

The *Vagina Monologues* and Gonzaga's Jesuit, Catholic, Humanist Mission and Identity
Gonzaga Socratic Club, Friday, October 21, 2011

Richard McClelland, Philosophy, Gonzaga University

1. Not all forms of pluralism are worth having. (Reply to Strain, Halstead and Drexler, 2009)
2. Three principles of authority in Christian tradition: (a) primacy of private judgment defines Protestantism; (b) teaching *magisterium* defines Catholic Christianity; (c) tradition (comprised of Scriptures, conciliar documents (at least up to 1054), patristic writings) defines Orthodox Christianity. Practices, activities and forms of life do not ground authority.
3. Science is not just one voice among many in the university (*pace* Strain et al., 2009, pp. 173-174).
4. Not all narratives conduce to, enhance or promote social justice. Counter-examples include *Mein Kampf* (and the alleged world conspiracy of Jews), also psychological narratives associated with major forms of psychopathology (e.g., autism, personality disorders, psychopathy).
5. Political correctness: the VM themselves exhibit a shocking bias regarding human sexuality (reference to Wendy McElroy's comments from 2002) and the empowerment of women (the latter has more to do with access to political and economic power than it does with sexuality).

Douglas Kries, Philosophy, Gonzaga University

1. Need to honor female students at Gonzaga.
2. Tom Wolfe's *I Am Charlotte Simmons* as a superior treatment of violence against women in a university context.
3. Catholic church, like any human institution, is imperfect.
4. St. Augustine said negative things about women (and also about men and about himself). However, the effect of his work was to honor and dignify women.
5. Many amazing and accomplished women could offer their "voices" in a way that would inspire and challenge Gonzaga students in positive ways. However, Gonzaga never sponsors presentations by "voices" such as these.
6. Appeals to John Paul II to justify the *Vagina Monologues* are dishonest and academically irresponsible.

David H. Calhoun, Philosophy, Gonzaga University

Two authoritative sources on secularization in higher education: George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (Oxford, 1996) and Fr. Frank Tunstead Burtchaell, C.S.C., *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from Their Christian Churches* by (Eerdmans, 1998)

1. There are far better tools to highlight and critically respond to violence against women than the VM.
2. At the very least, public presentation of an event such as the VM cries out for a critical academic framing.
3. Academic freedom requires critical judgment about educational aims and methods, and must be exercised in a responsible way.
4. Mission and identity should be conceived less as a set of rules about what is "censored" or "restricted" and more in terms of what an institution stands for and promotes.
5. Finally, Gonzaga University needs a robust, honest, and *informed* discussion about Jesuit Catholic humanist identity and mission.