scientism. Russello brings this argument to the

surface by arguing that if there was any chief canon universal to all of Kirk's works it was that the western mind needed to regain a moral imagination. Kirk explains, "[W]hen our minds are deprived of high poetic images the vacancy will be filled by images of another origin and character." For Kirk these new images were artificial scientism and fanciful utopianism.

At a time when the world had all but given in to modern liberal idealism, Russello makes it clear that Kirk's solution was not to create a body of rival values. Rather, Kirk hoped to reconstruct a culture that embraced the imagination. The imagination, manifested particularly in a culture's literature, could create a tradition that would teach the society's sentiments and deepen its understanding through the wisdom preserved in this tradition. The modern thrust toward ideology was the result of a culture that had stunted any ability to operate outside of a systematized framework based upon sense perception. Having cut itself off from the moral imagination, modernism could only create civil religion which rendered political compromise and "an affection for 'variety and mystery' of human existence" impossible. Kirk's moral imagination provides the solution. As Russello puts it, "the imagination could overcome the modern dualism, initiated by Descartes, between body and spirit, nature and history, or reason and belief The imagination has great potential to unify sentiments, loyalties, and ideas that are usually considered opposed." Our society achieves unity by recognizing that we need to know what a good society looks and feels like, rather than parsing our ideals into an abstract list of values.

Stated in this way, we begin to understand Russello's thesis that Kirk would have had a lot in common with the postmodernist critique of enlightenment modernity. The postmodern emphasis on the imagination, although in certain respects self-contradicting, resonates with Kirk's foresight and wisdom. It has every intention of moving past the confident scientism of the modern era. With its use of deconstructionism it attempts to proclaim that our ability to understand the world around has more to do with who

AUTUMN BE ASHES

MARK GORMAN

world on fire,
caught between explosions i
run, weaving among the bombs
raining all around me

legs burn to tire,
watching the ground flaming while
the landscape scrolls by in time
to the chords in my head

burn ice, burn on,
cascade in the fire around me
die to the sound of living,
breathe the water again

list more, drink from
the lilting tones and operatic
piercing notes of your brethren, love
sleep, six feet, 'til spring

Mark Gorman in a senior Communication major at Grove City College. His inspiration for life, love, and the occasional bit of verse comes largely as the product of late-night, solitaire-induced stupors. Last year he crocheted a pair of pants and has even been known to wear them on occasion.

we are than what "science" actually says. The postmodern uncertainty of man's ability to reason, allows it to celebrate the power of imagination and sentiment once again. Russello reminds us that it was a conservative, Bernard Iddings Bell, who first coined the term *postmodernism*. Although postmodernists do not join Kirk in his celebration of transcendent truth or a universal meta-narrative, they are able to find an affinity with the belief that "narrative knowledge represents a way of thinking about the world that constantly reincorporates the past with itself, and which places the legitimacy of a practice on its being practiced in the past." The distinction, however, is that for the conservative, "narrative knowledge" still exists, whereas the postmodernist acknowledges its loss.

One of the ways Russello demonstrates Kirk's postmodern imagination is his brief discussion of Kirk's take on historic landmark restoration projects. Kirk was encouraged to see many old buildings restored and renewed, indicating that the industrial "mass-production order" had a limit. Modern architecture was not universally replacing outdated styles, and thus Kirk celebrated these projects as signs that progressivism was losing steam. Russello marks Kirk's wishful thinking, however, by stating that postmodernism isn't trying to recreate, so much as reminisce. The restored buildings don't signal a return to pre-modern sentiments, which embody certain styles because they mean something, rather they only reveal that the current era is willing to recognize that it has lost something. In another section Russello includes further analysis, which argues that because "cultural objects" are no longer bound to a geographic area, tradition has lost its roots. Thus, postmodernists take broad liberties with their endless juxtaposition of "cultural objects and symbols." Nevertheless, Russello presents us with a clear example of what Kirk intended for the conservative imagination. He states, "Kirk placed the individual and the physical and psychological limits of life against the idealistic dreams of radicals of every stripe . . . Kirk created 'spaces of resistance' against liberalism, pockets of nonmodernity out of which he hoped the imagination could create an alternative future." One wonders if Kirk would have seen these restoration projects as proof that "pockets of nonmodernity" could exist.

Russello's description of Kirk's use of the postmodern imagination gives us the undertones of a conversation that might have been were Kirk still around. Postmodernism and Kirk's conservatism diverge upon contact, but we must acknowledge the common ground. Kirk was trying to create a new way for culture to experience reality. The legacy of Kirk's "core principles" can continue only to the extent that conservatism functions as an imaginative tradition and not an ideology. Russello reminds us that Kirk believed that humankind needed to begin salvaging a tradition from the rubble inherited from "scientism" in what needed to be a truly *post* modern age. Yet, by reminding us of Kirk's understanding of sin and redemption, alongside the moral imagination, Russello give us the "cautiously optimistic" Kirk, one who could "avoid the disappointment of liberalism" while also rejecting "the postmodern despair of meaning." Russello's Kirk gives us a vision for society that goes beyond public policy into what it means to be a community of human beings. If conservatives are going to embrace the postmodern imagination, it will involve their willingness to reject the definition of human society as a race of purely rational beings and acknowledge that we are mind and soul, reason and sentiment. **Q**

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CALVIN VS. MENNO: REFORMATION-ERA VIEWS OF CHURCH & STATE

BENJAMIN WETZEL

As the Reformation that began in Wittenberg in 1517 spread across Europe, it divided into various theological branches, each advocating different traditions and beliefs. These differences worked to undercut any perception of Protestantism as a monolithic movement. For example, though sixteenth century Calvinists and their contemporaries, the Mennonites, both supported the general principles of the Reformation, they disagreed sharply on “secondary” issues such as the proper Christian attitude toward the state.¹ These differences, reflecting the thought of their respective leaders, John Calvin and Menno Simons, unfortunately served to obstruct cooperation between the two groups. Moreover, the extreme positions that the groups adopted on the Christian’s role in the state hindered the spread of the gospel by producing negative reactions among each other in the sixteenth century and among modern historians—provoking strikingly different, though equally negative, opinions of both groups’ beliefs. While Calvinists have been criticized as theocrats overly ambitious to remake society, Mennonites have drawn equal criticism for advocating complete withdrawal from civic life. For contemporary Christians attempting to evaluate the proper relation between church and state, a historical glance gives perspective and depth to an oft-debated issue.

In order to understand the negative attitudes directed toward Calvinists and Mennonites, we must first understand the historical and theological factors that give rise to those attitudes. In the case of Calvin, his writings on the

role of the state in his monumental *Institutes of the Christian Religion* led directly to his controversial practices in Geneva, Switzerland. Calvin believed that God had ordained civil government, and, arguing that Christians certainly have a place in government, Calvin wrote in his *Institutes* that the calling of Christians to government is a high and noble one. In a passage entitled “Against the ‘Christian’ denial or rejection of magistracy,” Calvin used Scripture to argue that Christians have always participated in government, and that they are perfectly justified in doing so.² Secondly, reacting against the pacifism of his Anabaptist opponents, Calvin acknowledged the conundrum of Christians—who are told to love their enemies—bearing the sword as magistrates. He resolved this theological difficulty by conceiving of the magistrate as the executor of God’s justice: “if we understand that the magistrate in administering punishments does nothing by himself, but carries out the very judgments of God, we shall not be hampered by this scruple.”³

A final belief—perhaps most irksome to the Mennonites in particular and to modern thinkers generally—was Calvin’s contention that that the state must actively support and defend Christian civilization and doctrine. Historian Willem Balke writes that instead of extending freedom of conscience to all citizens, “[Calvin] entrusted the government with the care for the proper maintenance of religion.”⁴ Indeed, in the *Institutes* Calvin cited a number of Old Testament passages where rulers are exhorted

2 John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, vol. 2, (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1960), 1490-91.

3 *Ibid.*, 1497.

4 Willem Balke, *Calvin and the Anabaptist Radicals*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), 63.

1 Though such theological differences exist today, this paper will confine its analysis to the respective theologies as advocated in the sixteenth century.

to consider and uphold God's law in their judgments, and then without hesitation applied those principles to the sixteenth century, writing that it was "fitting that [the modern rulers] should labor to protect and assert the honor of Him whose representatives they are, and by whose grace they govern."⁵ If Calvin had been content to advocate his views without putting them into practice, perhaps he would have gained less notoriety. However, his subsequent actions at Geneva caused negative reactions among both his contemporaries and moderns.

Undoubtedly the most controversial outworking of sixteenth century Calvinism, Geneva represented the practical result of Calvin's political theology. In 1541, Calvin returned to Geneva determined, as European historian Stefan Zweig observes, "...to convert Geneva into the first Kingdom of God on Earth."⁶ While such an idea would have been anathema to the Mennonites, who saw secular government as "outside the perfection of Christ,"⁷ to Calvin, establishing a semi-theocratic state was a clear fulfillment of what the Scriptures mandated. In fact, describing the practices of Geneva, Calvin wrote that the role of civil government was to "cherish and protect the outward worship of God, to defend sound doctrine of piety and position of the church... to form our social behavior to civil righteousness."⁸ Certainly, Calvin attempted to realize these ideals as he led Geneva. To this end, the Consistory of Geneva punished as civil offenders those who committed ecclesiastical or moral offences. In 1543, for example, a man named Pierre Dumont was sentenced to spend three days in prison (on a bread and water diet) and pay a fine for committing adultery.⁹ In addition, the Genevan leadership even proscribed certain names from being given to children at baptism in order to condemn any remnants of Catholi-

cism.¹⁰ Calvin vigorously defended Christian activity in secular government and rigorously applied biblical norms to civic life; it is hard to imagine a more striking contrast than in the followers of Menno Simons.

If we are to understand the negative attitudes toward the Mennonites in the sixteenth century, we must first understand their theological presuppositions. Orthodox Anabaptists¹¹ such as Michael Sattler in 1527 had drawn up a brief list of common theological doctrines, the Schleitheim Confession. Article Six of the Confession explained the Anabaptists' reasons for withdrawing from secular government and stated clearly that a Christian had no lawful calling to serve as a magistrate or bearing the sword. Noting that Christians ought to imitate Christ in all areas of life, the Confession argued that Christ's refusal to become involved in government necessarily precluded any Christian's involvement with the state or military.¹²

Menno Simons and his followers approved the Schleitheim Confession's attitude toward government and war. In fact, in 1544, Calvin sharply criticized the Anabaptists—which would have included the Mennonites—calling erroneous their opinion that "whoever sits on the seat of justice is unworthy to be called a Christian, because the office of the sword has no place at all in Christianity."¹³ Truly, the necessity of the magistrate bearing the sword was a chief reason the Mennonites refused to participate in civic life. Menno stated in his treatise, "Foundation of Christian Doctrine," that he and his followers "teach and acknowledge no other sword, nor tumult in the kingdom

5 Calvin, *Institutes*, 1495.

6 Stefan Zweig, *The Right to Heresy: Castellio Against Calvin*, (New York: Viking, 1936), 41.

7 Balke, 65.

8 Calvin, *Institutes*, 1487.

9 Robert M. Klingdon, ed. *Registers of the Consistory of Geneva in the Time of Calvin*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 203.

10 W.G. Naphy, "Baptisms, Church Riots and Social Unrest in Calvin's Geneva," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 26 (1995): 89.

11 This in contrast to those followers of Jan of Leiden and Thomas Muntzer who engaged in the violent takeover of the city of Munster in 1534. Menno explicitly repudiated the actions of Jan in "The Blasphemy of Jan of Leiden, 1535," in *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons*, trans. Leonard Verduin, ed. John Christian Wenger (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1956), 31-50.

12 John Christian Wenger, *Glimpses of Mennonite History and Doctrine* (Scottsdale PA, Herald: 1949), 210-211.

13 John Calvin, *Treatises Against the Anabaptists and Against the Libertines*, ed. Benjamin Wirt Farley (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1982), 80.

or church of Christ than the sharp sword of the Spirit,” and dismissing a Christian’s role in government, he argued that “the civil sword we leave to those to whom it is committed.”¹⁴ For the Mennonites, “those to whom it is committed” were—exclusively—nonbelievers. Given the common sixteenth century acceptance of the Constantinian arrangement which equated a withdrawal from society with disloyalty to Christendom, this withdrawal from civic life significantly contributed to the negative attitudes toward the Mennonites.

Because of their beliefs concerning civic life, the Mennonites never erected a systematic government like Calvin’s Geneva. In fact, for many Mennonites, simply escaping persecution was a challenge in and of itself. Harassed by Catholics and Protestants alike, Mennonites strove to remain safe while warrants for their arrest were dispatched. Catholic Emperor Charles V, for example, in 1542 decreed it a crime to give shelter or aid to Menno Simons and promised a reward to those who aided in his capture.¹⁵ Likewise, Gillis of Aachen, the Mennonite bishop, was beheaded for his faith in 1557.¹⁶

Why were the Mennonites persecuted so energetically? Though many factors contributed, certainly their advocacy of withdrawal from public life and their negative views toward the state alienated Calvin, Luther, and Zwingli. Unsurprisingly, such attitudes frustrated the magisterial reformers, who understood the societal implications of a sect withdrawing from the public square. Indeed, the Mennonites “formed but a small group opposed to the whole hostile world” testifies Professor Harold H. Schaff.¹⁷ Furthermore, historian Claus-Peter Clasen of Yale University flatly states that the Anabaptists’ views on various state-related issues “undermined sixteenth century society,” and concludes that, in general, “the more pious an Anabaptist, the more

dangerous.”¹⁸ In addition to threatening civil society, the Mennonites dared to dissent from both Catholicism and mainstream Protestantism. “Nothing,” wrote John Calvin about Menno Simons, “can be more conceited than this donkey, nor more impudent than this dog.”¹⁹ In criticizing the Mennonites’ view of magistrates, an exasperated Calvin reiterated, “Thereby we already see what poor scatterbrains [the Anabaptists] are, speaking without reason.”²⁰ Calvin’s statement demonstrates that an important reason for his dislike of the Mennonites was their dismissive view of the state. Moreover, Calvin’s passionate denunciation of Mennonite theology indicates the estrangement that the groups felt from one another and their inability to cooperate in evangelism—an unfortunate situation where the spread of the gospel was hindered.

Although an equally negative attitude toward Calvinists developed, one would hardly level the same charges of simplicity and unreasonableness against them. Nevertheless, Calvinists also drew much criticism from both their sixteenth century contemporaries and modern historians. Certainly, the teachings and practices of the Calvinist leadership antagonized the Mennonites. In his letter to Martin Micron, a Zwinglian who disputed theology with the Mennonites, Menno declared that he would never again discuss his ideas publicly, partially because Micron’s “principal teachers and leaders such as... John Calvin and Theodore Beza... are men of blood.”²¹ Again, such harsh disagreement among Mennonites and Calvinists led to the hindrance of the gospel by preventing cooperation among the two nascent “denominations.” Concurring in the negative opinion of Calvin, modern historian Stefan Zweig ironically compares Calvin to Pope Paul III, writing that after Calvin had established his rule in Geneva “it had become as dangerous to offend the preacher of St.-Pierre as

14 Menno Simons, “Foundation of Christian Doctrine, 1539,” in *Complete Writings*, 200.

15 Wenger, 78-79.

16 *Ibid.*, 82.

17 Harold H. Schaff, “The Anabaptists, the Reformers, and the Civil Government,” *Church History* 1, no. 1 (1932): 30.

18 Claus-Peter Clasen, “The Sociology of Swabian Anabaptism,” *Church History* 32 (June 1963): 152.

19 Qtd. in Simons, 405n.

20 John Calvin, *Treatises*, 83.

21 Menno Simons, “Epistle to Martin Micron, 1556,” in *Complete Writings*, 938-39.

to offend emperor or pope.”²² While some would certainly dispute the accuracy of such a charge, nevertheless such negative perceptions arose because of Calvin’s conduct in Geneva. Zweig criticizes Calvin with the same fervor with which Calvin attacked the Mennonites, but for fundamentally different reasons. Zweig does not argue that Calvin is a simpleton or a threat to civil order; instead it is Calvin’s perceived arrogance and his curtailment of individual conscience that Zweig condemns. Concerning individual conscience, Menno asserted that Christ did an adequate job of guiding conscience and that the secular government ought not to meddle there.²³ Clearly, Calvin’s modern and historic opponents attacked him for the perception that he was instituting a theocratic state that lacked respect for individual conscience and refused to tolerate dissenters. The contrast between the reasons for the opposition to Calvin and Menno could hardly be greater.

The Reformation tilled the sixteenth century theological ground, creating the fertile soil from which sprung divergent shoots of Protestantism. Calvin and Menno, though only two leaders of the multifarious traditions

²² Zweig, 5.

²³ Sjouke Voolstra, “Themes in the Early Theology of Menno Simons,” in *Menno Simons: A Reappraisal*, ed. Gerald R. Brunk (Harrisonburg, VA: Eastern Mennonite College, 1992), 38.

which emerged, nevertheless represented two antithetical views toward the Christian’s role in the state. Although Calvinism has gained many more followers in the Reformed traditions of today than have the Mennonites, both views of the Christian’s relationship with the state have remained forcefully opposed by each other and by historians and theologians. Though rigorous opposition to both positions arose, Calvinists and Mennonite were criticized equally harshly but for different reasons. Unfortunately for Christians in general, the antagonism towards each other that the two groups felt in the sixteenth century dismantled any chances at cooperation in spreading the good news of Christ. For modern Christians, in order to gain a truly biblical view of what their relationship with the state ought to be, it is important to understand the various positions that historical Christians have developed. Perhaps armed with such an understanding, modern Christians can begin to discuss calmly and intelligently their views on the relationship between church and state. **Q**

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IN CAESAR'S HOUSEHOLD

ANDREW BRINKERHOFF

In first century Rome, amidst the visual cacophony of the Eternal City, there faintly glimmered an ember of faith which would soon ignite the whole Roman world. For in the very household of Caesar, we are told, there were those who belonged to the mysterious fellowship of Christians: pious atheists, obedient anarchists, charitable cannibals. These Christians were sometimes killed, often vilified, and universally viewed with suspicion by their unbelieving neighbors. Believers today live in a roughly analogous (though far less antagonistic) environment. Like the small cadre of believers in Caesar's house, we face hostility from a functionally godless society and competition from a messianic state. Wary unbelievers continue to suspect influential Christians of having designs on power. One recent analyst warned: "A specter is haunting America ... the specter of our nation ruled by the extreme Christian right, who would make the United States a 'Christian nation'..."¹ This invective begs the question: what constitutes a particularly Christian view of the state? What are our political objectives, and what means should we use to reach them? The example of the early Church in Rome and the testimony of Scripture combine to reveal a framework for political action: Christians in America should seek just laws and actively affirm that the Church, not the state, is God's chosen instrument for social change.

One of the primary tasks of government is enforcing justice. In a democratic society such as our own, it is especially crucial that Christians know what kind of laws should be established. First, we should recognize that there is no Biblical role for government beyond establishing justice and

peace. Thus we should judge the goodness of a law primarily by how well it fulfills these goals. Secondly, Christians are not explicitly called to align governmental laws with God's law, but they are called to conform the Church's governance and order to Scripture.

Throughout Scripture, civil government is tasked with the punishment of injustice, which is usually a variant of stealing or murder. God established governors to "punish those who do evil, and praise those who do good" (I Peter 2:3) and Solomon said "a wise king winnows the wicked" (Proverbs 20:26). Paul lays out government's duties most explicitly:

Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil ... [the magistrate] is God's minister to you for good ... he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. (Romans 13:3,4)

While no man or government can know ultimate justice without the revelation of Scripture, it is possible to achieve a certain proximate justice defined by God without recourse to special revelation. Paul writes: "Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law; these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness" (Romans 2:14,15). John Calvin echoes Paul's teaching, saying:

The Law of God which we call the moral law is acknowledged to be none other than the testimony of natural law and of that conscience which is engraved in the souls of men by God, and so the whole content of equity is prescribed by it.²

Just as science reveals the laws of nature, man's conscience reveals God's moral law in the absence of His Word. Without

1 Rabbi James Rudin, author of *The Baptizing of America*. Quoted in *World Magazine*, Dec. 2, 2006, p.15

2 *Luther and Calvin on Secular Authority*, p. 68

biblical presuppositions and goals, a full understanding of general revelation is impossible, and flaws in secular science and justice are endemic. However, unbelievers can know truth even if they cannot know it consistently, and secular governments can enforce just laws despite their inability to fully comprehend justice.

In the context of a functionally godless society and government, such as our own, it is not the duty of Christians to transform government into a Christian entity. Instead, we should focus on changing the state's actions and laws so that it will best fulfill its God-given purpose of establishing justice. The biblical means for doing so recognizes that unjust laws are not a problem of knowledge, but stem from an understanding warped by sin, and the desire for personal advantage rather than justice. To correct this, the Church should act as a prophet to rulers, declaring God's law to them and proclaiming His rule over them. This pattern is seen repeatedly with the Old Testament prophets, who expose rulers' hypocrisy in offering sacrifices to God while oppressing the poor among their subjects. They also declare God's rule over unbelieving nations. The clearest Old Testament example of this is Jonah's ministry to Nineveh. God sends Jonah with the message that the sins of Nineveh have come up before Him, and disastrous judgment looms on the horizon. As a result, this pagan people repent and amend their ways. Even unbelieving nations are under the rule of God and accountable to Him for their actions.

Leaders in the early Church likewise preached justice to the Roman government. Justin Martyr in his First Apology tells the authorities: "We assume that you who aim at piety and philosophy will do nothing unreasonable.... For as all people shrink from inheriting the poverty or sufferings or obscurity of their fathers, so whatever the Word forbids to be chosen, the sensible person will not choose."³ Despite being a member of an illegal sect, Justin also has no qualms about calling the Roman leaders to account before God: "For if, having learned the truth, you fail to do what is righteous,

you have no defense before God."⁴ Justin's statements are rooted in common human desires and knowledge, appealing to the self-image of rulers as philosophic and pious men; they have authority because they are derived directly from God's Word.

It is important to realize that civil laws ought to be a last resort, not the standard arbiter, when it comes to regulating Christians' morals. We are a distinct *politeia* within the secular polis⁵, and the government's laws are not "our laws," so to speak. The Church should be self-ruled, using self-consciously Christian laws and mediation. Because of this, Christians should first align the Church's governance with God's laws, rather than focusing on the laws of a secular state. Though ungodly men know a great deal of what constitutes morality through reason and the witness of general revelation, they warp this understanding through sin. Thus it is to be expected that an unbelieving culture will gradually strip marriage of its true meaning and redefine it to include homosexuals. For the Church to accept this definition, however, poses a grave threat to the body of Christ. Too often the Church blames cultural relativism for the ills of society when its own basic assumptions mirror those of society. We cannot ask government to be Christian in governing the nation when the Church is apathetic about governing itself.

Many might object to the seeming political passivity implicit in this stance. Should not redeeming the whole creation include bringing government under the rule of Christ? Others might observe that the Church is fractured enough without trying to mediate all disputes that arise between any believers. Also, isn't establishing a just government part of loving one's neighbor?

The basic problem with these objections is their over-emphasis of the state and commensurate diminution of the Church. If the ultimate goal of bringing all peoples into

⁴ From *Irenaeus to Grotius: A Sourcebook in Christian Political Thought*, p. 10-11

⁵ An idea from the early Church: "the early apologetic *Letter to Diognetus* ... presented the Church as a distinct *politeia*, distributed throughout various civic communities." From *Irenaeus to Grotius*. p.6

³ From *Irenaeus to Grotius: A Sourcebook in Christian Political Thought*, p. 12

the Kingdom is accomplished, it will signal the end of civil government as we know it. As Luther put it,

we must divide Adam's children into two parts ... [the first to] the Kingdom of God, the second to the kingdom of the world. All those who truly believe in Christ belong to God's kingdom ... these people need neither secular sword nor law.⁶

As the Kingdom of God expands, the state will either fade in significance or fight the Church to retain its position as the prime mover in society.

Those who observe the failure of the Church to fulfill its God-given task are correct in their assessment, but a weak or divided Church is no excuse to adopt the world's *modus operandi*. It should instead galvanize individual believers to follow biblical patterns of conflict resolution, coming to their respective Church leaders with disputes if negotiation has failed, and abiding by their decision. The suggestion that imposing civil justice is a form of loving one's neighbor has some merit, but far more emphasis should be placed on biblically mandated means of showing Christ's love, involving personal ministry and spreading the Gospel. It is only natural that a godless society should have some unjust laws, and oppressive government is seen scripturally as a judgment on a sinful people. The Kingdom of God provides an alternative—the obedient society of believers governed by God's laws and Christian charity.

Historically, governments have taken on responsibilities well beyond those of maintaining peace and preserving justice. Christians in America need to affirm that the Church, not government, is God's chosen instrument for social change. The Church has been given the duty of ministering to the poor and oppressed. The Church should serve as the moral prophet to society, and the moral overseer among believers. Finally, all of these duties should take precedence, in terms of time, resources, and effort, over our labors to improve the nation's government directly.

Scripture constantly commands God's people to care

for the downtrodden. The Mosaic law institutionalized gleaning and demanded care for the foreigner, and Jesus' ministry focused on the poor. "To visit orphans and widows in their affliction" is one of two parts of "pure and undefiled religion" (James 1:27) for the apostle James. Scripture places particular emphasis on caring for the needs of other believers; the office of deacon was established for the sole purpose of caring for widows, and Churches sent aid to distant provinces when they heard of famine afflicting their brethren.

That civil government does not share these responsibilities is more implicit, but no less true. Even in the theocracy of Old Testament Israel, charity was a personal responsibility, not a government program. The New Testament descriptions of government duties are limited to enforcing justice and preserving peace. Scripture has much to say on a man's duties to God and his fellow man, and how he should use his God-given wealth. Nowhere does it make government the enforcer of these duties. Giving one man's private property to another should only be done to mend a previous injustice, and thus coercive 'redistribution,' in whatever form, runs contrary to government's duty of enforcing justice for all its citizens. Likewise, parents are given the command to diligently teach their children – for the state to assume this prerogative is a gross overstepping of its bounds.⁷

We should not look to an amoral government to recognize or display Christian morals to the culture. Government does not set the moral norms by which Christians should live. While these statements may be affirmed by most evangelicals, the members of the 'Religious Right' still act as if government should be the protector of morality in our nation. Conservative Christians heaped scorn on the Massachusetts Supreme Court for legalizing gay marriage while taking little notice of Churches which had already affirmed homosexuality. While demanding that

⁷ Statists have long believed that government's right to educate children trumps parental rights. The Second District Court in Los Angeles recently ruled that no one may teach in California without teaching credentials, thus declaring almost all home schools and many private schools in violation of state law.

⁶ *Christianity and the State*, p. 23

government preserve the institution of marriage, even the most conservative Churches often permit no-fault divorces for their members. Media outlets made fools of preachers who vociferously defended Roy Moore's Ten Commandments sculpture, yet could not themselves name the Ten Commandments. Ironically, many Christians who support establishing the Ten Commandments in government would see any attempt to enforce them in their own Church as legalistic. We call on politicians to establish a "culture of life" while the Protestant Church has yet to deal seriously with issues like contraception and in vitro fertilization. When the Church stands on such shaky moral footing, is it any surprise that our secular society and government say: "What portion have we in David? ... To your tents, O Israel! Now, see to your own house, O David!"⁸

Christian advocates for political activism might respond that the failings of the Church do not justify the failings of the state. Should we not support right action on the part of government? In addition, many insist that government has an equal stake (and thus an equal duty) in preserving our country's Christian or 'Judeo-Christian' values. Rev. Louis Sheldon, founder of the Traditional Values Coalition, says "we are fighting the battle for traditional values at many levels and in many ways—at the local, state, and federal levels,"⁹ implying that the battle for our values is engaged primarily on the field of politics. Finally, many would say that investing our efforts in politics is the most effective and efficient means of bettering the country. A little influence in politics can produce great changes almost immediately, and government has the unmatched material resources necessary to accomplish significant economic change.

The first objection raised is the most challenging. Of course we hope our government will act justly; then again, when godless politicians abuse their power, it is far from a surprise. Seeing our government progressively embrace pagan morals should not cause shock and outrage, but

repentance. In no way does this negate political action, but it does influence the priorities and methods we use when dealing with politics. We should not tolerate lip service to God when it is not backed up with substantive action. A Christian leader who governs like an unbeliever is a greater threat than a non-Christian, since he does no practical good and mars the image of Christ. Those who demand respect for and adherence to our nation's Christian heritage fail to see that that heritage is worth little if it is dead. There must be a continuing and vibrant community that lives by Christian values for government to see any worth in them (aside from winning votes). The Church, more than the state, needs to return to its roots.

The greatest weakness of Christian politics lies in the assertion that political action is the most effective action; through the constant bombardment of politicians and the media, we have bought into the lie that civil government is the prime mover in society. Not that this lie is new: writers of history since Thucydides have perpetuated the myth that the actions of governments steer the course of human history. The pervasive notion of the Church as having influence primarily through politics has crept into our own thinking. It seems political issues are the only ones that are ever really urgent: "Unless Christian conservatives act soon, the level of religious programming ... could well decrease" blared one Christian Coalition bulletin. "It is imperative that Congress pass a 'multicast equal-access' provision."¹⁰ Compared to major issues like this, pouring time and resources into the Church may seem like wasted effort, but we must remember God has promised results. No guarantee of a politician could hope to compare to that promise. So the next time you see a political analyst harping on the current whims of religious voters, just remember the words of St. Augustine: "The clouds roll with thunder, that the House of God shall be built throughout the earth: and these frogs sit in their marsh and croak."¹¹

⁸ The cry of the Northern Kingdom after their oppression by Rehoboam, from I Kings 12:16

⁹ <http://www.calltoconservatives.com/>

¹⁰ <http://www.cc.org/mcmc.cfm>

¹¹ *Building a Christian World View*, p. 203

We see culture in a downward spiral; what are we to do? First, wrench our minds away from fascination with politics, its power plays and pageantry, its muck and grime. Christians should focus their attentions and energy on fulfilling the Church's call to minister to the world's physical and spiritual needs. The Gospel of Christ is unique to the Church; no other organization can fulfill the spiritual needs of people. Likewise, who has more reason to sacrifice his physical well-being than one whose eternal bliss is secured? In matters of need or conflict within the body, we should look first to other believers for help and just judgment. Settling conflicts internally is essential for preserving unity among believers and strengthening our Christian witness. A concrete first step in Kingdom building might be to divert all campaign donations to the ministry of the Church. R. J. Rushdooney concludes his study of *Christianity and the State* thusly: "Christians must once again take over [for] government in education, welfare, health, and other spheres. Basic to their take-over is tithing."¹² The respective credentials of the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Man should result in proportionately skewed support. Second, we should seek biblical responses to government when it acts contrarily to God's commands. Preach the Gospel to society, and remind government of its duties to God. We are more than constituents; we are prophets.

As Americans we have the historically anomalous opportunity of choosing our rulers through voting. Though our decisions in voting are the most effective way of altering government directly, biblical precedents are sparse. First we must realize that a secular ruler does not play the same role as a biblical leader. Rulers in Old Testament Israel had the duty of safeguarding the religious purity of the nation, and were often given direct instructions from God. As such, they had to worship and serve Yahweh unreservedly. The New Testament gives little in the way of advice or instructions to rulers, and there is no list of attributes for the secular authorities that would correspond to the qualifications for

deacons and elders. As a consequence, the candidates for whom we vote should be those whose actions most closely correspond to the biblical mandates for a ruler.

Any full treatment of the issues involved in voting would take far more than the few pages here allotted; however, I will proffer a few basic guidelines. The best candidates are those who have shown their love of justice and peace, and have demonstrated wisdom and discernment in their decision-making. Different offices require different qualifications; a good lawmaker might not be a good judge. Placing Christians in public office is desirable if they understand that their primary duty is towards God, not their constituents. We should hold Christian politicians to a higher standard, both because they have declared themselves to be servants of God, and so that the title of Christian is not lightly donned by vote-seekers. All Christians (statesmen most publicly) are emissaries of Christ, and as such ought to be accountable to their Church for their public actions. Finally, voting requires a great measure of wisdom and discernment, especially since most of us do not know any of our rulers personally. Although it may seem like majorities and money determine most political decisions, we must remember that "the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; like rivers of water, He turns it wherever He wishes" (Proverbs 21:1).

In conclusion—seek the peace of the nation, be at peace with the brethren. Proclaim the way of justice to our rulers, practice justice in the Church. Where the state adopts the role of savior, live out the Gospel of Christ. Appoint rulers who will do justice, who love the way of peace, and remind them always of the Master to whom they must answer. Seek first the Kingdom of God, and these things also will be added unto you. **Q**

Andrew Brinkerhoff is a junior physics major at Grove City College. He shows every sign of turning into an acerbic social critic and crusty old Calvinist, just like his great-grandfather.

¹² *Christianity and the State*, p. 187

JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER

NAOMI COUSINO

An angel's voice saved Abraham's white head
 From shame: It turned the trembling knife away.
 The altar was mere stone again—instead
 He cut the cords, not flesh, and laughed to say
 The tired joke once more, the son he bred,
 This Isaac—just jesting heaven's cat-play.
 At least he got the punch-line and his son.
 (But had Jehovah's joking just begun?)

Surely there is no balm in Gilead.
 No bloody beaten Ammonites who face
 Sheol—nor rams however myriad—
 Could purge the rust-dried rivulets, the trace
 Of altered god and man, whose sin, he had
 Known, visited the children. What of grace
 Was still in heaven? Curse the maw above,
 This Moloch-Yahweh who picks his teeth of love.

And so these four days' laugh-lament each year . . .
 The festive weeping on the mountain might
 Amuse such deity. He plugs his ears
 To mute the joke, but still he cannot quite
 Forget the echo of his vow. He hears
 Divine derision in the harsh delight
 Of buzzards cackling overhead again:
 This blood-lust of Jehovah turned heathen.

Why, Spirit of the Lord, such mystery?
 He broke the tambourine she played that day—
 That day he swallowed oath and victory
 With daughter-blood. Remembering her grey
 Eyes staring at the clouds, their history
 Of girlhood summers ready to obey,
 To wed the mountain god and bloody knife—
 A trembling kiss before he took her life.

Naomi Cousino is a senior English secondary education major at Grove City College. She has thoroughly enjoyed cultivating her love and taste for literature at GCC with outstanding professors and classmates, and she is looking forward to sharing that love with her students and, hopefully, her children as she graduates, marries, and begins teaching next year. She especially anticipates more leisure time to re-read C. S. Lewis with her future husband and write poetry as life quiets down after college.

CONUNDRUMS

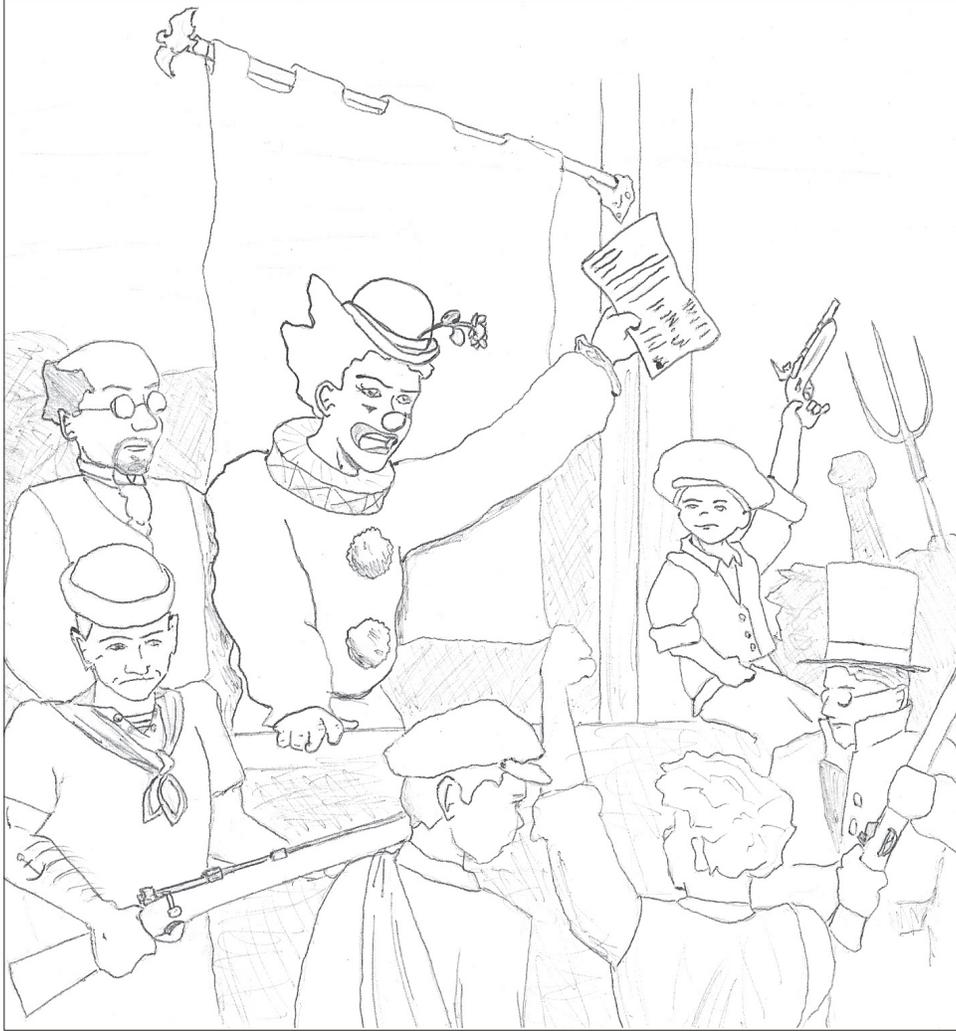
Monty Hall Problem

An old game show host named Monty Hall used to present three doors. Behind one door was a brand new car, while behind each of the other two was an old goat. A contestant could pick a door and keep whatever was behind it. However, after the contestant had made a choice, Monty would go to one of the two unselected doors and open it to reveal a goat. Then he would make an offer: keep your current choice, or switch to the other remaining closed door. What should the contestant do?

Logic Problem

Five men with different nationalities and with different jobs live in consecutive houses on a street in Grove City. The houses are painted different colors. Each man has a different pet and each man has a different favorite beverage. Determine which man has a zebra for a pet and which man's favorite beverage is mineral water (which is one of the favorite beverages) given the following clues.

1. The Englishman lives in the red house.
2. The Spaniard has a dog.
3. The Japanese man is a painter.
4. The Italian's favorite beverage is tea.
5. The Norwegian lives in the first house on the left.
6. The green house is immediately to the right of the white house.
7. The photographer breeds snails.
8. The diplomat lives in the yellow house.
9. Milk is the favorite beverage of the man in the middle house.
10. The favorite beverage of the man in the green house is coffee.
11. The Norwegian's house is next to the blue house.
12. The favorite beverage of the violinist is orange juice.
13. The fox is the pet in the house next to the physician.
14. A horse is the pet in the house next to the diplomat.



Each issue, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, and we choose the best one. Caption submissions for this issue's cartoon, by Sean McGonagle, must be sent to quad.submissions@gmail.com by 2 September. The winner will be given a signed print of the cartoon.

choose Door One at first. Clearly, there is a 1 in 3 chance that you are correct. But that means that there is a 2 in 3 chance that either Door Two or Door Three is correct. If Door Three had the car, then Monty would eliminate Door Two; if Door Two had the car, then he would eliminate Door Three. In either case, the remaining door is correct as long as the car is not behind Door One. That means you have a 2 in 3 chance of finding the car if you switch, while only a 1 in 3 chance if you stick to your original decision. So the contestant should switch to the other door.

Solution to Monty Hall Problem

There is an old problem that most of us have heard: If you flip a coin and get tails, what are the chances you get heads on the next toss? The answer, of course, is that the odds don't change. You can get 100 tails in a row, and the odds of getting heads on the next toss is still 50%. The Monty Hall Problem is tricky because it masquerades as the same type of problem. The odds can't change, right? Well, wrong. Actually, the chance of success doubles when you switch from your original choice. Suppose you

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