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Controversy a blessing in disguise

Observer Viewpoint

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Censorship is bad! "The Vagina Monologues" are the Anti-Christ! Our academic freedom is being destroyed! Our morality is in jeopardy! Okay, okay, I think we've all got it by now. And if we keep playing the same arguments on repeat with steadily increasing volume for the next few months, we might just go insane.

We can talk circles around each other about our polarized opinions on the best means to contend with the issue of Catholic standards vs. academic liberty for weeks if we want - and the abundance of discussion on campus is undoubtedly a good thing. However, I feel that our debate will go nowhere if we keep hearing these same opinions shouted back and forth without any backup. Of course many students will unfailingly contend that the elimination of "The Vagina Monologues" and the Queer Film Festival is abhorrent, and of course their more conservative counterparts will argue that the University must not stray from traditional Catholic ideals.

In nearly every article I've read regarding the Monologues, though, the issues have been so grossly simplified that it is impossible to know whether or not people have just taken hold of their general liberal/conservative argument of choice and run with it, regardless of what they actually know about the Monologues and its messages. I'm not gonna lie, I haven't read the play. So how can I know whether or not it is truly as anti-Catholic as is contended? I really have no grounds to make an intelligent argument for or against the University's suppression of the event. Sure, I don't believe in censorship, but there must be more to it than that, right? And yeah, it doesn't seem very Catholic to wax poetic about premarital sex, but there's no way that's as deep as this issue runs. I propose we all do a little homework if we want these debates to be at all fruitful. Let's find out some actual specific details from the Monologues if we want to argue its morality rather than hearing the word "vagina" and automatically brandishing our crucifixes and holy water.

Let's take a little time to think about what effects sponsorship or censorship would have on our academic life and what paths of action we have available, rather than immediately crying "dictatorship." If we strive to be adequately informed about all aspects and contentions in this debate and hence can have an enlightening discussion rather than a series of recycled inferences, I feel this controversy will be a blessing in disguise for Notre Dame.

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