VERBUM

St. John Fisher College
Religious Studies Department Club

Fall 2010
Rest Club Officers

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Dear Reader,

Thank you for your interest in reading this semester’s issue of Verbum. Just as Fisher has grown over the years, so has Verbum. It seems that every issue of Verbum brings forth a new variety of essays, poems, research papers and other works.

I would like to extend a special thank you to all the students, faculty and staff who have submitted their personal works for this fall 2010 issue of Verbum. What strikes me about this issue of Verbum is the diverse topics that the readers are exposed to as they progress from cover to cover. From Jewish traditions to Hindu rituals to philosophical topics like love and original sin, this semester’s issue of Verbum exceeds expectations.

The publication of Verbum would not be possible without the support and assistance of review boards, compilers/editors and the REST Club’s academic advisor, Dr. Michael Costanzo. The unending dedication of Fr. Costanzo to Verbum and the REST Club has kept it alive and growing. I would also like to thank the Office of Multicultural Affairs & Diversity, the Student Government Association and the countless other individuals and organizations who have donated prizes for each submission category.

I encourage you, as a reader, to submit a work for publication in a future issue of Verbum. We would love to include a writing of yours in the spring 2011 issue.

Respectfully,

Christina M. Regelsberger
REST Club President
Editor of Verbum
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The Davidic and Sinaitic Covenants

Introduction

Although the books contained in the Old Testament are extensive and diverse, it remains difficult to argue that the covenants created between God and Moses and God and David are central pieces upon which the subsequent writings in their entirety are based. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church defines the term covenant as “[a] bond entered into voluntarily by two parties by which each pledges himself to do something for the other.”¹ This basic definition did not derive theological connotations until it was utilized by Old Testament writers to signify a commitment between Yahweh and the Israelites whom God chose as God’s people.² In the book of Exodus, God initiates a covenant with Moses that is repeatedly violated by the newly formed nation of Israel. The covenant evolves during the time of David when God reaffirms God’s commitment to the people of Israel despite their rebellious nature. These two covenants and their implications will be discussed in greater detail during the remainder of this work.


² Ibid.
The Sinaitic Covenant

Despite an uncertainty surrounding the authorship and composition dates of the book of Exodus, much insight can be gleaned from the literary content contained therein, a significant portion of which can be found in the narrative regarding the covenant-making process between Yahweh and Moses. In chapter 19, God extends the covenant to Moses, who relays the message to the people of Israel as a mediator between God and the Israelites. The New Jerome Biblical commentary attests that this covenant was God’s response to “the condition of the people,” offering an opportunity for restoration by turning from their wicked ways and obeying God’s will. This covenant was not imposed upon the Israelites, however, but rather appealed to their freedom to either reject or accept its conditions. Israel remains unique in that it was the first nation of its time to profess that their God was directly involved with them in the establishment of a covenant, even though covenant-making was a common practice between both individuals and groups of neighboring societies.

The following four chapters outline the content and stipulations of the covenant. The prominence of this section within the book appears to be indicative of its significance to and impact on the overall text. This segment begins with a list of prohibitive statements known as the Ten Commandments, or Decalogue. Although these statements appear to be orders, their properties are much less legalistic than other writings of the

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same period and seem to emphasize living practices for a right relationship with God rather than meaningless demands.⁶ This is further evidenced by the first statement of the Decalogue, which warns against idol worship and indicates that “[s]ole allegiance to ‘the LORD’ lies at the very heart of the covenant relationship.”⁷ It would be senseless to attempt to adhere to any of the other principles if one’s focus was not yet on the God who instituted them. This commandment and the following three all address this concept of right relationship with God while the following six address issues pertaining to general life in society.⁸ In the case of the Sinaitic covenant, the blessings promised to Israel are conditional as they are offered as a response to obedience.⁹ There are no punishments directly listed, although it seems to be implied that there will be dire consequences to quality of life for disobedience with such phrases as “so that your days may be long in the land” in Exodus 20:12. After the Decalogue, there follows additional directives concerning daily living practices, such as Sabbath and religious festival observance, which are elaborated upon in a more detailed manner than the previous statements.

This covenant appears to be a continuation and fulfillment of God’s original promise to Abraham,¹⁰ which stated Yahweh would make him “the ancestor of a multitude of nations” in Genesis 17:4. The generic element of this statement becomes specified in Exodus as a nation belonging to God.¹¹ This promise is developed even

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⁷ Ibid.


¹⁰ Timothy Dwyer, “The Biblical Era: Evangelism, Missions, and Church Growth” (lecture, BHT511NE, Session 2.2, Northeastern Seminary, September 23, 2010).
further in 2 Samuel between God and David.

In chapter 24, the people of Israel must determine whether or not they choose to accept the terms of the covenant and respond with faithfulness to God’s invitation. The text suggests that the people agreed immediately without reservation, yet according to the narrative it is not long before they disobey.

The Davidic Covenant

Although the term ‘covenant’ is not used in 2 Samuel 7, the text outlines God’s promises to David, and it can be argued that this pivotal section serves as the crux to all Old Testament writings leading up to and away from it. This portion of the text describes a time late into David’s reign, and concerns the fate of two prominent institutions that were integral components within the lives of the people at this point in history and for centuries afterwards—the Jerusalem sanctuary and the Davidic monarchy. This covenant is given despite David’s repeated offenses against God and God’s people.

With the creative and complex use of the term ‘house,’ it is established that this covenant is everlasting. In addition to meaning a literal house or dwelling, the Hebrew word signifies a temple as well as a dynasty. God declares that a temple will be built, but not by David, and that David’s descendants will endure. As with the Mosaic covenant, the Davidic covenant again parallels God’s initial promise to Abraham with the divine

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11 Ibid.


14 Ibid.
declaration that the Lord will create a name that is great for David. According to theologian Paul H. House, “God has made [David] the father of an eternal household.”\(^{15}\) The consequences for refusal of these promises or disobedience to Yahweh are lacking in any great detail from this chapter of the text. However, it is evident that there will be punishment for iniquities even though God will never withdraw God’s love.

These promises to David are also significant because they appear to foreshadow the coming of a messianic figure, a theme which is expounded upon through the New Testament and the person of Jesus.\(^{16}\) This text declares that “the Messiah, Israel’s Savior, will come from David’s family” and it “unites the Old and New Testaments because it eventually leads to Jesus.”\(^{17}\) David responds to God’s promises with joy and thanksgiving, establishing his commitment and allegiance to God and God’s will. This passage of within Scripture, although relatively short in length, displays the hope and encouragement that the God of the Old Testament is the same as the God of the New Testament and that the promises of God are true, steadfast, and restorative.

**Conclusion**

The Sinaitic and Davidic covenants are foundational components of the Old Testament and remain relevant today despite their context within history. There appears to be a natural progression contained within them concerning the relationship between God and humankind. At first, the covenant is extended conditionally in order “to form the basis of Israel’s covenant relationship with God” and ensure right living before God.\(^{18}\)


\(^{17}\) Ibid.

\(^{18}\) Ibid.
Later, it is extended without measure to David and his descendants. Despite the distinctions between the covenants, however, the primary elements of the nature of this relationship with a full reliance on God remain consistent throughout both agreements and the generations of Israelites. Today, they serve as a reminder of God’s faithfulness, holiness, and unending love, which are extended to and must be accepted by the people of God for the development of a fruitful relationship between Creator and created.

Morning Bible Study
(Photo by Melissa Jadlos)
POETRY BEND

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Student Poems Submissions Review Committee

Members of the Religious Studies Club
Faculty Flowers

Minarets of Kazan

Oh how the promises cloud over the tall minarets of Kazan. Everything is sky here, all light between the arches, life and ancient splendor and something far beyond flows unknown and silent: a river not lived, a fire not exhausted. But there are the tall minarets, always them, from any point, to say, to indicate that which we sense, to cloud over the broad sky with their beauty and our audacity.

Francisco Plata

Kazan, Russia, June 2002
(Translated from the Spanish by Martha Black)
rosary beads

grey silk circles
mother of pearl
faithful fingers
weep over
translucent prayers
twist of joints
hope of healing
in the name of
our father
a hail Mary
and an absent
glory be

Dee Hogan
Mid-Autumn Reverences

Cold edged northwesterly wind
courses over open field
whispers through white pine needles.
Sound of spirit coming through.

Miles away on eastern ridge
golden needled tamaracks
shine in glow of late day sun.
Sight of spirit coming through.

Morning fire flames in cook stove
heading out to feed chickens
smoke from chimney wafts downward.
Smell of spirit coming through.

In bushel basket on porch
red apples wait to be used
crisp, cold sweetness with each bite.
Taste of spirit coming through.

An hour walk on property
woodlands, fields in brisk cool air
then back home to wood stove’s warmth.
Feel of spirit coming through.

This fleeting life, each day blessed.
Gift of spirit coming through.

Michael Czarnecki
Founder, FootHills Publishing
Leap of Love

These thoughts which protrude
I can no longer exclude
For now I am sitting on the edge
My feet dangling from the ledge
Did I do this? Perhaps
But now my legs collapse
Waltzing in the air
I am no longer in despair
To the ground I go
To Heaven or Hell I don’t know
But before I part my dear I must say
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust
This is what’s become of us
The World Seen Through the Lens of *Faith*

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Submissions Review Committee

Religious Studies Club
I had a dream a couple of weeks ago, where I was at the mosque that I usually attend; it seemed enormous and filled with spiritual light, which we refer to as “Noor”. I could feel the profundity in the atmosphere as I wondered around. Then I found myself baffled by the fact there were Christian congregations as well as Jewish, along with Muslims, each group gathered around their religious leaders and praying and singing. However, to my astonishment they all were singing the same religious song. As I approached a couple of members of the Jewish faith, I realized they were singing familiar lyrics that I could easily understand. I soon began singing with them. I felt the warmth that captured everyone’s heart. I told them we have the same prayer in the Islamic faith. We all prayed for a long time, enjoying each other’s company. I said to myself, this is how it should be; we should be able to breathe the same air, understand and respect our differences and be able to remain under one roof.

Furthermore, mainly we all are creations of God, regardless of how we refer to him, we all pray to the same God and we all have the same purpose in life, to serve him. Hence, we are like the branches of one big tree, we have the same roots, and grow the same fruit but just grow in different directions. Yet, we must still share our food, and land. Nevertheless, no need for competition, because we all are the children of Adam and Eve. Hence, we must cooperate and work as a whole for the good of humanity.
Moreover, going back to the example of the tree, I believe in reality that all three faiths resemble the tree, especially regarding the city of Jerusalem considered a holy city by all three Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). However, sadly we often hear about the negative events that take place among people of these faiths. Is it so difficult to unite and learn to tolerate one another and not become an object of hatred-filled eyes? Or simply don’t hate or fear but rather love each other for who we are? There is a saying in my faith that illustrates this perfectly: “Love all creation for the sake of the Creator, no matter what.”

As a result, I feel delighted when I see people from all three faiths come together for a certain occasion and celebrate it together. For instance, we share a parking lot with the Catholic Church next to our mosque in Charlotte, which makes us neighbors. During Ramadan we invite them to if tar (evening meal when Muslims break their fast) and they in return invite us and we meet their congregation and spend time together and get to know each other. Also, when they have a big event we accommodate and plan ahead so we don’t have problem with the parking space, and they do the same.

Ultimately, I think we all need to acknowledge the importance of faith and role of religion in our lives and don’t try to associate any certain event with religion. I believe there is good and bad in every society, but faith should not be held accountable for people’s mistakes. Faith is the path to God and it can only reflect goodness. Thus, coexistence is necessary among the faiths to unite the society and not divide it.
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The Immoral Sati Ritual

Introduction

On September 4th of 1987, Roop Kanwar died in the flames of her husband’s funeral pyre. She, like other Hindu women before her, made this self sacrifice in the customary act of sati to prove her devotion to her husband, and to honor his life. Sati is a controversial topic. It is prohibited by the Indian government for its inhumanity, but there are people who find it critical to the Hindu faith.

The sati ritual has its foundation in a myth. The myth describes Sati’s devotion to her husband Shiva through her self-sacrifice. She committed suicide in protest against her father’s refusal to invite Shiva to a sacrificial gathering. Despite religious purposes, by law Hindu women in India are no longer allowed to perform sati. The state denounces it, because the ritual is viewed as murder. The importance of sati to Hindus is for women to fulfill their womanhood, but the government has banned the ritual. Conflict exists because the Hindu religion encourages sati, yet the state prohibits it.

When observed from a critically tolerant eye, the reasoning behind sati is not all bad. Its function is to honor dead men, and to prevent widowed women from turning to condemnable actions. However, the ritual itself may not be the best way to express these intensions. A point to
consider is the background of sati. The ritual comes from a myth, which serves to convey a truth. However, the events within a myth should not always be taken literally. Therefore, because sati is self immolation, it is immoral for Hindus to support it today. There are other ways that would allow a woman to express honor and loyalty to her deceased husband.

I. Sati and Myth

The sati ritual is highly influenced by Hindu myths that observe the heroism in self immolation. The fundamental myth describes the burning of a goddess named Sati. In the book *Sati, the Blessing and the Curse: The Burning of Wives in India*, author John S. Hawley depicts different versions of this myth. In both stories, the goddess sacrifices herself when she is deeply insulted by her father’s refusal to involve her husband, Shiva, in a sacrificial gathering. Sati throws herself into a fire to “display her ultimate loyalty to her husband” (*Sati, the Blessing* 30).

There are two different endings to the myth. In one, Sati is reborn as the goddess Parvati, who becomes Shiva’s second wife. In the other, Sati’s body remains unconsumed by the flames of the fire. Shiva pulls her body out, and carries it on his back across the world to express his grief. To end Shiva’s misery, “[t]he gods dismember [Sati’s] body, and pieces of it fall to the earth, each forming a shrine” (*Sati, the Blessing* 31). Both versions of the myth about Sati provide key elements to the sati ritual. Women have performed sati to enjoy an eternal afterlife with their husbands, and to be honored for their faithfulness and bravery.

In addition to the tales of the goddess Sati, Hawley describes Hindu myths that involve local goddesses, known as satimatas. These myths illustrate common women who become worshipped goddesses for their self sacrificial acts of sati. One myth involves a woman named Karmavati. She and her newlywed husband, Karansainji, travel through a jungle to move to Karansainji’s home village. The couple stops at a tree to rest for the day. When Karansainji falls
asleep, he is bitten and taken to heaven by a serpent that represents the Lord of Death. Hawley describes, “As fate had arranged it, Dharmaraja [Yama, the Lord of Death] himself took the form of a snake to make this couple’s love eternal” (Sati, the Blessing 32). Karmavati notices that her husband does not wake up that day, so she calls upon some local herdsmen. These men examine Karansainji’s body, and claim that he is dead. Karmavati then instructs the herdsmen to make a funeral pyre for her husband so she can burn in its fire with his body on her lap. The story insists that Karmavati’s self immolation gives her enough power to ignite the fire herself. Her virtue also allows her to leave behind an eternal spring to answer the prayers of the herdsmen for water.

Myths related to the sati ritual are similar, because they involve self-sacrifice of women for their husband, and unity of the couple in the afterlife. The wives in the expounded myths gave up their lives to honor their husbands, and to join them in an afterlife in the divine world. Self immolation gave these women the strength to do so. In John S. Hawley’s words, widow Karmavati “maintain[ed] her marriage even when death itself threaten[ed] to deny it” (Sati, the Blessing 34). In the myth, it is believed that Karmavati was reunited with her husband by performing the sati ritual. It is also stressed that Karmavati became admired by the public for her deed. People worshipped her shrine to express their thanks for the peace and prosperity provided by the spring Karmavati left behind. The sati ritual is expressed as a positive practice for several reasons. It creates an eternal bond between a wife and husband, and the performer is praised for carrying out the courageous act. Both myths show that a woman must demonstrate devotion for her husband, and only her husband. Though the stories are just myths, they have been interpreted as examples of how women can become respected by their families and their society. This is how the sati ritual became a traditional ritual among Hindu women. However, the myths do not
necessarily make sati acceptable as a ritual. There are other ways a woman can express her devotion for her husband.

II. Morality of Sati

The sati ritual is controversial, because it is a tradition that involves issues of subordination and murder. Women are expected to sacrifice their lives for their deceased husbands, because it shows devotion. They are either pressured into sati because they believe it is their duty as a woman, or they are forced to perform the ritual by others who praise it. In the article “Saving the Victim: Recuperating the Language of the Victim and Reassessing Global Feminism,” author Anne McLeer comments on the issue. She claims, “Sati is a gender-determined behavior constructed by a system (a local patriarchal religious and cultural belief system) that by definition denies agency to women” (“Saving the Victim” 50). By saying this, McLeer insists that the sati ritual was shaped by a population that subjects women, and therefore it reinforces subordination of women. We do not see men sacrificing their lives on the funeral pyres of their wives, but women are expected to endure pain and suffering for men. Wanda Teays interprets the religious act of sati as “worship of the husband as a god” in her article, “The Burning Bride: The Dowry Problem in India” (“The Burning Bride” 41). If a sati can give up her life for her husband, it is likely that she did anything for him before his death. In her eyes, it was her duty to act as a slave to him. Teays also suggests that women perform sati because it gives them power, something they don’t have in Hindu society. “For Hindus, sati, rooted in the religious and social attitudes about women’s worth, offers the woman ‘spiritual power’” (“The Burning Bride” 41). Sati allows the woman to have control over something: her death. Yet, there are Hindu people who commend satis. They value the ritual for the devotion and courage it entails. Large yagnas, or public fairs, are organized to worship satis. In 1996, one was held to
celebrate the 400th anniversary of Rani Sati (Hardgrove 725). It was expected to take place at the Rani Sati temple in India, but a group of feminists brought up the issue with the court system, “claiming that the yagna fair glorified widow immolation and was against the dignity and democratic rights of Indian women” (Hardgrove 725). Support for sati is analogous with support for female subordination, which is unethical.

Sati should not be supported, because it is violent. It can even be considered murder when a widow does not give consent to perform the ritual. A woman may result to sati because her relatives think it is the right action to take, not because she wishes to herself. She is driven upon the funeral pyre in fear that her relatives will disrespect her if she doesn’t. This was often the case among satis, too. Margaret Cormack, in the book *Sacrificing the Self: Perspectives in Martyrdom and Religion*, mentions a song about a woman about to become a sati. The song conveys a rushed tone with lyrics like, “Why the delay for the forehead ornament, Satimata?,” and “Why the delay for the earrings, Satimata?” (*Sacrificing the Self* 125). The satimata is the widow about to burn with her husband’s body. She is expected to prepare herself with her finest clothing and jewelry for the ceremony, but she seems to be delaying. It is apparent that she is not getting ready fast enough for the singer, which most likely represents a relative. The satimata would not be rushed to perform the sati ritual if she truly wanted to do it. Therefore, she is being pressured into the situation. Cormack explains, “A woman who dies for any reason besides loyalty to the husband is not considered a sati: her death is suicide” (*Sacrificing the Self* 126).

The woman’s ritual should not be praised for its valor, but disapproved for its violence. Anne McLeer illustrates the pain and anguish a widow feels during sati by describing a poster made by an anti-sati activist group. Depicted is “a woman writhing upward from the flames,” and, “There is no naturalistic insistence on the mutilation of burning, but the posture and expression of the
figure, though stylized, capture the essence of pain” (“Saving the Victim” 51). No one wants to feel the pain of burning to death. It is so torturous, it is a crime that the woman was allowed to end her life in such a manner. As expressed by Anne Hardgrove, the ritual is “barbaric” and “culturally backward” (“Sati Worship” 728). It is rejected by Hindu society today, because Hindus value life over a violent tradition that is a misinterpretation of a myth.

**Conclusion**

The sati ritual is an act that is immoral to perform or support in present Hindu culture. It degrades women, it is a form of murder, and it is a ritual that comes from mythology. Despite its malevolence, sati became a tradition because there are myths that reveal the importance of self-sacrifice. The myths involved with the ritual convey the idea that devotion is an important part to a relationship between a man and a woman. It keeps each partner pure. However, a myth does not justify human sacrifice as an expression of devotion. The underlying purpose of a myth is to provide a model of behavior. Devotion between partners can be displayed in many nonviolent and respectful manners. Instead of sacrificing life after a spouse’s death, one should maintain fidelity by staying away from prostitution or remarriage. In the article “Sati: A Review Article,” Werner Menski describes the Hindu concept of vivahasamaskara as “The eternal, invisible bond of human marriage which is said to transcend even the barriers of life and death” (“Sati: A Review” 79). Thus, according to Hindu belief, death cannot break a bond between married partners; the couple will be reunited eventually in the afterlife. The wife just has to “follow her husband wherever he goes” (“Sati: A Review” 79). If he is cremated, the wife should also be cremated. Though, Menski advocates widows who wait for their time for reunion and finished their lives naturally. A widow can save her husband’s ashes to mix with her own after her death and cremation. In addition to diverging from the violent aspect of sati, gender equality should
also be implemented in the devotion between two Hindu partners. The husband does not always die before the wife. If the woman is to die first, the husband should also stay pure for her, and wait to rejoin her in the afterlife. Sati is a tradition with flaws that must be changed for the benefit of Hindu culture.

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*Bibliography*


An Investigation of Feral Children and Original Sin

The subject of feral children has often been explored from a variety of viewpoints and angles. Frequently, such topics as education, language acquisition, emotional stability, mental stability and behavioral patterns are reviewed. However, the motive of actions or the inherent tendency of feral children to behave one way or another is often overlooked. The question remains whether feral children (prior to their integration into society), are in possession of original sin. Many maintain that all humans are born with an inherent desire to do evil. However, is it the result of social stimulation or merely an innate propensity to sin? Before such a question can be answered, a short discourse on original sin is necessary. Thus, I intend to explore and discuss the theories of original sin presented by both St. Augustine and Jean Jacques Rousseau. After creating a basis for understanding original sin, case studies of various feral children (including the wolf-girls of India, Genie and Victor of Aveyron) will be reviewed. These case studies will allow analysis of the theory of original sin in feral children. I hope to explore whether feral children possess a sin nature even though they have not been exposed to society and have been living “innocent” wild lives. Furthermore, I wish to explore what solution or salvation remains for feral children and humanity in general, if indeed humanity is “cursed” with a sin nature.
I. St. Augustine on Original Sin

St. Augustine, a theological pillar of the church, was responsible for the initial development of foundational doctrines of the early Catholic Church. This includes the doctrine of original sin which consequently explores the fallen human nature and human freedom. St. Augustine supported the viewpoint that God created humans without blemish, fault or sin. Augustine writes, “For the first free will (liberum arbitrium) which was given to humanity when it was created upright (rectus), gave not just the ability not to sin, but also the ability to sin” (McGrath 399). Thus, Augustine suggests that man was created as a blank slate which possessed the ability to sin or resist sin. According to the book of Genesis, Adam (and then Eve), made the decision to sin by disobeying God’s commandment to not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This marred the blank slate that humankind was originally created with. Thus, the children of Adam and Eve were also implicated and possessed a propensity to sin. Author Mark Cladis writes the following in regard to the Augustinian view of original sin.

Augustine held that humans cannot cure themselves of sin or evil. The disposition to sin – an impaired will unable to order one’s loves properly – is acquired at birth and remains until death…Original sin, simply put, is fatal. It is invasive and, in terms of human effort, irreversible. Baptism can wash away the guilt inherited from Adam, but the will remains disfigured…the central issue is that since Adam, humans are only free to sin. (Cladis 80)

As Cladis writes, the will of humankind remains “disfigured” or stained with a desire to sin. No matter what the degree of our resolve, humankind cannot erase this desire to sin. There exists no remedy. Since no remedy exists, this theory acknowledges that man cannot save himself and is in need of God’s grace and mercy. Thus, Augustine maintained that humankind was created with
free will, and violated free will. Because of this, future generations were/are born with an inclination to continue this violation and are reliant upon God’s grace.

II. Jean Jacques Rousseau on Original Sin

St. Augustine held the traditional religious belief of original sin. However, Jean Jacques Rousseau, a philosopher of the Enlightenment period, countered this traditional viewpoint. Rousseau held that at birth, man is naturally good. According to Cladis, Rousseau writes, “‘That man is a being naturally good, a lover of justice and order; that there is no original perversity in the human heart, and that the first movements of nature are always right’” (Cladis 85). Thus, Rousseau was a proponent of a humankind that naturally sought love and justice. In his book *Emile*, Rousseau delves further into the issue and claims the following: “What makes him [man] really bad is a multiplicity of needs and dependence on the opinions of others” (Rousseau 209). Ultimately, Rousseau suggests that society corrupts man. A man’s interdependence and association with other individuals leads to frustrations with relationships, difference of opinions and thus a desire to look out for oneself, which often leads to sin or a tendency to do evil. In essence, Rousseau suggests that original sin is developed as the result of social stimulation. In an effort to explain Rousseau, Cladis writes, “As humans become social, their capacity for morality increases in proportion to their chance of encountering moral evil” (Cladis 89). Rousseau supports the idea that some aspect found within the core of humankind needed to be “activated” in order for man to develop a desire to act out morally. Historically, the Enlightenment period proposed the idea that the solution for humankind lies within knowledge. Thus, Rousseau suggested that man was independent of God’s grace and capable of saving himself through so-called “enlightenment.” If society causes man to act in a sinful manner, then the resolution lies within the reformation of society. If society were to be better educated (in every sense), then society would hypothetically not challenge individuals with moral evils. Thus, if individuals
were spared the encounter of moral evils, then they themselves would also become reformed and this would remedy man’s desire to sin. In summary, Rousseau held that man was naturally good, but that society caused man to sin and that through enlightenment man could save himself.

St. Augustine and Rousseau certainly possessed varying viewpoints on the issue of original sin. In regards to feral children, Rousseau’s theory would hold that children of the wild are without sin until they encounter society. As these feral children spend increasing amounts of time immersed within society, their disposition to sin grows. However, Augustine maintains that all are in possession of original sin. This is not dependent on location or immersion within society. Then, according to Augustine, feral children do have a propensity to sin even while dwelling in isolation from human society. It is thought that Augustine’s theory of original sin is more accurate. In fact, Cladis writes, “Rousseau was increasingly compelled to accept that no revolution or any amount of tinkering with social structures can rid us of our prodigious capacity for hurting ourselves” (Cladis 91). Rousseau was forced to recognize that no amount of resolve or reformation of society could cure mankind from its desire to do evil.

III. Case Study I: Wolf-Girls of Midnapore, India

Missionary Reverend J. A. L. Singh discovered the presence of two wolf-girls when he was asked to eliminate a man-ghost from the border between the villages of Midnapore and Morbhanj in India. Eventually, he adopted these girls into his home and began the process of reintegrating them into society. After only six years of living among the Singh family, one wolf-girl (Amala) died. The other wolf-girl, Kamala, showed remarkable improvement. Singh records her progress in his book entitled Wolf-children and Feral Man. Over six years, Kamala mastered walking upright (rather than travel on all-fours), developed a limited vocabulary, expressed feelings and learned to gesticulate. Initially, Singh and his wife observed hostility and a general violence from both girls. “Yet one day, without warning, they suddenly turned and attacked,
biting and scratching him [the baby] hard. From then on, the two girls refused to have anything to do with the little child” (Newton 185). This behavioral observation indicates an important point. Both girls acted violently. Yes, this action may have been a result of self-defense (i.e., they may have somehow felt threatened by the baby). However, the point remains that they acted violently. Whether for reasons of self-defense or not, Amala and Kamala put their feelings and well-being first. In addition, Reverend Singh records the following in his analysis of Kamala: “It appears from the above and other facts that Kamala’s temper was getting modified from the animal idea of pleasure and ferocity to that of human enjoyment or displeasure, resulting in a mild and modified form of conduct” (Singh 89). In contrast to Rousseau’s theory, Singh recounts the improvement of one of the wolf-girl’s (Kamala’s) behavior after eight years of assimilation into society. Rousseau claimed that “An originally good human nature is corrupted by society” (Cladis 84). However, Singh’s experience showed the inverse. Kamala’s general temperament improved as exposure to society increased. Thus, Rousseau’s theory that the tendency of man to do evil/sin nature increases with social interaction is directly refuted in the case study of the Indian wolf-girls of Midnapore.

IV. Case Study II: Victor of Aveyron

Often times Victor of Aveyron is referred to as “the wild child.” In January of 1800, Victor emerged from the woods surrounding the small, French village of Saint-Sernin. The child (thought to be around ten years old) behaved much like an animal. Possessing long, overgrown hair, Victor appeared beastly, disheveled and ultimately wild. Initially, “ownership” and responsibility of the boy shifted various times. Finally, the Guerin family and Doctor Itard made the decision to undertake Victor’s reeducation and care. Dr. Itard wished to fulfill the following five goals in Victor’s reeducation: “1) To give the boy the ability to respond to other people, 2) To train his senses, 3) To extend his physical and social needs, 4) To teach him to speak and 5)
To teach him to think clearly” (Shattuck 77). Often times the implementation or fulfillment of these goals was dependent upon Madame Guerin and Doctor Itard fighting against Victor’s wishes and imposing their will upon his. Naturally, this was done for Victor’s own good. However, Victor repeatedly responded in self-defense that manifested itself through tantrums. Shattuck writes the following:

Among these new joys came outbreak of irritation and anger. Itard noted them down carefully, for he felt that at those times the boy’s intelligence took a step forward and found unexpected strength. He had reacted to something. When Madam Guerin insisted on making him get into a bath he considered too cold, he first flew into a kind of tantrum. (Shattuck 80)

In this case, Victor responded in self-defense (similar to the Indian wolf-girls). Such a response is a mechanism inherent to every human being. Victor responded in such a way to protect himself from a situation that he viewed as displeasing. Slightly cold bathwater would not have a scathing effect on Victor. However, Victor displayed his displeasure through a tantrum in order to defend his desires, wants and needs. Although he may not have known how to express himself in a socially acceptable or even audible manner, Victor did possess the ability to defend himself.

V. Case Study III: Genie

Psychologists often review the case of Genie. Genie, whose real name was Susan, had spent thirteen years of her life locked in a room. She was discovered in 1970 at the age of thirteen. Her parents, particularly her father, had viewed this as a method of protecting their daughter from the evil of the world. However, this so-called “care” or protection quickly developed into abuse. Having spent the majority of her developmental years in isolation, Genie could not walk normally and could not communicate. Genie was removed from this dysfunctional home situation. Psychologists and other specialists worked with her to assimilate her into normal, American society. Genie eventually progressed enough that she to be able to speak, walk and
interact with other normal adults. According to Newton, “She was buried in silence – silently watching, silently scared, and silently crying. Even her wild temper tantrums – when she would flail manically, scratching, striking” (Newton 215). Just as in the case of the Indian wolf-girls and Victor of Aveyron, Genie responded naturally with violence. Once again, this behavior was likely a self-defense mechanism.

VI. Analysis of Case Studies in Respect to Original Sin

The above discussion on original sin and the three case studies presented provide an adequate background for a discussion of original sin as it pertains to feral children. In all the cases presented, the caretakers made an attempt to not invade the “personal space” of each feral child. In the case of the wolf-girls, Reverend Singh initially kept them by themselves alone in a room, so as to not overwhelm them with society. He then introduced other children into their lives. These children functioned as guards and were put in place to watch over Amala and Kamala, but they also functioned as companions for Amala and Kamala. Victor was assimilated into the home of the Guerin family so as to give him the sense of family. Unfortunately, Genie was transferred various times between caretakers. However, her therapists and others working with her never intended to disrupt her life. Despite what occurred in these situations, each feral child improved with exposure to society. This refutes what Rousseau believed about the nature of man. Essentially, Rousseau believed that man was naturally good and eventually became corrupted by society. All of these cases showed the opposite. Each of the feral children’s behavior and overall attitude developed and progressed because of interaction with society. Although none of them may have ever reached the social norm, each feral child made great strides towards social maturity.

As mentioned throughout the case studies each of the feral children (the wolf-girls, Victor and Genie) initially behaved violently. Whether tantrums and other violent behavior were the
result of direct disobedience or self-defense is of little importance. Regardless, all of these feral children displayed a degree of selfishness. Each of them acted in such a manner so as to protect themselves or in more colloquial terms, to look out for “number one.” At this point, a connection to original sin can be made. Original sin, as discussed, is the idea that man is inherently evil. If man is inherently evil, then he is not concerned with the welfare of others but rather only with his own desires. Thus, these case studies and the violent actions of feral children directly exemplify original sin. It can then be concluded that man is in possession of original sin regardless of isolation from society. This aligns with St. Augustine’s theory of original sin and refutes Rousseau’s theory that man was naturally good and that children are born with a desire only for love and justice. For if this were the case, then these feral children would not have responded to their caretakers in violence.

However, if man is naturally sinful then how is the problem of original sin to be resolved? Are we indeed hopeless sinners as St. Augustine suggests? Although Rousseau may have erred when it came to determining whether man was originally sinful, he did understand the need for education. Education is necessary. However, education alone cannot save man. If the human race depends solely on education then nothing will be accomplished. Cladis writes, “Should society offer a better education, for example, this would simply enhance its citizens’ ability to sin in a more erudite or sophisticated fashion; should society curtail poverty, this would simply permit more citizens to sin more affluently. Social engineering alters the range of possible sins, not the sinful condition itself” (Cladis 81). With education comes the improvement of society. If society can understand sin and learn from past examples, then society can better itself. Society as a whole needs to be educated morally and ethically. With true education, comes Biblical education. Biblical education can lend insight to man about sin and causes man to
realize that humankind is dependent upon God’s grace. God’s grace is needed in order to resolve man’s sin nature. Augustine reinforces humanity’s need for God’s grace. Without God’s grace, man is doomed to sin. God’s grace is evidenced through his love. As the Christian Scriptures say, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). If humanity relies completely on the education theory supported by Rousseau and the Enlightenment, then humanity rejects the grace of God and thus salvation from sin. This leaves humankind doomed to its sin nature. Therefore, a middle ground between Augustinian theory and Rousseau’s theory must be reached. While recognizing that education, particularly moral education is paramount, humanity must also acknowledge sin and the need for God’s grace.

Through an exploration of St. Augustine’s and Rousseau’s thoughts on the matter of original sin, it was discovered that the two scholars held varying viewpoints. St. Augustine proposed that man was inherently sinful because of the decision that Adam and Eve made (in Biblical events) to violate free will, disobey and therefore sin against God. According to Augustine, the decision to sin was and continues to be inherited by future generations. Thus humankind is “cursed” with a propensity to sin from which it cannot save itself. In contrast to St. Augustine, Rousseau posited that man is inherently good and is only corrupted by increased exposure to society. However, Rousseau proposed that the solution for humanity lay within the education of society and therefore, the improvement of mankind. The three case studies presented (Kamala, Victor and Genie), illustrated the opposite of Rousseau’s theory. First, mankind is not inherently good because all three children exhibited violent behavior initially. This confirms St. Augustine’s theory on the sin nature of man. Second, all three subjects improved in behavior and temperament with increased exposure to society. This suggests that
Rousseau’s theory was flawed in that aspect. Since all children initially exhibited violence this suggests that man is in possession of a sin nature regardless of exposure to society. This begs the question whether man is doomed to this sin nature since it is inherited, or whether some solution or salvation exists for man. From the research conducted, it can be proposed that the solution for humanity lies within the intersection of Augustinian thought and Rousseau’s theory. As Rousseau suggested, society can certainly benefit from education including reviewing past mistakes and the development of moral understanding. However, since man himself is flawed, then education that stems from man cannot be the complete solution. Rather, man must be reliant upon God’s grace and mercy as St. Augustine offers. God provides redemption from man’s sin nature.

**Bibliography**


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Antonio Napoli, Owner
Morning Clouds

(Photo by Melissa Jadlos)
Alumni Corner

Contributions from the Department of Religious Studies Alumni
“Love without Limits”

“Love the Lord your God with your whole heart. This is the first and greatest Commandment. The second is like it; love your neighbor as yourself.” These two commandments Jesus gave us echo in my heart as I continue to discern and follow the path God has for me each day.

My years at Fisher were memorable ones: academically, spiritually, and socially. I remember Fr Joe waiting that extra couple minutes for me before starting weekday Mass, learning and having professors know my name at class, and making friends that have lasted to this day!

I graduated Fisher in May 2005 with a degree in business management and Spanish. Shortly after graduation, I accepted a purchasing coordinator position with Dr Pepper Snapple Group. I worked for them for four years during which time I was promoted to senior buyer responsible for $57 million of ingredient purchases to support their brands such as Mott’s, Snapple, ReaLemon, ReaLime, Clamato, Hawaiian Punch, Rose’s, etc. My position as a buyer with a Fortune 100 company was intellectually very stimulating; I enjoyed learning the world of purchasing and being a rising star!

I was very comfortable with my life in Rochester, NY; I had a very good job, I ran a rosary ministry (that was actually born at Fisher!), was an active Catholic involved with my church, and enjoyed my social life.
also. Over the years, however, as I prayed and gave my “Yes“ each day to the Lord, I had a deep conviction in my heart that God was calling me to something greater, a higher call. It’s not that what I was doing was wrong or bad but that God had something greater in store for me.

Meanwhile God was also working on the hearts of my immediate family members. My dad had planned to expand his business to Colorado for several years. Over the years however as my dad prayed, God showed him it was not to expand his business, but rather to do ministry work. God used his business expansion plans to get my parents to Colorado. With this in mind, my sisters had already moved to Colorado with their jobs and I knew at some point I wanted to join the family out west.

After much prayer and discernment, I became absolutely convinced that it was time for me to leave Rochester and move to Colorado. So I quit my job and moved to join the rest of my family in Colorado. When I submitted my resignation, many coworkers were surprised because I was advancing well in the company. All I can say is that, when God calls, I’ve learned it’s best to follow even though I may not understand everything at the time!

I moved to Colorado in July 2009 without a job lined up; I thought I would take some time off then get a job and do ministry work on the side. As it turned out I took some time off and God started putting ministry projects in my path and the path of my family. For instance, we did a rosary project providing 300 rosaries to one of the area Catholic schools to encourage the kids and families to pray together. The new bishop for the Pueblo diocese, which is the diocese we live in, was introduced shortly after our move. The previous bishop had been there 29 years; this is only the 4th Bishop of Pueblo! Our family did a prayer project to help support the new bishop by visiting parishes in the diocese asking them to pray for him in his new assignment and ordination as bishop, as well as for the diocese. I started up my rosary ministry here in Pueblo, Colorado with a project at our new church to make a rosary for each person there; with our goal at 800 rosaries, we have nearly reached it! We’ll be handing them out in October to
celebrate Mary’s month of the rosary! My family was integral in helping launch perpetual adoration in the diocese of Pueblo in June 2010. This was our new bishop’s first priority; this was the first time in 50+ years that a church in the diocese had perpetual adoration. My family was also instrumental in putting on a Catholic conference in our town in August 2010; we also spoke at the conference witnessing how God brought us here to Pueblo. The conference was the first of its kind in Pueblo in 20 years!

After doing several of these projects and continuing to pray and discern what Jesus has for me here in Pueblo, Colorado, He brought me to a fork in the road. I was praying one evening when Jesus gave me two choices: I could take the high road and work directly for Him OR I could take the middle road and get the job He had been showing me while doing ministry work on the side. Jesus would love me either way but He told me that He had obtained this grace for me from God the Father to work directly for Him! Wow, what a choice! I went to Adoration praying over this for three days and asking the Lord how He would cover all of my expenses and He just kept telling me to TRUST HIM that He would provide for ALL of my needs. After three days I told the Lord I would take the high road and work for Him directly! Thus, I continue with my rosary ministry, our family ministry projects and also introduced “youth nights” monthly for teens in the area. On the youth nights we invite teens over for the evening to pray the rosary, we do a little teaching, have food, fellowship and fun! If you’d like, you can follow our ministry here at www.guarneres.com or our blog site: http://guarfam.blogspot.com/

It’s funny how hindsight can sometimes be 20/20. I don’t regret my choice to move to Colorado for one minute. God used our career experiences, gifts, talents, and worked with the human side of each one of us, and over time, invited my family and me not to pursue our own goals rather to give our “Yes” to serve Him. With our “YES” God placed us in the diocese of Pueblo, Colorado to carry out His two greatest commandments: to love Him and love our neighbors! A diocese that in land area is the size of New York State, has approx 100,000 Catholics and only about 60 priests. It’s very much mission territory and ripe for a spiritual renewal! It’s very awesome to see God move here in our lives and among the people! A
special bonus is that in Pueblo, we get over 300 days of sunshine each year! Some of the locals were complaining of a long, hard winter this year, while we only received about 15 inches of snow the whole winter!!! Praise God for even blessing us with beautiful weather!

In summary, I conclude with a personal challenge for you! I challenge you to get down on your knees at church, in a chapel or a quiet spot in your room. Give your “Yes” to God in your heart. You may or may not be Catholic; you may or may not have been to church ever in your life, but God created you and He has a plan for you! After you do that once, start doing it each morning, “God, I give you my Yes.” Understand that my story is not so unlike yours. Six years ago I was a student at Fisher studying hard, enjoying college, and wondering what kind of job I would get after college. It’s through my “Yes” to God that He works through me. It’s not because I’m lucky. So I challenge you to give your “Yes” to God in your heart and watch Him transform your life! Even if you think everything is going well for you, or you’re just a student, give God your “Yes!” It may not be easy, but God will never disappoint! He will amaze and bless you more times than you can possibly imagine!

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**EAST END SUNSET**

*(Photo by Melissa Jadlos)*
“What the boy felt at that moment was that he was in the presence of the only woman in his life, and that, with no need for words, she recognized the same thing. He was more certain of it than of anything in the world... And when two such people encounter each other, and their eyes meet, the past and the future become unimportant. There is only that moment, and the incredible certainty that everything under the sun has been written by one hand only. It is the hand that evokes love, and creates a twin soul for every person in the world.”

(Paulo Coelho in “The Alchemist”)

A wise former professor of mine recently recommended I read Paulo Coelho’s *The Alchemist*. When I came across the above section of the story, I was floored. Coelho’s description was exactly what I felt the day I met my future husband. It’s a strange feeling that I couldn’t quite put my finger on at the time, but in retrospect, Coelho’s words are a perfect description of the odd (but wonderful) feeling I had that day in 2000.

It’s my freshman year at Fisher. Standing ovations have been given and it’s time to get down to business. As a young communications/journalism major, I couldn’t wait to dive right into college and all it had to offer. That’s what put me in Basil Hall on the afternoon of September 12th, 2000. I was attending an informational meeting regarding joining the school’s radio station club. As soon as I walked into the room I saw the cool, cute, laid back sophomore,
David. Sitting in the front with his legs up on the teacher’s desk, I knew he was special. I knew I had to get to know him.

Almost eight years to the day we met, David and I got married at Fisher, the place that brought us together. With Fr. Mike Costanzo performing the ceremony and some of our classmates present, all the wonderful people who had watched us start dating and grow up as a couple were in attendance.

I never expected to meet my future husband the first week of my freshman year. I certainly didn’t set out to find a boyfriend right away. I had a number of things on my “to do” list first including: do well in classes, make friends (especially with my roommates), join the drama club and most importantly, get involved and have fun. But when I met David, I immediately knew there was something different about him. Somewhere in a far off section of my brain, I knew we would someday get married and spend the rest of our lives together. At the time, I didn’t know Coelho had a name for it, but I knew he was my “twin soul.”

Our college lives were always busy but we managed to make time for each other and learn about one another’s interests. Around junior year, we might not have known what we wanted to be when we grew up, but we knew we wanted to figure it out together.

We’ve been together for 10 years now, married for 2. We now have to deal with grown up things like rent, bills and taxes, but we continue to cherish each other and our time together. We always think of Fisher fondly as the place where we both met the most important person in our lives and thank God every day that we listened to what our hearts were saying and didn’t pass up the opportunity to get to know one another.
BRIEF ESSAY

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Submissions
Reviewed
By
Members of
The Religious Studies Department
Jeremy P. Backal  

God and Evil: What’s the Problem?

[These are only the thoughts of a young man, taking a course on the Problem of Evil. They in no way reflect the ideas of my instructor, classmates, or any organization or affiliation. I ask that you do not judge me based on them, or take them to heart. They are just thoughts, questions, and a vague understanding of the intricacies of this life, of the problem of evil, and of God as they come to a perhaps-at-time-naïve student. – J. Backal]

In the world as we know it, God gave people free will. So He could create a free universe where man has to live for himself. In this and in this only, can God create a world where people are like God, because He has free will, He can do whatever He pleases and in His effort to create man in His likeness, He was forced to give free will to man. In doing so, God gave man the choice to be evil. “The problem of evil” suggests that if God is omniscient, omnipotent, and morally good, He would be able to and would want to eliminate evil. Yet evil exists. A conclusion seems logical: either God is not all of those things, or He does not exist. In this brief essay I submit an alternative solution to the problem of evil.

God IS all omnipotent, omniscient, and morally good. He knows that evil is present in the lives of some people. He knows he can stop it. But why should he? It is up to MAN to save himself. Man has to prove to God that he can stand up for himself and he must look to God for guidance, advice, direction, and truth and, when it comes down to it, to do what is necessary to cast out evil. That is, moral evil which can be cast out. Of course God is omnipotent and can
remove all evil, but what is the point? How will man ever learn, if God does everything for him? No one does everything for God. He is the ultimate teacher. By forcing man to learn these lessons first hand, God allows man to find his place in God’s Kingdom. This life is a test for man, and those who pass it will live in eternity in the Kingdom of the Lord. Evil is part of life, and is perhaps the most challenging part of the test God presents to us. Along with temptation it is the basis of God’s examination of each individual man.

A man chooses to be evil. He is influenced, yes, by his surroundings and his knowledge, his past, and beliefs. But ultimately, a man chooses how he will conduct himself and how he will live his life. It is this ability to choose that is God’s greatest gift to us. Just like a man can choose to stand against oppression, or for freedom, he can also choose to be evil. We are warned not to be evil: "The path of the wicked enter not, walk not on the way of evil men; shun it, cross it not, turn aside from it and pass on" (Proverbs 4:14-15). God is always judging and will give us our final judgment on the Day of Reckoning. This warning is given to all men, but not all men heed it. Similar to the warning our mothers give us not to put our fingers in an electrical socket, we all hear it and understand it, but some of us are too curious for our own good.

We should see everything that happens in this world as a sign of God’s blessing; that He should choose us to bear witness to it, and that He chooses us to learn from it. Man was granted the grace of God over every other creature. It is through every creature that God can act, and God can speak; but it is man that God created in His image, and it is man that must revere God, and learn from Him, and take His lessons to heart, and be glad that He has chosen man to be His student.
PARENT AND CHILD

Jonah Uman Sander son of Dr. Deborah Uman and Michael Sander
Teenager. Like most of the developmental stages of our young – the stage of “teenager” can be described but never really understood until one travels that stretch of road for oneself with their teen. During a recent trip down a particularly tumultuous part of that path I recall wishing, yet again, “If only they could understand and know the depth of the love we have for them – one they can so apparently not see at this point in their lives.” A reflection that leads only to deeper thoughts about the immensity of this thing called “a parents love.”

If only they could know: it is a love like your own little personal nuclear reaction ever burning in your heart. Silently giving you the power you need to traverse the issues and rants of the teen years from dating and friends to work and responsibilities. Existing controlled yet always on the brink of raging into an explosion of emotion that wants to grab and hold them screaming, “Stay! Don’t leave me! Remain – little, like the days gone by.”

If only they could know: it is a Corinthian-esque love that “hopes all things; believes all things” yet knows better. A hope, each day new, for all the good things in life to be theirs realizing from experience none of that will come without first facing the hardships and struggles of daily living.

If only they could know: it is a love so powerful it is never diminished by not seeing eye-to-eye – seemingly on everything. Never lessened by squabble or row but, in fact, growing only stronger through these things - unbeknownst as it is at the time.

If only they could know: it is a love that lives in an always-optimistic present while at the same time existing with an under-current of fear of the unknown tomorrow – an accident; a relationship gone bad; another issue you could, but dare not, explain. You simply have to be present to them as they figure it out, and often deal with it, themselves.

If only they could know: it is a self-sacrificing kind of love. One that, like some surrealistic-energizer-bunny-thing, keeps on giving and giving even when it is overlooked, under-appreciated and largely misconstrued simply because that’s what a parent does.

If only they could know: it is a love that wishes it could supplant our own sinfulness through our very want: for them to be better, stronger, wiser; more capable, faithful, dependable then we ever were. Realizing they too are flawed yet seeing only the good, the beautiful, and the promise they possess.
If only they could know: it is, at least to me, so clearly a love that should have been declared “sacrament” as surely as anything that now exists for some reason gone neglected, or ignored, - misunderstood perhaps by those responsible for determining such ecclesial matters who may never have experienced or realized such a power for themselves. For it is truly a love that only another parent can fully appreciate or understand. Parenthood/family – so neatly tucked into the sacrament of “marriage” yet, I believe, secretly longing to escape and be its own sign of God’s bountiful grace present in the world – “let the little children come” as Jesus once uttered. Recounted thrice.

If only they could know: it is, finally, a love that is unbound by the confines of this lifetime. A love that, as surely as I know anything, exists beyond the beyond - when life for each parent changes from this to the next our love for each child will go with us. I know this as a child myself loved by a Parent whose love for me is everything I have stated and more – waiting patiently for the moment of this very last love I describe to come to be – to be with me forever – in a stage where animosity and misunderstanding are no more and only right relationship will reside; where love alone is present. That’s the only heaven I can ever believe in wanting to know - when a parents love finally comes to fruition.

If only they could know.
NUM3ERS
Dr. Vincent J. Amuso Sr. (RIT)

Both Dianne and I are engineers. I guess you could say we like numbers. So here we go.

46: The number of years we have been alive. 1964: Both born in Utica, New York. 2: The number of parents we are each blessed to still have with us. My parents are of Italian descent. Dianne's are of Polish heritage. Both sets of parents are very proud of their ancestry. 5: The number of siblings I have plus 3, the number of siblings I have in heaven. 1: The number of siblings Dianne has. 54: The number of years Dianne’s parents have been married. 48: The number of years my parents have been married. 102: The sum of these 2 numbers, and an incredible number in this day and age. 23: The number of years we have been married. 4: The number of children we have on earth with us. 1: Baby in heaven as a result of a miscarriage. 18, 18, 13, 6: The ages of our children Vinny Jr., Kaity (yes twins), Tommy and Pauly.

Let me stop with the numbers for a bit and talk about what our children mean to us. Pope John Paul the Great said, “As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes the whole world in which we live.” At one time I would say that he was just making an obvious statement that most people across ethnic and cultural lines would agree upon. But times have changed and more than ever the family bond and experiences that are part of everyday life are what makes us strong as a family, community, church, nation, and members of the human race. I remember vividly looking at Vinny and Kaity when we first brought them home from the hospital and feeling as though I was looking at God himself. I absolutely, unconditionally loved them instantly. Even though I had never seen them before and I did not know what type of personality they would have, it was just pure love. When you have twins you get a little sleep-depraved but it is ok because being in the presence of those little innocents is more comforting than any experience that can be described. Vinny was born first after about 12 hours of a difficult and at times scary labor. At one point the medical team thought we had lost Kaity. Thank God she was born about an hour after Vinny. She was born with eyes wide open. She looked at me and I looked at her. After the twins were born and before we brought them home, Dianne and I decided that we would each be responsible for one particular baby during the night. I chose Vinny and Dianne took Kaity. Vinny decided that his favorite time of the day was 2:00 am to 6:00 am. He did not cry or fuss; he just wanted to be held in my arms. That is what I did. For about two months straight. I admit that I was always tired but those were some of the best times of my life to date. I looked at Vinny and he would look at me. It was a very spiritual experience for me. Every parent should be blessed with the gift of twins. I know Dianne and I thank God for them both, and especially for giving them to us at the same time.
Nearly 6 years later our son Tommy was born. We still have a big laugh as a family because I passed out while he was being born. Tommy has the special gift of comforting anybody he comes in contact with; especially me. Since he was a baby I would just pick him up and hold him and any frustrations or tensions I had due to difficulties in the day would leave my body instantly. He still has that effect on me. The only time I experience that same feeling is at the moment of absolution during the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Tommy brings the Holy Spirit to me when I need comforting.

About 7 years later Paul came to us. We started trying to have another baby 4 years after Tommy’s birth. We were a little older and in the back of my mind I worried about Dianne’s health as well as the health of a baby that God would give us. As each month passed I began to think that we would not be blessed with another child. I began to get depressed, and as the months turned to 1 year then 2 and then nearly 3 years I realized that I was not being honest and open with God. Every parent prays for the health of their children from the time before they are conceived. I realized that I was not being open to God’s will in sending me His child no matter what the circumstances or health might be. I vividly remember the day I prayed to God asking Him that His will be done, and I would accept His child in His time. That next month Pauly was conceived. Pauly is the mixture of his three siblings. He makes me feel like a young twenty-something father again. He is full of energy and constantly tells us he loves us; especially his mommy. He has been telling me that he loves Mary because he knows she is Jesus’ mommy. He understands the mother-son bond and understands the love that Jesus has for his “Mommy”.

Let me tie together the love Dianne and I have for each other, the we learned through experiencing those many years of marital love shared by our parents. This parental love is an earthly manifestation of fatherly love personified in God the Father. I have experienced at least a small part of His unfathomable love in the gaze of Kaity’s eyes shortly after she was born, and the looks I received from Vinny in the wee hours of the morning when he was so little. The result of God’s Love is His Son Jesus. The result of my love for Dianne is physically evident in my children, who after all are on loan to us from God Himself. The warmth and Love I feel from Tommy’s hugs are like the Holy Spirit filling my whole being with His love. Being blessed with Pauly has taught me to trust in God and to realize He loves me more that I can imagine; that I can go to Jesus’ “Mommy” like Pauly tells me I can. Finally our baby in heaven ties our earthly family with a member who is already in the communion of saints.

So I will end with the numbers 3, 1 and 5. The 3 Persons in 1 God Dianne and I experience as a result of our 5 children.

The Amuso Family
FACULTY ESSAY
Mixed Martial Arts As A Way To God?

Jay Coakely, a prominent sport sociologist, has explored the links between religion and sport. Many avid sports fans insist that sport participation or viewing is their religion, and Coakley explores how this concept may not be far from the truth. Both have places for communal gatherings – religions have churches, temples, and mosques, sports have stadiums, ball fields, and arenas. Both have rituals before, during, and after events – religions have baptisms, opening hymns, and processions, sports have national anthems, initiations, and tailgating. The use of organizing structures, the disciplined nature of both, and the sharing of common values can be seen in sport and religion. A final area that shows this similarity between religion and sport is that “both evoke intense emotions and give meaning to people’s lives” (Coakley, 2009, p. 519). It is this final linkage that has become the foundation for a new mix of sport and religion, Christian based Mixed Martial Arts.

For many years, Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) was seen as bloodsport, was unsanctioned and illegal in many states. Arizona Senator John McCain called it “human cockfighting” (Marty, 2007). A combination of wrestling, boxing, kickboxing, and other fighting styles, MMA has now become a popular television and pay-per-view event. In 2006, the annual revenue for this sport was just over $2.2 million dollars (Marty, 2007). As of 2010, MMA is marketed similarly to mainstream sports and is legal in 42 states. While the violence associated with the sport has not diminished, it is being increasingly seen as an acceptable form of fandom. The athletes in this sport are now emerging as public figures and are experiencing the same following, publicity, and opportunity to express personal beliefs through many media outlets. Just as we see baseball players cross themselves when approaching the plate and football players kneeling in the end zone, MMA athletes are linking their faith and strength in pursuit of excellence in their sport. From the hands raised to heaven after a win or claiming that a win “wasn’t in God’s plan for me tonight”, MMA fighters’ recognition of the importance of Christianity in their lives is becoming very common.

However, unlike many other sports, some MMA instructors are using the sport as a gateway to teach and incorporate Christianity into the entire life of an athlete, not just a quick recognition of Jesus in the hopes or thanks of a great performance.
Beginning small, but growing in number, several schools of mixed martial arts now combines Christian values and Biblical teachings with the training and fighting in this newly popular sport. One such organization, Xtreme Ministries near Nashville, Tennessee, preaches the motto “Where Feet, Fist and Faith Collide” (Schneiderman, 2010, para. 5). Another studio outside of Houston, Texas has named their fight team “Jesus Didn’t Tap” as a reference to Jesus not forfeiting a fight or ‘tapping out’ (Shellnutt, 2010, para. 3). The Christian Martial Arts Network currently lists almost 100 schools, studios, and organizations as part of the network of purveyors of this faith plus fighting combination (Agapy, 2008).

This link between physical activity and sport is not a new concept. In the early 1900’s the concept of Muscular Christianity drew many young men to the newly formed YMCA and the Public School Athletic League (the precursor to today’s organized school sports) (Massengale & Swanson, 1997). The idea that young men could express their masculinity through weight lifting was officially sanctioned by many Christian denominations. This idea about weight lifting being an acceptable and positive form of exercise is generally met without controversy (Massengale & Swanson, 1997). Even women today are encouraged to be physically strong and fit to help with the tasks that are expected to perform.

This expression of masculinity was not without boundaries. At the turn of the previous century in this country, collegiate football games had, on occasion, life or death outcomes. The violence on the field was so unregulated, that the injuries sustained within the game resulted in death for players. While this was not a common occurrence, it happened frequently enough to have President Roosevelt concerned enough to mandate more regulation in collegiate sport. At this same time in history, President Roosevelt deemed that good boxers would lead to good fighting soldiers, and therefore encouraged sparring as a normal part of military training. This acknowledgement about crossover effects between controlled sport training and positive behavioral outcomes is therefore not a new concept.

Why then should individuals find controversy with this new crossover between controlled sport training and competition in the form of MMA and potential positive outcomes linked to embracing Christianity?

*Isn’t there a disconnect between Jesus’ teachings and engaging in sanctioned quasi-criminal violence?*

While the popular perception of MMA has changed from a violent bloodbath to an exciting form of dramatic spectacle, not all feel that way. Many see this fighting coupled with faith as an extreme contradiction, and cry foul to the linkage. Jesus was a non-violent ‘fighter’ and MMA is clearly encouraging violence against your fellow man. Religion and specifically Christianity emphasizes personal humility, MMA is about personal achievement and conquest of another. How does a no-holds barred, combative environment endorse love, acceptance, and respect for all human beings?

The clear distinction between sacred and secular nature of the two ideals is the basis for this argument. Many Christians may agree that both Easter Sunday and Super Bowl Sunday are important in their lives, but for two very distinct reasons (Coakley, 2009). The belief that their
importance is identical, in my estimation, is inaccurate and bordering on profane. The sacred nature of religion is corrupted when the secular character of sport is seen as equal. Sport does not have divine inspiration, and to claim that it is manna from heaven distorts the miracles that Jesus performed in his lifetime. Sport has a history of discrimination against women, people of color, and homosexuals. While the Bible and some of its interpretations express these same forms of discrimination, the social acceptance of these practices is no longer as prevalent.

The social constructivist nature of sport also applies to religion in that diverse meanings emerge through social and cultural conditions under which people create and maintain them. Creation and maintenance of Biblical interpretations as well as the organization of sport have historically come from white males. As some denominations have begun to question these interpretations, so to should we question the interpretation that this link of faith and fighting is valid.

“What led me to find Christ was that Jesus was a fighter”
This phrase is not uncommon in many Christian MMA ministries. Research has shown that men have left the church in greater numbers than women and children, and this new link to embracing outward expressions of masculinity and dominance has been the draw to get many young men back to faith (PEW Research Center, 2010). The ‘Jesus was a fighter’ metaphor for keeping your head up and striving for personal success in life has resonated with many. In some churches, a fight night event includes the viewing of the MMA match, but also a lecture and Biblical teaching discussing how Christ fought for what he believed in.

James Dobson, the founder of a prominent evangelical group Focus on the Family, and other Christian ministers have criticized current church practices stating that they have become too feminized (Schneiderman, 2010). While the Bible does teach kindness and compassion, some ministers feel that this has come at the expense of strength and responsibility, which begin with the man as the head of the household (Schneiderman, 2010). In Dobson’s view by using this sport, which in its essence stresses discipline, control, and physical dominance, many young men are able to become ‘proper men’ and the uncontested leaders of their families. These ministries do not condone any sort of domestic physical abuse or aggressive control of the family, but attempt to reestablish the male as the unquestioned head of the household. Dobson stated in a February 2010 article “We’ve raised a generation of little boys” and, in his estimation, this is not consistent with messages in the Bible.

Many ministries struggle with making the Bible meaningful in today’s society. Jesus doesn’t explicitly address how to deal with kids addicted to video games, with parents addicted to work, and many of society’s current problems. How then can we apply the Bible’s teachings and messages to our Y2K environment? Advocates of these Christian based MMA academies state that the physical training can be the hook to keep people coming around. That once they are in the door, and have bought into the system, fighters want to study the Bible. They want to learn more about Jesus and how they can bring his awesome attributes into their own lives. Through these meaningful discussions, people can bring faith back into their lives. Without this link to MMA, many feel that these individuals would be lost to faith forever.
Aside from my immediate dislike of Dobson’s statement that the church has become too feminized, I have to wonder about the mentality of using a violent hook to explore a non-violent teaching. Isn’t that like a bait and switch? Wasn’t one of the Ten Commandments about bearing false witness?

Don’t get me wrong, I think that religion is one way (and a great way) to enrich your life. In whatever form you seek to learn and practice, I feel there is value in the commandments and some of the overarching messages present in the Bible. So finding new ways to introduce religion to those who have not found it will often lead to positive life changes for that individual. However, I become concerned with this link when it seems to be reversing years of progressive equal rights initiatives. It seems as only the most conservative of religious groups have embraced this linkage of MMA to religion, and I am uncomfortable with many of their limited ways of thinking on the world. To couple this limited way of thinking with an encouragement of disciplined violence (when the situation warrants), makes me concerned about how far some individuals will go. We have thousands of years of history which provides us examples of ‘justified violence’ in the name of religious teachings and motives. What then is to stop the man from asserting his position as the ‘unquestioned head of household’ with a little domestic violence? If Jesus was a fighter, and the Bible says men should be in control of the family, what then is the problem?

Some may think that I’m paranoid or falling victim to my own extreme thinking. I do understand that watching violence does not automatically lead to committing violence. I also understand that that carryover effects (violence, aggression, etc.) from sport to regular life are not a guarantee to all participants. However, by providing this religious justification for dominance against others, seems to be a slippery slope. It is when the sporting organization, rather than an individual by choice, chooses to sell disciplined violence as an acceptable segue into religion, that I become uneasy. This sweat and Holy Oil should not mix.

For further information visit:
http://www.anointedfighter.com/
http://www.gladiatorsofchrist.com/
http://www.christianmartialarts.agapy.com/home.php
References


Below the bridge
(Photo by Melissa Jadlos)
Evolution and Faith: Clarified Terminology and Reasonable Debate

In recent years the news media have characterized the theory of evolution as contentious and that science and religion are incompatible. The so-called debate is fomented self-labeled scientist/believers who claim that the theory of evolution is scientifically ambiguous at best, contending that intelligent design is a viable alternative “scientific” theory. What follows below is an attempt to illustrate how the contentiousness of the issue follows from a misuse of language the ignorance of which falsely enables the so-called debate to continue. At issue is the ambiguous meaning of the word “random”—specifically, the scientific sense of random mutations that drive evolution versus the popular meaning of random as unplanned. First I start with some background information about biological evolution and the various theological interpretations prevalent in Christian theological understanding of creation.

Two presuppositions ground any course in biology:
1. All living things are composed of cells, and any discussion of the function of living things is necessarily cellular.
2. Living things are members of species that emerged into existence through the process of evolution.

These two are the grounding theories that make the study of modern biology possible. The first of these is self-evident—the proof of cell theory is obvious to us in the present moment. The second is not
self-evident because evolution’s truth-value is gleaned through scrutiny of a gradual and greatly extended process of events extending from the past. Both have truth-value of divergent qualities.

Microscopic evidence, first gathered by the Dutch biologist, Anton Loewenhook in 1673, has definitively established the cellular composition of living things. The cellular structure of life is factually definitive and evident to anyone with even the crudest toy microscope. Cell theory is evidently factual.

In contrast, evolution is a scientific theory based on solid inductive evidence gathered in its support over the last century and a half. Evolution is a process posited to occur incrementally over a one billion year time frame. Evolution cannot possess the same kind of scientific verity as cell theory because comparable visual evidence is not immediately obtainable. Evidence to support evolution has been, and continues to be gathered inductively, like clues in a mystery story. The majority of biologists accept its verity as scientifically and conclusively factual, but its definitude remains subject to debate in a way that cell theory is not.

For some non-scientists, evolution is a contradiction to their religious conviction that God created the ancestors of all living things in six days. To them, evolution is therefore false. The first two theories are scientific in nature, this third theory, creationism, is not scientific but a faith-based religious conviction. Each is a different way of knowing. The issue facing us is whether the third way of knowing is superior to or capable of refuting the other two.

Early in my career of teaching biology, a student asked, “As a priest, how can you be a biologist and teach evolution?” I told him that, as a Catholic, I found no direct contradiction between evolution and creation. In fact, the Catholic Church has never openly condemned the theory of evolution, but instead has shown an historical tolerance for it. As the 1909 edition of the Catholic Encyclopedia related, the evolution of life seemed to be “in perfect agreement with the Christian conception of the universe.” The same article stated that the church also had no difficulty with an evolutionary origin of the human race. The crucial theological qualification was and always has been that the human soul cannot be the product of any material process. Although the human body may have evolved, the soul was created directly by
God. The former conclusion was the product of the scientific method. The latter emerged from the theological method.

The Church’s position on evolution was formalized in the encyclical, *Humani Generis* by Pope Pius XII in 1951. The Pope noted that the evolution of the human body from lower animals could be investigated so long as no conclusions were made rashly. I presented these two citations in reply to my student’s query. However, he thought it a rather legalistic response. More colloquially I told him that there is no rational contradiction between God using evolution as a means to ongoing creation. Only when there is a contradiction between Christian faith and what we learn through human knowledge would there be a reason to consider scientific knowledge dogmatically questionable. This latter conclusion is the basis of the evolution debate among the various Christian fundamental interpretations of the dogma of creation. My student was not very satisfied. I encouraged him to do some reading. A short conversation cannot fully justify the history of tolerance that Catholic intellectuals have had for the notion of evolution over the past 150 years—as long as it does not lead to necessary atheistic conclusions.

The Theory of Evolution is a by-product of 19th C thinking. In contrast to what it contends about living things, the theory did not spring into existence out of no-where. Evolution is the end product the philosophical speculations from a century of thinkers and naturalists prior to, and not merely proposed by Charles Darwin, who formulated it as a scientific theory in two books, *The Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871). In Toronto in the late 1990s, I heard the famous church history scholar, Jaroslav Pelican, present a talk on Cardinal Newman’s notion of the evolution of Christian dogma. During the reception afterwards, I asked Dr. Pelican if in his writings Cardinal Newman had anything directly to say about biological evolution. He said no, which I interpreted to mean that if Newman had a problem with biological evolution, he certainly would have written against it. Then, unbidden, Dr. Pelican said something interesting: “In the nineteenth century, evolution was in the air”.

The concept of incremental change entranced the natural sciences in the nineteenth century, and permeated philosophy, theology, history, and the other human sciences. Indeed, modern historical
research grounds its very discipline with the presumption of incremental change, of the passing events of human experience, and the constantly changing point of reference from which we interpret the past. As Hans-Georg Gadamer contended in *Truth and Method*, each day we live is different than the day before, changing us, making us different people, and each moment of new interpretation reflects that difference. Today I am a different person than I was yesterday because I have grown incrementally from the experiences I am continuously having. This intellectual attitude towards change, in part, reflects the church’s modern approach to tolerance of scientific method. Modern theology is more willing to be informed by science than it was in the past. Otherwise our study of God would be in peril of statically ignoring new knowledge about the natural world. For theology to be informed by science, there must be common ground for understanding causation in the natural world.

Aristotle thought there was four ways things are caused. We will consider two of these ways: ultimate cause and efficient cause. Another way of putting it is that we can study “that” things exist or we can study “how” they came to be in time. Theologically, “that” things exist depends upon their ultimate source in God—not a time-dependent process. “How” things exist, or come to be, depends upon a sequence of incremental events that unfold through time that leads to their appearance in the here and now. Of course these two ways are not mutually exclusive. For example, everything we experience in human life unfolds for us within our sense of time, but each and every moment that we do exist, we relate to God as the source of who we are. God’s providence maintains us in existence, in an dialogue between the ultimate cause and us, the created effect.

We make can distinguish between these two causalities but there is a common basis to both of them. I will illustrate by a gardening example. When we mow the lawn, it is usually easy for us to distinguish between the grass and the rose garden. We take different approaches to gardening with each of them—use different tools, expect a different outcome—despite the fact that grass and roses both grow out of the same ground. If we did not make these distinctions, and instead just mowed down the roses with the lawn
mower, or alternatively if we tried to cut the grass using only rose-pruning shears … in both cases, no matter which approach we took, plants still grow from the ground.

Similarly, when we pursue truth through inquiry, we use different methods, depending upon the methodology of the intellectual discipline we are employing. Before we begin the process of truth gathering, we presume that all truth has the same common origin. In other words, Truth cannot contradict truth. This summarizes one of the teachings of the First Vatican Council.

We can only know something is true in any discipline if we presume, in the first place, that the universe in which we live makes sense. The ancient Greeks made this presumption, that the universe must be ruled by a rational principle that unifies all that is true into a sensible universal package. The universe is one and the universe is true. Any scholar who teaches at this college, whether their discipline considers this statement explicitly or not, presumes this to be true before they conduct their research or step into a classroom. In short, that the universe is rational is the first axiom of all intellectual inquiry. If unity of truth were in doubt, then anything one says is just words with questionable correspondence to reality. In the case of biology and theology, we are safe in our original unambiguous assumption of unity.

The Greeks called the rational principle that unifies all truth the logos. In Greek, logos means “word” or “language.” As language it cannot be understood apart from logos as “rational meaning.” Words correspond to meaning. When we find meaning, we search for words to describe it or we invent some. If we come upon a word that we don’t know, we always presume there is a meaning to discover. Whether our activities are primarily in the practical everyday world or in theoretical intellectual pursuits, we presume that things make sense, or else at least they should, or eventually will. Otherwise there is no point in looking for truth at all. Those who give up expecting to find truth have truly descended into despair.

Logos, or the expectation of reasonableness, is the grounding presupposition of every question we have, or will ever ask in biology or in theology. This presupposition grounds both ultimate questions and questions whose solution we seek through an efficient, time-dependent sequences of events.
Evolution can be distinguished from creation in the theological sense using these two causal principles. God is the ultimate source of creation; evolution is a possible efficient means of bringing it about. Using causal perspective, the question in dispute, from the evangelical point of view—and for some Catholics who are not clear why the church does not condemn evolution—is this:

*Does asking an ultimate question contradict the time-dependent efficient question or vice versa?*

Or from the journalistic perspective, can a tolerance of evolution contradict faith in creation? For Catholics, these are not necessarily in contradiction. I will expand this response from two standpoints.

Firstly, the theological sense of the word “creation” corresponds to the “meaning” of origins. Religious questions about origins depend upon the ultimate cause in God’s creative love. Christians believe that God created the universe in order to enter into a love relationship with creatures created in his image. This creator/creature relationship mirrors the infinite love that the Father has for the Son in the Holy Spirit. The universe is the very image of the divine community of Trinitarian love. This is foundational to confessing Christian faith. When theologians study creation, they presuppose this creature/Creator relationship as *a priori*, or a given fact. No amount of scientific investigation or measurement, or any amount of mathematical analysis could have cause on to draw this conclusion outside of divine revelation. Nor as a result can scientific analysis disprove it scientifically. Christians believe that God revealed these truths to humanity. Every other doctrine in Christianity proceeds from this grounding concept, including the redemption.

However, when *scientific* questions about origins are asked, this grounding theological concept is not, cannot be available for consideration by the scientific method. Science only studies what is sensible, what can be seen, felt, even tasted, and smelled. Scientific method presumes that the universe makes sense, and that the laws that unify it into a unity are deductible and inducible according to laws of nature as they have been rendered into language for human understanding. Even though scientific method treats with data available to the five senses, it also presumes a universal unity that cannot be directly sensed. In effect, both theology and science are grounded in a basic belief in *logos* or reason.
The difference between the *logos* of science and the *Logos* of faith is that science is limited to what can be sensed. Theology is not limited merely to the senses but also relies on revelation. Hence the *logos* of science is not exactly the same as the *Logos* of theology, although historically they derive from each other, depending on whether you look at it ultimately or efficiently.

To get back to the question my student asked me all those years ago …

Basic to the apparent contradiction between evolution and creation, in the minds of many today, is the literal inconsistency between the Genesis account of creation and the scientific theory of evolution. Many students have quoted this argument to me over the years. When I am specifically challenged by people that evolution contradicts the creation story in Genesis, I ask them *which* story. There are actually two creation accounts in Genesis, one in chapter one and the second in chapter two. These are two different accounts from two different literary sources and traditions. The older one is in Genesis 2, which is the story of the creation of Adam from the dust of the earth and Eve from the rib in his side. The other creation account in Genesis 1 begins with “Let there be light” and thereafter follows six days of Divine labor, each day God making incremental additions to what God made the day prior. Ultimately God makes “man in his own image” and rests the seventh day. Unless God made humanity twice, there exist two different creation stories, one the account of a spontaneous creation event, the other an account of incremental creation occurring over time.

The creation stories in Genesis were traditionally believed to be written by Moses. Modern scholars have concluded that they were actually written down by Israelite scribes living in exile in Babylon in the eighth century before the birth of Jesus Christ. They were written down to preserve them because the origin of the nation of Israel was important to a people whose country lay in ruins. Even if we somehow consider these two accounts as one, there are also several other creation accounts in both the Old and New
Testaments culminating in the most important creation account in the whole bible, the first chapter of the Gospel of John. So which creation account does evolution contradict?

The problem with quoting from scripture to defend an argument is that the line and verse quoted are just a small part of the unified whole of the record of God’s revelation to his people. Just as there is a unity to creation, and a unity to truth, there is also a unity to scriptural revelation. From a Christian perspective, unity in scripture is centered in an expectation that everything written in the bible somehow speaks about Jesus Christ. From the Christian perspective of the Old Testament, everything written there is literally about the time reported and simultaneously prefigures Christ’s life on earth in the first century and his presence in the Church in the here and now. In this context, whenever the Old Testament speaks of creation, whether in Genesis, or in the Psalms, or in the book of Wisdom, it is also and especially speaking of the role that Jesus Christ had in creation.

The Book of Wisdom relates that the wisdom or reason of God was present when the world was created. This theology of Christ’s presence at creation is mirrored in St. Paul’s letters. The reason of God or the Logos of God, is precisely what the first chapter of John’s Gospel is about. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”. Logos has been translated as Word. So, the difference between the reason of the world, the logos that is the sense than unifies all created truth, and the uncreated reason and wisdom of God, is that the divine Logos is a divine person – The uncreated Word made flesh.

The ancient Greeks never conceived of logos as personified and were shocked to hear it posited. For Christianity, the reason of the world finds its origin, its ultimate cause, in divine reason, the Word of God, Jesus Christ. This is a faith statement—a presupposition grounded in religious conviction. Theologically speaking, scientific logos is created—divine Logos is the uncreated Son of God, who created the world of time. For scientific method to acknowledge this presupposition would first require a confessional statement of religious faith. That would be contrary to its methodology. Science would no longer be science, but instead a branch of theology.
A corresponding contradiction holds for theology. To contend that the reason of the world is not a creation of God, the image of Divine Reason, contradicts the method of theology. Theology would be nothing more than a branch of physics.

Yet somehow, some scientists, specifically atheistic ones, draw conclusions beyond the presuppositions of their methodology. Scientists who are confessional atheists, stretch scientific conclusions and imply that science proves God is not the ultimate cause. Stephan Hawking has recently drawn this conclusion and claimed it was scientific. How can science conclude anything about things unseen or inaccessible to scientific theory or measurement? This is the problem with the so-called evolution debate: it is the classic apples/oranges dichotomy at the intellectual level.

This brings us, finally, to problems in terminology. Some scientific terminology has a meaning that is not precisely matched by its theological cognate – for example, the word “random”. The principle of evolution, according to several different interpretations, states that it is driven by “random chance”. Specifically, the mainspring of evolution is natural selection acting on random genetic variation.

Theologically, there is nothing random about God’s intent in creation. God created in love, eternally and decisively, for the sake of establishing a loving relationship with creatures, especially the ones created in the divine image and likeness. To say God’s intent is random seems to make him out to be a Divine scatterbrain. At least this would be true if we presume there is an exact equivalence between the scientific and theological meanings of the word random. Theologically, random means “unplanned” or “unguided”. Scientifically, random does not possess the same connotation.

In an October 25, 2005 article in the journal First Things, Stephen B. Barr, a theoretical particle physicist from the University of Delaware, attempted to clarify misunderstandings that arose from an article written by the Archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Schonborn on evolution. The Cardinal took the meaning for the scientific term random to be equivalent to the theological meaning of unplanned or unguided. Dr. Barr argued conversely that scientists never use unplanned and unguided in relationship to evolution. He showed that the Institute for Scientific Information’s well-known and well-utilized Science
Citation Index for that year reveals that only 48 scientific papers even mention the term “unguided” in the title, most of them having to do with missiles. Only 467 have the word “unplanned”, almost all referring to pregnancies and medical procedures. By contrast there are 52,633 papers with “random” in the title from all fields of scientific research.

“Random” is a basic term in science that relates to statistical dynamics. For example, the movement of atomic or molecular particles in a gas, or fluctuations in quantum fields, or the recombination of genes during the process of meiotic cell division. The word random in science does not mean uncaused or unplanned but statistically “uncorrelated”. Dr. Barr uses the example of his children’s game of recording the origin of cars that pass by reading out their license plates while riding in the car. If you record each plate, noting the state of origin, then the sequence of them will exhibit a degree of randomness such that in no case can you accurately predict the next license plate based upon what you have already recorded. The origins of the cars are uncorrelated. Yet, each car is where it is, in that sequence, at that time for a reason.

This example illustrates a persistent problem with using statistics to analyze human behavior. The presumption of randomness inherent in statistical theory collides with the purposefulness of human action. The children’s car game illustrates that an action can be both random and purposive simultaneously. Hence it is statistically impossible to deny that the random activity in recombination of genes that eventually leads to species change, or evolution, is a possible means by which God directs creation without contradicting the scientific observation that there is no correlation between that and what is observed. It could be both purposive and scientifically random. To accomplish such a feat should not be too difficult for an omnipotent being with infinite knowledge, and an infinite capacity for loving and giving.

Yet at a rally on campus of this very college, a visiting scientist and a mathematician spoke to students denied the scientific validity of evolution by proclaiming their understanding of the word “random” as unguided in contradiction to the scientific meaning of “uncorrelated”. They deliberately used
the colloquial meaning to convince students that randomness contradicts the biblical creation accounts makes the theory of evolution unscientific. This was professional fraud or incompetent ignorance of the methodology of their fields of study. If there is a contradiction, it does not reside in science versus religion, but in the misuse of language for rhetorical purposes.

Carrying on a valid debate in the so-called conflict between science and religion, the problem is knowing the limits of methodology. In the 17th C the church exceeded its limits by making dogmatic statements about scientific methodology that exceeded theological method. Paradoxically, in the current climate, some atheist scientists draw theological conclusions that God could have nothing to do with the outcome of evolution or the causal engine driving it by citing their personally derived “convictions” as scientific proof. On the other side of the political debate, are those who still wish to force the scientific method to obey Christian dogma. The news media limit their reporting of evolution to this apparent standoff and willfully foment debate for the sake of spicy headlines. This aspect of the dialogue is more about power politics than religion. The current “debate” is not a dialogue but a polemical standoff. Crushing your enemies, like modern politicians do, denying the possibility of the disclosure of truth and its understanding. The intention of debate in modern human affairs has been reduced to the pursuit of power gained from being on the winning side.

Truth is only disclosed in true dialogue. Debate should further our understanding of reason. True debate has the logos as its common ground. From the perspective of the Incarnation, because the risen Jesus is the Christ-always-with-us, the Logos of God infinitely indwells the world maintaining it reasonably in being. Now that we have defined our terms, for believers or non-believers, the process of evolution is random in the scientific sense. For believers, randomness itself is God’s means of continuously creating the universe in love, so that those with the intelligence and capacity to understand it might love God back in response.
PEKARESQUE ADVENTURES: AESTHETICS AND IDENTITY IN “AMERICAN SPLENDOR”

“The late Harvey Pekar’s American Splendor was a comic book exploration of his life and times. Best known perhaps for its 2002 film adaptation, American Splendor was a thirty-year exploration of what Pekar called “finding the extraordinary in the ordinary.” For most of his working life a file clerk at a Veteran’s Hospital in Cleveland, Pekar gave a singular exploration into such topics as leading a working class life in an economically downward economy; matrimonial issues (he was married three times); health scares (he had two bouts with cancer, as well as long-term depression); the benefits and drawbacks of being a minor celebrity (he was a frequent guest for several years on Late Night with David Letterman as well as becoming a well-known figure thanks to the popularity of the film version of American Splendor); and reflections on personal identity in a media age. In this paper, I will discuss how Pekar’s life work presents a major contribution to sociology, as well as connect it to James Joyce’s concept of “epiphanies.” In addition, I will discuss my own 25-year friendship with this remarkable writer.

“Comics are words and pictures. You can do anything with words and pictures.”
-Harvey Pekar

When considering the ontological status of the comic book, it was once natural to think of superheroes battling all-powerful villains, Archie and Jughead battling wits with Principal Weatherbee, or Bugs Bunny and Porky Pig battling Elmer J. Fudd in the forest. In short, the assumption was that comic books were kids’ stuff, and not to be taken seriously by world-weary adults. Much has changed in the last 20 or so years, with the rise of the so-called graphic novel, but many of these – including such seminal works as Frank Miller’s The Dark Knight, Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons’ Watchmen, and Ed Kramer and Neil Gaiman’s The Sandman – still deal with superheroes, albeit in complex and ethically shaded
ways. While it is the case that the comic book field has primarily dwelt in the world of fantasy, there has always been a strong regard for realism as well, detailing the everyday adventures of ordinary individuals. Examples of this can be found in the works of Will Eisner, Milton Caniff, and Frank King. This realistic strain is perhaps best exemplified today by Harvey Pekar’s magnum opus, *American Splendor.*

Harvey Pekar, author of the famed graphic novel *American Splendor,* died on July 12th, aged 70.

Best known now for the film version from 2003, *American Splendor* began in 1976 as a self-published yearly comic detailing Pekar’s life as a file clerk at a Cleveland, Ohio hospital. It is a chronicle of his life: his boyhood, growing up as a “greaser” in the fifties; his varied relationships with women, and his eventual marriages (he’d been wed three times and each wife puts in an appearance in *Splendor* issues); his reflections on politics, literature, jazz, work, and life in general. Pekar was a down-to-earth guy who tried to record things as they really happened. He was reflective without being preachy. In his story “Rip-Off Chick”, for instance, he told of his on-again, off-again relationship with a woman he described as being “basically a worthless person,” then adds “Dig me, casting stones.”

One could never accuse Pekar of pandering to his audience. He did nothing to spruce up the often grim realities of his day-to-day existence. Many of the stories dealt with his money woes, his anxieties about growing old, his health issues (including several bouts with cancer), and his tendency to say the wrong thing at inopportune moments.

Yet for all their apparent harshness, one had to admire Pekar’s attempts to show life as it really is: for the most part unglamorous, often tedious, but nonetheless worth living. His stories remind me time and again of Samuel Beckett’s famous words “I can’t go on/I’ll go on.” It is the meaningfulness of simple pleasures which really come across in these tales. In one of them, Harvey – who portrays himself as a diehard cheapskate – comes across a secondhand store which sells good shoes for fifty cents a pair. He’s in heaven!

Pekar had a fine ear for dialogue, and some of the best stories in *American Splendor* involve his interactions with members of the working class, a part of society which is all too seldom dealt with in
literature, let alone the specialized area of comic books. It is in this manner that he expanded the comic book field, showing what it is capable of doing, and pointing out new horizons which fellow authors and artists can capitalize upon. The comic book can detail a credible, realistic story without resorting to the hero (and Pekar is a hero in these tales) having to attain mystical powers or supernatural strength. Pekar’s honesty, his eye for details and his sympathy for the human condition places him in the same category with Mark Twain, Frank Norris, George Ade (a particular favorite of his) and Henry Miller. And the fact that it is by no means ridiculous to place a comic book author in such ranks is due entirely to the quality and integrity of *American Splendor*.

Much praise is also due to the various artists of these works, for these stories are all collaborative efforts. Pekar wrote them, then worked closely with the men and women who depict, through their artwork, his autobiographical texts. Probably the best-known of these artists is Robert Crumb, creator of “Fritz the Cat”, “Mr. Natural” and other famed underground comics (and recently the creator of a comic rendition of the Book of Genesis!). The two first met in Cleveland in the 1960s, and it was Crumb’s wild versions of a nervous, bug-eyed Pekar that first gave *Splendor* its prominence. It is interesting to compare the different ways in which the various artists portray Pekar and his world: in some of the stories he appears quite handsome, resembling a slightly manic Ben Gazzara; while in others (particularly those drawn by Crumb) his appearance is more akin to a raving lunatic; and in most he is a much like the schlubby Everyman so ably portrayed by Paul Giamatti in the film version. The film version of *American Splendor* nicely demonstrates this when Joyce Brabner (later to become Harvey’s third wife) is meeting him for the first time, and wonders which, if any, of the artistic renditions she’s seen will most capture the flesh-and-blood version she’s soon to meet.

I first met Harvey back in 1985. At the time I was an undergraduate student in philosophy at the State University of New York at Buffalo. As a child I had been a big comic book fan, but had long since put them aside and felt I had given up such childish things for good. My friend Craig Fischer, then an undergraduate student in English at the same institution, convinced me that comics were worth
reconsidering, and that several important works were expanding the field in ways previously unimaginable. We both marveled, from issue to issue, at the intricacies and unexpected twists of the *Watchmen* series, and the dark and disturbing variations on the Batman story which Frank Miller was coming up with in *The Dark Knight*. But, as mentioned earlier, while I admired these works, they still struck me as being essentially superhero stories. When Craig showed me *American Splendor*, however, I was convinced that the comic book world could indeed develop narratives in a more mundane but equally exciting way. How could someone growing up in Buffalo, New York *not* love a work that dealt with stories about old cars not starting on a winter’s day? *That* was something I could truly relate to, and something I’d never before seen in a comic book.

Craig and I took several pilgrimages to Cleveland to meet the master. I well remember the first occasion, where we burst into his apartment, crammed wall-to-wall with record albums and books, holding up a six pack of beer and offering to take him out to get an order of chicken wings. We were shocked when he told us he neither drank alcohol nor ate meat. Thus were our preconceptions shattered. He also told us at the time that he had been invited to appear on “Late Night With David Letterman.” This seemed to us a great opportunity to alert the world to his work, but Pekar astutely said that the only reason he’d been asked to come on was to make fun of him, and that instead he was going to come out and aggressively attack Letterman. It seemed to me that this was exactly the wrong thing to do, and I can well remember watching, with fear and trembling, the first appearance of Pekar on the Letterman show. His strategy, it turned out, was spot on – it was so unexpected, and so entertaining, that he appeared several more times, which itself became grist for the *American Splendor* mill, and led to some memorable television experiences.

What I have most learned through both reading *American Splendor* and getting to know its author is that life is far more complicated than one can imagine, and that the simplest events can have unexpected profundities – something which James Joyce referred to as “epiphanies”. As the comic strip and the movie based upon it ably show, Pekar’s life was unpredictable, but then so are all our lives. One
of the constant themes of the work is personal identity: who is “Harvey Pekar”? One facet of the man I came to know is one seldom dealt with in the stories: he was an intense reader with an interest in such avant-garde novelists as Edouard Dujardin, Andrei Bely, Flann O’Brien, and Dubravka Ugrešić. This deep intellectual side is one that might be more difficult to depict graphically than the cantankerous guy impatiently caught behind an old lady at a supermarket or the obsessive collector of jazz albums or the angry author dealing with his various editors, but it is one more piece of the total person.

There are many levels to Pekar’s personality which go far beyond that captured by his work – as he himself was quite conscious of, and as is witnessed in the story (well depicted in the film American Splendor) called “The Harvey Pekar Name Story.” In it, Pekar reflects on the fact that for many years there was another Harvey Pekar listed in the Cleveland phone book, one he was not related to or connected with in any way. Soon a third with the same name, the son of the other Harvey Pekar, appeared. For years he wondered who they were and what they did, but never followed up on this. Then, within six months times, both of the other Harvey Pekars died. “Although I’d met neither man, I was filled with sadness. ‘What were they like,’ I thought. It seemed that our lives had been linked in some indefinable way.” He is nonplused to see, a few years later, yet another Harvey Pekar listed in the directory. “What kind of people are these? Where do they come from, what do they do? What’s in a name?” he reflects. And then he asked the ultimate philosophical question: “Who is Harvey Pekar?” followed by a panel – masterfully drawn by Crumb – of our Harvey Pekar reflecting wordlessly upon this.

Shortly before his death, I asked him to reflect upon his life and work. He told me: “I read comics as a kid, from around the age of six to eleven, but by eleven I found I could predict the plot. I stopped reading them then. In 1962 Robert Crumb moved to Cleveland. I saw his stuff and was blown away. The underground movement that Crumb was involved with was important, but it left too much out. There never was a realistic movement in comics. There was this huge gaping hole that to me were obvious. I thought ‘shit man I should do this before someone else does it.’ I’ll at least be a footnote in history.” Impetus enough for starting a comic book with his own life at the center.
I stayed in touch with Harvey, on and off, over the years. We mostly talked on the phone about avant-garde literature and jazz (he hated Ken Burns’ PBS series on the latter). I kept encouraging him to put together an anthology of his jazz criticism, but he grumbled that it would be too much work and not lucrative enough to be worth the bother. I also closely followed what seemed to be the quixotic efforts of getting *American Splendor* made into a film. One memorable event occurred at a Toronto restaurant in the early 1990s, where I drove up to meet him and a potential producer. While standing around with a group of Pekar acolytes, Harvey burst into a profane diatribe about how the producer never showed up, and that it was all futile anyway, since nothing ever came of such meetings, and the guy was probably nothing but a lying jerk. Suddenly one of the people standing by said in a quiet voice “I am here.” It was none other than the potential producer. The rest of us fell into stunned silence, and Harvey, awkwardly, put out his hand and said “Hey man, good to meet you.” I recall staggering out into the Toronto night, nonplused and yet happy to have witnessed a genuine Pekar moment.

A few years later, while flipping through *Entertainment Weekly*, I saw a still for an upcoming movie. “That looks like Harvey,” I thought, and then learned that it was actually Paul Giamatti, portraying Our Man. So a film was indeed made, and it very nicely captured the complexities of the Pekar world. When I called him up to congratulate him, Harvey said “Well, we’ll see how it does.” After the film won several awards, and made Pekar the center of media attention, he told me “We’ll see how much I’ll be talked about a year from now.” And, as usual, he grumbled about how everyone thought the movie had made him a lot of money, which was NOT the case.

I last met up with Harvey about a year ago, when I stopped by his – surprise, surprise – cluttered home to catch up on things. We wandered over to a hamburger joint and even though I offered to pay he insisted on picking up the check. "I'm doing alright, man," he said. Most of all he seemed if not happy then at least immersed in work, which was probably the best thing for him.

I last spoke to him in April. I had arranged to bring him to give a talk at my school, St. John Fisher College, and he called a month or so before to say "Hey, man, I completely forgot, I'm gonna be in
San Francisco then.” With anyone else I’d have been upset, but Harvey being Harvey I shrugged it off and was planning to bring him to town in the fall semester of 2010. Now all I have are the memories of my meetings with him, my Harvey Pekar bobblehead, and my dog-eared copies of *American Splendor*. It’s still difficult to think of him in the past tense, for he was a vital part of my life for 25 years. I wish he could have seen all the tributes to him, for I suspect he relished the recognition he did receive for making his life his life’s work.

*American Splendor* allowed us all to follow the slings and arrows of Harvey’s existence, and thereby come to better appreciate the turns in our own lives. It is difficult not to feel empathetic with such a “tell-it-like-it-is” kind of guy. Harvey Pekar – file clerk, jazz critic, urban dweller, movie star, and author – was an authentic working class hero, even if he couldn’t leap buildings in a single bound. Thanks to *American Splendor*, we can all better appreciate our own Pekaresque moments. He was a genuine inspiration to me and to countless others who continue to see the extraordinary in the ordinary.
Dockside Morning

(Photo by Melissa Jadlos)
Diversity Vision

*** Prize provided by

SJFC Office of
MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS
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Submission Review Committee:

REST CLUB Officers
A Reminder from the Past

Nearly forty-six years ago to the day, Martin Luther King Jr. accepted the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts in trying to eradicate African American discrimination by using non-violence. Dr. King accepted this prize whilst racial injustice was still prominent in the United States. He did this with the hope that someday people would find a way to live along side each other in peace. “If this [peace] is to be achieved, man must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love.” Although there have been many strides against discrimination and hatred, both remain prominent not only in the United States, but around the world exponentially.

Martin Luther King Jr. knew the extremes of the Holocaust during World War II. What he did not know, was that genocide would occur again half a century later. In 1994, Rwandan Hutus planned a massacre against the tribal Tutsis. What is often forgotten is that many of these people that were brutally murdered were their neighbors, friends, doctors, teachers, and unfortunately, family. People
raped and killed solely on the reason that they were told to do so. This is what happens when morality and peace are completely disregarded. People lost all sense of civility and went on killing rampages for the single reason that they were told to hate. Additionally, people of the world turned their heads away instead of stopping this brutal massacre. At a time when human decency was yearned for, the world did not go to their rescue.

The United States is once again at a problematic time with ethnicities and religion. Following the effects of the terrorist attacks from September 11, 2001, many Americans have once again made a divide between their own citizens, rather similar to Rwanda. It is not through anger and retaliation that the nation will heal from such a tragedy, but from peaceful efforts made to stop from ever happening again. Many Middle Easterners feel the depth of the discrimination many African Americans once felt. What is to be reminded is that it was not all Middle Easterners who committed these crimes; nor were they all Muslims. The world needs to know that stereotyping and placing blame on people who are undeserving of it is morally wrong. Many people need to be reminded of the efforts and strategies Dr. King used in his struggle against violence.

Even more recent, it has been a topic in the news of students bullying those who have chosen to be part of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgendered community. These students who are bullying are being influenced by the media and replicate what they see in their own actions. Many students may not know the effects their words and actions may have on others. However, many more of the victims of bullying are choosing to harm themselves because they feel they are not allowed to express who they are and feel unwelcome. At such a developmental stage, it is critical that all students are to be shown love and given the acceptance they very much desire instead of being harassed and made fun of.

A reason why so many of these horrible actions have been dismissed is because society has been taught to “dehumanize” the victims. If one hears or listens to constant rhetoric and propaganda
regarding people who are different or “outside the norm” then one tends to believe that these victims are mere things, less than animals. The victims become indiscriminate objects that are not subject to the same feelings deserved by human beings. Calling people names, instead of identifying who they really are, minimizes their worth and devalues them. The “bystanders”, people who allow the bullying or discrimination to occur, have also become de-sensitized and thus “go along” with the crimes. Gone is the character trait of empathy or any understanding of a person’s situation.

Because so many people have lost this sense of understanding, the need for peace and acts of non-violence are needed now more than ever. Martin Luther King, Jr’s ideals, presented decades ago, need to remind people that violence and hatred are not the way to go about one’s life. In order for the following generations to have a peaceful and loving lifestyle, Dr. King’s methods must be reintroduced. It must be taught that there is more to life than hatred and brutality; that there are ways to go about things to express opinions that do not deal with criticizing others or destroying lives. As Dr. King ended his acceptance speech, “the beauty of genuine brotherhood and peace is more precious than diamonds or silver or gold.” Society must remember that life is valuable and fragile; each bringing new characteristics and meaning that are priceless.

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Here below is Dr. King’s Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech
Martin Luther King - Nobel Prize Speech

Martin Luther King's Acceptance Speech, on the occasion of the award of the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, December 10, 1964

Your Majesty, Your Royal Highness, Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:
I accept the Nobel Prize for Peace at a moment when 22 million Negroes of the United States of America are engaged in a creative battle to end the long night of racial injustice. I accept this award on behalf of a civil rights movement which is moving with determination and a majestic scorn for risk and danger to establish a reign of freedom and a rule of justice. I am mindful that only yesterday in Birmingham, Alabama, our children, crying out for brotherhood, were answered with fire hoses, snarling dogs and even death. I am mindful that only yesterday in Philadelphia, Mississippi, young people seeking to secure the right to vote were brutalized and murdered. And only yesterday more than 40 houses of worship in the State of Mississippi alone were bombed or burned because they offered a sanctuary to those who would not accept segregation. I am mindful that debilitating and grinding poverty afflicts my people and chains them to the lowest rung of the economic ladder. Therefore, I must ask why this prize is awarded to a movement which is beleaguered and committed to unrelenting struggle; to a movement which has not won the very peace and brotherhood which is the essence of the Nobel Prize.

After contemplation, I conclude that this award which I receive on behalf of that movement is a profound recognition that nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral question of our time - the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to violence and oppression. Civilization and violence are antithetical concepts. Negroes of the United States, following the people of India, have demonstrated that nonviolence is not sterile passivity, but a powerful moral force which makes for social transformation. Sooner or later all the people of the world will have to discover a way to live together in peace, and thereby transform this pending cosmic elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood. If this is to be achieved, man must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love.

The tortuous road which has led from Montgomery, Alabama, to Oslo bears witness to this truth. This is a road over which millions of Negroes are travelling to find a new sense of dignity. This same road has opened for all Americans a new era of progress and hope. It has led to a new Civil Rights Bill, and it will, I am convinced, be widened and lengthened into a super highway of justice as Negro and white men in increasing numbers create alliances to overcome their common problems.

I accept this award today with an abiding faith in America and an audacious faith in the future of mankind. I refuse to accept despair as the final response to the ambiguities of history. I refuse to accept the idea that the "isness" of man's present nature makes him morally incapable of reaching up for the eternal "oughtness" that forever confronts him. I refuse to accept the idea that man is mere flotsom and jetsom in the river of life unable to influence the unfolding events which surround him. I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality.

I refuse to accept the cynical notion that nation after nation must spiral down a militaristic stairway into the hell of thermonuclear destruction. I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right temporarily defeated is stronger than evil triumphant. I believe that even amid today's motor bursts and whining bullets, there is still hope for a brighter tomorrow. I believe that wounded justice, lying prostrate on the blood-flowing streets of our nations, can be lifted from this dust of shame to reign supreme among the children of men. I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits. I believe that what self-centered men have torn down men other-centered can build up. I still believe that one day mankind will bow before the altars of God and be crowned triumphant over war and bloodshed, and nonviolent redemptive good will proclaimed the rule of the land. "And the lion and the lamb shall lie down together and every man shall sit under his own vine and fig tree and none shall be afraid." I still believe that We Shall overcome!

This faith can give us courage to face the uncertainties of the future. It will give our tired feet new strength as we continue our forward stride toward the city of freedom. When our days become dreary with low-hoovering clouds and our nights become darker than a thousand midnights, we will know that we are living in the creative turmoil of a genuine civilization struggling to be born.

Today I come to Oslo as a trustee, inspired and with renewed dedication to humanity. I accept this prize on behalf of all men who love peace and brotherhood. I say I come as a trustee, for in the depths of my heart I am aware that this prize is much more than an honor to me personally. Every time I take a flight, I am always mindful of the many people who make a successful journey possible - the known pilots and the unknown ground crew. So you honor the dedicated pilots of our struggle who have sat at the controls as the freedom movement soared into orbit. You honor, once again, Chief Lutuli of South Africa, whose struggles with and for his people, are still met with the most brutal expression of man's inhumanity to man. You honor the ground crew without whose labor and sacrifices the jet flights to freedom could never have left the earth. Most of these people will never make the headline and their names will not appear in Who's Who. Yet when years have rolled past and when the blazing light of truth is focused on this marvelous age in which we live - men and women will know and children will be taught that we have a finer land, a better people, a more noble civilization - because these humble children of God were willing to suffer for righteousness sake.

I think Alfred Nobel would know what I mean when I say that I accept this award in the spirit of a curator of some precious heirloom which he holds in trust for its true owners - all those to whom beauty is truth and truth beauty - and in whose eyes the beauty of genuine brotherhood and peace is more precious than diamonds or silver or gold.