

OPINION

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Logic and emotions often collide in decision-making

Every once in a while you see something that makes you question what you believe.



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I've always thought of myself as a pretty progressive, open-minded person who is tolerant of different and controversial opinions.

The past four years of college have seen a marked liberalization in my thinking. I think homosexuals deserve equal rights. I think people should be allowed to burn the American flag if they want to use it as a powerful symbol of protest. I think some people get a little too excited about Aggie traditions.

However, sometimes your emotional response to a situation does not correspond with your logically held beliefs.

At a Houston Astros game a few weekends ago, I stood for the national anthem as the game was about to begin. I always stand for the anthem, remove my hat in the MSC, and things like that out of habit more than fervent patriotism. Although I certainly honor the flag and respect fallen Aggies, I've never been particularly gung ho about demanding that other people do the same.

But as the national anthem played, I noticed a pimply-faced teenage kid a few rows in front of me chowing down on his nachos.

Suddenly, I was transformed. I wanted to kick his snout-nosed little ass.

This was even before my rational thought processes were clouded by a few \$4 Dome Foams.

Throughout the game, I referred to him as "The Commie." Several times I mumbled that he should love America or leave it.

As the boiling maroon blood coursing through my veins started to cool down, I began to wonder why such an emotional response overtook me. A few months ago, I remember expressing support for Mahmoud Abdul-Raouf, the former Denver Nugget guard who refused to stand for the national anthem because he thought the American flag symbolized tyranny and oppression. Abdul-Raouf was suspended by the NBA for violating league rules and incurred the wrath of self-proclaimed patriots throughout the nation.

The disparity between my intellect and emotions has troubled me. Do I believe something other than what I think I do? Why would I react in a way that violated my rational belief?

The ancient Greeks used the term *harmartia* to describe harmony between one's emotions and intellect. To have *harmartia* was an indication of a well-ordered life.

My reaction to the kid not standing for the national anthem at a baseball game, then, seemed to indicate that conflicting thoughts and feelings are causing disorder in my life.

Of course, one big difference in the two situations between Abdul-Raouf and the teenage punk is that Abdul-Raouf had an honest protest and made a conscious decision to violate NBA rules by refusing to stand. The punk was more interested in his nachos than any burning social issues.

The question still lingers, though. If I read in the paper that a hot-headed Aggie beat up a 16-year-old kid because he didn't stand for the national anthem, I would shake my head at such idiocy. At the moment in the Astrodome, though, I thought he deserved to be taught a civics lesson in a not-so-civil way.

If I read in the paper that hundreds of cadets rushed to defend the integri-

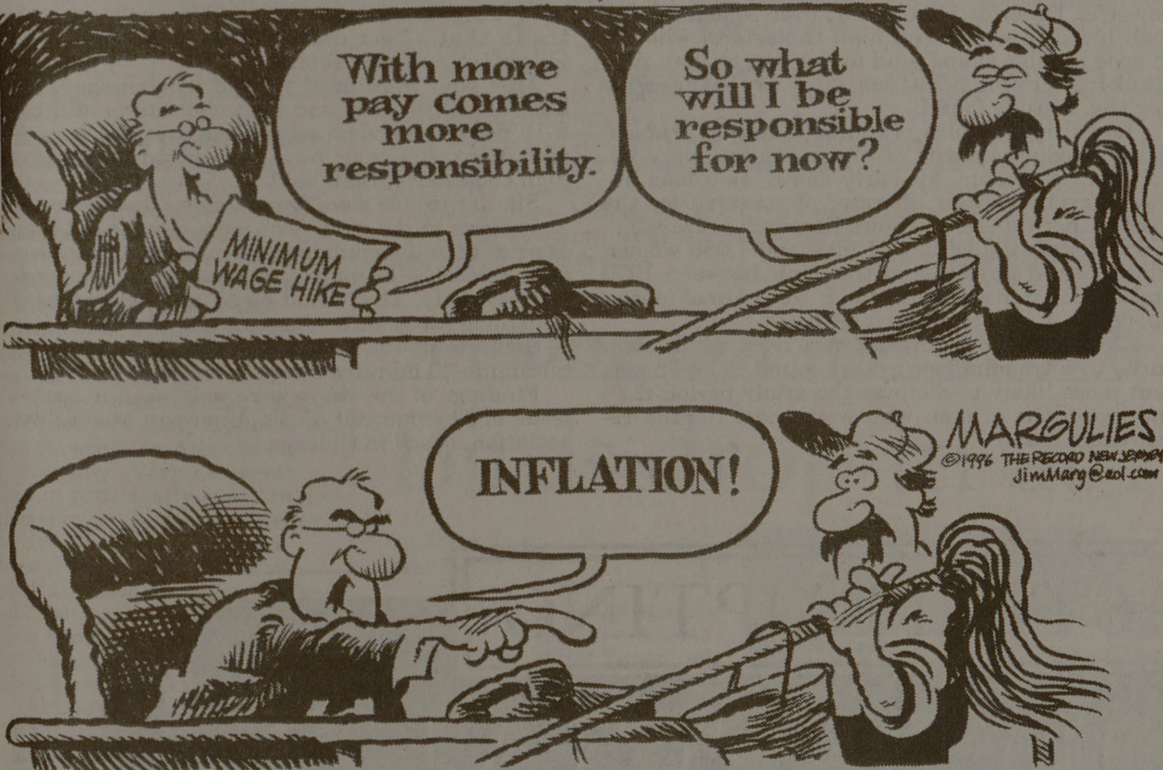
ty of Kyle Field from hundreds of celebrating t-sips, as I did last December, I would shake my head at such idiocy. However, in the heat of the moment, as I stood there on the second deck watching the events transpire, I was hoping to see some bones crushed.

So logically I'm a liberal two-percent, but emotionally I might as well be Rock the Good Ag.

If there are many others like me, that would explain A&M's overzealous school spirit. Unfortunately, some people are a little more emotional than logical. That's why people are harassed for leaving their hats on during yells, sitting down at football games, and walking on the grass around the Memorial Student Center.

A little *harmartia* could help us avoid a lot of problems.

Jim Pawlikowski is a Class of '96 chemical engineering major



MAIL CALL

Building remnants could be recycled

As a result of the decision made by the A&M system Board of Regents to demolish Deware Field House and Law and Puryear Halls, several concerned student groups have been planning the post-destruction land use alternatives such as "green space" or memorials. Yet to my understanding, little if any thought or planning is going into what will become of the building materials left after the structures have been bulldozed.

Construction and Demolition (C&D) debris materials are quite heavy, bulky and usually intermingled. These characteristics will all have a detrimental impact to the landfill we use. Texas A&M currently

sends 8000 tons of waste to the area landfill each year at a cost to us of \$20.50 per ton. Buildings such as Law and Puryear would create a ballpark of 36,000 tons of waste. This addition to the landfill we share with 17 other counties would bring down the already low remaining life span of the landfill to just two years.

Habitat for Humanity, the second largest home builder in the country, estimates that about 30 percent of C&D material routinely dumped in Texas landfills could be reused. To put that amount in perspective, it is roughly the equivalent of throwing away 80,000 one-thousand-square-foot homes every year across the state.

The cost of separation may seem high to the traditional demolition contractor, but their

reluctance is unfounded because of the rising value of the recoverable materials and the increasing cost of disposal. C&D debris is often not recycled because of simple inertia: things continue to be done the way they were because that is how they have always been done. Toward that end, contractors, administration, staff, faculty and students should all be in on the complete planning of this and future projects. We can not ignore these obvious problems just because the solutions are hard in coming.

Cassandra DeLarios
Class of '96

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor and will print as many as space allows. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class, and phone number.

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Congress should pay attention to Parliament's "Questions"

Life is pretty sweet on Sunday nights at 11:00. It's time for "Prime Minister's Questions."

And little C-SPAN junkies across the nation are glued to their television sets. Yes, you know who you are.

But "Questions" isn't just for these helpless addicts to enjoy.

Twice a week, the British prime minister and his cabinet must account for their decisions to the House of Commons. Members of both the ruling and opposition parties are given the opportunity to ask questions — and insult each other.

It makes for a rather hilarious half-hour.

Of course, the content of the questions isn't always interesting. Rather, it's the reactions that the queries cause among the members.

People jump up and down. Yell. Boo. Some even throw paper across the benches at rival party members.

And then come the insults. Oh, the insults.

They all begin with "my honorable friend," but what follows isn't always cordial. Even the prime minister himself joins in the festivities.

Members sling comments across the aisle with a blatant disregard for each other.

Comparisons to various banyard animals aren't uncommon. Neither are "dimwit," "nitwit" or the mother insult of them all — "little squirt." Ouch.

It's the one time you don't see the British trying to act overly proper.

But attempting to keep things running smoothly is the first female speaker in Parliament's 600-year history, Betty Boothroyd. She's constantly yelling, "Order! I shall have order in this house at once!"

And she throws out a wisecrack or insult of her own if things get too heated.

It's all in good fun. But "Questions" also has an important purpose — to ensure accountability from the prime minister and his cabinet.



MICHAEL HEINROTH
COLUMNIST

Here in the good ol' United States, we don't have anything like this.

Instead, we inherited the most boring national legislature on Earth — Congress.

Have you ever seen these guys? All they do is yield speaking time to one another.

"Mr. Speaker, I yield 10 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia." Then the gentleman from Georgia yields six minutes to the gentleman from Wyoming.

And so on. Until there is simply no more time to yield. Or until everyone in the chamber falls asleep from absolute boredom.

It's a great cure for insomnia.

No speeches are given and no debate takes place during this ridiculous process. Members simply trade time. And it seems as though nothing is accomplished.

Whenever someone does manage to give a speech, few other congressmen are in the chamber to listen. So what's the point?

Worthy debate and riotous insults are something we just don't see in our Congress.

And why not? Why doesn't somebody stand up and call Ted Kennedy a fat alcoholic?

But the greater issue is this: Our nationally elected and appointed officials aren't as accountable as their counterparts in Britain.

Making the people who run this country account for their decisions on a regular basis could only help. I can only imagine the way this country is governed would change immensely.

With that in mind, "Questions to the President" might not be a bad idea.

Can you imagine Bill Clinton being grilled by members of Congress twice a week? He would run out of the Capitol begging for mercy.

So after stealing their language and declaring our independence, it appears as though it's time to take something from the British once again.

I say, "give us 'Questions' or give us death."

Well, scratch the part about death.

Michael Heinroth is a Class of '96 political science major

Record companies hit sour note in dealing with drug problem

Keith Richards, Scott Weiland and Dave Gahan. Future inductees to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, or merely members of the Drug Rehab Clinic All-Star Band?

Though musicians have been abusing drugs since the turn of the century, only recently have the media latched onto the deaths and arrests of prominent musicians as an example of how widespread drug use is.

As a result of this media spotlight, many began to question the response of record labels toward the drug problems of the artists they represent. In the past, as long as the hit albums came out, no label interfered.

But with the recent public scrutiny, music industry leaders vowed to stop "this senseless tragedy." Although this statement and any resulting actions are seemingly altruistic, it is a farce for any record label to pretend it has the moral right to interfere in the lifestyles of its recording artists.

One key problem in the response of the recording industry lies in the timing. The first industry-wide conference on drug abuse, sponsored by the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, was held in

December. Drugs have played a key role in the premature death of musicians since the '50s, and it takes 40 years for the industry to meet to talk about this problem? Evolution has a quicker response time.

Another problem with the sudden paternalistic care by the record industry lies in the conduct of the labels. Record labels fight to sign the latest band, even when band members have a known drug addiction. And according to those within the music industry, some labels believe signing a band with known drug problems adds some sort of credibility to their "authenticity image."

It is a farce for any record label to pretend it has the moral right to interfere in the lifestyles of its recording artists.

Once signed, labels ignore the addictions of the bands under contract, unless they interfere with album output or touring capability. If the drug use wasn't a problem for the company when the band was making money, then it shouldn't be a problem afterwards.

Yet another reason for labels to stop intruding is the hypocrisy involved. The last time I checked, no record label was presided over by someone with wings and a harp. Those within the industry acknowl-

edge that drug abuse is just as prevalent among those representing the artists as among the artists themselves. In fact, the magazine *Underground* reported how a certain record label pays someone to take daily drug orders from employees.

Yet these are the same people who are supposed to be encouraging musicians to stop taking drugs. How realistic is it to expect an artist with a habit to lay down the needle or pipe when the person telling them to quit is waiting for his dealer to page them back?

Perhaps the most compelling reason record labels should not interfere is that, as grim and deplorable as it is, drug abuse is a personal choice by the musician. As an illegal activity, labels should leave law enforcement to the police. But if artists choose to abuse themselves through drugs, love or any other self-defeating substances, how can a label rightfully interfere?

Drug use is not worth glamorizing, let alone condoning. And as a music fan, there is a certain sense of sadness involved in seeing one's emaciated idol led off by the police, pleading guilty to drug possession (why Dave?). But artists with problems should only be helped by family, friends and drug therapists — not the self-righteous, hypocritical inquisitions of a music industry that cares more about the product than the problem.

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