

Rushdie and Scorsese: No Comparison

Taking a look at freedom of expression

by Pete Weichlein
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My, my, how short my memory is.

"Freedom of expression," was the first thing I yelled, "Freedom of Religion" was the second. "Let the man write his book, this is the 20th century, nobody is going to get shot for writing a book."

So if anyone has a problem with Salman Rushdie openly expressing his views on the Islamic religion, he's going to have to answer to me. In this day and age, where democracy is clearly the most civilized and intelligent form of government, any artist should be able to openly express himself.

An opinion is meant to stimulate thought and discussion, and the "Satanic Verses" is just that, an opinion. This book expresses Rushdie's understanding of the Islamic religion, and it is a

sign of pure barbarism and stone-age thinking if certain leaders of the Islamic religion get all worked up, just because somebody openly disagreed with their views on religion. Thank God we Christians are above such thinking.

And then it hit me. Wasn't there some really disgusting movie about Jesus Christ not too long ago? Somewhere around September I think. What was that movie called? "The Last Temptation of Christ" - that's it. But that's something completely different. You can't compare the one to the other. Whoever directed that movie, openly attacked fundamental beliefs and truths of Christianity. Things taught for generations were made to look like lies.

The director, Martin Scorsese, expressed opinions for which he'll surely go straight to hell. And certain members of the church were ready to send him

there promptly and personally.

But Scorsese's movie didn't really hurt us that much. We were able to get it out of the movie theaters before too many disbelievers had a chance to indulge in it. And all our beloved

blasphemy, but that would have been such a barbaric way of handling things. And since all of this cannot be compared to what is going on with Salman Rushdie and "The Satanic Verses," why even bother getting all excited

September we demanded the disappearance of "Last Temptation of Christ", is Iran right in demanding the removal of "The Satanic Verses"? But why even bother asking such questions, since these two matters are of completely different nature and have absolutely nothing in common.

In this day and age, one cannot call himself a columnist without making reference to Vice President Quayle on a rather regular basis. Danny surprisingly enough had a thought on "The Satanic Verses." He found the book "very offensive and disturbing." Asked whether he had actually read the book before forming an opinion of it, the Vice President smiled sadly and shook his head. Obviously he doesn't feel the one is a prerequisite of the other.

Pete's Perspective

religious leaders let us know what eternity would be like if we even dared to start thinking along Scorsese's lines.

It wasn't that we were afraid of what Scorsese might have to say, or that we feared open-minded Christians, it was just so upsetting to be exposed to such clear lies about our religion. I'll be the first one to admit that I thought Scorsese should be burned publicly for his

again. Rushdie is clearly a case of freedom of expression, Scorsese clearly one of offensive blasphemy.

A revolutionary mind could, however, ask a very logical question now: are there certain double standards at work here. In other words, did we in September choose to ignore Scorsese's freedom of expression while we now condemn Islam for doing the same to Rushdie? Or, since in

Letter To The Editor

Are We Losing Our Rights?

Dear editor,

Let's lynch Salman Rushdie, burn all copies of "The Last Temptation," turn Manhattan into an isolated, quarantine facility for AIDS victims, shoot all foreigners (which the Indians would love to see), and force all minorities to re-accept second class citizenship.

Here are a few of the bumper stickers which could be sold in white supremacist camps around the country: "Increase your hunting abilities, shoot a minority," "Enslave all women as porno-sex toys," "Smoke a smoker with an elephant gun," "Snuff all people who chew, unless they are (members of) the ruling class," etc., etc., etc.

Oh yeah, let's not forget last semester's Collegian article which classed all women smokers as "men-haters." The new warning on cigarette packs would read: "Warning: Cigarettes cause social stigma and thoroughly exaggerated over-generalizations."

People will be outcast, even on college campuses, as social deformities, and be otherwise subjected to ignorant ridicule.

We seem to be regressing into a modern form of humanitarian barbarism. Our international,

foundational base of Human Rights is being eaten away. Non-smokers enjoy a new-found autonomy at the expense of the rights of others.

Don't get me wrong, a lot of non-smokers I've talked to feel that, while their rights need to be protected (through the implementation of the Smoking Ban set to go into effect April 3rd), that the smoker's rights should not suffer and that there should be an effort made by the University to set aside a smoking area. Many people feel that by pushing the smokers out doors, their basic rights are being stripped away, and they are being treated as just more unwanted dogs which should be put out.

If the minority (of smokers) lose their rights, where will it end? How many doors are opened which could begin the systematic stripping away of human rights (piece by unnoticed piece) until there's nothing left? If we allow this to happen, then we will soon become so riddled with holes (of stripped away rights) that we'll become biotic masses of Swiss cheese.

Sincerely,
Andrew Festa

Dear Andy,

As always, we appreciate your letter. We also sympathize with your ultimate point, the idea that smokers may be having their rights stripped away. But I've got to ask, what does this have to do with enslaving women as porno sex toys? - ed.

This is for Tom who was taken in a car accident. He deserved the opportunities more than I did but I believe he made it either way, life or death . . . he made it.

A Conversation with God

Where are we going now? Where will those books lead us?
Who will hold us up in life, care for us and need us?
"All of the knowledge you've attained can only bring success,
reaching for your goals and dreams never settling for less"

But I can't help but think of those who travelled but never arrived
suffered for the price of wisdom only to be cheated and deprived
"Don't let misfortune make up your mind, go on and learn your way
to a brighter future, peace of mind, fulfillment and a prosperous day"

But I feel so guilty like I've taken his chance to play the game and win,
the feeling hinders my motivation and crushes desire to achieve within
"Don't look behind for even though the sunset has it's colors,
the sun which brings in the new day shines above all the others"

But is it fair that I should see the dawn he waited for?
Can I with conscience behold this and sigh, while he can see no more?
"The dawn he sees, he views with me, the love he knows is whole,
His hopes, his dreams were not in vain, either way he's reached his goal"

- A Friend

This poem was written in memory of Tom Amendola who along with a friend, Justin Skol, was killed tragically in an auto accident last week. We'd like to dedicate this poem to the memory of both Tom and Justin.

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Postal Information: The Behrend Collegian (898-6221) is published weekly by the students of the Behrend College; The Reed Union Building, Station Road, Erie, Pa 16563.