An atheist's creed: self-legitimized indignation

Ryan Bromsrovge CALG10877

I found the truth, and I'm going to shove it down your throat, because it's the most important thing in the world. See, my friends, I decided to keep my spiritual beliefs to myself. So, I have to share them — and by share them I mean to try to force you to accept them too.

Every opportunity I have, I'll bring religion into the conversation and demand that you accept and adhere to my belief system — and shun you as a moron who can't admit to the self the truth about the existence of a deity if you don't. Because, my friends, I am an atheist.

I capitalized that because I'm really into this movement, and I use the word "deity" because it helps me sound smarter. I've searched every forum and lecture for Richard Dawkins, read like a whole book about evolution and I've totally con- cerned the corpse of Carl Sagan into my cause because he was just so elo- quent. And now I'm ready to show the world how smart I am, starting with wherever's unfortunate enough to mention anything even remotely connected to religion in any way whatsoever. I have a talent for twist- ing conversations into whatever I want them to be.

Why just last week loudmouth two people talking about the discovery of a star spinning at 600 kilometres per second. "Khaa, yes," I chimed in at once, "what marvels science has brought. Not like religion, Pabl." To think that people actually believe that the world was created by a deity 6,000 years ago while this star is probably billions of years old. The very thought!

One of them must have been a believer because he looked at me, like I was Satan himself — who also doesn't exist, by the way — for having interrupted them. I laughed and merrily turned to, confident that I had placid the tendency to think in his close-minded brain. All yes, it would only be a matter of time before he would accept the inevitable truth.

I resumed my post-graduate level explanation of the Euthyphro Dilemma, enlightening both my peers and my professor.

But if you don't yet understand how important it is for me to let every- body know how smart I am for not believing in a deity, allow me to submit to you a second anecdote. Later that day I was in my Philoso- phy ten class, happily pointing out to the professor all of the inconsistences with a deity-based moral system while everyone listened rapt. When somebody from the back of the class dared suggest that atheism was just another religion, I exploded in rage. "Goodmad man," I began, contain- ing my apocalyptic anger through sheer force of human will, "to sug- gest that the atheistic worldview is merely another religious system is absolutely misguided. First, atheism contains no faith-based claims and is always open to intellectual criticism. Second, we are still by far the most deficient in delites."

The entire class sat in stunned si- lence, and I resumed my post-graduate level explanation of the Euthyphro Dilemma, enlightening both my peers and my professor. Pains himself would have been impressed by the subtle intricacies I unravelled.

Finally, I told people on my Face- book about both incidents that day, and I know that I'm correct in my belief system because I met with such a warm acceptance amongst my friends.

Now, yes, it is true that there is a selection bias, for I have added every online atheist I can find. Also, I have systematically checked the religious beliefs section in the profile of ev- erybody's who added me, and have erroneously purged all those who have indicated that they profess belief in any supernatural claims.

I sincerely hope that I have con- vinced you, the reader, of my wide intellect. In any supernatural, perhaps even you can attain such enlightenment. But never free, I shall always be lacking the halls of academia, writing to de- rive any and every conversation I can have in appreciation of how smart I am for having realized how miniscule the chances are of there being a deity in reality. Hopefully, next time, my vic- tim is you.

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I hear so much more from my peers than from some of my professors. And when you ask me what I think of, let's say, no, there is quite a bit of creativ- ity and brawn in my brain, as opposed to the pro's own brain.

This is not to underline our pro- fessors' accomplishments at all. But at times these researchers seem so stuck in their research mode they fall flat on their face in a creative manner. The only proof I've experienced who has truly embraced this is Michael Macdonald. In fact, he introduced it to me and got me thinking.

In his class he impressed me that a workshop for learning. A place where we are the produc- ers of our knowledge, facilitated by the teacher. He also spoke to the way classrooms are set up — in a manner that emphasizes the teacher's authority. Yes the teacher has some authority, but should it really be the emphasis in this day and age? I think we need to restruc- ture our classrooms.

A little bit of this is done in the 400-level courses, but I think this could be extended to even 200-level courses to get some real learning done.

If U of A is a research-based institu- tion — fabulous. Maybe we should research better ways to teaching too.

Chakanaa Zanyemba K791

K97 billboard actually was objectification

(Rew: "K97 billboard ad nothing worth complaining about," by Darcy Ropchan, Nov. 2)

After viewing the K97 bill- boards, even as a man, I could see the brazen sexism being portrayed. Therefore, after reading Darcy Ropchan's piece about the billboard ad, I was both dumberfounded by his inaness and generally unanalyzed analysis. What became blantly clear after reading his piece was his complete misunderstanding of the issue at hand. He makes the claim that these billboards, which were deemed by the ASC as "totally gratuitous and served only to objectify women," were taken down simply because of nudity.

This is where his argument shows an utter lack of comprehension about the issue at hand. The close- up of the women's breasts shows no nudity whatsoever. This billboard is sexist and objectifies women simply because it does, in fact, make women an object. Perhaps the term "objectifying- women" gets tossed around too much and has lost its true meaning. The term is often heard as a phrase thrown out when something is per- ceived as sexist.

This phrase however is over- whelmingly explicit in the K97 bill- board. The close-up photo shows no full body image and more impor- tantly no face, thus reducing this woman to a pair of breasts, and not a person. The caption "pray for more race" further emphasizes this objectification by sexualizing the breasts with the association of a wet white "tush." The clear objectification of this billboard versus Kry's previ- ous billboards, with the talk show hosts coved in cocoons, shows the difference between the two and the acceptability of the latter. Comparing this ad to the Oil City Roadhouse ads again misses the mark. One can make a claim that the Oil City ads are in fact sexist, but the clear objectification and reduction of women is not as prevalent.

What disturbs me the most about Mr. Ropchan's comment is his belief that we have no impact on viewers if they choose to "ignore" them. I believe it's well known that images and messages portrayed in the media have a huge impact on the thoughts and beliefs of viewers.

The public display of objectification fur- ther purports to perpetuate the patriarchal sexist ideologies our society oper- ates in and denigrates the worth of feminists. It becomes clear that Mr. Ropchan's piece is in very current sexist, and I believe this shows a failure of policy enforcement by the ASC. The ASC's inconsistently applied policies helpfully come from his lack of knowledge about gender and wom- en's rights. I suggest for future ref- erence if an opinion editor decides to publish a piece about sexism or women's rights, they should have an adequate understanding about the issue at hand.

Davis Levine MB19

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