

ABSTRACT

MEANS OF PERSUASION: A CENTRAL VALLEY CATHOLIC EXPERIENCE OF DOUBT AND ENLIGHTENMENT

As a half-Okie, half-Alsace-Lorrainian Catholic from the Central Valley of California, I find it difficult to think of myself as representative of any group as pervasive as those current heavyweights labeling swaths of people, Generation X and Middle Class. To force my actions into the expectations of a particular belief system would be to limit my words' authenticity. I have chosen to explore several unique, if loosely connected, experiences to examine their contributions to my worldview. As a child, I found myself dissuaded by the Catholic Church's means of persuasion, looking instead to a venerable teacher for inspiration. I began to understand as an adolescent the disparate values of my mother and father, and reflect upon how they have helped shape me. Lastly, a trip to Sequoia National Park as an adult has forced me to evaluate my core beliefs. It is here that I locate my present consciousness.

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