

[http://onfaith.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/panelists/willis\\_e\\_elliott/2008/02/the\\_twostring\\_lyre\\_of\\_american.html](http://onfaith.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/panelists/willis_e_elliott/2008/02/the_twostring_lyre_of_american.html)

## The Two-String Lyre of American Politics

The reason secular ideas are “getting shorter shrift” in this year’s presidential campaign is that the people are scared and angry that secularism has taken over so much in American life, especially public education (beginning with the [1933] Humanist Manifesto campaign). Sang Wordsworth, “Let heart and mind, according well, make one music....” But the critical mind, honoring reason above faith, has sidelined God and religion.

A two-string lyre cannot be played on one string. The fundamentalists—on the right, religious; on the left, secularists—are wrong. The universe is *two*-string: computers [the digital age] and the human mind are *binary*.

Human beings need to be APART: we have individual minds, able to distance us from all else. This critical (no-saying) consciousness is secularism’s string on the lyre. But we need also to be A PART of some whole: we need to be together. This social (yes-saying) consciousness is faith’s string on the lyre. It is our trust, which makes possible both community among us and communion with the transcendent (“God,” for short).

Another way of putting this binary reality is that we human beings need to be both over and under. In our individual minds, we are OVER, in charge, responsible. But as social beings we are accountable, UNDER.

But under who or what? That’s two-string, a problem and project equally for politics and religion. (Also for our biology: sex is two-string.)

As *individuals*, we are (to varying extents depending on our abilities and societies) free to choose in religion and politics. But as *social* beings, we face both politics and religion in institutional forms. America’s contribution to the political wisdom of the world is the “separation” of these two strings, “church and state.”

In the music of the two-string lyre, the binary strings sound both contrary and cooperative. Each has its INDEPENDENT sphere of responsibility and, for melody, its DEPENDENCE on the other. Over, under, together. And the product, the music as heard, requires the harmonious working together (con-struction) of faith (trust) and reason.

America needs a president who understands and lives the American mind as a two-string lyre, both “*under God*” and “*under the constitution*.” Bilingual, able to speak both within the limits of reason (as democratic discourse requires) and within the freedom of faith.

Given this binary balance in the American mind, we can expect wording-differences, from time to time, in the rhetoric required for electability. Being monolingual, religious and secularist fundamentalists need not apply. The American lyre is *two*-string.

Hypocrisy? Political pandering? These are easy and cheap accusations against our politicians, who must persuade their way into electoral service to a people wondrously pluralist in convictions, tastes, worries, and hopes. But not to worry. Lincoln’s bromide can now be stated even more strongly. This multi-media increasingly informed and savvy people is getting tougher to fool even part of the time.

BY WILLIS E. ELLIOTT | FEBRUARY 8, 2008; 1:44 PM

### Comments

Please report offensive comments below.

Daniel in the Lion’s Den

Everything you said is true & irrelevant to humanism, which in my first paragraph I designated as the (secular-HUMANIST) problem.

POSTED BY: WILLIS E. ELLIOTT | FEBRUARY 15, 2008 11:04 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Dear Dr Elliott

One of my pet peeves is the insistence of people in calling "secularism" a philosophy or a religion. If you are so smart, it seems like you would know better.

Secularism is whatever is not religious. But it is not a philosophy. It has more to do with social custom, and cultural norms. Tell, me what is the philosophy of "secularism" and not what you read into it, or what you infer about secularists based on their behavior, but tell me, what it is the philosophy of "secularism?"

Can a person major in "secularism" in college? Or is the most anyone can say about it, just a terse dictionary definition?

And how is "secularism" a religion? Are there ceremonies for initiation? Are there any rites at birth, death, and weddings? do they have special places and buildings of worship? do they have secular prayers, and moments of silence? do they read from very old text, or even from modern text? to substantiate their secular belief? So they have a business organization that maintains all of their worldly affairs, and raised money for self-maintenance and for all kinds of "secular" projects?

I do not think so.

"Secularism" is a socio-economic trend, that seems to accompany the progress of history as cultures go from more primitive to more complex, at least so far. YOu can name it, identify it, control it, or do anything about it. But, I think it is rude, to forever and always be labelling people as secularists, in a negative way, when they are just behaving and reacting to the world in which they were born.

Secularism is an attribute of culture, a quality of person's life, not a philosophy, not a religion; it seems like someone as smart as you would understand that.

POSTED BY: DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN | FEBRUARY 13, 2008 9:38 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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The difference between not-paradise and paradise, is like the difference between "god in the machine", and "god in the human machine".

POSTED BY: BRIAN | FEBRUARY 13, 2008 8:02 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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The story in Genesis of Adam and Eve is allegorical.

Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Apples had nothing to do with it, and there were no actual trees. They presumed to know or decide what is good and what is evil.

The tree of life (the Son of God) is wisdom, i.e. absolute obedience to God without question. "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, but fools despise knowledge and instruction."

The serpent is symbolic of man's nature, the will of the flesh, if you will. "For we find in our members a war against the Spirit..."

Eve's primal sin was that she doubted God. Doubt is the antithesis of faith. "In the day that you eat thereof, thou shalt surely die." She reasoned to the contrary, most likely because she had never seen death.

The first death was that of perfect innocence, because they now had the knowledge of evil.

Equally culpable, but typically male, Adam blamed their problems on Eve and God. "The woman that you gave me told me to eat..."

This story of the loss of innocence and the fall from grace due to our own errors or poor judgement has been played out again and again in great literature, and in our lives.

POSTED BY: JOHN STEPHENS | FEBRUARY 13, 2008 6:33 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Doctor, you failed to mention proctology.

By your own declaration, you believe in the Trinity, a false doctrine. One often hears church pastors pray "...in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

What is the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost? (It's one name.)

POSTED BY: JOHN STEPHENS | FEBRUARY 13, 2008 5:45 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Dude, one of your strings is wound too tight, and you aren't wrapped too tight.

POSTED BY: JOHN STEPHENS | FEBRUARY 13, 2008 5:19 AM  
REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KeZB2EsPqGE&feature=related>

POSTED BY: PROVIDENCE CANDLELIGHT | FEBRUARY 12, 2008 9:48 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

See:

## A\*N\*O\*N\*Y\*M\*O\*U\*S on Heels of Tom Cruise & His TOP-GUNS!

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=eiUgewqQgBI&feature=related>

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See:

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TOM CRUISE & His TOP-GUNS Chasing A\*N\*O\*N\*Y\*M\*O\*U\*S on the EHERNET!

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=Hh7tF3PkUio&feature=related>

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STOP! In the Name Of HILLARY CLINTON! STOP In The Name of THE-LAW! STOP WE Say Stop!

[illegible]

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | FEBRUARY 12, 2008 8:14 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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I like this column and all past columns. Not perfect, but they have spirit.

POSTED BY: BRIAN | FEBRUARY 12, 2008 7:30 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Mr Mark

AND  
btw

what are you doing pulling out Ulysses when you want something difficult!!!!

What's wrong with good ole American Henry James?????

POSTED BY: HENRY JAMES | FEBRUARY 12, 2008 6:31 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Mr Mark, with his usual frighteningly penetrating analysis, notes to the good Dr:  
"A few months ago, you suggested that those of us who didn't "get you" re-read your columns over and over again. Might I suggest that you save us all the trouble by employing a competent editorial assistant who can read your columns pre-posting? Such an assistant may well be able to suggest changes that would add clarity to your columns."

Mark

a couple of months ago I vowed to read Dr Elliott's columns as many times as he has gotten Ph.Ds of various stripes. Sixteen, I think is the number.

One MIGHT think a person with sixteen PhDs could write an understandable paragraph. On the other hand, being here near Harvard and seeing more PhDs than you can shake a Graduation Gown at, I believe that the opposite correlation pertains, and the Good Dr is a perfect example

The greater the number of PHds  
the less comprehensible the prose.

I UNDERSTAND what the Good Dr is trying to say, as I know you do. I just continue to marvel at his obscurantism. (sic\_)

POSTED BY: HENRY JAMES | FEBRUARY 12, 2008 6:26 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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terra - I beg to differ - mankind is immortal, and so are you if you belong to mankind, i.e. if you are on the tree of life which is \_all\_ mankind. The self is the human form which is also God's form, and everyone has that. But while people still have outward selves ("in God's image"), their inner selves ("being") have been replaced by "being right" and someone else being wrong. Some people are right, some people are wrong, and as long as there is a single person that you think is wrong (i.e. an alien), then you are not part of mankind, but of some subset of mankind.

When I say "God" I don't mean some demiurge, but to me God, Self and "the human form" are interchangeable and equivalent notions. The demiurge notion of god appears at the same time you turn a human into an alien.

POSTED BY: BRIAN | FEBRUARY 12, 2008 5:31 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Dw,  
Well seems the bible says what the trees are...one the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil...the Other the Tree of Immortality.

Having eaten of the apple means to have self knowledge; To be self aware and to have gone from animal and instinct, to man and using awareness and thought.

Personally, I would rather have the knowledge to create my own garden, then wait for some egotistical god to do it for me.

In the myth God says what the trees are...so you needn't rewrite the story.

terra

POSTED BY: TERRA GAZELLE | FEBRUARY 12, 2008 2:49 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Dear Rev Elliot -

Once again, you have written a difficult-to-decipher column, and once again, you have been forced to post additional messages in an attempt to decipher your column for the rest of us.

Perhaps "no one commented on the column's basic affirmation" because for the life of us, we couldn't figure out what that basic affirmation was.

A few months ago, you suggested that those of us who didn't "get you" re-read your columns over and over again. Might I suggest that you save us all the trouble by employing a competent editorial assistant who can read your columns pre-posting? Such an assistant may well be able to suggest changes that would add clarity to your columns.

Or, you can keep blaming the rest of us for not having the intellect to "get" your musings.

If I'm in the mood to read something difficult, I'll pull down my copy of Ulysses.

Joyce, you ain't.

POSTED BY: MR MARK | FEBRUARY 12, 2008 2:15 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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- in terms of rights and wrongs.

POSTED BY: BRIAN | FEBRUARY 12, 2008 1:40 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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..and things go to hell when God is talked about. :)

POSTED BY: BRIAN | FEBRUARY 12, 2008 1:27 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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DW: why complicate it? Paradise isn't heaven, so, whatever was there is here now. Tree of life - mankind (family tree, in a sense). Tree of knowledge - what people know.

POSTED BY: BRIAN | FEBRUARY 12, 2008 1:04 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Terra,

The analogy of the two trees is much deeper than the few scriptures it was allotted...and, IMO, a good analogy even to this day in how it not only set in play the way mankind has gone, but also applies to us today in many ways. (My opinion, of course)

The tree of knowledge (of good and evil) and the tree of life:

The way I read it, one can deduce that both trees symbolized knowledge. The former representing carnal knowledge (carnal in the sense of 'knowledge', 'habits', 'tendencies'etc that have created problems for mankind) vs. knowledge that does benefit every man, woman and child as a whole. I beleive we can see these battles today in our time. And the subsequent outcome of partaking of that tree seems to also symbolize the ongoing differences of what is right and wrong in this world. Does that mean the question of right and wrong in every matter? No, I dont think so...only those things and matters that are common to every individuals well-being, mentally and physically.

The difference in the tree of life, I feel, is that there is knowledge also, and the knowledge within it will fulfill the human experience to a much higher degree, as well as how it also symbolizes, according to scripture, our potential to become part of the family of God.

Just some additional thoughts on the subject. I see much more to the subject that it would take a loooooonng manuscript to comment...but will leave it as is. :-)

Regards

POSTED BY: DW | FEBRUARY 12, 2008 10:18 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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GaryD's behavior makes sense when you think about how threatened animals behave.

He'll be along shortly to puff himself up again.

POSTED BY: TJ | FEBRUARY 12, 2008 8:40 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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I have a problem with GaryD. In almost every post, he has to get in a dig at someone. But, he is also telling us what a conciliatory fellow he is. Of course I know that there is alot more to a person than what they write here, but if all I had to go on were these postings, I would think he is not a very nice person.

He does not present his opinions and beliefs; he lets us all know, sometimes by name, that we are all dumber than he is, and he knows more than we do, and he is trying to help us by letting us in on all the things he knows.

This style of arguing fot he cause of Christ and Chritianity, will never, in a million years, win any converts.

POSTED BY: DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN | FEBRUARY 12, 2008 7:57 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Well, as selection bias and superstition are valid elements of argument for you, I'll answer your silly binary assertion with a question:

If the universe is binary, why do things always happen in threes?

POSTED BY: TJ | FEBRUARY 12, 2008 6:02 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Because what's left of the apple after it has been eaten has no business sitting on an idea-tree - it's much better off as fertilizer.

POSTED BY: BRIAN | FEBRUARY 12, 2008 5:05 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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This ain't to say that I believe in going to paradise, but rather in kicking the \*\*\*\* out of the angels with flaming swords - been there done that (and it's all in the mind, off course).

POSTED BY: BRIAN | FEBRUARY 12, 2008 4:32 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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..and the Self is God within and without (as long as it's sitting on the tree of knowledge - a wordless idea in one's head)

POSTED BY: BRIAN | FEBRUARY 12, 2008 3:58 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Apple is the Self-idea. Apple in mouth is the word for Self, i.e. ego (= "I"). Paradise is what is not the ego-world and the ego-idea.

POSTED BY: BRIAN | FEBRUARY 12, 2008 3:53 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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You know, Terra, that was something I could never get my brain around either about the Genesis story.

They would just have been sloths sitting around the garden.. and yet someone told me that one of the most deadly sins in Christian theology was sloth.

I will be the first to admit I don't know a thing about Christianity, having come from a similar background to our Starhawk's, but nobody was able to answer that question, among many others for me.

Go figure.

POSTED BY: PRIVER | FEBRUARY 11, 2008 11:01 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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DW,  
I have read the book...I think that when a person is a seeker, what they seek within first is what they know, what is around them. Most Pagans come from a Christian background...I know with me, it didn't take.

As far as Adam and Eve and the Garden? I am so grateful that Eve ate the fruit of knowledge. For where would we be without knowledge.

Still sitting in the garden like a couple lazy sloths...I like striving, failing, learning and succeeding. I like dareing and willing and reaching and stretching. I like that Mother Eve ate that apple...I like sex and sorrow and joy and life.

Gary, it's always interesting that when a Christain tells a non Christian that the reason they aren't Christian is they do not understand the bible...because they do not have the Holy Spirit.

ummm um.

terra

POSTED BY: TERRA GAZELLE | FEBRUARY 11, 2008 10:43 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Arminius,

I promise if I turn you into a newt I will make sure you get your dram of Guinness. lol.

Oh you have not seen me riled...lol.

Last year our parish council decided to pass a law against something they have never had a problem with...only because it made a point against those of us who are Wiccan. They passed a "soothsayer" law. In other words it is against the law for us to use any kind of divination, which is a practice of our faith. Oh they are being sued in Federal court by a Wiccan Priest, and a bunch of us went to the open meeting tonight, but they had already decided. They would rather be sued...and the parish pay.

Even the parish president said that the statement we gave was complete and agreed with what the State's attorney said...they would not change their mind. The Parish president said..."I love the Lord, I am Christian and I will not change my mind." We shall see.

They claim fighting fraud...but not one person has ever been arrested for any divination fraud in this parish, ever. It's not fraud they are fighting...there are already laws against fraud. It's Wicca they are fighting. But see I have a 501 c incorporated church, and our practices are protected, even those that others do not like.

So, any way I am a little angry right now...but I promise Arminius, if I could turn any one into anything, it would be those sanctimonious duft council members, into truffle seeking pigs (with no Guinness).

terra

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POSTED BY: TERRA GAZELLE | FEBRUARY 11, 2008 10:29 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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If you read the Bible without the benefit of the Holy Spirit while looking for something to carp about you won't understand it and certainly won't be able to see the reality you will however find exactly what you set out looking for, something to carp about.

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POSTED BY: GARY | FEBRUARY 11, 2008 7:29 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Here's Willis Elliott once again playing his idiotic one-note kazoo. Over and over again. Will he ever see that his "American mind" is all IN HIS MIND? It's an absurd construct developed as a way of obfuscating the incompatibility of reason and "revealed" faith. This fact must be sinking in, because now he's defensively building an entire metaphysics out of it. Imagine that! And he seems upset that people aren't basking in it's ontological glory!

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POSTED BY: CHRIS EVERETT | FEBRUARY 11, 2008 6:41 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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>>Read the old testament (and quite a bit of the new one!) and conclude that that horrible, primitive entity called god in this book is the first candidate to go to hell, for every imaginable crime, hatred, jealousy, murder, genocide, stupidity, greed, vengeance etc.. You name it, he has it.

Actually, the horrible, primitive entity in the OT (whether you are a believer or not) was the family of man. Mankind, if you REALLY read the accounts took life into their own hands and made their own rules...and consequently suffered, and still suffer, the consequences of their own 'wisdom'. God was angry at times? You bet. Consider the scenario of many fine parents. The ones that do their children a favor when the child gets in deep trouble time after time after time aren't going to play pansy-a\*\* with them. Same with God in the OT. Man wanted to do it their way. God still had a purpose..but ok, let them do it their way. Still has his guidelines. And remember (again whether you're a believer or not) God has the ability to give life back to those who have lost life..it whatever way. If you read the end of the book...all who have lived will have a chance to be a WINNER (emphasis mine)..

Many just don't read the book enough to understand those who believe.

>>I am so happy I got over this darkness early in my life.

Truly sorry you feel that way, my friend. As stated above, If one really studies scripture..there is a lot more potential to mans destiny that the erroneously belived heaven or hell...part of the religious deception of Rev 12:9 that has confused the whole world with regard to the actual destiny to be offered to all mankind...those who choose to partake.

Unfortunately, IMHO, the darkness comes from mans reign over man...for they are the ones who really offer us a darkness...such as a potential nuclear winter...among other things

Regards

POSTED BY: DW | FEBRUARY 11, 2008 1:36 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Garyd:

Read the old testament (and quite a bit of the new one!) and conclude that that horrible, primitive entity called god in this book is the first candidate to go to hell, for every imaginable crime, hatred, jealousy, murder, genocide, stupidity, greed, vengeance etc.. You name it, he has it.

I am so happy I got over this darkness early in my life.

Unbelievable that even today people who can read and write resort to "heaven and hell", against every possible experience they can easily make in every minute of their lives, and stick to the archaic most primitive Manichean concept ever created.

POSTED BY: GERRY | FEBRUARY 11, 2008 7:47 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Forgot to mention one point on which we are in total agreement, Shaman Elliot. You opened with:

"The reason secular ideas are "getting shorter shrift" in this year's presidential campaign is that the people are scared and angry that secularism has taken over so much in American life"

I think you are exactly right, though it certainly isn't a brand-new phenomena. Islam and non-belief are the only categories of "faith" that are growing as a percentage of worldwide population. Islam is growing simply because of its higher birth rate; only non-belief is gaining enough "converts" to expand. Much of the bitterness and anger we see from religionists (such as our very own GaryD) is a reaction (indirectly) to that trend and its many consequences.

POSTED BY: ASH | FEBRUARY 10, 2008 11:28 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Hilarious thread. Dr. Willie, I think your post has been treated with the light-hearted contempt it deserved. Social consciousness is not 'faith's string on the lyre' (as you claim), because social behavior is not and never has been the sole province of the faithful. Our apelike ancestors were grooming each other and choosing leaders eons before the first humans credited ravenous celestial wolves for the movements of the sun.

Your binary model for reason/faith is clearly wrong, because it does an exceptionally bad job at explaining people's actual behavior, just as it did when Gould called it NOMA. Faith continues to inform our understanding of the natural world despite the fact that it is clearly a horrible tool for the job. And when you say, "Being monolingual, religious and secularist fundamentalists need not apply", you are simply excluding everyone who doesn't fit your model. With such methodology, no wonder you cherish your own ideas so!

POSTED BY: ASH | FEBRUARY 10, 2008 11:19 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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GARYD-

Obviously, whether you are right or wrong isn't up to me. I don't think I was claiming it was.

I can assure you that I don't secretly harbor the belief that you are correct, and simply can't face the horror of it (and I am a definitive expert on what I believe).

I just find it particularly strange when people gravitate to a belief system where they describe their God as a colossal jerk. Why create a universe and fill it up with pathetic losers, just so you can spare a few souls from eternal damnation for no reason other than your own amusement. Where is the dignity in this?

POSTED BY: TD450 | FEBRUARY 10, 2008 10:33 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Those running for President need is to come to grips with the flaws in the foundations of religions i.e.

(for those unfamiliar with said flaws)

1. Abraham founder/father of three major religions was probably an embellishment of the lives of three different men or a mythical character as was Moses, the "Tablet-Man" who talked to burning bushes and made much magic in Egypt.

1.5 million Conservative Jews and their rabbis have relegated Abraham to the myth pile along with most if not all the OT. <http://www.simpletoremember.com/vitals/ConservativeTorah.htm>

2. Jesus, the illiterate Jewish peasant/carpenter possibly suffering from hallucinations, has been characterized anywhere from the Messiah from Nazareth to a mythical character from mythical Nazareth to a mamzer from Nazareth (Professor Bruce Chilton, in his book Rabbi Jesus). Analyses of Jesus' life by many contemporary NT scholars (e.g. Professors Crossan, Borg and Fredriksen, On Faith panelists) via the NT and related documents have concluded that only about 30% of Jesus' sayings and ways noted in the NT were authentic. The rest being embellishments (e.g. miracles)/hallucinations made/had by the NT authors to impress various Christian, Jewish and Pagan sects.

The 30% of the NT that is "authentic Jesus" like everything in life was borrowed/plagiarized and/or improved from those who came before. In Jesus' case, it was the ways and sayings of the Babylonians, Greeks, Persians, Egyptians, Hittites, Canaanites, OT, John the Baptizer and possibly the ways and sayings of traveling Greek Cynics. <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/theories.html>

For added "pizzazz", Catholic/Christian theologians divided god the singularity into three persons and invented atonement as an added guilt trip for the "pew people" to go along with this trinity of overseers. By doing so, they made god the padre into god the "filicider".

3. Mohammed, an illiterate, womanizing, lust and greed-driven, warmongering, hallucinating Arab, also had embellishing/hallucinating/plagiarizing scribal biographers who not only added "angels" and flying chariots to the koran but also a militaristic agenda to support the plundering and looting of the lands of non-believers.

This agenda continues as shown by the assassination of Bhutto, the conduct of the seven Muslim doctors in the UK, the 9/11 terrorists, the 24/7 Sunni suicide/roadside/market/mosque bombers, the 24/7 Shiite suicide/roadside/market/mosque bombers, the Islamic bombers of the trains in the UK and Spain, the Bali crazies, the Kenya crazies, the Pakistani "koranics", the Palestine suicide bombers/rocketeers, the Lebanese nutcases, the Taliban nut jobs, and the Filipino "koranics".

And who funds these acts of terror? The warmongering, Islamic, Shiite terror and torture theocracy of Iran aka the Third Axis of Evil and also the Sunni "Wannabees" of Saudi Arabia.

4. Luther, Calvin, Joe Smith, Henry VIII, Wesley et al, founders of Christian-based religions, also suffered from the belief in/hallucinations of "pretty wingy talking flying fictional thingie" visits and "prophecies" for profits analogous to the myths of Catholicism (resurrections, apparitions, ascensions and immaculate conceptions).

5. Hinduism (from an online Hindu site) - "Hinduism cannot be described as an organized religion. It is not founded by any individual. Hinduism is God centered and therefore one can call Hinduism as founded by God, because the answer to the question 'Who is behind the eternal principles and who makes them work?' will have to be 'Cosmic power, Divine power, God'."

The caste/laborer system and cow worship are problems when saying a fair and rational God founded Hinduism."

6. Buddhism- "Buddhism began in India about 500 years before the birth of Christ. The people living at that time had become disillusioned with certain beliefs of Hinduism including the caste system, which had grown extremely complex. The number of outcasts (those who did not belong to any particular caste) was continuing to grow."

"However, in Buddhism, like so many other religions, fanciful stories arose concerning events in the life of the founder, Siddhartha Gautama (fifth century B.C.):"

Archaeological discoveries have proved, beyond a doubt, his historical character, but apart from the legends we know very little about the circumstances of his life. e.g. Buddha by one legend was supposedly talking when he came out of his mother's womb.

Bottom line: There are many good ways of living but be aware of the hallucinations, embellishments, lies and myths surrounding the founders and foundations of said rules of life.

POSTED BY: CONCERNED THE CHRISTIAN NOW LIBERATED | FEBRUARY 10, 2008 9:13 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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And you ought to be ashamed of your self.

POSTED BY: GARYD | FEBRUARY 10, 2008 8:07 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Anonymous: asked, "What's a Lyre?"

Dr Elliott said, "....In early-ancient Greece, [t]he two-string lyre was more a[for] story-telling than a musical instrument."

So there you have it, "story telling" as in LIAR. It has two strings because there's two sides to every LYE.

Dr Elliott goes on to explain one of the two sides of the LIE making sure to be correct by pointing out the BINARY nature of LYING. The Greeks plunked either one string or the other depending on which side of the LIE was being told at the moment. That way an element of truth was added.

Conclusion: There's a little truth to every LIE even if it's limited to being honest about the structure of the LIES told or just plunking a LYRE's strings.

POSTED BY: I'M ASHAMED OF MYSELF | FEBRUARY 10, 2008 7:58 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Mr. Elliot I firmly agree. That is what I tried to point out to them. Most don't get it largely for the same reason they don't get the Bible. It isn't that it is hard to understand but rather that it is difficult to accept. We human beings wish to think far better of ourselves than we ought. Case in point being the next individual I will address.

TD, my boy, the fact that you won't admit it even to yourself changes nothing. Further it isn't God's vengeance that sends people to hell but his justice.

Hell is a place of absolute justice, heaven of complete and total mercy. One goes to hell because one wasn't saved from one's mistakes. One goes to heaven because God chose to rescue one from the fate one richly deserved.

Oh and to whom it may concern those being rescued in Darfur are the remnant of the Coptic church that has existed there for nearly two millenia now. In other words they are Christians. Darfur is the Hell it is in most regards because it is both a religious war and a race war. The more I see about this mess the more firmly convinced I become that what the average American and not a few others knows about Africa wouldn't fill a thimble.

POSTED BY: GARYD | FEBRUARY 10, 2008 6:03 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Reality is not binary.

For that matter, neither is sex. (Or sexuality, to which I think he was referring in a veiled heterosexist metaphor)

But I thought I'd point out that intersex people and conditions are surprisingly-common, and that's \*with\* a binary way of looking at such things. Societies just tend to bury or ignore the inconvenient variations and claim they're the 'way the world is.'

In fact, the way the world is has nothing to do with binary thinking, ...that's just how some filter a real diversity of things through their own sorting.

False analogy, anyway. 'Under God' was added to the Pledge of Allegiance during the Red Scare when certain right-wingers wanted to divide 'One Nation Indivisible' over religion.

POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | FEBRUARY 10, 2008 5:14 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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In other words, it's pointless to discuss something that just isn't there, as far as some of the participants of the dialog are concerned, because then you'll be talking about yourself - the place where they think that thing is, and that wouldn't really be the thing, nor the place.

And it's better to be silent than to talk about things that can't be talked about (Wittgenstein)... unless some way is found to talk about them.

Heh...) I think I've actually said more than what is useful

POSTED BY: BRIAN | FEBRUARY 10, 2008 3:26 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Sry, TD450, I don't believe in "believing", I believe in "seeing is knowing"; I have never believed in anything in my life, by the way of blind faith. Hence, all I can do is reveal things (and I'm doing it, within the larger context of the topic, and the totality of my comments).

POSTED BY: BRIAN | FEBRUARY 10, 2008 3:08 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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BRIAN-

Statements like that may be meaningful to people of faith, but in this context, they tell non-believers that you don't want to have a dialog with them. It would be nice to exchange some ideas here.

POSTED BY: TD450 | FEBRUARY 10, 2008 2:08 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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point is - God is not just the inner and the outer light. God is also the darkness of the night sky, and the depths of the ocean.

POSTED BY: BRIAN | FEBRUARY 10, 2008 1:46 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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... Tao FTW :)

<http://pages.cs.wisc.edu/~bobba/tao.jpg>

POSTED BY: BRIAN | FEBRUARY 10, 2008 12:05 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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## Romancing the Pope

We are at the point of prophetic history where the final powers are courting each other. The American politicians currently do this for ideology or for political survival. The Catholic church does this for world domination.

At least since 1989, this is the known involvement of the government with Catholic goals.

1989 - Joined forces under Ronald Reagan and Pope Paul II to end communism.

2001 - Religious education assistance (School Voucher Bill) which was stated in the language of Catholic canon law on education.

2001 - Religious charity assistance (Faith-Based Initiative). George W. Bush publicly seeks the approval and advice of the Catholic Bishops. In the months after his inauguration he did the following:

- Proposed the two religious laws on the day of his inauguration.
- That Friday he had dinner at the home of the Archbishop Theodore McCarrick.
- Met twice with the pope (once while campaigning for president).

March 1, 2001 - spoke at the opening of the John Paul II Cultural Center

- Met with Miami Archbishop John Favalora
- Met with Donald W. Wuerl, Roman Catholic Bishop of Pittsburgh
- Met with Archbishop Justin Rigali of St. Louis
- Met with Anthony Cardinal Bevilacqua Archbishop of Philadelphia

July 2001 - Awards the congressional medal of honor (the highest civilian honor bestowed by Congress) to the late Cardinal Cardinal O'Connor.

-Met with 120 Catholic bishops where he was overheard telling the bishops in an open microphone that not even the republicans want the school voucher bill.

January 2001 - meeting with Archbishop Egan and thirty other Catholic leaders to discuss the new faith based initiative.

- Appointed John J. Dilulio, a Catholic as head of the new office of Faith-Based Initiatives
- He has weekly conferences between his administration and Roman Catholic advisers. He reportedly tries to meet with any Catholic leaders he can when he visits other cities.

Protestants, are you sleeping! Read Revelation 13.

Speaking of the growing power of the church in the top layers of government, "The Central Intelligence Agency", page 271 Jim Marrs:

"Politically, she looms ever larger in the White House, in the Senate and in the Congress. She is a force in the Pentagon, a secret agent in the FBI and the most subtly intangible prime mover of the S.S. wheel within a wheel."

Who's running this country, the Pope? Who's Bush taking orders from, we see who he's reporting to and who he seeks advice from.

If I were a betting person, I would say that we will soon have talks about making Sunday a national day of rest...Keep Watching...

Also...In the final days of President Clinton's frustrated attempt to make a peace agreement in the Middle East, they called on Pope John Paul II to intervene. The Pope told Secretary of State Madeleine Albright that he would - on condition that he becomes the ruler of Jerusalem with the United Nations forces as the army.

Will this be the only option for President Bush and any subsequent leader?

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | FEBRUARY 10, 2008 10:43 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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ANONYMOUS-

There is a huge difference between finding instances of horror in the human condition, and seeing humanity as fundamentally horrible. It is just as easy to come up with stories of dignity and kindness.

WILLIS E. ELLIOTT-

I never asked what the faithful are missing in public school. I asked how speaking to the transcendental can inform a political issue. Bringing up this idea of the need to teach "binary" thinking in schools is just a way to repeat your argument.

When these kids leave school, how do they go out into the world and use this second channel of thought to improve their lives? How does it connect back to politics and the choices we make in the real world? I assert that it is a cop-out. We can take a position on an issue without the need to explain it in language which holds up to anyone who doesn't share the same scope of faith.

At its best, faith gives large number of people an obtuse but strangely comfortable rationale to behave well when they are too weak to come up with one on their own. It just fills an uncomfortable vacuum. I think we can do better.

POSTED BY: TD450 | FEBRUARY 10, 2008 10:19 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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ANONYMOUS-

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At its best, faith gives large number of people an obtuse but strangely comfortable rationale to behave well when they are too weak to come up with one on their own. It just fills an uncomfortable vacuum. I think we can do better.

POSTED BY: TD450 | FEBRUARY 10, 2008 10:17 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Dr Elliott's Distorting Oversimplification on Intelligence

In response to my point that  
the more intelligent a person is  
the less like she is to believe in God

Dr Elliott responded

"the reason that intelligence, for the time being, correlates with atheism is that in our public education, the balance of faith/reason has been lost, & the kids more gifted with reason WIN. What we have is not good

"public" education, but "government" education on what I might call a reverse-madrassa basis (the Islamist madrassa being faith, NOT reason)."

An incredible response, when you think about it.

1. Public Education in the US DOES NOT teach faith!!!! When I was in school in the 50s and 60s, Jesus was never mentioned.
2. The smart kids and the less smart kids ALL went to the same school.

So to argue that

"the balance of faith/reason has been lost" is absurd.

If it has been lost, it has been lost for all kids, smart and dumb.

and its the smart kids who realize God is a Fraud.

POSTED BY: HENRY JAMES | FEBRUARY 10, 2008 9:57 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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(should not be viewed as an endorsement for anyone)

POSTED BY: BRIAN | FEBRUARY 10, 2008 5:51 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Oh, and one more thing:

see this video:

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=PMq4akUZr8c>

then look at the last several covers of the Economist and the New Scientist online (in parallel) - see if you can find where "the wall" is/was.

That's what "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" is about.

POSTED BY: BRIAN | FEBRUARY 10, 2008 5:37 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Oh yes, I forgot to mention that Almighty me can turn on a light in my house by flipping a light switch. I believe that entire process actually is dependent on about 2000 people working day and night. Wow, I am a peon.

POSTED BY: MARK W. | FEBRUARY 10, 2008 12:21 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Dr. Elliot the problem is that a small group of the general voting populus, about five-percent, sold themselves as higher and ethical human beings. They have been exposed in public as nothing of the sort, as a group they are viewed as pedophiles, perverts, customers of prostitutes, over-spenders and I would include arrogance and ignoring the needs of the flock, in this case the general American populus.

Watching the Government in action or inaction, I see lip service given to the Rule of Law. Some think that lawyers actually run the country. And so exfacto arguments defending past actions are in public display all over the media. One could suggest that when an Attorney General of The United States sounded like a very forgetful Defense Attorney for the Whitehouse, we were in trouble. Besides, Lawyers really don't like that leave your gift at the alter thing to reconcile differences with a neighbor, ain't no money to be made in that concept.

Now, this past week shows Pennsylvania in action for benefit of the populus in the area of Public Safety. Senator Specter wants to introduce legislation streamlining the deportation of criminal illegal aliens. Some would say there needs to be balance as in James the Justice. We must accomadate those here legally who qualify for the Right to earn citizenship under the Law, it's the Christian thing to do if you were to ask me.

Politicians threatening to deport 12 million illegal aliens were uncool. The proposal nearly sparked civil unrest that threatened every major city in our country. So look, does threatening the security of 12 million people with deportation fall under the categories of "under God" and "under the Constitution" ? I think not, I really do.

One other possible scenario is that abusing assets of Federal Government could lead to charges of (among other things) Industrial Espionage. So in general, I suggest fear of the populus makes no room for under Gawd or Allah and ignoring the Rule of Law (as in criminal negligence) has got some people behind a rock and a hard place we can only imagine. I don't think a charactor trait known as "panic" is a Gawd given trait either.

You have given me something to be included into a meditation, good sir, thank-you.

POSTED BY: MARK W. | FEBRUARY 10, 2008 12:18 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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"while in fact when I look at the night sky I see mostly darkness"

Your night sky are the heavens to me:

"Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,  
Enwrought with golden and silver light,  
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths  
Of night and light and the half-light.."

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | FEBRUARY 10, 2008 12:12 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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PS. Link didn't paste OK, here it is again:

[http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/charles\\_w\\_chuck\\_colson/2008/02/do\\_not\\_be\\_deceived/all\\_comments.html](http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/charles_w_chuck_colson/2008/02/do_not_be_deceived/all_comments.html)

POSTED BY: BRIAN | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 9:57 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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The secular society, Doctor, is the product of the secular mind. The middle-ages mind was all dark, and the Enlightenment mind pretends to be light, by ignoring the inner darkness. Such 'binarity' is irreconcilable, on one hand because the age-of-reason minds pretend there is nothing to be reconciled, and on the other hand because the middle-ages-minds claim that "God is light", while in fact when I look at the night sky I see mostly darkness - the sun is but a tiny insignificant speck of Creation. This is what T.S. Elliot's "The Hollow men" is all about - The Shadow, something neither side of this false modern 'binarity' is prepared to acknowledge.

(also mentioned in my previous comment, here:

[http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/charles\\_w\\_chuck\\_colson/2008/02/do\\_not\\_be\\_deceived/all\\_comments.html](http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/charles_w_chuck_colson/2008/02/do_not_be_deceived/all_comments.html))

POSTED BY: BRIAN | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 9:45 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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What's a Lyre?

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 9:31 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

1.....In early-ancient Greece, the two-string lyre was more a story-telling than a musical instrument. I was amused by the literalism with which some of you stomped on my metaphor.

2.....None of you has commented on my column's basic affirmation, viz. the BINARY character of reality--ontology/cosmology/anthropology/philosophy/theology (transcendence/immanence, Creator/creation, Jesus Christ as divine/human, the Son of God in the Holy Trinity, incarnate to live with and die for humanity to save us from our sins & ourselves; who will come again "to judge the living & the dead").

3.....I was being bilingual when I wrote "communion with transcendence ('God," for short)." For every story-form, concrete RELIGIOUS (or theological) expression, there's at least one abstract PHILOSOPHICAL expression (here, "communion with transcendence"). In the case of a religious person, the latter abstraction does not wash out the former concretion (as you can see, in my case, by the lang parens at the end of section 2, above: I am a Christian, fully & joyfully believing that God has come to humanity in Jesus & as Jesus. Every world-paradigm (way of seeing the world & telling the story) is non-sense outside the paradigm's community. E.g., to me, the evolutionism taught as science in our public schools [on the basis of the Humanist Manifestos] is nonsense in comparison with Darwin's evolution. Evolutionism is in the materialist-atheist story (world-paradigm).

4.....The comment that I should be read aloud is correct. I am talking to you, not "writing."

5.....Henry, the reason that intelligence, for the time being, correlates with atheism is that in our public education, the balance of faith/reason has been lost, & the kids more gifted with reason WIN. What we have is not good "public" education, but "government" education on what I might call a reverse-madrassa basis (the Islamist madrassa being faith, NOT reason).

6.....Gary, the American mind has been, FROM THE START, both "under God" & "under the constitution." Fundamentalist (religious or secularist) raids on the revolutionary & constitutional period of our history are just that, raids: historians insist that neither case can be made: American has always been, church/state, faith/reason, God/constitution. In dropping God, our public schools are unAmerican.

7.....TD450, you ask what the faithful are missing in public school. In public school, the faithful should not expect what the religious schools are there to provide. My concern is what ALL public school students are missing, namely, the reason/faith BALANCE. We are bio-binary (2 1/2-brains, 2 eyes, 2 ears, 2 legs, 2 arms, 2 sexes, 2 primary modes of thought [appreciative/critical], etc.). Montagu's THE WAYS OF KNOWING is one of many works indicating the impoverishment resulting from insisting on the rational (commensural, repeatable) mode & method of arriving at "truth." Bilinguality (reason/faith) should be the educational goal--as Obama uses rational discourse for bridging across all our American pluralist differences, but "the freedom of faith" language when speaking within, of, & for his own world-paradigm, Christianity.

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POSTED BY: WILLIS E. ELLIOTT | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 8:34 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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"What is it with atheists in America? It always comes back to Jesus with them. The centerpiece and showstopper of their unbelief is their obsessive hatred of Christ.."

There's that word again: Hate. Implied hostility. Why do you guys insist that, when someone doesn't believe in JC as God, it means that person "hates" or is "hostile" toward Christianity?

I'm not an Atheist, but I'm not a Christian, either. Does that make me less hostile than an Atheist?

What if I say I am apostate? Does that automatically increase my hatred load?

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POSTED BY: MAMA BEAR | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 6:49 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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td450- i think this is a horror. what do your think?

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cS4HmV6duiU>

i'm curious to see if the christian groups that rushed to help muslims suffering in darfur, will rush to eqypt to help their own..

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POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 5:24 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Come on, like T.S. Eliot ever made much sense, as it was. W. E. Elliot is no W. Blake either, but this doesn't prevent this page for being one of the more interesting pages among the panelists.

GARYD-

Again, your explanation that atheists hate final judgement presumes belief every bit as much as a hatred of Christ.

I must say your vision of religion is creepy. Seeing humanity as a horror is sad. Believing in a petty, vindictive God is sadder still.

And that, JWH, has exactly what to do with this thread?

I don't hate atheists. I've neither the time nor the energy to dedicate i to so pusillanimous an endeavor. My friend of the faith was wrong in one regard it isn't Christ they hate but the possibility that there does indeed exist an ultimate and final judgment from which there is no escape. A point at which each of the short comings and every selfish act of each of us will stand revealed. Where there are no hidden motives and we can no longer hide even from ourselves. That is what they fear and hate and for that I cannot blame them. That you see ultimately is the worst part of hell. Why me isn't a rhetorical question. It always gets an answer, a full and detailed answer. The cries and screams of Hell have nothing to do with the heat but rather are the sound of a humanity in full flight from the horror that is itself.

we call this friday good..

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-9gcauboc>

GUANTANAMO BAY NAVAL BASE, Cuba - The secrecy shrouding government files on terror suspects is bogging down the Pentagon's effort to hold trials at Guantanamo Bay, with defense attorneys accusing the government of withholding potential exculpatory evidence.

At pretrial hearings this week, attorneys for two al-Qaida suspects captured in Afghanistan said they need more access to interrogators, witnesses and records. Prosecutors objected, citing a need to protect the identities of U.S. service members and other security concerns.

The hearings did not resolve the disputes, which appear likely to further delay the launch of first U.S. war-crime tribunals since the World War II era. The first detainees were charged more than three years ago, but repeated legal challenges have kept any from going to trial.

"We're going to have to see how willing the judges are to interpret the rules so as to give defense counsel some kind of chance to actually defend their clients," said Navy Lt. Cmdr. William Kuebler, a defense attorney for detainee Omar Khadr. "That means litigating these discovery issues and that takes time."

Trials are scheduled to begin this spring for Khadr, who is accused of hurling a grenade that killed a U.S. soldier in 2002, and Salim Ahmed Hamdan, a former driver for Osama bin Laden who allegedly also delivered weapons for al-Qaida.

They are minor figures compared with the 15 "high-value" detainees - including Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the alleged mastermind of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks - who are among those expected to face charges. Secrecy may be even a bigger issue in their trials.

The New York Times reported Saturday that military prosecutors are nearing the end of preparations for the "first sweeping case" against as many as six Guantanamo detainees suspected in the Sept. 11 plot - Mohammed likely among them.

The law authorizing the war-crimes tribunals allows the use of classified evidence, and prosecutors say they fulfill their obligation to share it with the other side. But some defense attorneys say the government uses too narrow an interpretation of what information is relevant and should be provided to the defense.

Classified evidence will likely play an increasingly central role as the government forges ahead with plans to prosecute about 80 of the roughly 275 men held at this isolated U.S. Navy base on suspicion of terrorism or links to the Taliban or al-Qaida.

A Pentagon spokesman, Navy Cmdr. Jeffrey Gordon, said the government's decisions to classify evidence often reflect a need to protect U.S. forces still fighting in Afghanistan.

"The hearings this week demonstrated some of the complexities involved in a new type of war against a new type of enemy," he said, while expressing optimism. "On balance, we're making progress and moving forward."

In Hamdan's case, his attorneys asked the military judge to provide them access to government employees who interrogated Hamdan after his capture in November 2001. One of his attorneys, Charles Swift, said the defense wants to determine whether Hamdan made any statements through coercion.

Hamdan's defense team said they have been provided with only partial, incriminating portions of his interrogation transcripts - an accusation that prosecutors denied.

"Every statement that he has made we have provided," said Army Col. Larry Morris, the chief prosecutor for the military tribunals.

In Khadr's case, Kuebler said the government has refused to put defense lawyers in touch with several eyewitnesses to the 2002 firefight in Afghanistan which Khadr, who was then 15, allegedly hurled a grenade that killed Army Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Speer.

At one of the hearings this week, the government inadvertently released a witness account that raised doubt over whether Khadr threw the grenade. Prosecutors later said they had planned to hand out a redacted version, but Kuebler said he believed the government meant to keep the witness account from the public.

"There's no openness about this process," he said.

The military commissions, as the tribunals are called, convicted one detainee - David Hicks of Australia - but it was through a plea bargain before his trial even began.

POSTED BY: JWH | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 3:46 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Anonymous-

Wouldn't you have to believe in Christ in order to hate him?

POSTED BY: TD450 | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 3:12 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Henry, my boy, in general I eschew the use of punctuation, as I am typing as it slows down both my typing and side tracks my train of thought. Sometimes, I remember to go back and add it sometimes I do not. AS for 'proof read' Out of idle curiosity (or maybe you'd prefer idol) what do you prefer to use for that essential meaning?

As far as logic goes other than your tour de force regarding grammar and punctuation, you have yet to produce any

POSTED BY: GARYD | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 3:09 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Atheists do not hate Jesus. You cannot hate a non-entity. They only don't believe any of the legends that surround his presumptive life. I does not concern them. You cannot hate something that does not concern you.

Of course, believers hate atheists: They are real. They concern them.

POSTED BY: GERRY | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 3:06 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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The original point was that we needed a politician who could speak to the transcendental. Sorry to repeat myself, but can anyone address a single concrete example of how that might inform a political issue?

POSTED BY: TD450 | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 2:56 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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"One hint: physician, heal thyself."

Hey Henry-

Is this the best you can do? Your comment is a little stale. It was used against Jesus in Nazareth. What's your point? If only you could crucify Him again?

What is it with atheists in America? It always comes back to Jesus with them. The centerpiece and showstopper of their unbelief is their obsessive hatred of Christ..

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 2:39 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Dear Anonymous

I wrote a whole book about what poetry means.

If you buy it at the bookstore rather than having me reproduce it here, I get royalties.

The poem you quoted means what it says.

As Robert Frost said "you mean you want me to say it less good words?"

One hint: physician, heal thyself.

POSTED BY: HENRY JAMES | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 1:48 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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"The wounded surgeon plies the steel  
That questions the distempered part  
Beneath the bleeding hands we feel  
The sharp compassion of the healer's art  
Resolving the enigma of the fever chart"

"I KNEW TS Eliot. TS Eliot was a Friend of Mine"

Hey Henry-

Tell me what your "friend" is talking about-

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 1:28 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Perhaps we can get somewhere here if we discuss examples. As a practical matter, what exactly is it that the faithful are being denied? The inclusion of religious symbols and tradition within the sphere of government? Do they object to the fact that others disagree with them? What is the problem here?

POSTED BY: TD450 | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 1:18 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Since I am widely known to be an elitist, I don't hesitate to point out that the

Defenders of the Faith  
on this thread, Gary and Bill

both show thoroughgoing ignorance,  
in Bill's case, ignorance of history,  
and in Gary's case,  
ignorance of spelling and punctuation and word usage and logic.

It is fairly widely documented that

the more intelligent a person is  
the less likely she is to believe in a creator/theist god.

Bill and Gary's example would not contradict this conclusion.

The myths of religion have been defended, by millenia, by people who are ignorant of the truth.

POSTED BY: HENRY JAMES | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 1:07 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Hey Possum-

'of the people', 'by the people' and 'for the people'

like in over 75% of the people are Jesus Believers and less than 10% are nogodders?

"created by the reproductive process that my parents engaged in"

if the "act" creates you- there is no way we are "equal"..

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 1:05 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Gary, my love

Your inability to use the English Language is not due to typos. It is due to ignorance.

There are five or six errors in your last post that aren't due to typos. "Proof read" for example, to take a particularly ironic example (look up "ironic" in the dictionary).

I don't point this out to make fun of you.

I point it out because your inability to use the English language properly is matched by your inability to reason logically.

You should work on these things, Gary. Also, take a review course in punctuation.

And just who do you think was a greater literary critic than I was? I can't WAIT to hear your answer.

POSTED BY: HENRY JAMES | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 1:02 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Sorry I used the wrong homonym or did not proof read well enough and failed to note that I did not hit the 'o' hard enough the second time. That happens when I get in a hurry time to time.

And the Henry James here is scarcely Americas greatest critic not that the original was either.

I have no trouble understanding what he is trying to say it isn't in my opinion either vague or opaque in fact it seems to me to be a bit conciliatory.

Hence my point earlier about atheists not being interested in sharing the country with everyone else.

POSTED BY: GARYD | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 12:51 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Bill -

Turning to the chapter on reproduction in my human anatomy book tells me that humans are created through an act of sexual intercourse - although these days it could be artificial insemination - let's give a bow to science. We don't need to be more explicit, do we??

That tells me that my parents were 'creators', rest their souls. You can capitalize that word if it makes you feel special, and you can interpret the wording of the Constitution however it suits you. In the end, you haven't made a convincing point.

Imagine 75% of 300 million folks all believing the same thing ..... now that could be a recipe for disaster, all depending.

I do like that part about all people being equal, however they get here. Let's make sure that remains the case.....

POSTED BY: TERRY | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 12:25 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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"That all people are created equal. (most atheists HATE this because it affirms the Creator)"

Sorry, I disagree... I was created by the reproductive process that my parents engaged in. (pause to shudder uncomfortably)

That statement does not confirm 'the' creator, or even 'a' creator.

As for the 75% .... nice .... but our government is 'of the people', 'by the people' and 'for the people' Which I guess is what drives christian dominionists nuts....

POSTED BY: POSSUM | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 12:23 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Bill

Your historical illiteracy is showing.

You are quoting the DECLARATION of INDEPENDENCE  
by thomas jefferson

who believed that IF God created the world,  
he left the building eons ago  
and hasnt been seen or heard of since.

POSTED BY: HENRY JAMES | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 12:16 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Of course "a two-stringed lyre", whatever such a fantasy instrument may be (what a dysfunctional metaphor!) can be played on one string. As a matter of fact, some people, like the Dr. Dr. Dr., play one string all the time. It gets completely out of tune. Sometimes a string breaks, if it is plucked too strongly. And a two-stringed instrument, whose strings can't be stopped, is utterly boring after a short moment. All you can do is play "cockoo" on it over and over.

The Constitution, at best, would have to resort to the "American God", since every nation has theirs, especially when they are desperately fighting and killing each other. But such an - at least honest- attribute would unveil the ridiculousness of the whole endeavor "under god". Hitler's Wehrmacht fought "under god".

POSTED BY: GERRY | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 11:47 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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The US Constitution states:

That all people are created equal. (most atheists HATE this because it affirms the Creator)

And that the government's authority is only by the consent of the governed. (Over 75% of the total US population are Christians)

POSTED BY: BILL | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 11:42 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Of course "a two-stringed lyre", whatever such a fantasy instrument may be (what a dysfunctional metaphor!) can be played on one string. As a matter of fact, some people, like the Dr. Dr., play one string all the time. It gets completely out of tune. Sometimes a string breaks, if it is plucked too strongly. And a two-stringed instrument, whose strings can't be stopped, is utterly boring after a short moment. All you can do is play "cockoo" on it over and over.

The Constitution, at best, would have to resort to the "American God", since every nation has theirs, especially when they are desperately fighting and killing each other. But such an - at least honest - attribute would unveil the ridiculousness of the whole endeavor "under god".

POSTED BY: GERRY | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 11:41 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Once you get past the quirky language, we are left with the same weird point. We refer to God as that which we cannot know (his communion with the transcendent). The religious then insist on somehow dressing this concept up and making up insane back stories about it.

The insight that we are not just individuals, that much of who we are comes through our roles with and connections to the world outside of us, is fine, and I have no problem with dealing with the political

consequences of accepting this. It's just annoying when the religious don't take responsibility for all the other crazy ideas that they attach to it.

POSTED BY: TD450 | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 11:06 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Tom Moore: GOOD POINT! thanks for pointing this out.

when i read that part, i said to myself  
"this is so ridiculous that it CAN"t really mean what it appears to mean."

and Viejta  
we all UNDERSTAND the major point Dr Elliott is trying to make. We just think he makes it MUCH more complicated than necessary, and that his metaphor and its development is more obfuscatory than illuminating, and is inelegant to boot. So we booted it, respectfully though.

POSTED BY: HENRY JAMES | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 11:06 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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It would be understandable if people got scared and angry because secularism was taking over the churches; or if religion was taking over the public schools. But to get scared and angry because secularism is taking over the public schools, makes about as much sense as getting scared and angry because religion is taking over the churches!

We are, after all, talking about PUBLIC schools. And the public contains people of ALL religious creeds and beliefs. And they don't want the beliefs of others forced on them. Remember the Pilgrims and freedom of religion? Well? Do you?

The PUBLIC schools are not an interfaith opportunity for unilateral or even mutual evangelism. Get over it and send your kids to church, or to a parochial school.

Tom Moore  
Crofton MD USA

POSTED BY: EXCUSE ME? | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 10:00 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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As I've pointed out before, Willis Elliott's posts are easier to understand when read aloud. Like Gary I found the point obvious. Unlike Elliott I would add the disclaimer that the sacred and the secular must both be acknowledged but not necessarily followed. Many religious people -- not just the zealots -- are uncomfortable with the legal dominance of secularism. This is because they really don't understand the difference between tolerance and endorsement. I find the views of the more articulate representatives of non-Christian faiths interesting and insightful, and they often help me to resolve issues I have with my own faith. I'm really not tempted to change to a different religion. Secularism gives us the freedom to have these conversations without having to subscribe to the same dogmas. Faith and reason -- religion and secularism, if you will -- require each other's help in a pluralistic society.

POSTED BY: VIEJITA DEL OESTE | FEBRUARY 9, 2008 4:44 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Hey Henry-

"The wounded surgeon plies the steel  
That questions the distempered part  
Beneath the bleeding hands we feel

The sharp compassion of the healer's art  
Resolving the enigma of the fever chart"

"I KNEW TS Eliot. TS Eliot was a Friend of Mine"

REALLY? Then.. what does he mean?

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | FEBRUARY 8, 2008 11:24 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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anon

Willis Elliott  
is not  
TS Eliot,  
nor was he meant to be.

TS Eliot, in the midst of great poetry,  
can pull off an obfuscatory metaphor.

Willis Elliott has never written a poetic line in his life,  
  
said America's greatest literary critic.

I KNEW TS Eliot. TS Eliot was a Friend of Mine. Willis Elliott is no TS Eliot.

POSTED BY: HENRY JAMES | FEBRUARY 8, 2008 11:08 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Anon,  
his body is in Tennessee..his head is???

Garyd,  
The Doc is not too hard to understand, if you read between the lines. It's reading the lines and his really obfuscatory metaphores. He is like a woman that marries a rich man, so wears a mink in the summer...she has it so she flaunts it, even if she is making no sense.

There are so many beautiful metaphores that could have been used...  
But you have to have an imagination. A two strings lyre? There is no such thing.

Now a Tambouras is an instrument that was originated by the Assyrians and the Egyptians, and it had from 2 to 6 strings.It went to the Arabs and was called the Tourbor. Now if he would have said that religion and the state was like the Tambouras...two strings that when played together in balance was something beautiful, that can be used to spread its harmony.

It is not that we are ignorant and do not understand the good Doctor, he just plucked that two string lyre once to often.

and Anon...Henry James is an asset...  
terra

POSTED BY: TERRA GAZELLE | FEBRUARY 8, 2008 10:52 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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"And all shall be well and All manner of things shall be well When the tongues of flame are in-folded Into the crowned knot of fire And the fire and the rose are one."

Hey Henry-

Another obfuscatory metaphor..

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | FEBRUARY 8, 2008 10:45 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Anonymous

"I am not Prince Hamlet,  
Nor was meant to be."

POSTED BY: HENRY | FEBRUARY 8, 2008 10:31 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Anonymous

was it you who said that sometimes one must be  
cruel to be kind?

POSTED BY: HENRY JAMES | FEBRUARY 8, 2008 10:26 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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"Three things in human life are important: the first is to be kind; the second is to be kind; and the third is to be kind."

-HENRY JAMES

Hey Henry-

You ain't Henry..

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | FEBRUARY 8, 2008 10:17 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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That prolific author Anonymous  
asks America's Greatest Literary Critic

"Hey Henry:

Ever consider.. his metaphors may be intentionally obfuscatory?"

Reading Anonymous's post may cause one to wonder, in an elitist moment (i.e. an intelligent moment), how one who writes in the style that Anonymous does would dare to advise Henry James (or anyone else for that matter) on the uses of Metaphor.

The New Yorker used to have a regular feature called  
"Block that Metaphor."  
Elliott's lovely Lyre would be a prime candidate, were the feature still extant.

POSTED BY: HENRY JAMES | FEBRUARY 8, 2008 10:03 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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terra asks-

"Exactly where has that bozo been ?"

....tennessee

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | FEBRUARY 8, 2008 9:53 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Hey Henry:

Ever consider.. his metaphors may be intentionally obfuscatory?

He may be tired of your self-consumed, "I'm a big ASSet watch me prove it" rants.

He is speaking a language understandable to believers and I believe he is right.

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | FEBRUARY 8, 2008 9:25 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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to show MY OWN imbecility

the above post was TO GARYD

NOT from GaryD

POSTED BY: HENRY JAMES | FEBRUARY 8, 2008 9:23 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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First, not to be mean but...

you misuse "to poorly educated" (a particularly pathetic mistake on your part) in demeaning America's greatest literary critic and his friends,

and

"there knees start jerking" - do you RECOGNIZE your mistake here? I doubt it.

You are certainly no genius. You can barely use the English Language.

And you doubt if I, Henry James, can comprehend what Dr Elliot is saying??????????

If I were you, I would ask humble questions in this forum, not try to make pronouncements in a language you don't even know how to use, with a logic you have no comprehension of.

Love you  
Henry

POSTED BY: GARYD | FEBRUARY 8, 2008 8:50 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Actually, GaryD, he is wrong. Simple as that.

He calls it 'under god', which is actually not anywhere in the founding documents, but the phrase was added in the 1950s as the result of fears of the 'godless communists'.

Funny how you make assumptions about people's level of education when in fact we are capable of reasoning far better than he is. He tends to couch his dominionism in oblique terms that show that he is capable of, as Shakespeare so aptly says.. 'a lot of sound and fury, signifying nothing.'

and BTW, I'm not an atheist.  
Boggles your mind, doesn't it?

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | FEBRUARY 8, 2008 8:44 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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I make no claims here in to be a genius, but it seemed to me rather obvious what Dr. Elliot was saying.

So either you didn't try, you are too poorly educated in the realm of reasoned discourse, or because he has a doctorate in theology your paranoia of such made it impossible for you to comprehend what he was saying.

Much as the American left can't figure out where George Bush is coming from (hint it isn't far right) because the minute they see him their knees start jerking so hard they can't possibly hear what he is actually saying, so all too many atheists respond to religious writers who have the nerve not to openly kowtow to their nonsensical view that the state needs protection from religion rather than vice versa as the framers fully intended.

POSTED BY: GARYD | FEBRUARY 8, 2008 8:34 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Actually, GaryD,

There are probably more Pagan postings here than outright atheist.

There is a difference.

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | FEBRUARY 8, 2008 8:30 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Pretty wild flail against your imagined (paranoic?) "paranoia of the atheist."

The criticisms here are predominantly stylistic. They have a hard time understanding WHAT the heck Dr Elliot is talking about. And the find his metaphors obfuscatory rather than illuminating.

Many believers are wonderful writers. Mr Mark, Terra, and I will be glad to compliment such a writer when we see one.

With Dr Elliot, we see an obfuscatory pedant.

But NOTHING to do with Paranoia. Not a very smart criticism, Gary.

POSTED BY: HENRY JAMES | FEBRUARY 8, 2008 8:04 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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The paranoia of the atheist never ceases to amaze me.

The man merely points out that there are and should be areas of common ground between the religious and the non religious And the usual suspects act like he's trying to cut their throats with a rusty hammer. Thereby, one might add, that even if there is such commonality the Atheist not the religionists will never permit it to be found.

POSTED BY: GARYD | FEBRUARY 8, 2008 7:56 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Funny how with two strings John Williams came up with the most nefarious theme in movie history.. that of Jaws. Which is what goes through my head when trying to imagine America operating in the frame this man suggests.

POSTED BY: PRIVER | FEBRUARY 8, 2008 7:26 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Possum,

"Current flows unlike ancient syrian fleas on a nuthatch wing"  
Now that gave me a giggle..

yes he polishes that weasel alot.

terra

POSTED BY: TERRA GAZELLE | FEBRUARY 8, 2008 5:50 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Two string lyre... hmm, as a 'pastor, teacher, lecturer' You'd think he'd at least use a metaphor/analogy to something his audience might actually understand/ identify with...

I once taught electronics, I used analogies a lot.. "Current flows like water in a garden hose" for example. I did not ever say "Current flows unlike ancient syrian fleas on a nuthatch wing" The whole point of metaphors/analogies is to make the complex easier to understand... otherwise you're just polishing your own intellectual weasel.....

POSTED BY: POSSUM | FEBRUARY 8, 2008 5:44 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Doctor,

One day I will learn my lesson, not to read your posts. They make me want to ram my head into a wall.

First off...secularism is not getting short shift in the political discussion. Obama, as a religious man said that he will not allow any laws that come from any religion, as there are many religions and this is a democracy. That is being secular. Secularism is not "no religion", but seperating it from the state. Hillary also is a secularist, though a religious person.

And as far as Over and Under. Uhh?

Today I saw McCain at the Conservative Pep Rally..now that was pandering. Those folks are not secularists, they are panderers...who care more about their ideaology then this country. Bush goes on and says that they have to have a Conservative take the Oval Office for the prosperity of this country. I almost spit milk all over the table.

Exactly where has that bozo been ? Not only does he not read big books..he doesn't watch the news.

And doc...you need a editor.

terra

POSTED BY: TERRA GAZELLE | FEBRUARY 8, 2008 5:40 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Where have all the secularist gone...gone to hoax buster every one...when will they ever learn?

Seen-your Jacques only expresses an opinion by one person, himself. The 'right' is in a state of panic. They have no candidate at all. They rejected God's candidate, Mitt. Wannabe Huckabee is dead in the water. The only decision left is whether a liberal or conservative secularists will be president, Hillary/Barak or Mac. Secularist can support any one or all while the 'thumpers' are all dressed up with no place to go.

McCain was one of the first of many if not all senators to know the Bible is now a proved hoax. Methinks Lott retired, outright quit over it. There's little doubt, Mac plans to do a lot hoax busting himself if elected...something about brainstorm sessions, how all MUST live with supernatural beings in an Arabian cave. The war on terror must eventually address the source of the terror.

Only the dumbest don't know that was NOT God Moses made the deal with and the even dumber think God's representative gave Muhammad license to steal. The whole political situation is a genuine laugher...jokes on evangelicals and their Muslim cousins.

<http://www.hoax-buster.org/sellyoursoul> is equally valid for all faiths. IT is Devil that all faith is in and never God. All sacred scriptures are the word of Devil, not just the Hooooooly Bible.

The Devil now has His Hooooooly Due, chaos amongst His Hooooooly followers. The road to hell is paved with good intentions...getting to heaven is the loftiest of all possible intentions. They promise heaven but where does all the chaos, hell's primary attribute come from, God? Blasphemy!!!!

POSTED BY: BGONE | FEBRUARY 8, 2008 5:39 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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Whew!

All I can say is that if Willis Elliot were given the task of writing our Constitution, we'd still be hailing Queen Elizabeth and her dauphin progeny.

BTW - a two-stringed lyre would be a very limited instrument. I know of no such instrument. Most lyres have 4 to 7 strings. The strings on a lyre cannot be stopped - they can each play only one note, and that is the raw note that the string is tuned to.

Why do I get the impression that the interval between the two notes on Rev Elliot's lyre is a diminished fifth, also know as the "devil in music?" What else could be expected for the unholy alliance and reliance he suggests?

How's that for the exercise of Rev Elliot's "American mind?"

POSTED BY: MR MARK | FEBRUARY 8, 2008 5:21 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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yep, Possum, this is a tough one.

i think he is trying to say

that

Politicians are not Lyres.

POSTED BY: HENRY JAMES | FEBRUARY 8, 2008 5:00 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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help me please... I've read Mr. Elliot's piece three times and I cannot for the life of me figure out what he is trying to say....

POSTED BY: POSSUM | FEBRUARY 8, 2008 4:14 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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If I hear a single lick more of your 'American mind' nonsense, and the insinuations implicit in it, I'm going to vomit.

POSTED BY: TJ | FEBRUARY 8, 2008 3:09 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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The comments to this entry are closed.