

## Scopes dichotomy

The clash of Faith and Reason, of Religion and Science, has captured the imagination of this century, as evidenced by the 1925 "Scopes Monkey Trial" and the

that when you create a straw man to tear down, his defeat is likely to become a hollow victory.

The famed critic H.L. Mencken's caricature of Bryan, the "old buzzard" who "has been oozing around the country since his first day here," has been soundly humiliated. The real William Jennings Bryan, the Great Commoner, that fiery crusader for the rights of the masses, the resonant orator whose faith enriched his life and inflamed his sense of justice, has been left untouched and forgotten, lying under inches of dust that few care to uncover.

A wide brush is always dangerous, no matter who is painting with it, and bigotry has two faces on its coin. If it is a danger to distrust science as heresy, it is equally deadly to discount religion as idiocy. The fact that so many scientific innovators throughout Western history have been Christian in either profession or paradigm is a significant clue.

One of the most famous of these, Galileo, is known for having been tried and persecuted by the Church for his views in an affair ostensibly similar to the Scopes Trial. But Galileo in fact was tried not for science which challenged Biblical doctrine, but for attempting to demonstrate that Copernicus' discoveries were compatible with Scripture! The Church was threatened because he contradicted ideas of Aristotle and Ptolemy which had entered Christian dogma through Thomas Aquinas.

The basic dichotomy between science and religion often leads to confusion. The two disciplines are not opponents, because they deal with different things. Faith must accept that the study of workings of the physical world is healthy and good in a universe created by



### THE ALTAR OF AN UNKNOWN GOD

JOEL P. SHEMPERT

Copy Editor



1951 drama it inspired, Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee's *Inherit the Wind*.

With last term's production of *Inherit the Wind* by the Clackamas Theater Department, this issue has been dragged to the surface of our consciousness once again. I take the play's bias, that devout Christianity is ignorant and oppressive, to be a grievous and prejudicial error.

This is not a slight against the play, or its stellar performance by Clackamas' students and faculty. Indeed, I contend that the very excellence of craft in *Inherit the Wind* is a part of its danger.

*Inherit* paints the picture Lawrence and Lee intended, and paints it masterfully, in fact. But in so doing, an entire point of view, along with one of its greatest champions, is left by the wayside.

I allude, of course, to Christian Fundamentalism and Scopes prosecutor William Jennings Bryan. Though the play makes no claim to accurate representation of the facts, the damage is done for those millions who saw "the movie" without ever reading "the book," ironically enough given the play's message. Bryan, in the person of "Matthew Harrison Brady," is now a raving bigot and Fundamentalism the oppressor of reason.

The attacks against Bryan and Fundamentalism in the course of the trial are too numerous to be dealt with here, but suffice to say

a reasonable God, and Reason must realize that no amount of physical discovery will ever negate the presence of a higher reality.

In C.S. Lewis' *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, third in the Narnia Chronicles, the heroes meet an old man who is a retired star, for in Narnia stars are living beings. Eustace remarks in puzzlement, "In our world, a star is a huge ball of flaming gas."

"Even in your world, my son," the star replies, "that is not what a star is but only what it is made of."

In other words, things are more than they seem. Physical reality does not negate metaphysical reality.

I serve a God who is unafraid of science because He has set in motion the processes which it studies. Christianity suffered a terrible blow at Dayton in 1925, which I hope to have some small part in setting right. I humbly ask the reader to consider a relationship with a God of both Faith and Reason. *I show you a more excellent way.*

## The true face of war

Joel Shempert's March 3 piece on Iraq and the atrocities of war was absolutely great. To know that Dean Darris is continuing to present the facts about this na-

tion is outstanding. We have a charge to educate and enlighten students.

No one does that better than Dean. However I find it very alarming that we have to put war in its proper context. Bruce Willis wracks up the body count and there are no children. Sly Stallone surfaces in a swamp and saves half the world. Steven Segal breaks the limbs of anyone pointing a weapon of destruction at him. Arnold has saved America from a hostile world. He has even conquered a few aliens when he is not busy being a bad ass. Demi Moore can cause the best of the Navy SEALs to clutch their family jewels. Geena Davis is a wonderful housewife by day and a trained assassin by night. Meg can just flat fly that chopper. Isn't this how war really is? In this nation we certainly wouldn't glamorize war then feed it to the youth of America.

The atrocities of this nation in the last 40 years go way beyond George Bush. He was only one member of the class of '46. That class had some of our greatest leaders. LBJ, known for the Great Society, which included the use of napalm on children, is one striking example. The leader of the free world's strategy of draft the kids from our ghettos was pure genius. Protecting the middle class white boys with school deferments is another stroke. Or is it a form of ethnic cleansing? However, this is the greatest nation on earth. Doesn't everybody know that? Our citizens surely adopted all those defleshed children and gave them good homes and the finest of

medical care. Just like we do our own. I must be stupid to think we would let our poor and underprivileged fight our wars. Iraq wasn't about the price of gaso-

line. It was this nation's statement about human rights.

I hope I am not coming across as some draft-dodging anti-

war activist of the sixties. I am simply a guy who has had to wrap a towel around someone's head because their brains were leaking out and they still had a heartbeat. Spending Christmas Eve changing bandages and IVs on a double amputee who hadn't told his wife about his injury, is a wonderful way to get into the holiday spirit. Everyone should get a chance to dangle from a helicopter cable and try to get to a downed pilot as Charlie is trying to use your red cross as target practice. This nation loves to label and name things like Rambo, Terminator or Top Gun. Other names that come to mind are Tet offensive and My Lai massacre? "So simply label me," and those I served with, as VICTIM OF THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS 1970-1974.

So, gentlemen, keep getting the word out. As this nation passes out of the barbaric hold of the class of '46, maybe there is hope. Who knows? The life you save may be your own son or daughter. If your students and readers really need to see a war movie for entertainment, can I suggest *Saving Private Ryan*? I really like the scene on the beach when Tom Hanks is towing a young GI and a mortar shell blows him in half. It brought back such wonderful memories.

Respectfully Submitted on Behalf of a New Generation,

Tom Laugle  
Faculty President

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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