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THE JOURNAL OF THE **CORE CURRICULUM**

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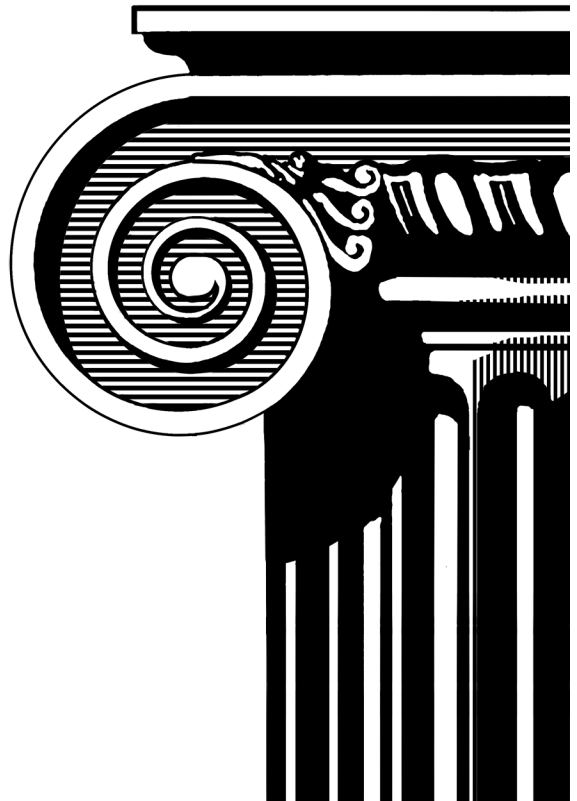
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With gratitude & admiration we dedicate this issue to

STEPHANIE NELSON

*

*“Dante, though Virgil is leaving you, do not
yet weep, do not weep yet; you’ll need your tears
for what another sword must yet inflict.”*

Dante, perché Virgilio se ne vada, / non pianger anco, non
piangere ancora; / ché piangere ti conven per altra spada.

Purgatorio, Canto XXX



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Cover photo: a foggy view from San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice, taken in 2017 by Alex Lo.

Table of Contents

5	Editors' Note	
6	The Core Almanac	
10	photo: Notre Dame	Erica Brandt
10	The Tragedy in Paris	Alex Lo
11	drawing: faces in smoke	<i>anonymous</i>
11	poem: untitled	<i>anonymous</i>
12	Blasphemy in <i>Paradise Lost</i>	María Antonieta Rondón Anzola
17	photo: El Deir at Petra	Alex Lo
18	Rousseau & Kanye on the Shortcomings of Confession	Bradie Wright
23	The Implications of Revolution in Chekhov's <i>Three Sisters</i>	Caroline Brantley
25	illustration: a Russian bird	Hannah Dion
29	photo: red pens	David Green
30	A Discussion of Augustine's <i>City of God</i>	Bruce Hallgren
33	poem: Seyavash's Farewell to Farigis	Jān Shodam
35	On the Variable Brightness of Boyajian's Star	Madison Romo
39	Enkidu's Lions	Parker Jorenby
45	A Philosophical Playlist	Kyna Hamill + CC202 students
46	drawing: Athena Parthenos	Moeka Suzuki
47	John Milton's Higher Purpose	Lily Campbell
53	The Dream of Socrates	Raphael Indrisano
61	Las Casas's Rhetorical Failings	Jonathan Han
65	photos: Faculty Throwbacks	
66	Six Analects	Joseph Waterman
68	A Marxist Analysis of Contemporary Identity Politics	Quinn Angelou-Lysaker
74	photo: Michelangelo's <i>Pièta</i>	Alex Lo
75	Authenticity, Empiricism & Faith in the Case of the Shroud of Turin	Bridget Cohen
79	poem: Genesis 1:2-3	Sydney Ellis
81	Transformations by Tool	Alex Lo

84	Comparing the Patient Care of the Hippocratic Physician and the Modern Doctor	Caroline Michail
89	Essay on Water	Eve Worobel
91	On the Authenticity of <i>The Polish Rider</i>	Helen Houghton
96	In the Quantification Lab	Brian Jorgensen
98	poem: To My Laptop, Shirley	Elizabeth Huelsenbech
99	Penelope's Game	Faisal Halabeya
103	Hell's Hidden Rooms	CC102 C6, Spring 2018
115	photo: Michelangelo's <i>David</i>	Alex Lo
116	poem: A Plan to Drain the Sky	Zachary Bos
117	Raised Atheist	Jay Clark
120	Two Goddesses	Samantha Vatalaro
123	The Significance and Evolutionary Purpose of Anxiety in Women	Emily Cioch, Eleni Constantinou, Morgan Farrar & Vartika Govil
130	Bach's Musical Humanism	Danial Shariat
135	A New Dutch Home for a New Dutch Republic	Hannah Jew
146	poem: Ode to My iPhone	C. Vega
147	photo: a Venetian gondolier	Alex Lo
148	poem: A Lost Canticle	Danial Shariat
149	illustration: the Simorgh	Hannah Dion
150	Uncivil Civility & False Moral Permissibility	Cory Willingham
157	On the Occasion of a Change of Directors	Brian Jorgensen
160	Lot's Theme	Callie Rosenstein
162	poem: Neighbors	Chloe Hite
164	poem: Sestet #2	Abel Sharpe
165	Our Contributors	
168	poem: Siren Song	Sassan Tabatabai

Visit www.bu.edu/core/journal to access additional, online-only contents for this issue, including: a multimedia introduction to the **Cult of Argos** by Chelsea Ji; a downloadable **guide to art at the MFA** by David Malkin and Cadence Seeger; **interviews** with writers who are updating old ideas and myths for modern times, by Sammi Arnold, Selena Lin, and Danial Shariat; and a content pack of **Core-themed Bitmojis** created by Mica Jadick & Nyah Patel.

Editors' Note

Our 28th issue is finished, meaning that our names, the names of the staff, and those of contributors, and of all those who helped it come to fruition have been printed here for posterity. This issue is a culmination of cooperation, friendship, and mentorship, among students, staff, faculty, and alumni. To catalog, edit, and celebrate their works in these pages is to force a kind of permanency upon the temporary nature of this welcoming community, which though ephemeral, is somehow also everlasting. Clearly we contain contradictions, as well as multitudes.

In a few years, all the familiar Core faces on campus will be replaced by a new cohort. But that doesn't mean our community fades. Even as our experiences in Core become memories, new students arrive ready to start their journey, beginning with *Gilgamesh* and moving on to all those other texts and ideas. Some memories, like those which involve people like Professor Nelson, are indelible. Even as we say goodbye to our time in Core, we will strive to maintain this fulfilling space she has nurtured with her leadership. Though Virgil must leave us on our path, we know we could not have gotten to where we are now without our humble guide's expertise and steady hand.

In this issue, you'll find numerous places where we've tried to tie back texts and imagery to the impact Professor Nelson has had on the Core community. Alas, here at the end of her tenure as director, we seem to lack the words to truly describe the profoundness of her influence. The Classics teach that through poetry we may express the inexpressible, but to express our gratitude is beyond even the reach of verse. (Next time you see her, tell her thanks in person, and maybe that'll help to compensate.)

Here's to reading the past to face the future.

With appreciation,

Elena Bernstein & Daniel Shariat

on behalf of the 2019 editorial team

"It was from there that we emerged, to see—once more—the stars."

— *Inferno*, Canto XXXIV

FACTS, FIGURES AND TRIVIA FROM THE PAST TWO YEARS OF THE CORE CURRICULUM:

The Core Almanac

I. List of All Authors and Artists Studied in Core, Fall 2017 - Spring 2019:

Aertsen, Aristotle, Attar, Augustine, Austen, Bach, Beckmann, Beethoven, Bhagavad-Gita, Blake, Byron, Cavendish, Cervantes, Chekhov, Clement VI, Coleridge, Confucius, Conway, Corinth, Dante, de las Casas, Degas, Descartes, Dickinson, Dix, Du Bois, Durkheim, Engels, Esther, Euripides, Evans-Pritchard, Gilgamesh, Goethe, Gospel of John, Gospel of Matthew, Grosz, Hobbes, Höch, Homer, James, Kant, Keats, Khaldun, Kirchner, Klinger, Lao-Tzu, Liebermann, Lindley, Locke, Luther, Machiavelli, Malinowski, Mammen, Marsiglio, Marx, Michelangelo, Milton, Monet, Montaigne, Moses, Nietzsche, Oreskes, Petrarch, Pizan, Plato, Rembrandt, Ricci, Rousseau, Sepulveda, Shakespeare, Shelley, Smith, Sophocles, Thucydides, de Touqueville, Voltaire, Virgil, von Menzel, Weber, Whitman, Woolf, and Wordsworth.

II. Core Faculty, Fellows & Administrators, Fall 2017 - Spring 2019:

Binyomin Abrams, Chemistry	Andrew Christensen, English
Emily Allen, Core	Alex Claxton, Anthropology
Amy Appleford, English	Yuri Corrigan, WLL
Kimberly Arkin, Anthropology	Dennis Costa, Romance Studies
Jura Avizienis, Writing	Ben Crowe, Philosophy
Clifford Backman, History	Liam Cruz Kelly, English
Thomas Barfield, Anthropology	Matt Dill, Philosophy
Eric Bjornson, English	David Eckel, Religion
Zachary Bos, Core	Stephen Esposito, Classics
Christopher Brown, Theology	Maria Gapotchenko, Writing
Matt Cartmill, Anthropology	Abigail Gillman, WLL

David Green, Core/Writing	Anita Patterson, English
Rose Grenier, Core	Vladimir Petrović, Pardee
Kyna Hamill, Core	Jason Prentice, Writing
Sarah Hardy, Writing	Simon Rabinovitch, History
Alexandra Herzog, Jewish Studies	Christopher Ricks, Editorial Institute
Blake Huggins, Religion	David Roochnik, Philosophy
Emma Jerndal, Philosophy	Jennifer Row, Romance Studies
James Johnson, History	Loren J. Samons, Classics
Stephen Kalberg, Sociology	Christopher Schneider, Biology
Emanuel Katz, Physics	Peter Schwartz, WLL
Lauren Kerby, Religion	Mohammad Sharifi, Anthropology
Catherine Hudak Klancer, Core	Parker Shipton, Anthropology
Irit Kleiman, Romance Studies	Gabrielle Sims, Core
Emily Kramer, Editorial Institute	Allen Speight, Philosophy
Andrew Kurtz, Earth & Environment	Susanne Sreedhar, Philosophy
Martha Lagace, Anthropology	Robin Stevens, Core
Paul Lipton, Neuroscience	Natalie Susmann, Archaeology
Alex MacConochie, English	Sassan Tabatabai, WLL/Core
Rebecca Martin, Art History	Jacob Tischer, Anthropology
Brendan McConville, History	Laura Tourtellotte, Anthropology
Marie McDonough, Writing	James Uden, Classics
Philip Muirhead, Astronomy	Frankie Vanaria, American Studies
Erin Murphy, English	Allison Vanouse, Editorial Institute
Stephanie Nelson, Classics	Brian Walsh, English/Core
Emma Newcombe, American Studies	William Waters, WLL
Thomas Nunan, American Studies	Kristen Wroth, Archaeology
Lucia Pastorino, Neuroscience	Diana Wylie, History
Ryan Patten, Editorial Institute	

III. Zodiac Signs for Some Faculty, Administrators, and Student Staff:

ARIES	TAURUS	Jonathan Han
Kyna Hamill	Eleni Constantinou	Nick Rodelo
Frankie DiMento	LEO	VIRGO
CANCER	Madison Crosby	Kassandra Round
Hana Batio	SCORPIO	AQUARIUS
Matt Moon	Nyah Patel	Bradie Wright
LIBRA	Rose Grenier	Elena Bernstein
David Malkin	Robin Stevens	Jay Clark
Anto Rondón	Helen Houghton	PISCES
CAPRICORN	GEMINI	Morgan Farrar
Hannah Dion	Jacob Hillman	Caroline Brantley
Gabrielle Sims	Danial Shariat	Sassan Tabatabai

IV. Page Counts for Core Course Reading, with Number-related Trivia:

Course	Pages	Fun fact:
CC101	1,508	In 1508, Michelangelo started painting the Sistine Chapel.
CC102	1,944	Name of a song released by Ukrainian singer/songwriter Jamala.
CC201	1,497	1497 is the regular American Airlines flight from Boston to Dallas.
CC202	1,980	Post-it Notes were released in 1980.
CC112	877	Spam calls are often dialed from 1-877 toll-free numbers.
CC211	1,619	1619 is the title of a book by historian James Francis Horn on Jamestown and American democracy.
CC212	640	640 is the street number of the BU College of Communication on Commonwealth Avenue.
Total:	10,065	Did you know? Located on Manhattan's Upper East Side, the 10065 ZIP code area is America's most expensive.

V. Core Student Award Winners for 2018:

Devlin Awards: Nicholas Rodelo and Amy Wu; Honorable Mention, Rownyn Curry, Andrew Kelbley, and Bradie Wright.

Divisional Awards: *First-Year Humanities*: Quinn Angelou-Lysaker, Georgia Caras, and C. Vega. *Second-Year Humanities*: Hannah Dion, Jonathan Han, and Blaine Rinehart. *Natural Sciences*: Morgan Farrar, Châu Vu and Cory Willingham. *Social Sciences*: Eliza Dorfman, Sarah Eagan, Bradie Wright, and Benjamin Wuesthoff.

Polytropos Awards: Sammi Arnold, Gideon Breslaw, Rosie Carter, Cat Dossett, Emily Hatheway, Femke Hermse, Gregory Kerr, Kristen Manning, Sylvia Reyes, and Olivia Simonson.

VI. Core Student Leaders, 2018-2019:

Student Office Staff: Elena Bernstein, Caroline Brantley, Eleni Constantinou, Hannah Dion, Morgan Farrar, Jon Han, Helen Houghton, Nicholas Rodelo, Anto Ron-
don, Cassandra Round, Danial Shariat, Cory Willingham, and Bradie Wright.

Word & Way Principal Membership: Lee-or Bentovim, Ashini Best, Leanna Cherrette, Helen Houghton, Hannah Jew, Danial Shariat, and Carolyn Welter.

Peer Tutors: Isabella Amorim, Hana Batio, Elena Bernstein, Madison Crosby, Francis DiMento, Morgan Farrar, Helen Houghton, Matt Moon, and Bradie Wright.

VII. Definitive Core Community Lexical Rankings

As determined by Facebook poll in April 2019. CORE'S FAVORITE WORDS ("not necessarily for meaning, but for visual and auditory aestheticism"): 1. Serendipity; 2. Lackadaisical; 3. Shenanigans; 4. Felicitous; and 5. Yikes. CORE'S LEAST FAVORITE WORDS ("both for their meaning and their existence"): 1. Phlegm; 2. Moist; 3. a tie between Utilize and Mucus; and 4. Gusset. TRAGICALLY UNDERRATED WORDS ("which we wish were used more frequently"): 1. Conundrum; 2. Concomitantly; and 3. a tie among Fussiness, Capital, and Dysphemism. ■



The Tragedy in Paris

The photo above was taken by Core alumna Erica Brandt, during her visit to Notre Dame on the morning of April 15th before a fire broke out in the cathedral. Throughout that day, other Core friends living or studying in France wrote or texted to let us here in Boston know of their whereabouts and their well-being. Alex Lo, on study abroad presently in Paris, wrote to us later in the day, after he had made a visit to the site of the fire. Here is his note:

Early this evening, I rushed to the banks of the Seine to pay my respects to the old Cathedral for what I feared could be the last time. The crowd around me sang hymns, their collective spirit overpowering the drone of police sirens. And I could do nothing but watch powerlessly; watch as flames engulfed the rooftop, watch as the spire came crashing to the ground, and watch as glass melted into unrecognizable shards.

Fire and smoke are unfortunately not uncommon today on the streets of Paris, at least not on Saturdays when the *gilets jaunes* protests bring the city to a halt. Perhaps the damage to an icon of Parisian cultural heritage can rally the spirit of unity in a city struggling through deep-set division. ■



A POEM: written by a *Journal* staff member, to accompany the drawing above:

*out of the smoke / I saw faces / I never imagined the city making
c'est effrayant / c'est fou / c'est Notre Dame en feu ■*

MARÍA ANTONIETA RONDÓN ANZOLA

Blasphemy in *Paradise Lost*:

On the Inevitability That Follows Creation

Blasphemy, as defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* (definition 1a), is “profane speaking of God or sacred things;” God is clearly conceptualized as the highest Deity, while “sacred things” remains unspecified. As a result, questions on blasphemy might result from any work that mentions God or comes close to it in any way, and John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* is an instance of this. One could argue that there are two cases of blasphemy in Milton’s poem: one internal, the other external. The internal one is the case of blasphemy against God by Adam and Eve, that is, blasphemy within the story and its characters. The Son of God tells his Father, on account of Man’s first disobedience—yet to happen—“so should thy goodness and thy greatness both / be question’d and blasphem’d without defense” (III.165). The other is the case of blasphemy against God or the divine by Milton, who writes, “Hail holy light” and asks, “May I express thee [God] unblamed?” (III.1, 3) To evaluate blasphemy and its seemingly inevitable presence in religious writing, let us dissect the two cases mentioned above.

In the first case, the internal, Adam and Eve blaspheme against God when they disobey him and eat the forbidden Fruit. The blasphemy here is Adam and Eve’s defiance of their Creator: “this Tree is not as we are told, a Tree / of danger tasted,” says Eve (IX.863). However, they did so not only by eating the Fruit, but also by showing that their love for each other was stronger than their love for God. Once Eve eats the fruit, aware of the possible consequences (even when she cannot know the meaning of death), she searches for Adam, rather than repents; “Adam shall share with me in bliss or woe: / so dear I love him, that with him all deaths / I could endure, without him live no life” (IX.831). When Eve arrives and recounts how she ate the Fruit as the Serpent told her, Adam quickly realizes she is doomed. Nonetheless, he consciously decides to eat the Fruit too, because if Eve is doomed, he is doomed. Adam says in desperation, “with thee / certain my resolution is to Die: / How can I live without thee, [...] Should God create another Eve, and I / another Rib afford, yet loss of thee / would never from my heart...” (IX.906). He recognizes God could have another plan for him, maybe even the gift of another woman, but still he chooses his Eve *over* God. Furthermore, when referring to God’s possible reaction, Adam assures, “Nor can I think that God,

Creator wise, / though threat'ning, will in earnest so destroy / us his prime Creatures," because he has *created* them, not because he *loves* them (IX.938). Accordingly, after acknowledging that he has sinned, Adam tries to hide, seemingly afraid and ashamed. Do we hide from a loved one who loves us back?

Milton makes Adam's love for Eve and Eve's love for Adam real, but he does not make their individual love for God real. He also abstains from making or fails to make God's love for Adam and Eve real. Once the original sin has been committed, God's first concern is punishment. Not only does he foresee what will happen, but he also knows he has to punish the Creations he claims to love. "Whom send I to judge them? Whom but thee vicegerent Son," God tells Jesus (X.55). Although tough love exists, and parents can cultivate discipline in a child through restrictions, rules, and punishments, by reading Milton it seems evident that God is not a Father to Adam and Eve in the way he is a Father to Jesus. The relationship between God and Adam and Eve appears to be one between the master or the dominant figure, and the dominated. It follows that one may see God's love for Adam and Eve or Adam and Eve's love for God as insufficient or unreal.

In the second case, the external, it could be argued that Milton blasphemes against God or the divine solely by writing *Paradise Lost*. Firstly, by writing the poem as he writes it, he fails to make God's love for Adam and Eve, or vice versa, real. One can judge Milton's portrayal of the man's love for God or God's love for man as deficient, only if there is some other writer who made this divine love real. One can consider, perhaps, George Herbert's poem, "Love":

Love bade me welcome. Yet my soul drew back
 Guilty of dust and sin.
 But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
 From my first entrance in,
 Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,
 If I lacked any thing.

A guest, I answered, worthy to be here:
 Love said, You shall be he.
 I the unkind, ungrateful? Ah my dear,
 I cannot look on thee.
 Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,

Who made the eyes but I?

Truth Lord, but I have marred them: let my shame

Go where it doth deserve.

And know you not, says Love, who bore the blame?

My dear, then I will serve

You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat:

So I did sit and eat.

Herbert names God “Love,” successfully presenting God as benevolent and all loving. Moreover, the character of Love—God—is welcoming and sweet, instead of disapproving and punishing. God invites man to look at him without shame or remorse. Man, as a response, resolves to serve God and taste his meat. If God is Love, man then *tastes* Love. Through the intimacy of letting in—ingesting—Love is made *real*, similar to the way one ingests bread and wine during communion as symbols of Jesus’ body and blood.

Secondly, it can be said that Milton blasphemes God or the divine by writing about them. In his life of *Waller*, Samuel Johnson argues that “poetical devotion cannot often please,” mainly because “the essence of poetry is invention,” and religion is not invention, religion *is*. To write a poem about religion would be to invent religion, when really, “religion must be shown as it is.” Consequently, it is not only safer but also more appropriate to write about “the works of God [...and] not [*of*] God.” As a writer or simply as a person, one must understand that God remains unknown and unreachable. Accordingly, when referring to God, “poetry loses its lustre and its power, because it is applied to the decoration of something more excellent than itself,” something that needs no decoration, something that already is.

One cannot help but ask, if God is whole, does it mean he does not need to be worshipped? The common conception of God is grounded in the idea that he is omnibenevolent, omnipotent, and omniscient. In a nutshell, he is complete. To desire is to lack, as one only desires what one does not have. If God wants to be worshipped, it is because he needs to be worshipped; but God cannot *want* anything because he is already whole, and he does not lack anything. The best way to respect him or hold him dear may be not to speak of him at all either because he does not need us to, or because we do not know how to speak of him suitably. Is this not why any religious writing runs the risk of being considered blasphemous?

Even Dante, who very cautiously designs his *Divine Comedy* as a journey to God, is not immune to being considered blasphemous. In the *Paradiso* Canto XXXIII, when Dante portrays God as light and as nothing short from perfect, he is aware that he cannot accurately describe God or the paradise that surrounds him, and writes “shorter henceforward will my language fall.” In truth, “there is no great religious poetry that does not raise—as crucial to its enterprise—the question of whether it is open to the charge of blasphemy,” as even Herbert’s love poem runs this risk. In truth: “there is no great religious poetry that does not raise—as crucial to its enterprise—the question of whether it is open to the charge of blasphemy, even as there is no great erotic art that does not raise the question of whether it is open to the charge of pornography” (Ricks).

Therefore, Milton was not necessarily careless when writing *Paradise Lost*; maybe he simply understood that regardless of the words he used, the characters he portrayed, or the story he conveyed, he would be accused of blasphemy. This might be the reason why, when describing the circumstance of Satan tempting Eve in the body of a Serpent, Milton had Satan say, “I who erst contended / with Gods to sit the highest, am now constrain’d / into a beast, and mixt with bestial slime, / this essence to incarnate” (IX.163), instead of using another word for incarnate, knowing that, as in the OED, ‘incarnation’ was considered an action unique to Jesus Christ. Hence, rather than believing, as did Richard Bentley, that “Milton would not use thus the word incarnate; [because] he knew a higher essence than seraphical was afterwards incarnated” (Empson), let us take the liberty of assuming that Milton left the word “incarnate” as it was, even after revising his poem, because he knew he would be judged either way.

Creation has gains and losses, as most things do. To create is to risk, but one must believe that to risk is also to hope to win. Having the fear of something inevitable prevent us from creating—writing, composing, acting, being such-and-such a way—would be inhuman. After all, what is being human but being and recreating oneself, as one lives and dies simultaneously? And what is being and recreating oneself but risking and sacrificing, gaining and losing? ■

Special thanks to alumna Rosie Carter for her editorial assistance with this piece. – Eds.

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(*banging fist on table*) "SATAN! SATAN! SATAN!"

– Kyna Hamill

"William James thought of people as, like, really ugly lemons."

– Sassan Tabatabai

"If you saw the real scientific method, you'd become an alcoholic."

– Binyomin Abrams



El Deir at Petra, photographed by Alex Lo in Jordan in August 2016.

BRADIE WRIGHT

“Everybody Knows I’m a Monster”:

Rousseau and Kanye on the Shortcomings of Confession

From political philosophers to rappers, writers often use their media to confess their innermost struggles. However, confessional works can reveal moral shortcomings that the author did not intend to reveal. In the case of his heartfelt revelations in the *Confessions*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau downplays abandoning his children to foster care. Moreover, he shows his self-centeredness through his frequent transformation of confession into an excuse to praise himself. On some of his albums, Kanye West depicts similar moral pitfalls. In their respective works, both Rousseau and West show their true moral character through their inability to confess serious issues and to avoid conflating confession and self-praise.

Despite his intention to deliver a candid depiction of his life in his *Confessions*, Rousseau does not confess his gravest wrongdoing: the abandonment of his children. Throughout the text Rousseau provides an autobiography and deliberately refers to the moments of his life that fill him with the most guilt by using the word “confession.” For instance, after relaying how as a child he blamed Marion, a servant of Rousseau, for stealing a ribbon that Rousseau himself had stolen, he says, “I have been outspoken in the confession I have just made, and surely no one could think that I have in any way sought to mitigate the infamy of my crime” (84). He uses the word “confession” again to describe his abandonment of his friend who was in the middle of an epileptic seizure; Rousseau dubs this event his “third painful confession” (126). The word “confession” does not appear when Rousseau explains how he had given up his children to a foster home. Rousseau argues that “the risks of having [the children] educated by the foundlings were considerably fewer” than if they were cared for by the mother’s “badly brought-up family” (406). Here, Rousseau does not confess that he had abandoned his children; he merely states it as a fact. The fact that he had made no attempt to provide for his offspring does not make him feel guilty whatsoever, unlike the ribbon incident which sometimes makes Rousseau “lie sleeplessly in ... bed” (84). One must question the moral standards of Rousseau’s confessions based on how much more gravity he gives to petty theft during his childhood than his refusal to raise his children. If Rousseau is able to discuss how he gave away his children with so little emotion or regret, then one wonders what other controversial events Rousseau may have possibly

excluded from the *Confessions* because he may have considered them not worth confessing. Rousseau certainly fails to tell “the good and the bad with equal frankness” if he cannot verbalize some of his worst deeds (5).

Similarly, on his album *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy*, Kanye West makes many confessions without verbalizing one of the most controversial events of his career. In 2009, West interrupted Taylor Swift’s award acceptance at the Video Music Awards to proclaim that Beyoncé deserved the award for best music video over Swift. This incident turned West from a somewhat controversial celebrity to a pariah, and in 2010 he released his fifth solo album *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* (MBDTF) to respond to this dramatic shift in his image. Although intending to reveal West’s most personal thoughts, MBDTF makes the same mistake as Rousseau by being unable to address his biggest controversies. As the title suggests, MBDTF invites the world to listen to West’s innermost personal thoughts after the stunt that would change his career. Despite his intentions, he does not explicitly mention Taylor Swift or the award show; rather, throughout the first half of the album West provides a rather vague depiction of how his newly attained fame affected him. MBDTF opens with a narration from rapper Nicki Minaj, where she warns, “You might think you’ve peeped the scene / You haven’t; the real one’s far too mean” (“Dark Fantasy”). Here, Minaj hints to the audience that the album will reveal the reality that fame is not as glamorous as one perceives. Rather, it has the potential to make an enemy of the entire world, as West experienced after embarrassing Swift on stage. The hook of the first track consists of an angelic choir asking, “Can we get much higher?” (“Dark Fantasy”). West is pondering the heights to which his stunt could take his stardom. The chorus of the next track reveals West’s thought before his decision to increase his fame: “Ain’t no question if I want it, I need it / I can feel it slowly drifting away from me” (“Gorgeous”). The chorus also reminds West, “no more chances if you blow this” (“Gorgeous”). The temptation of fame has made up West’s mind. He only begins to realize the potential error of his decision to interrupt Swift on the next track, “POWER.” West raps, “As I look down at my diamond encrusted piece / Thinking no one man should have all that power” (“POWER”). West examines his lavish jewelry and starts to feel some regret for his ambitions; so much so that the track ends with West contemplating “jumping out the window” (“POWER”). However, much like Rousseau’s incident with his children, West’s initial regret is not enough to truly confess his wrongdoing. This lack of regret culminates halfway through the album on the track “Monster,” in which West brags about his career and nominates himself “the best ever living or dead.” West admits,

“Everybody knows I’m a motherf*cking monster,” which seems to reference the backlash he received after the award show (“Monster”). Here West turns the fact that the media has portrayed him as a monster into a positive thing. West depicts his rap ability, his jewelry, and his sexual conquests to be so impressive that no human could be capable of duplicating him, while only a monster like West could (“Monster”). West has found comfort with the monster that he has become and focuses the remainder of the album on his romantic and sexual troubles instead of his guilt. West has still refused to verbalize the award show controversy, so one must question the importance that he, like Rousseau, gives to his different moral shortcomings.

Another obstacle that Rousseau faces in his intention to deliver a book of confessions is his use of honesty in a self-congratulatory manner. In the beginning of his *Confessions* Rousseau claims, “I am not made like any that I have seen; I venture to believe that I was not made like any that exist” (6). While it is true that Rousseau may merely be asserting how “different” and unique everybody is, later on, he points out how writing a confessional work makes him better than others (6). He dares the reader to read his work and say, “I was better than that man” (6). Again, it may be the case that Rousseau wants the reader to feel humbled after reading such an honest account of one’s life. At the same time, Rousseau insinuates that he is better than the reader because of his honesty. One can identify this self-congratulatory tone in the opening of *Confessions* and question the integrity of a confessor with conceited motivations.

West also uses self-congratulatory confession on his album *Ye*. In 2018, West made arguably the most controversial comment of his career when he told TMZ in an interview that slavery in the United States was “a choice” by the slaves (Beaumont-Thomas). Already scrutinized for his endorsement of President Donald Trump, West’s statements on slavery caused rifts among his fans and the general populace. A short while later came an album titled *Ye* which West had reworked to comment on his recent criticisms. From the album’s outset West presents it as a work of confession. The opening track begins, “Today, I seriously thought about killing you / I contemplated, premeditated murder / And I think about killing myself / And I love myself way more than I love you” (“I Thought About Killing You”). It is not immediately clear to whom this confession is directed, but nonetheless West sets the tone of the album as being frank and honest. The next track is “Yikes,” on which West for the first time mentions his diagnosis with bipolar disorder as well as the “hospital band” he received after treatment for his opioid addiction. West plays on his bipolar disorder on the track’s outro to literally congratulate himself; he says, “You see? / That’s what I’m talkin’ ‘bout! / That’s

why I f*ck with 'Ye! / ... That's my superpower ... ain't no disability / I'm a superhero!" ("Yikes"). Concluding a track of confession, West spins his struggles into an excuse to declare himself a superhero. Admittedly, Ye does not fall into MBDTF's problem of failing to verbalize the biggest controversy surrounding the album's release. On "Wouldn't Leave" West directly address his belief that "slavery [was] a choice." However, he does not seem particularly apologetic. He raps, "Just imagine if they caught me on a wild day" with the implication that his slavery comments were reasonable because he was sane and level-headed that day ("Wouldn't Leave"). He also uses this track to praise his relationship with his wife. Still on the topic of the slavery comments, West raps, "My wife callin', screamin', say we 'bout to lose it all / Had to calm her down 'cause she couldn't breathe / Told her she could leave me now, but she wouldn't leave" ("Wouldn't Leave"). West has such a high opinion of himself that he uses an opportunity to acknowledge his controversial statement to focus an entire track on how much his wife nevertheless loves him. The closing track however seems to shift from self-congratulatory to humble. "Violent Crimes" depicts West warning his daughters about how terribly men treat women. West shares how he has corrected his behavior to women in saying, "[Men are] savage, [men are] monsters / [Men are] pimps, [men are] players, / 'Til [they] have daughters ... Now I see women as somethin' to nurture / Not somethin' to conquer" ("Violent Crimes"). Despite this confessional track, one line seeks to undermine West's apparent humility; he raps, "I want a daughter like Nicki ... I'ma turn her to a monster" ("Violent Crimes"). This line directly references MBDTF's "Monster" which also features a verse by Nicki Minaj. West does not want his daughters to share in the humility of "Violent Crimes;" rather, he would like his offspring to resemble the arrogant braggart on "Monster." Like Rousseau, West uses the veil of confession to praise himself. Here West is praising his past, monstrous self. Despite all of his confessions on Ye, West has not learned anything and continues to view himself as highly as he did in 2010.

The criticism of Rousseau's and West's respective reliability and moral compass expands beyond the domain of confession. If an artist has difficulty weighing which of their moral shortcomings deserve greater attention in a work of confession, then this also speaks to the rest of their corpus. It proves difficult to take seriously a Kanye West song about the plight of black people in America when he raps about his marriage when given the opportunity to apologize for his comments on slavery. Likewise, one might find it hard to reconcile Rousseau's theories of educating children when he gives little attention to his relinquishing his own children to foster care. When engaging

with any work of art, it is imperative to know what vices the artist personally values, otherwise the message of the artwork becomes hypocritical. ■

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Analects, drawn from Walt Whitman's Song of Myself —

"I am of old and young, of the foolish as much as the wise, /
Regardless of others, ever regardful of others, / Maternal as well as
paternal, a child as well as a man... / A learner with the simplest, a
teacher of the thoughfulest." (from Section 16)

"I teach straying from me, yet who can stray from me? / I follow
you whoever you are from the present hour; / My words itch at your
ears till you understand them." (from Section 47)

"I too am not a bit tamed I too am untranslatable, / I sound my
barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world." (from Section 52)

CAROLINE BRANTLEY

“All Power to Natasha!”:

The Implications of Revolution in Chekhov’s Three Sisters

On the eve of the 1905 Russian Revolution, Anton Chekhov lived during a time of increasing political and social unrest that manifested in an emerging societal desire to change the status quo. *The Three Sisters*, written in 1900, showcases this political tumult through the attitudes of his play’s main characters. In the play, Olga, Masha, Irina and their stepsister, Natasha, reflect differing political attitudes surrounding the years prior to revolution through their different orientations with the social and political status quo. To the three sisters, Natasha serves as an embodiment of the status quo; she is bound to their provincial town and abides by a social structure that contrasts with the society the three sisters knew in Moscow. However, Natasha also embodies the rise of Russia’s middle class, and by the end of the play, she uses her new social standing to overpower Olga’s weariness of her, Masha’s dismissal of her ideas and Irina’s idealism—forcing this fixed status quo upon them all.

Following the abolition of serfdom in 1861, Russia experienced a rapid growth of the working class and urban middle class without the same level of growth to workers’ rights and working conditions, public services or democratic representation. As a result, in the late 19th century people began to participate in a new civil society that was divided more by political affiliation, culture and access to education than by old social class structures (Figs 163-4). This led to a political awakening that, according to Orlando Figes, “was part of the broader social changes that lie at the root of the revolution” (Figs 162). These social changes and a shift in the status quo culminated in the Bloody Sunday massacre in St. Petersburg and the 1905 Russian Revolution, which ultimately contributed to the Russian Revolution in 1917. Although Chekhov died the year before the Bloody Sunday massacre, he observed this shift in thought among the liberal and educated public, as well as with the new working class. In this way, the build up of tension between Natasha and the three sisters across the four acts depict this “time-bomb of violent revolution ticking in the cupboard of liberal politics” that existed in Russia (Figs 164).

When Natasha marries Andrei, she marries into a family with a higher social standing than her own; the Prozorovs are from Moscow and well educated, while she is from a provincial town and is a part of this newly deemed middle class. As a result, Natasha

feels out of place and powerless at the beginning of *The Three Sisters*, and she tells Andrei, "I'm not used to society like this" (Chekhov 137). Her insecurity and feeling of not belonging leads her to stick to the rigid social structure that she knows, but gradually this commitment to fixed social rules allows her to dominate the Prozorov house. Natasha uses her son, Bobik, as one of her main motivations to maintain control in the house, as she orders the carnival people away to not disturb him and later requests that Irina move out of her room so that Bobik might have it (139; 150). Therefore, she rigidly follows traditional social rules of maintaining order over the house, and through this Natasha is able to exert control that ultimately increases her power against the Prozorov sisters, despite their higher social class and education. The sisters also each present their own retaliation to her and opinions about the changing Russian society, showing how Natasha's role as a type of status quo affects each of them.

Olga, Masha and Irina have all become trapped in a society that greatly differs from their childhood home in Moscow, and they each desire to return to the city. However, their reasons or expectations for returning to Moscow vary greatly, and their abilities or inabilities to accept their current life reflect a larger societal anxiety about the rapid rise in the working class and changing political aims. Olga, the eldest, appears most receptive to the status quo, both by her beliefs and interactions with Natasha. Olga may not always agree with the status quo, but she is willing to adapt if it will simplify life for her and her family. Caught between her more dissatisfied sisters and Natasha, as well as a teacher for the state, Olga has internalized the expectations and demands of the status quo in order to fulfill her role in society and relaxes the strained relationships between the family members. When Andrei goes gambling, Olga laments, "The whole town talking . . . I'm going to lie down . . . Tomorrow I'm free . . . Dear God, won't that be nice! Tomorrow and the day after . . . Oh, my head, my aching head" (156). Olga would rather accept the status quo than risk embarrassment or trouble, and as the oldest sister, it is her duty to maintain order. She reflects, "I'm older and much thinner . . . I'm only twenty-eight, after all. It's just that . . . all's well in God's world, of course, but I do have the feeling that if I'd married and could have stayed at home all day things would have been better" (Chekhov 121). Therefore, rejecting the status quo would have tired Olga further, and she also still clings to a more traditional life that she has not been given.

Since Olga often appears more accepting of the status quo than Masha and Irina, she is able to listen to Natasha and seeks to understand those from a different class than herself, especially if they must live together. Olga and Natasha share the same sentiment for order, and it is Olga's weariness and exhaustion that often leads her to

*“Migrant birds, cranes for example, fly on and on, for all
the great thoughts or small thoughts going round their
head, they’ll keep on flying without
knowing why or where . . .*

*Let them philosophize all they please,
so long as they go on flying.”*

— Chekhov, *Three Sisters*



sympathize with Natasha and to accept the status quo. Olga attempts to understand Natasha's different attitude towards society; when Natasha comes to Irina's name day celebration, she tells Olga, "Best wishes. What a crowd! I'm terribly nervous," to which Olga responds, "Don't be. They're only family and friends. (*In an undertone, alarmed.*) That's a green sash you're wearing. It's not right, you know" (Chekhov 135). Despite Natasha's nervousness around people of a higher class, Olga is reassuring, accepting and welcomes Natasha to the family. Her critique of Natasha's sash shows her separation from Natasha's class, as she appears to correct the fashion with an air of knowledge, but this attempt shows that Olga reaches out and tries to connect with the status quo even if she may not like it all the time. Later on, Natasha lashes out at Olga, stating that, "Either I don't understand you or you refuse to understand me" (Chekhov 159). However, it is Olga's effort to talk to Natasha, instead of dismissing her, that allows her to most accept Natasha's social rules and to be also overtaken by them.

Unlike Olga, Masha and Irina both reject current society and lust after a revolution; however, their outlooks in life are polar opposites due to their relationship to the status quo. Masha's marriage to Kulygin, a man from the provincial town, ensures that she cannot return to Moscow and is married to this stagnant way of life, as much as she despises it. Kulygin agrees with order and rejects revolution, as he states that, "Our headmaster says the most important thing in life is structure. Take away the structure and there's nothing left. The same holds for our day-to-day existence. (*He puts his arm around Masha's waist, laughing.*)" (Chekhov 133). Therefore, in Masha's day-to-day existence with Kulygin, she is chained to a structure that she despises, both in the physical location of the town and her intellectual superiority to her husband's. When Kulygin

places his arm around Masha's waist above, he limits her physical ability to rebel; as a result, she must turn to an inward, personal form of rebellion. Throughout the play, she often whistles or ignores other characters, retreating into herself and poetry. Masha constantly repeats the same lines of a poem, where, "A green oak stands upon a firth / A chain of gold hangs round its trunk . . . I'm going out of my mind" (Chekhov 186). Here, she is the green oak standing upon the firth; there is nowhere else to go but water, and she is chained to the location, much like her marriage to Kulygin. Masha also cries out this poem when she has said goodbye to Vershinin, with whom she had an affair. Therefore, for Masha this poetry has served as a silent protest against her marriage and an expression of grief at the end of her affair, as she must bid farewell to the intellectual outlet and mental escape to Moscow that Vershinin provided. Therefore, instead of accepting the status quo, Masha knows that she is chained to it but chooses to reject it; she protests against it while living inside of it by dismissing characters like Kulygin and Natasha.

Masha's rejection of the status quo shows that she represents more of the revolutionary ideas of the time period, yearning to rise up all around Russia. Masha comments on a prisoner's freedom, saying that once the man is free "of course, he takes no more notice of them than before. The same thing will happen to you. You won't notice Moscow when you live there. We're not happy. We've never been happy. We only long to be" (148). Masha's pessimistic outlook allows her to retain control over her inward emotions, where she can most deeply express a private, personal form of rebellion. To Kulygin, Masha snaps that, "I don't need anything for myself. It's the injustice of it all that infuriates me" (166). Masha's needs for survival and wellbeing are satisfied; she is from a wealthy family and has a husband, so it is not the social status of her life that bothers her as much as the inability to work towards anything else. Revolution against the Tsarist regime would not change Masha's personal condition as much as it would end the injustice of the regime and revolutionize the rights of others, but for Masha, this abandonment of the status quo is a right she has been denied altogether.

Like Masha, Irina desires to break from the status quo of dogmatic social structures. However, while Masha's revolt is confined to the world of her emotions and mind, Irina rejects the status quo through a desperate, idealistic desire to return to Moscow and an obsession with work. Unlike Masha, Irina is not chained to the status quo but instead finds a relationship with Tusenbach. In an unloving, and yet deeply emotional way, Irina connects with Tusenbach through her desire to break from her life outside the city and to build her own life. Irina rejects the privileged way that she

has been raised, saying, "Life hasn't been so beautiful for my sisters and me. It's stifled us, like a weed . . . Now I'm crying. I mustn't . . . Work—that's what I need. The reason we're so unhappy and take such a gloomy view of life is that we don't know what work is." (Chekhov 135). Although Irina does not need to work, especially if she were to marry Tusenbach, her idealized view of the change that it can bring her reflects that of the rising Russian working class finding a new place in society and demanding fairer laws and workers' rights as a result. Irina sees no other purpose than work, as "We must work, work by the sweat of our brow, no matter who we are. In that alone is the meaning, the purpose of our lives—our happiness, our ecstasy" (Chekhov 122). This is the happiness that she gets from Tusenbach, as he proclaims, "A colossus is upon us, a mighty, health giving storm. It's on its way, moving closer, and soon it will sweep our society clean of sloth, indifference, of prejudice against work, of putrefying boredom. I will work, and in twenty-five or thirty years' time everyone will work. Everybody" (Chekhov 123). Irina's love for Tusenbach is synonymous with her love for another life; she does not love him but the idea of what revolution might bring. Similar to Masha, the Russian Revolution does not particularly pertain to her and her sisters, as they are already well off, but here Irina represents a worker who sees the hope of another Russia.

Irina's idealistic view towards changing the status quo is foiled by her inability to accept the realities of her revolutionary ideas. After securing a job at the telegraph office, she laments, "This one's not right for me. It has none of the things I'd hoped for, dreamt about. It's work with no poetry or ideas" (Chekhov 143-4). Irina's rebellion against the status quo of society, such as having a family and staying at home, falls empty-handed when she realizes that her rebellion is not glamorous but miserable. Irina also proves that her rebellion is an idealized, disconnected one through her relationship with Natasha, who has come from a working class background and yet Irina seems to disrespect. Natasha tells Olga that she tries to connect to Irina by saying, "Just this morning I told your sister, 'Irina darling,' I said, 'you take care of yourself now.' But she won't listen" (Chekhov 138). Irina's dismissive attitude towards Natasha and the reversal of their expected roles—Natasha, a working class woman at home and conforming to the status quo while Irina, a wealthy woman desiring to work—suggests that Irina views work more as a dream to reach Moscow than as a necessity for the betterment of her life. For Irina, it is exactly this unrealistic dream of hers that causes her to fall to Natasha and her portrayal of continued traditional social norms.

Although Natasha represents a stagnant, fixed social structure through her role as a housewife, she also represents the rise of the working and middle classes after the end

of Russian serfdom. Therefore, Natasha's physical presence in the house also serves as the middle and working classes finding a place in society where they can exert their power. When Irina dismisses Natasha, instead choosing to voice the aims of the working and middle classes without allowing Natasha's voice, she instead encourages Natasha to create a voice for herself; this is how Natasha gains power over the Prozorov house. Right before Irina discovers that Tusenbach has been killed and that her dreams of Moscow are crushed, Natasha comments, "Irina darling, that sash doesn't become you. It's in such poor taste . . . What you need is something bright and gay" (Chekhov 188). This scene reverses the one from the first act, where Olga comments on Natasha's out of place sash. Here, Natasha has gained the power of the house and scolds an emotional Irina, while Olga previously held the power and comforted Natasha. Thus, it is Irina's dismissal of Natasha throughout the play that leads her to gain power as the new rising class, and it is Olga's acceptance of the status quo that also leads Natasha to control the Prozorov estate.

The Three Sisters focuses on daily life as opposed to epic, unrealistic ideas, but this does not mean that Chekhov only deals with "the quietist pessimism of the 'nothing to be done' school of Absurdist," argues Geoffrey Borny; "[instead] the difficulty of depicting failure while at the same time communicating the possibility of human achievement became one of the central problems that Chekhov faced" (Borny 28). Although *The Three Sisters* concludes with a continuation of the status quo, Chekhov does not aim for political apathy in his work. Instead, he uses the looming atmosphere of the 1905 Russian Revolution, which Chekhov himself will not live to see, to comment on the social and political climate at a small scale. By the end of the play, Natasha's ability to overtake the Prozorov estate while the four siblings sit aside and watch reflects the often quick and yet rarely subtle usurpation of power. As Orlando Figes states in his examination of the Russian Revolution, it is an examination of "a social history in the sense that its main focus is the common people" (Figes XVI). This is exactly what Chekhov achieves in *The Three Sisters*; he tells the story of a family that defines the movement of a nation, instead of the reverse. ■

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FROM THE DESK OF:

DR. GREEN

Students in Professor Green's seminar sections know well his fastidious, copious, even zealous, use of the red pen while marking-up papers. This photo, straight from the source himself, shows the contents of the desk drawer where

Dr. Green stashes pens that run out of ink. The night is full of terrors. ■

BRUCE HALLGREN

Getting to Know One's Neighbor:

A Discussion of Augustine's City of God

In an effort to defend his faith from Roman criticism, St. Augustine writes *The City of God*, a text which divides the world's population into two distinctive groups. Augustine reasons that there are two cities into which all of humanity can be sorted: an earthly city, made from "Love of self, even to the point of contempt for God," and a heavenly city, formed by "love of God, even to the point of contempt for self" (*The City of God*, XIV.28). To better describe each city's priorities, Augustine sorts various figures from the Hebrew Bible into each city. Abel is placed in the heavenly city for his selfless devotion to God, while the self-serving and jealous Cain takes a spot in the earthly city (XV.7). While Augustine sorts only a select few characters, one can use his descriptions of each city to identify where the other Old Testament characters fall. Noah, the chosen descendent of Seth, displays total devotion to God, making him a likely candidate for the heavenly city. Aaron, brother of Moses, rejects spirituality by making the Israelites a new god in the form of the golden calf; for this act, Aaron would likely live in the earthly city. St. Augustine sees clear divisions in humanity between those who seek God and those who pursue earthly pleasures, and he sorts them into the heavenly city and the earthly city respectively. Based on their actions in the Old Testament, Noah and Aaron fit into these cities quite well; Noah acts as an exemplar for the heavenly city and Aaron as one for the earthly city.

Augustine sees these cities as opposites in terms of virtue, action, and desire, claiming that the inhabitants of the earthly city are born from "a nature vitiated by sin," as opposed to the "grace liberating that nature from sin" which gives birth to citizens of the heavenly city (XV.2). Owing to predestination, the fates of each city's citizens are decided from birth, when sin is either embedded in them or not. No one has a say in whether he or she is created as a virtuous person or not, but Augustine maintains that members of the heavenly city can be identified by their activities on earth: "For the good make use of the world in order to enjoy God" (XV.7). This can be understood in two ways; citizens of the heavenly city offer up the world to God through direct ritual sacrifice, or these citizens make use of the world to spread God's messages and increase his flock. Yet, though Cain sacrifices to God, Augustine states that he is not a member of the heavenly city because his gift is "wrongly divided," and that he "gave him-

self to himself" (XV.7). Thus, we find another signifier of the members of the earthly city; those who keep more for themselves than they give to God cannot reside in the heavenly city. The actions which these people perform aren't just made thoughtlessly; citizens in both cities have certain desires which set them apart from one another. Augustine asserts that "sin may also be understood to mean . . . carnal desire," meaning that those who seek bodily pleasures (food, sex, or physical possessions) default to the earthly city (XV.7). Therefore, those who seek spiritual pleasure as opposed to carnal pleasure have good desires and are citizens of the heavenly city. Thus, there is verifiable criteria for the two types of citizens; those who inhabit the heavenly city are born free of sin, prioritize God over themselves, and seek the pleasure of God, while the inhabitants of the earthly city are born of sin, prioritize themselves over God, and desire carnal pleasures.

At the time of Noah and the Flood, all people on earth are descendants of either Cain or Seth. While little information is given as to the life of Seth, he is generally assumed to have lived a more virtuous life than Cain, who "rose against Abel his brother and killed him" (Gen. 4.8-9). Not only is this action sinful according to the Ten Commandments ("You shall not murder" (Exod. 20.13)), but God curses him for it: "cursed shall you be by the soil that gaped with its mouth to take your brother's blood from your hand" (Gen. 4.11-12). Thus, Cain's bloodline is bound to sin, while Seth's is assumed to be pure. Noah, one of Seth's descendants, is selected by God to carry on the human race after the Flood: "Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord . . . Noah was a righteous man" (Gen. 6.8-9). God believes that the world has become tarnished because "flesh had corrupted its ways on the earth" (Gen. 6.13). While this verse is somewhat vague in specifying how flesh destroys the earth, one might reasonably infer that it is something other than the sheer presence of flesh. If this is the case, God would not save Noah, for he is flesh and bound to cause the same problems after the Flood. A more reasonable interpretation of the line is that desires of the flesh are what cause ruin, and as stated previously, sin and carnal pleasures can be roughly equated to one another (XV.7). Since Noah is free from sin, he is also free from earthly desires. The only remaining criterion for the heavenly city is action; therefore, one must ask: does Noah place God over himself? The answer is a resounding yes: "And this Noah did; as all that God commanded him, so he did" (Gen. 6.22). Not only does Noah perform every task God asks of him, but he sacrifices to Him almost immediately after seeing the flood waters subside: "And Noah built an altar to the Lord and he took from every clean cattle and every clean fowl and offered burnt offerings on the altar" (Gen. 8.20-

21). Through his sinless birth, Godly desires, and righteous actions, one can confidently place Noah in the heavenly city.

At the complete opposite end of the spectrum lies Aaron, a man born of sin who has carnal desires and acts without prioritizing God. Though the reader never hears of Aaron's youth, he is "born" into the story from Moses' doubt in God; after Moses shows apprehension towards God's plan, God summons Aaron to act as his mouthpiece before the Pharaoh (Exod. 6-7.30-2). If one considers a sin to be anything which goes against God's will, then Moses' fear is the sin which brings Aaron into existence in the story. Later, when Moses is receiving God's orders on top of Mount Sinai, the Israelites grow impatient: "the people assembled against Aaron and said to him, " Rise up, make us gods that will go before us" (Exod. 32.1). Aaron heeds their request and creates a golden calf to which they then pray. This is quite clearly an indicator that Aaron puts himself over God and does not desire that which is good; when an angry mob converges on him, he acts selfishly to preserve bodily pleasure (not getting attacked) rather than seeking Godly pleasure in refusing to aid them. Aaron creates the calf to create temporary order without considering God, thus upholding the tenants of the earthly city: "So also the earthly city, which does not live by faith, seeks an earthly peace, and it establishes a concord of command and obedience amongst its citizens" (XIX.17). Since Aaron is born of sin, desires earthly peace, and leads the Israelites away from God, he would be a member of the earthly city.

Although Aaron and many other people reside in the earthly city, this is not to say that they did not do good in life, nor that they are wholly without God. Aaron plays a major role in helping the Israelites escape Egypt and in leading them to the promised land. Augustine reasons that those who reside in the earthly city still have the chance to go to heaven and to be close with God: "After this sixth age God will rest, as on the seventh day; and he will cause this same seventh day—the day that we ourselves shall be—to rest in him" (XXII.30). Since all of mankind is predestined to fall into one of these two cities, there is no use in worrying where one resides. If God has a plan and God is good, then there is truly nothing to fear. ■

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JĀN SHODAM

Seyavash's Farewell to Farigis

This dramatic monologue recounts a story found in Ferdowsi's Shahnameh, the "Book of Kings." Prince Seyavash of Iran has become a fugitive in Turan, the rival state. He marries into Turanian royalty after falling in love with Farigis, the daughter of King Afrasiyab. However, Afrasiyab's brother Garsivaz is jealous of the union, and entreats his king to have Seyavash killed. As the tragic episode concludes, the young prince anticipates his death, and names his unborn son. – JS

My love, consider the cypress: silver

In its beauty, alone in the bowl
Of the valley, silver and aged
By the knowledge of fate. I die more
Than young, having lived twice: by what I
Wished to be, and by what I became,
Both leaving me discontent; broken twice,
I lost one father to another;
Feigning love for one woman only to
Spend so few years with another. It hurts,
Not because we fell in love — for I knew
I always had your heart — but how we loved,
How I built our city from the beauty
Of your hand: the lines of your soft palm
Curved into roads, the rings on your fingers
Reflecting the light on the white houses.

Consider the silver cypress, uprooted
From the fresh soil, and mourn. Silver because
I have only known winter. There were nights

When I dreamt of my death when I should have
 Stayed awake and watched your breath gently rise,
 Gently fall; or imagined the child who
 Looks more like me than you, the child who
 will have to imagine my face, my arms,
 my heart from an estranging reflection.

Afrasyab comes. I hear the troops
 And the din of their longest march.
 Even the night passes like chaff,
 The hours winnowed from hours
 In this season of aftermath;
 Rousing the last watch, the women
 Fetch water from the fountains,
 As though today will be the same
 As what has always been. Our child
 Born out of tragedy, must live
 Until his years of fame, until
 They raise his banner on the ruins
 Of this city. *Khosrow, Khosrow,*
 How it just slips out from the tongue.
 Tell him I chose his name after
 The man I know he will become.

You will not see me again, or you will,
 And then wish you had not, as I'm shattered
 By a wronged war. Consider the cypress
 My love: silver, shriveled, and sapped.

MADISON ROMO

On the Variable Brightness of Boyajian's Star

Humanity's knowledge of the universe has come a long way, even in just the past few years; yet myriads of unanswered questions still remain. Even in the observable universe alone, strange events and unexplained phenomena captivate astronomers and citizens alike. Often, it seems as though every answer simply yields another question. The same pattern holds true with regard to what many are calling the “most mysterious star in the galaxy” (Bochanski).

Since 2016, observations of unexplained fluctuations in the brightness of “Boyajian's Star,” located in the Cygnus constellation 1,468 light years away from Earth, have puzzled professional astronomers and citizen scientists alike. Suggested hypotheses to explain the strange dimming include interstellar debris, black holes, and alien megastructures (Wright). One promising theory explains the mysterious dips in the brightness of Boyajian's Star as periods when the star's light is being blocked by intervening clouds of interstellar dust.

Boston University students, working with the faculty of the first-year Core Curriculum Natural Sciences course in the College of Arts & Sciences, had the opportunity in the fall semester of 2018 to study Boyajian's Star for themselves at the Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff, Arizona. We began our research by evaluating information and analyses developed by professional astronomers, before deciding what sort of focus our investigation of Boyajian's Star would take.

What we know

Boyajian's Star, known in the Kepler Input Catalog as KIC 8462852, was first observed during the Kepler Mission. Later, citizen scientists collaborating on a project called “Planet Hunters”—which allows the public to access and analyze the data from the Kepler Mission—first noticed the irregular light fluctuation patterns. In 2015, Tabetha Boyajian, now on the faculty at Louisiana State University, published a formal paper describing the unusual phenomena (Grecius). The observed dips were quite dramatic with some occurrences showing decreases in brightness of up to twenty-two percent, which is extremely unusual for star dimming (Ross). No pattern could be

found in the frequency of light fluctuation, or in the duration of each dimming episode (Foukal 1). Some episodes of dimming lasted only a very short time while others persisted for months at a time (Cartier). Despite the many theories about why these odd dimmings were occurring, only a few are able to account for most of the star's irregularities. Specifically, the dust hypothesis has become a leading candidate to explain why the mysterious dips of light from "Tabby's Star" are happening.

The dust hypothesis

This explanation suggests that a large cloud of dust blocks light from Boyajian's star at irregular intervals. There are a few reasons why scientists believe that this theory may be able to explain the odd dimming better than other theories. First, the irregular motion of the dust accounts for the irregular dimming of the star. Unlike a theory proposing the idea of rings around the star or the movement of other celestial bodies in orbit, dust does not follow a particular pattern (Wright). If the dust is moving by quickly, the dimming may be shorter, while it could last longer if the dust takes longer to pass by.

Furthermore, we know it is possible for a cloud of dust to form which is large enough to block such substantial amounts of light. While interstellar dust, in space anywhere between Tabby's Star and Earth, would be too tiny to withstand the pressure from the star and form a cloud large enough to block light, circumstellar dust is able to withstand the pressure from the star's light and avoid being pushed away (Grecius).

The second primary piece of evidence that supports the dust hypothesis is that dust, unlike other possible explanations like comets or exoplanets, can block certain wavelengths of light more than others. This wavelength-dependent dimming aligns with the light analysis done on Boyajian's star. Researchers have found that more ultraviolet light is dimmed about two times more than infrared light (Wright). This process is also known as the "reddening of the star." A large, solid object (like perhaps an alien megastructure) would likely block wavelengths evenly (Drake). Still, the light from Boyajian's star brings up even more uncertainties. The immense amount of interstellar materials between the star and earth weakens the force of the light of Boyajian's star by about 35% before it reaches the Earth (Wright). This makes measuring the star's light even more complex.

Our data

During our Core Natural Sciences expedition to the Lowell Observatory, students were able to observe the star for several night sessions. Unfortunately, we saw no signs

of short-term dimming, a result to be expected as the dimming is often short-lived and sporadic. Even so, the observations by the students still contributed important information about the star's changes in magnitude when data from 2017 and 2018 are combined to study long-term dimming patterns. The magnitude data, which was used to study the star's brightness, showed that the brightness of the star had, in fact, decreased over the course of one year from 11.68 to 12.06. This information fits into the overall trend of the consistently declining brightness of the star. Data on Boyajian's Star dating back to 2015 shows an overall long-term decrease in brightness by 1.5% (Simon).

What we've learned

The mystery of Boyajian's Star has provided an invaluable opportunity for citizen scientists to take part in a big discovery. Their contributions through the Planet Hunters project provided essential data and analysis. Even the students of 111 were able to collect new data about Boyajian's Star, to be used in helping to explain this puzzling astronomical phenomenon. Specifically, our data supports the conjecture that there is a long-term decrease in the brightness of Boyajian's Star. We shall have to see if this trend continues in data collected by future groups of Core students traveling to Arizona for citizen science.

After so much investigation and conjecture over the past few years, observers and researchers are still drawn to the mysterious flux of Boyajian's Star. Perhaps we are closer than ever to understanding this phenomenon, or perhaps it be a long time yet before the data yield an explanation. What is certain is that uncertainties and the questions they give rise to will continue to engage curious inquirers for years to come. As we seek to understand this planet of ours and the stars above us, we keep in mind the words of T. S. Eliot in his poem "Little Gidding": "We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time." ■

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"My cat is a god to me. Don't say anything against my cat."

— Kyna Hamill

PARKER JORENBY

Enkidu's Lions

(*an excerpt from Jorenby's Handbook of Lost Religions*)

The cult adherents who refer to themselves as Enkidu's Lions worship Enkidu as a protector of nature, a loyal brother and equal to Gilgamesh, a Wild Man, and a Master of Animals. In their devotional art, Enkidu is depicted as a large man, surrounded by a snake, a lion, a bull, and an eagle. Sometimes, he takes on attributes of these animals. As well, the Lions worship Aruru, the divine creator of Enkidu. Enkidu's Lions worship Aruru as a means to receive the strength and wisdom of Enkidu, but Enkidu is their hero. Advisors to the Enkidan are known as the Worshippers of Aruru.

Practices

Immersion in Nature. Half of the year, followers must adhere to a vegan diet, take an evening walk amongst the animals, release animals from any traps they find when caught, prepare food without utensils. This practice signified their respect for nature, their care of their bodies, and their desire for knowledge only found in nature.

Walled City. Half of the year, followers may eat meat, dress in fine clothes and work their jobs. They may utilize utensils to prepare their food and may resort to trapping and equipment for hunting. Enkidu may have been raised in the wild, but he became a contributing member to society after becoming civilized. He brought a unique perspective with a rough edge behind it, but he was the only being able to tame Gilgamesh. He achieved taming Gilgamesh by engaging with society, hence why Enkidu's Lions devoted half their year to the city.

Devoted Brotherhood. Throughout the year, each cult member practices brotherhood by pairing with a nonmember. Each brotherhood pair is established through selection by the Worshippers of Aruru. The non-members were individuals that could not completely be devoted to Enkidu's Lions but wanted to contribute. During the nature season, they would provide for themselves and their brother.

Holidays

"Turn of the New Leaf." Revert to the wilderness, feast on gathered fruits, beans, and vegetation, strip off all clothing and gather in wild places to run with the deer.

“Prancing of the Morning Sun.” Halfway-point of the Nature Season. A time to run through the forest onto the top of the tallest nearby mountain with no shoes or clothes and wrestle your best friend until either one submits.

“Feast of the Bull of Heaven.” Revert to civilization, gather all animals they can muster and feast for a whole week, a cultural celebration with music, songs, dances, and theater. A wrestling competition between all the men establishes the hierarchy. This wrestling match took place at the rumored location of Gilgamesh and Enkidu’s match.

“Cherished Maiden.” Halfway-point of the Civilized Season, have sex all night, wear the finest clothes for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. This festival takes place at the site where Enkidu laid with Shamhat. During this time, the men of Enkidu’s Lions would also choose their wife.

Hierarchy

Enkidan: winner of the wrestling competition, he sets policy during the civilized season and leads the annual hunt of Huwawa. Revered as an incarnation of Enkidu.

Shamhats: female cultists that travel into the wilderness to find uncivilized men.

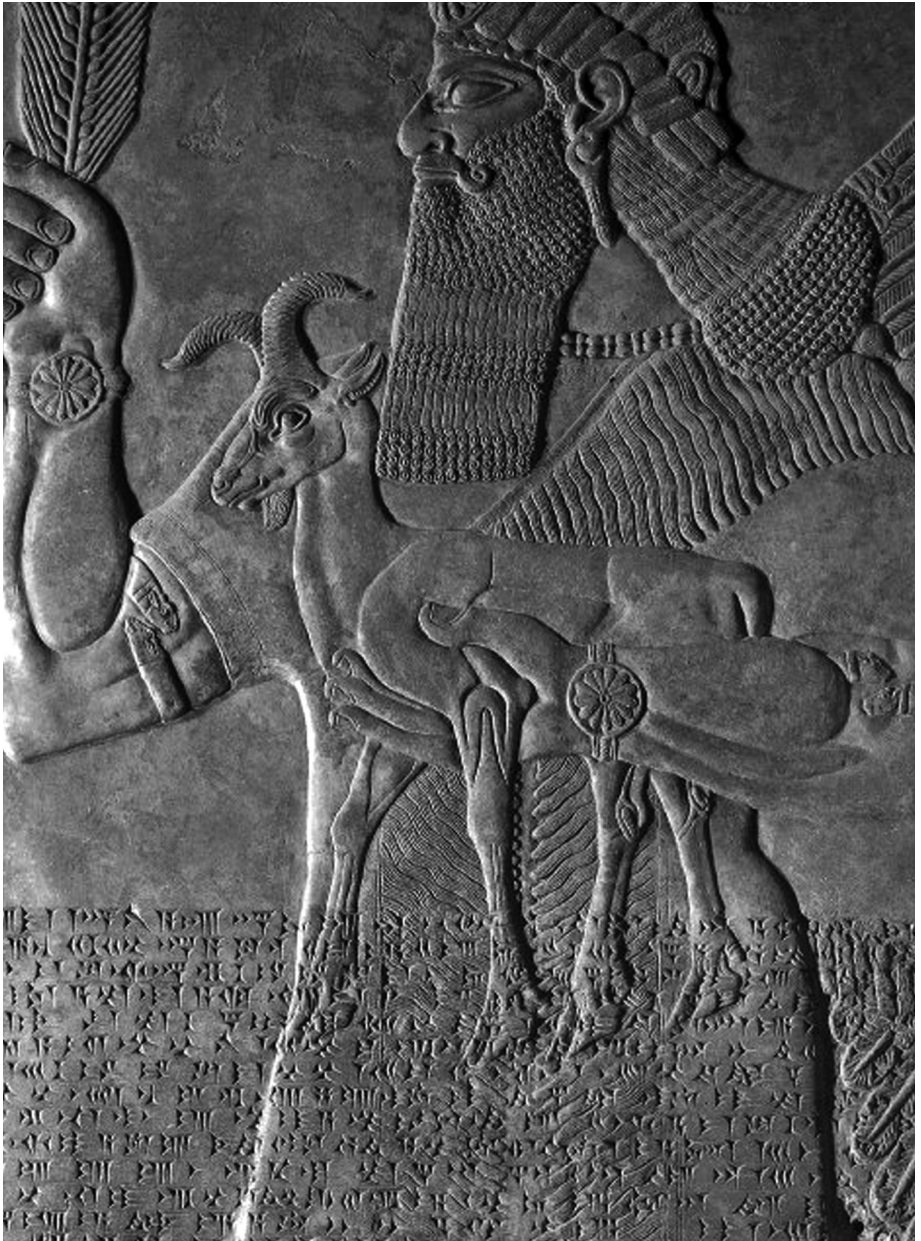
Worshippers of Aruru: cultish followers that focus on nature, during the nature season they are the “governing” body.

Shamashite: cultish advisors that enforce rules and policies set by the Enkidan.

History

The wrestling match of Enkidu and Gilgamesh to decide which person was stronger racked the whole city of Uruk. This competition was witnessed by many citizens, specifically a man named Sard Eil. A simple forger, Sard Eil became fascinated with the wild man that challenged the unbeatable Gilgamesh and followed Enkidu and Gilgamesh throughout their journey together. Sard Eil spent his free time listening to and retelling stories of Enkidu’s adventures with Gilgamesh. While others focused on Gilgamesh’s strength and powers, Sard Eil emphasized the brotherhood and loyalty of Enkidu as the admirable quality. The companionship between the king and the wild man inspired Sard Eil to begin his exploration of brotherhood. He found that the transition from wild man to brother of Gilgamesh provided Enkidu a unique perspective retained through his time in nature.

Stories of Huwawa’s death and the slaughter of the Bull of Heaven only made Sard Eil admire Enkidu even more. He committed to spending half of the year immersed in nature, abandoning his civil duty, to experience the life of Enkidu before being civi-



Pictured: A Neo-Assyrian panel depicting a protective spirit or *apkallu* in relief, ca. 870 BC. "This figure was probably one of a pair which guarded an entrance into the private quarters of the king." Found in the North West Palace in Nimrud, in what is now Iraq. (British Museum, item #124561).

lized by Shamhat. His half year journey gave him a greater understanding of Enkidu's perspective, as he released animals from traps, wore minimal clothing and ate nuts, fruits, and vegetables. He forged a deep connection with the animals he saved and empathized with Enkidu's sadness when he left them after six months.

When the news of Enkidu's death reached Uruk, Sard Eil mourned the loss as much as Gilgamesh. Citizens gathered in the city square and wept for the great protector of Uruk. Even though Gilgamesh tamed Enkidu, Sard Eil recognized that Enkidu also tamed the uncontrollable desires of Gilgamesh. During the mourning, Sard Eil met his lifelong brother and partner Erishum. Erishum and Sard Eil shared a similar desire to immortalize Enkidu for his accomplishments. They travelled into the forest, escaping their civil duties to begin their quest to immortalize Enkidu.

In the forest, Erishum and Sard Eil began worshipping the goddess Aruru believing that she would protect them and grant them the same strength as Enkidu. Surviving in the wild, Sard Eil and Erishum thought Aruru blessed them with extreme strength and a connection with nature. While in nature, they met Leja, daughter of Shamhat, who was bringing people from the wild to civilization through beer, hot meals, and sex in honor of her mother's contribution to Uruk. The meeting between these three people became the foundation of the Enkidu's Lions.

To honor the duality of Enkidu, his wild upbringing and his civilized ending, Sard Eil and Erishum established the practice of spending half the year in nature and half the year in the city of Uruk. The half year in nature was in the season of spring and summer to symbolize Enkidu's creation and the half year in the city was in the season of fall and winter to symbolize the brotherhood between Gilgamesh and Enkidu.

During the nature season, Sard Eil, Erishum, and Leja promised to avoid meat, abstain from sex, and wear things only found in nature. They were the first individuals to live the way Enkidu lived before his encounter with Shamhat. Their experience living in nature taught them discipline and grace, valuing the lives of animals, and understanding the pitfalls of the wild. When the civilized season came, they returned to Uruk to practice their crafts and enjoy commerce, singing, and dancing.

Their first return to the city brought many questions from citizens, but once they received Sard Eil's reason a select few chose to join their cause. As the group expanded from three members to twenty in their first year, organizational systems needed to be founded. A leader needed to be chosen to ensure other members adhered to practicing the life of Enkidu, so they could achieve the perfect balance between civilization and nature. Thus, the annual celebration called the Feast of the Bull of Heaven was

founded. The first wrestling competition during this celebration was between Sard Eil and Erishum because they started the initial movement. Sard Eil won this competition, becoming the first Enkidan, who would establish the policies and practices of the year. Along with the Shamashites led by Erishum, they established the four main celebrations that would occur throughout their year.

Celebrations and holidays would signify the start or the halfway point of a season. The Feast of the Bull of the Heaven, a mighty feast where followers ate meat, and then engaged in a night of games, sex, and drinking, started the civilized season with the wrestling competition to decide the Enkidan of the year. Cherished Maiden occurred at the halfway point and followers dressed in their finest clothing all day for great meals, discussion, a speech from the Enkidan, and at night, the men decided their wife. The Turn of the New Leaf started the nature season and saw followers revert back to eating only nuts, fruits, and vegetables. Prancing of the Morning Sun was the halfway point in which followers would wear minimal clothing and run to the tallest mountain with no shoes. Those over the age of 16 that could not make it were forced out of Enkidu's Lions, as they were not qualified to continue living with nature.

Over the course of the first five years, the Enkidu's Lions transformed from twenty members to over 200. The amount of people in Enkidu's Lions became an issue for Uruk as a significant number of followers left the city for half the year, abandoning their civic duties. Elder Hanodeen openly opposed the growth of Enkidu's Lions and argued about their merits with Sard Eil on countless occasions. After a few months of Hanodeen calling for the execution of Sard Eil and Erishum, Sard Eil rallied his people to stand in the city market preaching their belief in having this essential balance between nature and civilization. Despite the fact that many people feared nature and its association with the unknown, Enkidu's Lions was able to convert an additional fifty people that day.

Angered by Sard Eil's resistance, Hanodeen gathered his sons to burn Sard Eil and his home, where the governing body of Enkidu's Lions met. They successfully burned down Sard Eil's home, but no inhabitants were injured. Three days later, Hanodeen perished from unknown causes, but Sard Eil interpreted Hanodeen's death as a sign from Enkidu that they were following the right path.

Sard Eil, who had already passed down the title of Enkidan and become a permanent member of the Shamashites, decided Enkidu's Lions needed a centralized location to practice their worship, celebrate their holidays, and where the governing body could meet. Erishum found a large three story building once used for commerce that

was right in front of the legendary statue of Enkidu. The building stood on a cliff that looked out onto the city and the forest, divided by the immense wall. When the current Enkidu and Sard Eil laid their eyes on this view, they revered it and blessed Aruru. With the building, now called the Temple of Brotherhood, Enkidu's Lions sought out the best artists and craftsmen to adorn their new place. Images of the wrestling match between Enkidu and Gilgamesh, the fight with Huwawa, the creation of the Cedar Gate, and the building of Enkidu's statue were depicted on the walls. Enkidu's Lions found many artifacts of Enkidu such as the traps he destroyed, the weapon he used against Huwawa, and cloth that wrapped Enkidu on his deathbed.

The establishment of a hierarchical leadership system brought order to their dealings during the civilized half of their year, yet they needed order during the nature part of the year, especially since so many individuals were leaving their homes and work. As membership grew, the warnings of Hanodeen were brought up again as many members were not fulfilling their civic duties. Thus, Erishum established the Worshippers of Aruru who would oversee the cult during the nature season. They were not there to enact policies, but to ensure that each member continued their practices even during harsh climates. Erishum also established the Devoted Brotherhood practice which would help ease tensions between the city and Enkidu's Lions as the nonmember brothers would complete the civic duties of their brother during the nature season.

With Devoted Brotherhood now enacted, Enkidu's Lions thrived throughout the countryside and in the city. They became advisors, guardians, and loyal citizens through their practices of balancing their wild side with their civic duties. What started out as a group of three that wanted to pay respects to their hero, turned into an organization of hundreds that believed Enkidu was the man everyone should strive to be.

Today

Enkidu's Lions enjoyed a prosperous three hundred years of existence, never expanding outside of Uruk's walls. They remained in the Temple of Brotherhood and even expanded the temple, so more members could participate during their gatherings. After Enkidu's Lions disappeared, the temple remained abandoned for a few years. Between the second Dynasty of Uruk and the third Dynasty of Uruk, the statue and the temple ceased to be prominent within the city and were torn down. The jewels of the statue were taken and refined for jewelry and precious stones, while the artifacts within the temple were dispersed throughout the region. The only records of the Enkidu's Lions were written stories found in urns deep within the city of Uruk. ■

COMPILED BY KYNA HAMILL AND CC202 STUDENTS

Playlist: The Good, the Bad, and the Categorical Imperative

A good will is good not because of what it effects, or accomplishes, not because of its fitness to attain some intended end, but good just by its willing. – Kant, trans. by Timmermann

THIS PLAYLIST IS NOT PHILOSOPHICAL because feeling *good* is so subjective and being *bad* is so darn fun. We are interpreting Kant pretty loosely here, but we hope you enjoy. You “Kant” go wrong if you dance! – KH

1. Lady be Good 🎵 Ella Fitzgerald, 1959
2. Johnny B. Goode 🎵 Chuck Berry, 1958
3. Everybody Wants to Rule the World 🎵 Tears for Fears, 1984
4. My Bad 🎵 Khalid, 2019
5. Bad Girls 🎵 M.I.A., 2010
6. U Should Know Better 🎵 Robyn + Snoop Dogg, 2010 (explicit!)
7. He’s the Greatest Dancer 🎵 Sister Sledge, 1979 (dedicated to Professor Lipton)
8. Rebel Rebel 🎵 David Bowie, 1974
9. Good as Hell 🎵 Lizzo, 2016
10. Doin’ it Right 🎵 Daft Punk, 2013 (dedicated to Professor Nelson)
11. Feeling Good 🎵 Nina Simone, 1965
12. Honesty 🎵 Billy Joel, 1978
13. You’ve Got to Stand for Something 🎵 Aaron Tippin, 1990
14. Youth 🎵 Shawn Mendes feat. Khalid, 2018
15. Sympathy for the Devil 🎵 Rolling Stones, 1968
16. Blackbird 🎵 The Beatles, 1968
17. The Gambler 🎵 Kenny Rogers, 1978
18. Bad, Bad Leroy Brown 🎵 Jim Croce, 1973
19. Closer to Fine 🎵 Indigo Girls, 1989
20. Good Thing 🎵 Fine Young Cannibals, 1989
21. Do You Know What Your Future Will Be? 🎵 Toploader, 1999
22. Murder on the Dancefloor 🎵 Sophie Ellis-Bextor, 2001
23. Stuck 🎵 Caro Emerald 2010
24. New Rules 🎵 Dua Lipa, 2017
25. Ain’t No Rest for the Wicked 🎵 Cage the Elephant, 2008
26. I Love It, Icona Pop, 2012 (dedicated to Professor Sims)



determined

type of clay

she is sculpted from

what is the face on her armor / dress
gorgon? Aegis?

Have attributes - Identify her with Aeg

where are her arms

It was so expensive
they needed
to pull down
the statue
to gain
money

Mass produced
of Athena

Modesty
she is the
virgin
mess

LILY CAMPBELL

John Milton's Higher Purpose

Milton's stated purpose in *Paradise Lost* is to justify God's ways to man, and he is rather successful in doing so. Specifically, Milton's justification of God's actions (or lack thereof) and the punishment given to Adam and Eve attempts to answer the most fundamental questions of Christianity, such as why mankind fell in the first place. Through the preservation of free will and justice, Milton's God is able to maintain his role as beneficent Creator, ultimately allowing humanity to experience an even greater good—namely, the Son.

Milton's work truly begins in Book III, where it is established that God has foreknowledge about Satan's plan to corrupt man. Not only is God watching the events transpire, from his "prospect high, / [. . .] past, present, future he beholds" (3.77-8). Knowing now what is going to happen, God has the opportunity to intervene; however, he also has the choice not to. The existence of God's multiple courses of action play into what Guggenheim Fellow Stephen M. Fallon has deemed "significant freedom," in which God has the choice to act or not act, but any choice he makes is good (448). That is, God has the "freedom to choose among equal alternative goods," and not interfering in Satan's plan is just as good as interfering (Fallon, 448). However, this alone is not enough to justify God's inaction because it blindly accepts God's goodness, giving no reason as to why God chooses not to stop Satan when given the chance.

To explain, God invokes the notion of free will in his human creations; in the same way God himself has the freedom to choose, so do Adam and Eve. "I form'd them free, and free they must remain," God insists, "[. . .] I else must change / Their nature" (3.124-6). J. Allan Mitchell, an English professor, critiques Milton's God, arguing that blaming it all on the humans' free will is a means for God to deny his responsibility (77). Though it is difficult to discern the validity of this statement, it is more likely that God is attempting to preserve both the free will of his creations and that of himself. For God to interfere with Satan's plan would be to usurp man's choice. The fact that man has free will is precisely what differentiates him from the rest of the animals who roam the earth, and it must be maintained if man is to remain man.

Furthermore, the preservation of man's free will also necessitates the preservation of justice. It makes sense that justice should dictate the consequences of good and bad choices arising from free will, but an issue emerges concerning the need for justice in

this scenario. If the purpose of justice is as previously stated, and God is inherently good (per the definition of “significant freedom”), then it follows that God created the world to be good, and man, created in God’s own image, was also meant to be good. Theoretically, no one would be making bad choices in this world of pure good, and justice would therefore not be needed to punish these nonexistent bad acts.

Obviously, evil is present in the narrative, which validates the need to preserve justice. This, however, creates a new dilemma for Milton, who must now justify the existence of evil in God’s good world. Mitchell asserts that God once again uses man’s free will to acquit himself, this time of having created sinful creatures (77). A much more plausible theory is put forward by writer Jarod K. Anderson: “In order to create a legitimately questionable but ultimately beneficent God, Milton employs various representations of otherness—elements that are literally or figuratively outside the rule of God” (198). Indeed, positioning these elements outside of God’s power can certainly allow Milton to justify their existence, but in doing so makes it appear as though Milton, a human, is freely dictating the limits of the Father. Milton is vindicated of this potential accusation by the simple logic: if something is deemed “good,” it is, by definition, not “bad.” This inherently necessitates the existence of something “bad” for something “good” to be compared to. Thus, if God’s world—and God himself—are to be called “good,” there must unquestionably exist within the universe something (and someone) evil. This system of logic is supported by Anderson, who claims, “Without otherness, there is no relativity [. . .], there is no way for the reader to question God’s actions and certainly no need for the poet to defend them” (202). Therefore, it is not Milton who dictates what is “good” or “bad,” but God himself; Milton, in creating those “othered” characters, simply provides God with the platform on which to do so. The fact that evil exists nonetheless changes the definition of free will from the theoretical scenario—the freedom to choose between good acts—to the realistic: the freedom to choose between acts both good and bad, which does demand that justice be intact.

Having demonstrated that the protection of free will requires the maintenance of justice, it is important to note mankind’s potentially questionable freedom in the poem and the implications that has on the nature of their punishment and thus their Maker. For God’s given penalty to be regarded as good and fair is predicated on the notion that Adam and Eve acted solely of their own volition. Whether or not the two actually possess free will, beyond God’s declaration that they do, could be a main source of critics’ doubt surrounding the clarity and ethics of God’s main judgment. Throughout the poem, uncertainty about free will can be drawn most logically from two concepts:

predetermined fate and the power of temptation.

The first of the two emerges with the idea that God is able to see the outcome of the fall before it has happened. If God can see the future, it would seem as though there is only one potential path of action, meaning Adam and Eve's decisions would not reflect their own choices, but rather would signify steps in a fixed series of events. In response to this, it is possible that God is simply viewing the result of whichever specific path they choose to go down. God, in this case, would not be dictating the progression of events—he would just be privy to the choice they are most likely to make or, through his all-knowing wisdom, the choice they certainly will make.

The second argument against God's punishment surrounds temptation and whether Satan's power is too strong to be overcome by the freedom of choice held by mere human beings. Mitchell claims that Satan's deception "deprived Eve of right judgement" and that "without right judgement, there can be no right choice" (77). To tackle this question, the very nature of human choice must be examined. If one is to accept Fallon's assertion that Milton's man makes choices based on reason, then it is sufficient that Eve's choice was maintained through logical reason (428); she heard the serpent's tale, wanted to become all-knowing, and decided to eat the apple. This reasoning is still born of deception, adding salience to Mitchell's original point. However, Adam was not tempted by the serpent—he chose to eat from the apple to avoid being separated from Eve. Eve may have lost her freedom of choice in some sense, but Adam certainly did not. Regarding whether or not these circumstances are deserving of punishment, God seems to believe that his one rule should have overridden the temptation, however powerful it may be: *Whatever wiles of Foe or seeming Friend. / For still they knew, and ought to have still / remember'd / The high Injunction not to taste that Fruit* (10.11-14). God does, nonetheless, take into account that man's free will may have been compromised through temptation by the fallen angels, and it is for this reason that "Man therefore shall find grace, / The other none" (3.130-1).

Additionally, God's given punishment must be defended especially as it pertains to the individual crimes of Adam and Eve. As was previously stated, Eve fell prey to the serpent's temptations; Adam did not. For this reason, Mitchell argues that it is unfair for God to punish them equally, since Adam was not tempted (76). God generalizes their acts by saying "man" was deceived, Mitchell posits, adding that God's misinterpretation of the situation leads to faulty punishment (76). Because God is all-knowing, it is unlikely that he simply misinterpreted the situation and unintentionally generalized "man's" deceit. This generalization must therefore be intentional on God's part,

and likely has more to do with the overall principle of the crimes than the specificity. In the grand scheme of things, God may intentionally generalize man's crime because it truly may not matter who was deceived in the first place. God gave humans free will, and though Adam was not the one initially deceived by Satan, he still made the choice to eat from the fruit. In this way, Adam and Eve's respective acts are nearly identical and thus deserving of nearly identical punishment. Mitchell's argument also leaves out the fact that Eve is not punished equally; for succumbing to temptation, she is also made to live the rest of her life subservient to Adam (10.195-6). Though Eve's deception initiated the fall, the act of eating the fruit seems to be the one deserving the most punishment because it is a direct violation of God's law. Moreover, had God decided to only punish Eve, Adam would not have the chance to find the grace and redemption God ultimately plans to give the fallen humankind.

In a like manner to its specificity, the punishment must be defended in terms of its severity. According to Mitchell, the curse of hereditary sin is too severe for the original crime, and it is unfair to punish humankind for the crimes of its ancestors (80). The punishment is necessary, however, as an example of the same justice God sought to preserve by choosing not to intervene. It would seemingly be both hypocritical and fruitless for God to make a point of arguing for justice only to decide against using it. Perhaps it is more accurate to think of the punishment not as a curse on the entire human race, but instead as a sentence in the modern sense. In a traditional modern judicial system, someone who a judge has found guilty of committing a crime is removed from society and sentenced to spend a set amount of time paying his/her dues to society in an effort to work toward redemption. This sentence continues until the criminal has the chance to demonstrate to a judge that he/she is rehabilitated, at which time the criminal will be reintroduced into society as a regular citizen. Similarly, Adam and Eve are found guilty by God and are subsequently removed from Eden. In the years spent on Earth after the fall, humankind must redeem itself, prove its worth, and earn back God's trust by demonstrating its dedication to the Father. When the Son returns on Judgment Day, those who have truly redeemed themselves will be allowed to reenter the society of Heaven. Looking at it from this perspective, the severity of Adam and Eve's sentence is upheld because it allows them time to work their way back to the rank they initially held. Moreover, this sentence pales in comparison to that of the fallen angels, who will never find grace (3.133). By all accounts, this is an example of God showing mercy towards humans, as it is well within his capacity to banish Adam and Eve from Heaven and bar them from ever returning.

Finally, it was this mercy that God always intended to show toward his creations. Even before the fall, God states that “Mercy first and last shall brightest shine” (3.133). God can only show his mercy in a situation where mercy can be given; he cannot be merciful if Adam and Eve do nothing wrong. The fall, therefore, is a necessary part of God’s ultimate plan—his declared “Eternal purpose” of mankind’s salvation (3.172–3). Salvation brings with it a broader concept subsequently termed “greater good,” which could not otherwise be achieved. Adam describes the ways in which greater good arises from the fall: “O goodness infinite, goodness immense! / That all this good of evil shall produce, / And evil turn to good; more wonderful / Than that which by creation first brought forth / Light out of darkness!” (12.469–73). Here, Adam reinforces the idea that the goodness coming from the fall is greater than the goodness already inherent to God’s world when man is created. This greater good has benefits both for God and man. Though God must sacrifice the Son, the notion of salvation offers the chance to demonstrate his mercy, which would otherwise go unknown. Additionally, salvation would reinstate the purity of his human creations by essentially weeding out those who are not completely dedicated. Salvation would also offer God a world devoid of evil, as it calls for the second coming of the Savior, in which the Son is to “dissolve Satan with his perverted World” (12.546–7). Given the earlier arguments about the existence of good necessitating the existence of evil, it is possible that, with that logic, a world consisting only of good may not be achievable. However, one might consider the possibility that evil need not exist in that world, since its existence would serve as a comparison of what is not good; the concept of evil, having existed previously, may serve as existence enough.

For humans, greater good is similarly unattainable through means other than salvation and offers equally magnificent benefits. Most notably, greater good will manifest itself in the Son, who will offer salvation only to those he considers worthy of it. The Son will bring with him divine compassion and religion. Though Adam and Eve will temporarily lose their place in Paradise, Adam is told they will “possess / A Paradise within [...], happier far” (12.586–7). The quest for salvation brought about by the fall also offers the beginning of a new adventure for Adam and Eve, who are now truly the authors of their own fate. As they leave Paradise, “The World [is] all before them” and they are free to go wherever they please, so long as they abide by the conditions necessary for their salvation (12.646).

Overall, Milton’s logic—though a bit uncertain regarding some instances of free will—is for the most part quite sound. By the end of the poem, God is still able to be

seen in his archetypal benevolent manner, despite having just taken part in a narrative that might otherwise raise questions about his motives. In this sense, Milton has certainly achieved his overall goal of justifying the ways of God to man in what can be broken down into a series of logical steps. Free will is an essential aspect of human nature, which God chooses to protect by not intervening to prevent the fall. Because there are evil objects outside God's control, free will encompasses the potential for both good and bad choices, so justice must be preserved. This is Milton's justification for God's inaction. Justification for God's punishment then follows: Adam and Eve eat from the fruit, God exercises the judgment he preserved through inaction, but ultimately shows mercy so that salvation may be achieved. With this salvation comes a greater good in the form of the Son, who rids the world of all evil.

By ending the poem in this manner, Milton offers his readers a sense of closure. The reader who abides by the Christian faith is imbued with hopefulness that the human race will be saved and the evils of the modern world will disappear. Even for readers who do not identify with religion or identify with a religion other than Christianity, the poem's ending serves as a source of inspiration for the endless possibilities of mankind's future. For those who agree with Milton's justification of God, the poem offers answers to questions that may have been previously deemed unanswerable—questions surrounding the origin of the human species, the evolution of right and wrong, and perhaps an explanation for why religious practices have survived the test of time and are still seen in modern society. As such, Milton is able to give his poem a higher purpose, and thus, a reason to be read. ■

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RAPHAEL INDRISANO

The Dream of Socrates

My relationship with Socrates started when I was twenty-two, and it continues to this day. At the time it began, I was a hopeless drunk and street punk on my way to becoming a drug addict. It was a time of deep depravity in my life. Not only did I not care about anything at the time, it was worse. I did not even care that I did not care. In fact, I really liked the lifestyle of being a complete reprobate and a burgeoning drug addict. I was twenty-two and could see no future. So what did I give a fuck. On top of that, it was the height of the Viet Nam War and as far as I was concerned I was going to Viet Nam and I was going to die there. It seemed like my fate. I had a lot of evidence to support this belief. Out of the myriad of “beefs,” or streets fights, I got in, whether in the North End or at Boston Trade High School, I lost way more than I ever won. I took some pretty vicious beatings, two of which caused my Mom to not recognize me when I walked through the door. With that kind of record, my chances in Viet Nam seemed slim to none. So going to Viet Nam meant it was going to be *tutto finite*—all over—at a very young age.

The North End back in the 70s was nothing like it is today. It was rough and hard, but it was soft and tender too. There was a lot of violence and there was a lot of love. It was both the scariest and the safest place I ever lived. I felt so alive in those days! Growing up in the North End in the early seventies, like my friend Peter Catizone said, was like living in a Fellini movie. Everyone was a ‘character’ on the stage of our streets, no two were the same, and there was always something going on: good, bad, funny, sad, violent, or tragic—and often all of these happening at the same time. But whatever happened, it happened with passion; and then it was talked about with even more passion. Someone’s story became everyone’s story. I loved being out on those streets with my goombas. We were one big ‘tribe,’ all of us, from elderly to infants, all so different from each other, but also much like one another because we were all so different from the world around us. And that world had a war raging.

By some miracle, I got into the National Guard and both my tour of duty in Viet Nam and death were postponed. The Army was a strange place, especially Basic Training. Yet, it was a lot like the North End. They were teaching you to be tough and to kill people if you had to. You learned to be part of a tribe that was separate from the social structure of the society. But there were differences. You had to conform to a dif-

ferent hierarchy. In the Army it was blind obedience to authority; in the North End it was blind disobedience to authority. In the Army, any revolt against authority was smashed. In the North End, every revolt was a celebration. As for the food, what can I say? When you come from the North End where your mother cooks the best Italian food in the world and go into an Army Mess Hall, you go from Heaven's *cuchina* to Hell's kitchen.

After Basic Training, on my first weekend of National Guard Duty, I was in a two-and-a-half-ton army truck going to our training camp on Cape Cod. There were two other Guardsman in the truck with me, MIT professors. The truck was only allowed to go twenty-five miles per hour so it would take us five hours to get to our base camp. They were talking about some pretty heavy shit. I thought I was getting a college education. Of course, you have to remember who I was in the back of that truck with those two professors. In the sixth grade, I got polio. I went from an honor student in Saint Mary's elementary school to a silent, extremely withdrawn, academically falling student. I went from taking good care of the way I looked to not washing and not brushing my teeth and letting my school uniform fall apart. On top of that, I stuttered. The nuns classified me as "retarded" and passed me each year just to move me on. The High School I went to—Boston Trade School—was the dumping ground for students with learning and/or discipline problems. Only seven of the 48 students in the cabinet making class passed, two of whom could not even read. So, although I could hardly understand most of what these two MIT professors were saying, the conversation fascinated me. I listened in awe and silence for the whole five-hour trip.

We got to the base and set up camp. It was Saturday night and one of the professors was really drunk. He came over to talk to me. To my surprise, he was very direct and this was not an intellectual or abstract conversation. He told me that he envied me. Astonished, I asked why? He had a world class education, lived in a lovely house, and had a beautiful wife. I was a street-fighting goomba destined to get shot, go to prison, or die from a drug overdose. I lived in a small apartment with a bathroom in the hallway. I not only did not have a girlfriend at the time, but I was not even having sex—despite being in the midst of a sexual revolution. He had what I thought I wanted: the American Dream. So, what he said next really touched me. He said that he envied me because I had a huge capacity to love and he did not. He also told me that on the surface I was pretending to be happy but deep down I was depressed. He said that all I wanted to do was intellectual and creative things. He said I should take drugs because they would act like a catalyst for me to feel the pain I was keeping myself

numb to. Then, I would realize that all I wanted was to do was intellectual and creative things. I listened and went to my tent. I thought about it and came to the realization that he was right. He knew me. I do not know how he knew it but he did.

I ended up getting out of the National Guard for medical reasons a few months after this conversation. About six months later, I remember being on my bed in the North End and feeling like I was at the edge of a dark abyss. It was worse than being depressed. I felt like I had no feelings and no future. Then it hit me. I thought that I would try out what this mysterious professor from MIT said: I would take drugs. Being a reprobate, the idea of taking heavy drugs appealed to me. I had friends in the North End where the drug culture of the sixties was beginning to gain ground. In fact, there was a variety of sub species of North Enders in the genus family of "North Ender." You had a sub species that managed to do well in school and go to college, or who got blue collar jobs, and managed not to not get addicted to alcohol, drugs or criminality. Then, there was a sub species that was addicted to alcohol and did not do well in school. Next, there was a sub species that were addicted to heroin. Each of these groups had different "crews" (a crew was like a gang except they were not really a gang because the organized crime in the neighborhood—the Mafia—was the gang). Crews were like platoons in a company of men in the Army. There were some crews that mingled with drug addicts, alcoholics and non-alcoholics. There were few crews that did not drink at all or do drugs. Among these were crews that were intensely hostile to the kids who did drugs and used to beat them up and even shoot some of them. We had our own war going on in the North End.

There were two basic sides in this war. The kids who did drugs thought of themselves as "going Hip." This meant you were growing your hair long, making friends outside the North End, listening to rock 'n' roll—and taking drugs. On the other side were the "Wannabees," the kids who wanted to acquire a reputation for being violent and tough in order to gain access to the underground life in the North End (the Mafia). If you wanted to gain access to the underground in the North End you had to be tough, have huge balls and acquire a reputation where you would follow the rules of the underground of the North End. The family that was ahead of the Mafia at that time also wanted someone who was smart and was capable of being cool under the most stressful situation as well as capable of violence. One particularly violent Wannabe was a man by the name of WF. His strength was his ruthless capacity for violence. With the advent of drugs at the time, the rulers of the Mafia were finding that drugs brought the police into the neighborhood. So, they did not approve of the youth culture of the

sixties and seventies; being Hip, because this was bad for business. And what was bad for business in that Family was bad with a capital B. What was bad for business was usually responded to with violence. WF and his crew, none of whom did drugs, took on the job as enforcers against drugs. They really took center stage. It was not just being beaten with fists; they went after kids with bats. If you were like me, you were afraid of WF and his gang. When you saw him on the same sidewalk as you, you walked to the other side of the street and hoped he kept walking on his side.

So, I kept a low profile and kept taking drugs—acid. After about three months of this it hit me that the MIT professor had been right: I was depressed and had been for a long time. So, I decided, “what the fuck, I might as well read some books. If he was right about the depression, then maybe he was right about the intellectual and creative part too. There was a problem with reading, however. In my house we rarely read, so there were only three or four books available. Three philosophy books. One was the *Dialogues* of Plato, and the other two, Marcus Aurelius’s *Mediations* and Saint Augustine’s *Confessions*. I chose the dialogues of Plato. I knew that this was the book that I had to read. The book pulled me towards it like a magnet.

Keep in mind that at the time this was the second book that I had read in my twenty-two years. I only read one book in Boston Trade School High. It was *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*. Our English teacher had us read it in the class. Every time we went into that class he had us read for the entire class. No one did any homework. So there I was, reading my second book, the *Dialogues* of Plato, featuring Socrates. *Ba da bing!* I started in the late afternoon, and read it until I finished, around eleven pm. I was amazed at not only how fast I read this one book but also by how I had only read one other book in my life and there I was, finishing a book in a night. Here was a person who, when people were going to put him to death unjustly, said, “I honor and love you, but I would rather obey God than you.” At that time if you stepped on my toe I wanted to kill you, and I had almost killed a couple people for less. So, I was just amazed by this. How can a man say this? I went to Catholic school and they taught of a man called Jesus who taught unconditional love for everyone and forgiveness. He forgave those who put him to death and loved them who crucified him. I always felt that they the Priests and Nuns were trying to shove this down my throat. It was just a myth for me. On the other hand, Socrates was flesh and blood and I felt that was with him when I read the dialogues, holding his hand as he went through what he had to go through. I felt a kinship towards Socrates. In some unconscious way he became a surrogate father taking the place of my father who died just two years earlier. I think that

maybe he was hitting upon my collective unconsciousness in some way. The second thing that Socrates said, which really threw me around the world in twenty days, was that a man could have anything he wanted: health, wealth, and happiness if he merely told the truth. Now, at the time I lied, cheated, stole, and did anything to get what I wanted. I was only honest with my family, friends and the Tribe of the North End, who were the only people that I felt I had any sense of integrity and morality. Socrates was saying that we should love all people and be good to all people. Even those outside the tribe! Even people that wanted to hurt me.

As I finished the Dialogues, I was intensely galvanized. I just could not stand still. So, I went out for a walk. I did not walk in the North End but around the periphery. Time passed. I walked along Boston's Waterfront, which at the time was deserted and abandoned. We called it "Ghost Town." Then, to my surprise I started to walk out of the North End down the financial district. I realized that there had been an invisible barrier there for me which I did not know how it got there or who put it there. The streets of the Financial District at that time before gentrification were devoid of people. The only people I saw were homeless drunks. I continued through the empty Downtown to the old red-light district called "the Combat Zone" which I participated in in my teen age years. Then, I started to walk through the Public Gardens, something I never did just living a half-hour walk from them. It was like a Whole World opening up to me. I walked down those green streets lined with trees: Commonwealth Ave, where there was grass and trees and tall granite buildings where only one family lived, unlike the North End where multiple families of eight or ten people lived in three or four rooms, with no greenery on the streets. It was funny though. I was not jealous or even bitter that people could live in so much affluence and we did not. We had an affluence of a different kind. I remember talking to Jerry Ameno, Captain Carl's father. He said that the North End was a special place. I asked him why? He said that the love here was just amazing. Jerry was an architect who somehow managed to achieve this coming from a depressed area that was also stigmatized because it was Italian—being Italian was not seen as a good thing in those days. I heard it again from a young boy. I was down the North End Pool with JR and Mikey Fud and we were talking about how crazy the North End was and this young boy who could not be over eight said, "Hey, I know the North End is crazy, but I would rather live around a bunch of people who are crazy and love you than people that are not crazy and don't love you. Out of the mouth of babes.

I did not know how far I walked, when I started to head home. I did know that

it was the middle of the night. I just remember being at Government Center under the abstract statue of Thermopylae commemorating that battle between the three hundred Spartans and the mighty army of the Persians. As you probably know, the Spartans fought till their death. On their monument were the words:

*Go, tell the Spartans, stranger passing by
That here, obedient to their laws, we lie.*

And so, I lay under that statue of Thermopylae. It looked like a brass dinosaur who was a Spartan warrior standing on three legs. I remember that there were no thoughts going through my head. There was only a certain kind of silence and calmness, which I had never experienced in my life as I looked towards the east where the sun was beginning to rise. I had never stood up all night to greet the dawn without sleeping, even on acid. Then, suddenly a thought occurred to me that seemed to come not from me, but from outside of me: “I am going to do an experiment. We will see if this man called Socrates was bull-shitting us or was being straight. I will start to live my life telling the truth and loving all those around me unconditionally.” I knew that I wanted this more than anything. I embraced the commitment that I was going to live as well as I could and die as well as I could like this Athenian who somehow was a father to me. Not quite knowing what I was doing, I figured that if knowledge was virtue and virtue was essential to leading a good life, I should go to school. And so I began my odyssey. I worked hard and went to school nights. I had to take a train ride to Roxbury—the African American part of Boston—in the middle of the race riots. I went to therapy at twenty-five and went to college after two years of picking up what I did not learn in high school.

But it was not easy. Most people in the North End did not see education as something that pulled you out of poverty. As for a way to cultivate yourself—forget about it! That thought was anathema. I remember a guy we called “Doctor Mike” saw me reading a book called *Problems in Philosophy*. Mike said that the problem of the problem with Philosophy was Philosophy itself. I did not know if he was saying that because he felt that learning philosophy would make a person too conceptual or that learning anything other than to make money was a mistake. But I knew it was not a statement of approval. And it was not only Mike. When people would ask why I going to college I would say that I loved it; the response was invariably something like “get the fuck out of here” or “why are you doing something like that, wasting your time,” just “what the

fuck is wrong with you?”

On top of that, I still struggled to make a living. I was working marginal carpenter jobs that were really miserable. I was going from one armpit of construction to another. And the drugs were bringing crime to the North End. I remember one night I parked my car in front of the Pizzeria Regina. Out of all the parking spaces I parked in I remember parking that night in that space in mid-November. When I woke up the next day to go to work, I found that my car was broken into and the tools stolen.

I was devastated. I fell into an abyss of hopelessness and despair. Before I went to bed I thought of death. Thinking maybe I will get lucky and not get up to do this tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow, again and again and again, the same thing all over again and again. Sleep came hard, but I did succeed in succumbing to death counterfeited, falling deep into unconsciousness. There I had a dream. It was the beginning of dawn and I was walking down a wheat field in full bloom. A golden wheat field of hope all around me. As I walked down this path in this sea of golden sunlight and golden wheat I could see a figure of a man walking toward me. As he came closer, I recognized and knew that he was Socrates. He was wearing a *himation*, which was a simple two-piece garment around the body. I was stunned. I did not know what to say as he approached me. He came right up to me and much to my astonishment he spoke in a heavy North End accent.

“Hey, kid. How you doin?”

That he spoke in a way I was used to made me feel completely at ease. It felt like I was talking to one of my brothers from the North End. I replied:

“I don’t know, Socrates. I am trying so hard to do as well as I can and live an honest and noble life like you lived, but it seems so hopeless. It seems that for me, the streets are just too long.” I looked down and then up into his smiling face.

Still speaking like a North Ender, he said, “Don’t worry about a thing, kid. You are going in the right direction.”

And he pointed down an earthen path surrounded by golden wheat and the sun was beginning to rise at the end of the path. He did not say anything else with words, but I knew his thoughts. They added up to this: “A man who is good for anything ought to calculate that death is not an evil because no evil can happen to a virtuous man, whether in life or after death.” So, I knew that all was well and all will be well.

After that dream, I was in a state of euphoria for about six months. I stopped taking acid. How I viewed the world shifted from a mean-spirited place where I could not cultivate a life, to a place where life had the possibility of being rich and fertile, and

more importantly, I experienced being fertile. Because of this I was more responsive and optimistic to my life and life in general. Socrates did that for me. He pointed the way.

And now, as I enter my seventh decade, I find that I still work on being Socrates. I am a lifetime student. I still go to therapy to know myself. I have been going to a poetry class for over twenty-five years. I have been doing transformational seminars and courses. I still read and work on my ethical and spiritual self. Socrates is a constant presence. I am seventy and can see death approaching, and I find that I want over only one thing. That I can say before I lie in my grave:

*Stranger, thou who passes by, go and tell that here I lie,
obedient to the promise: to be as Socrates was, so long ago.*

“If you saw me after dark, it wasn’t me.
It was Dmitri, my doppelgänger.”

– Yuri Corrigan

“*Abandon every hope, who enter here.*” These words—their aspect was obscure—I read inscribed above a gateway, and I said: ‘Master, their meaning is difficult for me.’ And he to me, as one who comprehends: ‘Here one must leave behind all hesitation...’”

– *Inferno*, Canto III

JONATHAN HAN

Las Casas's Rhetorical Failings

Bartolomé De Las Casas's *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* illustrates a pointed attack on the Spaniards' ill treatment of the Indians in the New World. The work is both dedicated and addressed to the Prince of Spain, Philip II; at the end of the account, Las Casas addresses Philip II, claiming that "the Crown has not shown itself strong enough to put a stop to these injustices" (130, in Stafford Poole's translation published by Northern Illinois University Press). With the royal audience in mind throughout the text, Las Casas attempts to persuade the court that it must do more, with varying degrees of success.

There are instances and extensive passages when Las Casas's rhetoric loses its effectiveness. The saying, "the death of one is a tragedy, the death of a million is a statistic," certainly rings true in *A Short Account*, as Las Casas estimates the death of many millions of natives. The relentless accumulation of tragedy becomes numbing, when the death of one native in the beginning of the book becomes indistinguishable from the death of another native at the end. Las Casas certainly attempts to offer a gradation of suffering, stating in his description of the Kingdom of Venezuela, near the end of the book, that "the Venezuela expedition was incomparably more barbaric than any we have so far described" (96). This superlative, a rhetorical device, is unconvincing, because Las Casas has already described rape, mutilation, and death. The adverb "incomparably" is ironically apt, considering the comparison is unnecessary and borders on inconsiderate. Quantitatively, to burn down a house full of men in Venezuela is worse than mutilating a child in front of his mother in Yucatán, but only quantitatively (98; 74). Indeed, the overwhelming violence and destruction is numbing, but the decision to fit the atrocities to a scale, having to distinguish one anguish from another, is perhaps also proof of a gradual desensitization.

The inability to distinguish one death from another is at the core of Las Casas's rhetorical failings. For one, he does not name the Spaniards who have committed the atrocities, instead only informing Philip II of their station. There was one instance when Las Casas names one of the blackguards, "a certain Juan Garcia," to which the footnotes point out that the name "is too common for any identification to be possible" (77). The hesitation to provide names could suggest that regardless of their identity, those in power would still commit heinous crimes. Despite the possible justification,

the omission nonetheless reduces the effectiveness of the account, as it strips the crime of the perpetrator's identity. In addition, the Spanish writer does not often name any of the Indians, with the exception of Kings and the nobility (21). Much like his limited descriptions of the Spaniards, the natives in *A Short Account* do not seem fully-formed:

The simplest people in the world—unassuming, long-suffering, unassertive, and submissive—they are without malice or guile, and are utterly faithful and obedient...the notions of revenge, rancor, and hatred are quite foreign to them...They are innocent and pure in mind and have a lively intelligence (9-10)

The docile population in Thomas More's *Utopia* comes to mind, with the same one-dimension characteristics. "Gentle lambs," as Las Casas would also call them, alludes to the ideal Christians these natives could become, and refers back to the evangelical purpose that brought many Spaniards to the New World. However, the upstanding purity remains unbelievable, portraying these natives as both more and less human—with overwhelming goodness and underwhelming depth.

Although there are weaker parts in his account, there are points when Las Casas is successful in his rhetoric. Keeping his royal audience in mind, the Spanish writer sets up a three-pronged argument that structures his account. Namely, Las Casas focuses on the political, economic, and religious repercussions that follow the annihilation of the native population, the three explained by Brother Marcos de Niza, whom Las Casas quotes: "The way the Spanish have behaved has been an offence to God and a disservice to the Crown; the Treasury has been defrauded" (114). Each category, aided by the flooding illustrations of savagery, serves to demonstrate the contradictions between the violent means and the upright ends.

First, Las Casas effectively lays out the political costs that come with the destruction of the Indies. Although he does not consistently provide specific names for the Indians, he often sketches out a simple political hierarchy in many of the regions he writes about: "The king [...] had as vassals several extremely powerful local leaders... the king himself was dutiful and virtuous...much devoted to the King and Queen of Spain" (18-19). The violence was seemingly intended to subjugate the natives, but the destruction of the Indies led to the loss of a structured political fealty. Las Casas later explains the difficulty of achieving such fealty, "were a stranger suddenly to issue a demand [...] 'You shall henceforth obey a foreign king, whom you have never seen nor heard of'" (53). Moreover, Las Casas warns of misrepresentation of the Spanish

crown, when describing one bandit who proclaimed before slaughtering the natives: "Let it be known to you that there is [...] one King of Castile who is the rightful owner of all these lands" (33). The Spanish author reports on the ruination of a sovereign's reputation, again contributing to the loss of political loyalty. In other cases, the King's authority is not at all introduced, as when in Yucatán, "no one had ever breathed a word [...] about there being any king save the governor who mistreated and slaughtered [the natives]" (75-76). Las Casas illustrates how the political complexity of a corrupt colony can erode into the simple doctrine that might is right, with the bandit leaders displacing kings, those across an ocean and those subjugated by the threat of slavery and massacre.

Second, and related to corruption, Las Casas also took note of the economic costs that were incurred due to the destruction, which had significant importance as the Americas were rich in gold. Occasionally, Las Casas would include fiscal details to his account, for example:

The total value of the gold stolen from that kingdom during these few years [...] amounted to no more than a million castilians, and of those only some three thousand ever found their way into the royal coffers (34).

Similar to how he had reported on the number of deaths, by including the quantifiable, Las Casas raises the authoritativeness of his account. Shifting the focus to economics of robbery and destruction may suggest indifference or the numbing aforementioned, but nevertheless introduces a new point in the argument.

Third, Las Casas condemns the atrocities from the perspective of religiosity. He frequently discusses how the Indians would make good Christians, with their peaceful dispositions, themselves children of God. The destruction not only depletes the population of the Americas, but also the Kingdom of Heaven. However, Las Casas's religious argument takes full form when he recounts the opposition between pious figures and vicious monsters. In Yucatán, the friars of Saint Francis preached peacefully amongst the local natives, only to be interrupted by Spaniards, who forced the local lords to sell idols to the same natives (75-77). The conflict is perhaps encapsulated by the letters from the bishop of Santa Marta and Brother Marcos de Niza, both of whom Des Las Casas quotes (81-83). His argument strengthened by a religious authority, Las Casas is able to condemn the Spanish bandits not only for crimes against the Kingdom of Spain but also the Kingdom of God.

Knowing Las Casas can create a persuasive, sound argument, it is a wonder why there are the uncharacteristic, rhetorical lapses. The answer, perhaps, lies in the fact that Las Casas is writing a shortened account. In his prologue, he acknowledges that the Prince, to whom the book is dedicated, may “have never found the time to read the Account” (7). Consequently, the Spanish writer presents the “Short Account, which is but a brief digest of the man and various outrages” (ibid). The limitation has certainly hampered the scrupulous account, as the intended audience has no time for details: there are multiple instances when the destruction of a whole region would be reduced to a single paragraph (26; 85). Las Casas is certainly aware of these constraints when he writes: “I am well aware that I can hardly recount one atrocity in a thousand” (43-4). But he has to. To a certain extent, despite the numbness, by packing the atrocities into a statistical account, Las Casas allows room for the terrible imagination to consider what a longer account would include.

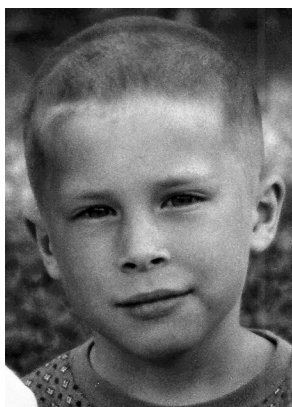
In response to why the persons described lack depth, in particular the portrayal of angelic natives and the demonic Spaniards, perhaps Las Casas had to illustrate these persons as definite. If Las Casas opened up the possibility of a savage Spaniard seeking peace, and a docile native turning bloodthirsty, then the Crown’s support in implementing laws and sending “fresh and uncorrupt officials” would not be necessary (129). Instead, an opponent might argue, a change of heart is all that is necessary. ■

“Hell is us on our worst days.”

– Yuri Corrigan

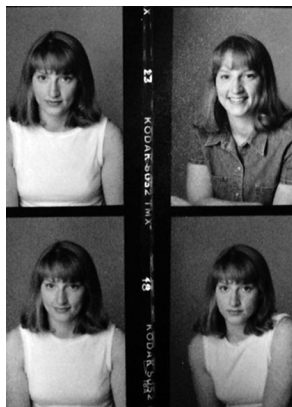
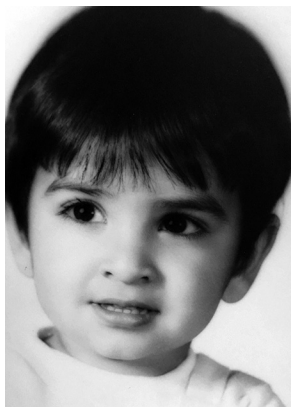
“I think of this part of *The Odyssey* as ‘Telemachus takes a gap year.’”

– Kyna Hamill



Faculty Throwbacks

Thanks to the help of a network of trusted and discreet sources, the Journal has been able to obtain photographic evidence that some of our faculty had lives before the Core. Clockwise from top left: David Green in 1960; Stephanie Nelson in high school; Sassan Tabatabai as an undergrad; Kyna Hamill at the Thunder Bay airport at age 1, and in college; Tabatabai in toddlerhood; and Green (right) with a friend in Castletownsend, Ireland, 1975.



JOSEPH WATERMAN

Six Analects

The following extracts are drawn from “The Acquisition of the Moment,” a set of aphoristic passages written in 1991 “in the style and honor of Friedrich Nietzsche” for a meeting of The Wranglers, an undergraduate discussion society active in the early days of the Core Curriculum. That group was looked to as a model by the founders of the current Core student association, The Word & Way society. – Eds.

A Doomed Flight

Man today believes that he will soon and must take flight from the body into some world purely of the mind. Have we forgotten that we exist in the universe as an appearance, as well as a true being?

The Mystic

After that man, who fathomed himself a sage, passed through the gate towards which we all endeavor, he returned to say, “After long trials and meditation I did not find myself at all. But I did find...”

Implicit within that which follows lies the most fundamental secrets of the creative, and hence the world. Considered in terms of universal content, the messages from mysticism to mysticism vary little, mostly in poetry. It is in the relationships between mysticism and religious authority that we find our answers—also the latter in light of this saying of Maimonides: “no one is worth to enter paradise who has not first taken his fill of bread and meat.” Everything of dialectic, genius, and the strange chirality of truth lie in these words.

Nietzsche’s Transvaluation

With Nietzsche’s profound exhortation, “develop an intellectual conscience!” we should surely walk on new paths, test the horizon of this strange vista of morality of thought that points its finger at no one else. In this new realm is a transfiguration of moral thought as we have known it. Principles that have always applied to the actions of man, now rearrange themselves as principles applied to the thought of man. How should one think!

Anything New Under the Sun?

The tacit belief, almost become sentiment, in a historical presentism that only sees itself in everything at bottom says, "Now is the only time there is." We especially see this in the petty qualms of social politics, environmentalism, and that speech used against others—sophistry at its most powerful—political-correctness. In ignorance, our majority, society, blinded by their own preciously misunderstood creations, obey and coo without the knowledge that they even obey. O that poetry once again had its place, to utter its fair winds. Epistemology, now set adrift, would again part fog and dangerous waters instead of creating them.

This, perhaps, is philosophy's greatest task: to save the poet!

Would Hegel Lose Sleep?

Viewing history as a teleological process was Hegel's most popular concept. According to this theory, revolutions occur when opposing views arise contra the old ones. There is then an ensuing struggle—an antithesis—and finally a synthesis. In the past century the Western world has seen no new rise of contending beliefs. Rather, it has only witnessed in unconscious despair the brutal death and evaporation of its old self, much like a snake who sheds but yields no fresh skin. Now, since Perestroika and the removal of the Berlin Wall—both events hailed unreflectingly as wonderful—the West is seeing itself used as a model of democratic government. How strange that we have been put on a pedestal right at that very moment when we are so unsure of ourselves.

Nature's Last Stand

The idea of substance was so harmfully discarded, despite the fact that this notion served certain function in our thought and being. Its ghost has resurfaced and will continue to make itself known, in fresher and more deceiving guises. It is quite a shame that most believed there was nothing lost in this 'good riddance' of this Western philosophy's 'tissue of errors.' The concept 'nature' has suffered the same fate at the hands of our society. We now seem to regard nature only as docile, open to our command, neglecting the wrathful and sublime aspects. These latter qualities have been predominant throughout history, up until the advent of 'technology.' Nature does not forget and repays us with devilry in the form of infirmities of character sanctioned good by our society. We will certainly see, the closer we look, this nature returning itself, as it has before, in newer and more terrifying guises: in the political. ■

QUINN ANGELOU-LYSAKER

A Marxist Analysis of Contemporary Identity Politics

Karl Marx's "On the Jewish Question" at first appears wildly contradictory to his values. Why would Marx, a staunch proponent of revolution, look down upon Jewish people's effort to liberate their community? What issue could he possibly raise with an oppressed people demanding civil rights? Upon further inspection, Marx's analysis of the Jewish community's struggle for political emancipation in Prussia contains many insights on the potential for today's identity politics movement to divide or unite the working class. In some instances, a fight against one type of oppression (anti-semitism, racism, sexism, etc.) can focus on political liberty, and organizing becomes isolated and exclusive to the group affected. When organizing lacks a class-based perspective, Marx argues that it becomes short-sighted. This type of movement for political emancipation falls short of human emancipation. In other cases, anti-racist or feminist organizing points the way toward a broader struggle. If activists are willing to collaborate with workers of all backgrounds and develop a program with specific demands on class issues, sectional issues can lead to revolutionary conclusions of true emancipation.

Before applying Marx's critiques to today's political movements, it is necessary to have a firm grasp on his critique of the Jewish movement in Prussia. Marx makes a distinction between what he calls 'political emancipation' and 'human emancipation.' Before beginning his argument, he takes for granted that Jewish people are seeking political emancipation, which he defines as "the emancipation of the state from Judaism, Christianity, and religion in general" (Marx 32). This concept is essentially the separation of church and state. Jewish people imagined a society with a secular state where they would be protected from discrimination. They wanted to enjoy religious freedom and to pursue economic prosperity alongside all other members of society, which they knew was only possible by removing Christianity from the state. Jewish people wanted liberty in terms of opportunity—the freedom to legitimately gain private property—without their Judaism as a barrier.

Marx believes that this form of political emancipation "represents great progress" and quotes Hegel in saying that the state should indeed be separate from religion (35).

To separate the state from religion is to “[affirm] itself purely and simply as a state” (32). A secular state is no longer distracting its subjects by masquerading as some kind of spiritual authority as well as a government. By stripping it of religion, the people see the state plainly as a governing political body. (To be clear, Marx advocated for the abolition of organized religion as a whole. That discussion disconnects the text from today’s political movements. For our purposes, it is more useful to examine the limitations of political emancipation in terms of liberating workers.)

Marx argues that a secular state and economic liberty will not truly free the Jewish people. While he prefers a secular state to a religious one, the pursuit of ‘liberty’ focuses on the rights of the individual. By acquiring liberty, working people withdraw into themselves and see one another as competition. Even if the Jewish worker gains equal footing with Christian workers under the law, he is not guaranteed prosperity. He has to be “wholly preoccupied with his private interest and acting in accordance with his private caprice” (43). It is only through competitive, self-interested thinking that he will find security. Superficially they may have rid their government of anti-semitism, but by becoming individualists the Jewish people fail to see the potential for a radically new and better system.

Marx uses the Jewish pursuit of political emancipation as an example of how liberty as a concept scatters working people. Marx says that liberty is not “founded upon the relations between man and man, but rather upon the separation of man from man” (42). By this Marx means that ‘liberty’ builds a sense of impenetrable individuality into each person. The ‘liberated’ person sets out into the world knowing he must seize his spot. Under a secular state, the only barrier between any one person and success is the existence of other people with the same goals. He sees himself and his interests as unitary. Liberty as a ‘free-for-all’ of financial prosperity causes the individual, Jewish or not, to separate himself from the group. To the ‘egoistic,’ liberated man, all of society “appears as a system which is external to the individual” (43). He no longer sees himself as part of a whole, so he has no reason to try to connect with his fellow men. Political emancipation may level the playing field, but its base in the idea of ‘liberty’ draws working people apart.

What, then, is Marx’s alternative? What exactly is his issue with this disconnected ‘liberated’ society? Instead of political emancipation, Marx proposes human emancipation. His vision of a truly emancipated society is more thoroughly described in other texts, but, in short, it is the victory of all workers over the capitalist state. Human emancipation requires workers of all backgrounds to recognize the capitalist elite as

the source of their oppression and collaborate in a socialist revolution. While Jewish people were certainly disadvantaged under Prussia's Christian state, Marx argues that their movement needed a class analysis to see the full picture of inequality. Workers of all ethnic and religious backgrounds have a common enemy in the 1% regardless of the inequality between one worker and another. Marx urges the Jewish worker to "[recognize] and [organize] his own powers (*forces propres*) as social powers" (46). That is, he should recognize that his real potential lies not in his ability to compete for crumbs alongside Christian workers but in his ability to struggle with Christian workers for their shared class interests. Through unity, workers can build a world where no one of any creed need push, shove, or sweat to meet their basic needs.

Having examined Marx's critique of Jewish liberty, it is natural to wonder if today's feminists or black activists are guilty of the same egoism as Marx's Jews. Like Jewish people, these groups have withdrawn from the whole of working people and seek reform that addresses oppression specific to them. People of color, women, and LGBTQ people are demanding an end to the oppression they face in their lives—oppression that a white, cisgender, heterosexual male worker does not face. Will this anger stop the black, queer, or female worker from seeing the class interest she shares with her white male co-worker? Will these movements be divisive and fall short of human emancipation? This discussion is ongoing, and there is certainly no resounding consensus among women or any racial group about the right way forward. However, it is helpful to examine some case studies through a Marxist lens.

Superficially, the US has arrived at a politically emancipated state. Women and people of color have gained the 'liberty' to work in any industry and to participate fully in the capitalist life of the nation. Many legal barriers to success have been removed, yet still today women lose \$10,000 per year to the gender pay gap (NWLC). According to one study, an identifiably white name on a resume is 50% more likely to get a response than an identifiably black name (Politifact). Black communities are still mired in poverty. Efforts to address this disparity look much like the Jewish movement Marx writes about. This type of identity politics seeks to liberate through financial independence. They seek liberty not just in a superficial sense but liberty to be that 'egoistic' man or woman without the limits of racism and sexism. This can mean initiatives to support black or female-owned businesses and to close the gender wage gap through more effective HR departments. This strategy can be termed 'inequality-centric' identity politics.

However, oppression also takes shape in everyday racist microaggressions, sexual

harassment, cultural appropriation, and other instances where it is not inequality but behavior that is the problem. Women seek to hold men of all class backgrounds accountable for misogynist behavior, and black people seek the same regarding white folks' racist behavior. This focus can be termed 'behavior-centric' identity politics. Which anti-racist/feminist strategy is conducive to class solidarity and which threatens it?

A prime example of 'inequality-centric' identity politics is Sheryl Sandberg's *Lean In* campaign. As a former employee of the Treasury Department and current COO of Facebook, Sandberg is a member of that capitalist elite that Marx sees as the enemy of all working people, regardless of gender. Sandberg does not take issue with capitalism itself but rather with the lack of female capitalists. Sandberg says: "The blunt truth is that men still run the world. Unequivocally, no question about it" (Stanford). She advocates for women to be bolder in the workplace and dreams of a world of gender equality in corporate and political leadership. This speaks to an ongoing feminist trend of fighting patriarchy by getting "a seat at the men's table." Much like the Jewish movement in Prussia, this brand of feminism seeks to liberate through financial success. From a Marxist view, this perspective builds solidarity among women but inevitably bars the majority from arriving at that destination. Like the Jewish movement, this thinking is predicated on the notion of liberty. Marx would argue that Sandberg is calling for an 'egoist woman,' a feminist who pulls herself up by the bootstraps and works on her own financial success. She may support other women's careers in the abstract, but ultimately this form of feminism creates 'losers' and 'winners' among working women. There are only so many seats at that men's table. It envisions a gender-egalitarian distribution of wealth as an end in itself, which is still a long way from Marx's vision of human emancipation. This vision comes from the top; millionaire women like Sandberg convince the common woman that she need only be bolder and harder-working to defeat the patriarchy.

Another inequality-centric example of identity politics is the push to support black businesses. There is an app called 'Official Black Wall Street' that alerts users when they are near a black business. They note that "out of our \$1.1 trillion buying power only 2% is invested in black-owned businesses" (Official Black Wall Street). 'Our' refers to black people in the US. The vision is a world with solidarity among black people to support one another's entrepreneurship for more racially balanced distribution of wealth. Much like inequality-centric feminism, this vision comes from the top. Jay-Z, with a net worth of \$810 million, is a main advocate for black financial independence (*Time*).

In his song “Story of OJ” he encourages black investment with lyrics like, “Y’all think it’s bougie, I’m like, it’s fine / But I’m tryin’ to give you a million dollars’ worth of game for nine ninety-nine.”

The pursuit of a racially balanced bourgeoisie engenders an abstract sense of mutual support among black people, but it inevitably leaves many behind. It encourages that ambitious, egoistic mentality that separates the individual from the rest of the working class. Like the Jewish movement, it seeks to liberate through financial success. It is also predicated on the same notion of liberty as the Jewish movement, but rather than pursuing financial prosperity for oneself, it is for the black subset of the working class. It imagines that through entrepreneurship, the black community can earn the same respect and comfortable lifestyle that the white middle class enjoys. The pressure is on individual black people to ‘defy stereotypes’ and be successful for the sake of the community. This frames poverty within the black community and the overwhelming whiteness of the bourgeoisie as the result of black laziness. It generates ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ within the community and sees a hypothetical future of racially balanced bourgeoisie as an end in itself, which is still a long way from human emancipation.

Behavior-centric identity politics address less consequential matters like the use of slurs or media representation, but it has successfully arrived at a synthesis of black and feminist activism. Media outlets like *Everyday Feminism*, *Bitch Media*, and even *Teen Vogue* take an angle to anti-racist and feminist work that combines the two. They see forces of oppression as linked. Everyone is expected to educate themselves on the issues affecting other demographics and understand their advantages and disadvantages depending on their identity. This is a movement based in empathy and collaboration across identities to defeat the ideologies of patriarchy and racism together. It envisions a future of a culturally sensitive society free of ignorant behavior. On the surface, this emphasis on common accountability seems like it would be more productive than inequality-centric identity politics, which focuses on only individual black people or women. From a Marxist lens, behavior-centric identity politics does more to shape the individual into the “abstract citizen” (46) by seeing one another as potential allies against oppression rather than as obstacles to personal success. This movement is also based in the working class itself, rather than millionaire women or black people. While this form of identity politics is certainly less ‘egoistic,’ in practice it has earned few tangible gains. Since it focuses on behavior, activism goes case-by-case and lacks a program or concrete demands. So while behavior-centric identity politics does promote unity of the working class, the purpose of that unity is unclear.

It is clear that both inequality-centric and behavior-centric identity politics have their limitations, but today's Marxists should be prepared to maximize upon the merits of both. Inequality-based identity politics recognizes the importance of money. Instead of directing women's frustration at men who make 30 cents more per dollar than they do, Marxists should direct them toward the likes of Jeff Bezos who make hundreds of millions of dollars more per day than any woman. Similarly, black people should not try to out-invest and out-work white people but should make demands of the capitalists who already have the resources to rebuild black communities. This movement should be reclaimed from the likes of Sheryl Sandberg and Jay-Z and placed into the hands of working people. Behavior-centric identity politics understands the importance of solidarity and already has a base in the working class, but it lacks a concrete program for working people to rally around. It is time to take this strategy off of social media and into the streets, focusing on multiracial movements to earn reforms on behalf of people of all backgrounds. By removing egoism and focusing on bold movements, identity politics has the potential to eradicate both class- and identity-based oppression. ■

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Michelangelo's *Pietà*, photographed by Alex Lo in St. Peter's Basilica in January 2017.

BRIDGET COHEN

Authenticity, Empiricism & Faith in the Case of the Shroud of Turin

One of Christianity's most revered religious artifacts, the Shroud of Turin has perplexed both religious and scientific communities for over a century. Thought to be the burial garment in which Jesus Christ was wrapped following his crucifixion, this fifty-three square foot linen man has long been the subject of scientific analysis. This interest reflects a collective effort to determine whether it is possible that the faintly imprinted body on the fabric could in fact be the historical figure Jesus of Nazareth. Beginning in April 2015, the shroud was exhibited publicly at the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist in Turin, Italy for an unprecedented seven weeks. As the opening of the display drew near, journalist Frank Viviano published an online article in which he recalls the Shroud's elusive past. Interest in the scientific study of the Shroud, termed sindonology, took off in 1898 when Italian amateur photographer Secondo Pia presented the negative images of pictures he had taken that revealed the form of a seemingly crucified man. Since then, the question of whether the figure is an authentic imprint of a crucified corpse or merely a painted forgery has pervaded the minds of researchers and spectators alike. Numerous projects have been deployed throughout the twentieth century, the most high-profile of which was the 1978-81 Shroud of Turin Research Project (STURP). Headed by the United States, STURP reported a lack of "artificial pigment," concluding that "the Shroud image is that of a real human form of a scourged, crucified man...not the product of an artist" (Viviano). However, the team was ultimately unable to identify a set of "physical chemical, biological, or medical circumstances" to explain the process by which the image was produced. Seven years after the publication of STURP, the Vatican permitted researchers to sample a corner of the shroud for radiocarbon dating. The results dated the shroud between 1260 and 1390 AD but have since been disputed on the grounds of incorrectly assumed fabric homogeneity. The twenty-first century has likewise seen many scientific attempts to further reveal the Shroud's historical narrative, as well as discussions surrounding the socio-religious implications of its status of authenticity. The two-fold aim of this paper will be firstly to assess the degree to which one can (tentatively) call the Shroud authentic based on specific physical characteristics, and

secondly to consider the extent to which a concrete understanding of ‘authenticity’ matters in a socio-religious context.

Sindonology, especially in the twenty-first century, has been a locus for interdisciplinary discussion. Each new study published provokes a new territory of discourse concerning the relationship between science and Christian faith. Thanks to studies conducted by scholars such as Jean Pierre Laude, Giulio Fanti, Liberato De Caro, and Cinzia Giannini “we can [begin to] speak of Christ’s Passion and Death in medical terms” (Fernández-Capo, 44). Laude and Fanti focus their attention on a stain in which a “microsubstance” adheres to the shroud. It is likely, according to Laude and Fanti, that the microsubstance contains “oxidized or photo-oxidized ‘degradations’ of blood products” (2323). Via Raman and energy dispersive spectroscopy, they determine the microsubstance to consist largely of biliverdin, a blood derivative responsible for the green pigmentation in bruising (2322). Biliverdin is a “degradation” of bilirubin, a pigment formed by the breakdown of hemoglobin and of which levels would have been characteristically high in the blood of a man beaten intensely prior to his death (Fernández-Capo, 52). Alternatively, De Caro and Giannini speak about the implications of the hand placement of the shroud’s figure. The “non-relaxed position,” with the “upper extremity of the right hand’s thumb” just barely visible, indicates “a possible state of stress, fixed by rigor mortis” (De Caro and Giannini 2016, 144). This state of the figure’s hands corresponds to the standard of Roman crucifixion to drive nails through the wrists (in the specific case of Shroud figure, through the Destot’s space), injuring the median nerves and thus causing the thumb flexor muscles to contract, almost hiding the thumbs from view underneath the palms (141).

In addition to paleopathology, sindonologists must concern themselves with the historical context in which the Shroud may have once existed, asking the question of whether that context is compatible with the one in which Christ would have lived and died. Efforts to re-date the Shroud in response to controversy concerning the medieval date arrived at 1988 include those of Giulio Fanti and Robert Basso. In a 2017 study, they employ mechanical dating methods to compare linen fibers from a twenty-seventh century BC Egyptian mummy, the Shroud, and a modern fabric. The results produced date the Shroud to the first century AD—the time during which Jesus of Nazareth is said to have lived in Palestine (1750006-1). Elsewhere, Marzia Boi addresses the Shroud’s original historical-cultural function. Reexamining data previously taken on pollen grains found on the Shroud, she claims that the relative abundance of *Helichrysum* (which, she says was previously misidentified), *Cistus*, *Ferula*, and *Pistachia*

pollens suggests that the Shroud was involved in a first-century Hebrew funerary ritual (326). Boi looks to the writings of historical scholars such as Pliny the Elder and Dioscorides, for descriptions of the given plant species being used in one form or another in the embalming and anointing of corpses according to Hebrew burial rites (326).

It is important to remember that as much as scholars have invested in sindonological endeavors, the most scientific analysis can do is affirm a historical narrative. Although religious and historical authenticities are intertwined in the case of the Shroud, they nevertheless remain separate concepts, corresponding respectively to a “Christ of Faith” about whom the Christian tradition revolves and an “Historical Jesus” who is known to have lived in Palestine during the first-century AD (Fernández-Capo, 42). Needless to say, in the event that the Shroud is proven to be a forgery, the Christian paradigm of the Crucifixion and Resurrection will remain intact (47). Empirical data can only bring us as far as historical authenticity. To quote Fernández-Capo, “there is no laboratory test for divinity”; thus science cannot *prove* religion, only “enrich” it (49).

This is not to say however, that faith does not influence science; quite the contrary is true. During episodes of scientific dispute, such as that which followed when the Shroud was incorrectly dated to the Medieval period, Christian mythology (or at least, a fascination with Christian theology) played a significant role in keeping the field of sindonology active. Though it would not be prudent to solely credit religion for the continual interest in Shroud research, it nonetheless might be appropriate to suggest that “not only [can] research [be] driven by faith but it is also supported by it in difficult times” (Fernández-Capo, 47).

At the same time, faith (or lack thereof) can bias the outcomes of scientific study. This problem is particularly apparent within sindonology, since acceptance of the Shroud as a divine object rests on the personal religiosity to which every individual is entitled. Sindonologists and their research are therefore more vulnerable to exaggerated approval or condemnation by “self-styled” scientists, especially on the Internet (Fazio, 1607). In view of these methodological risks, it should be noted that Pope John Paul II urged researchers “to study the Shroud ‘without pre-established positions that take for granted results that are not such’” (Fernández-Capo, 52-3).

The evidence provided by the studies named above—though admittedly minimal compared to the rest of what sindonology has to offer—has established compatibility between the Shroud’s physicality (including image imprint, stain, presence of pollen, and fiber quality) and the historical context in which Jesus of Nazareth would have lived and died. Ultimately, the question of whether the Shroud is authentic most di-

rectly impacts the relationships between a “Christ of Faith” and an “Historical Jesus.” Thus a disproof of authenticity, though perhaps disappointing to believers seeking empirical evidence in conjunction with their faith, would not disrupt the Christian paradigm of Crucifixion and Resurrection. Confirmation of authenticity, on the other hand, would provide Christians a new artifact with which to tether their faith in the divine to mundane reality. Here, we see an intertwining of religious and scientific pursuits, as the enigma of the Turin Shroud provides a stage on which religion and science may perform interdependently, while remaining distinctly individual actors. ■

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SYDNEY ELLIS

Genesis 1:2-3

"...and the earth then was welter and waste and darkness over the deep and God's breath hovering over the waters. And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light."

1 And the Earth was then welter and waste
 A vast emptiness, uninhabitable and chaotic
 Deafening sounds of wrestling waters and ceaseless storms
 And there was darkness.

 An oppressive darkness
5 That consumed all with no opposition
 Utter loneliness
 Fearful madness

 Imagine constant turmoil,
10 The sea in untamed motion, persistent winds,
 Bitter cold and vicious clamor,
 Ears aching.

 Imagine endless night.
 The stars extinguished, the moon nonexistent,

15 The constant glow of city lights burnt out,
 Eyes straining.

 And still, nothing.
 And our imaginings cannot come close
 We know the hope of stillness, of quiet.
20 We know the hope of day, of sunrise.
 There was no hope like that here.

 This was our beginning.

 But there was something more in the chaos
 God's breath hovering over the waters
25 A rush of calm
 A soft warm breeze

A still presence.
 God remained unaffected, steadfast in His peace.
 And then He spoke, and everything shifted.

30 He brought the energy of chaos to order
 And there was light.
 Rays cut through the winds
 A flood washed over the seas

Rushing to fill the void until even the deepest chasm glowed.
 35 The darkness stood not a chance.

From nothing came the source of everything
 From chaos came the order of the universe
 The Glory and Majesty of God was made visible
 It filled the Earth

40 And with one breath and four simple words
 The character of our Creator was revealed
 Order in chaos
 Peace in conflict
 Light in darkness
 45 Hope in despair
 With four simple words
 Life as we know it became possible.

God saw what He was doing
 In the moment of these words He saw His plan unfold
 50 Light was only the first stroke in His masterpiece.
 He looked around and whispered,
This. This is good.

ALEX LO

Transformations by Tool

Transformation is the crux of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. These changings of forms primarily involve mortals being transformed by divine beings from humans into nonhuman creatures or lifeless objects. However, some mortal characters in the narrative poem, such as the inventor, Daedalus, seem to possess the ability to realize the changing of forms through the use of tools. Tools enable their users to reshape materials, similar to how a sculptor employs a chisel to convert a shapeless block of marble into a vivid statue. Ovid's discussion of the transformative power of tools is centered around his retelling of stories involving Daedalus, his reckless son, Icarus, and his gifted nephew, Perdix. The narrative brings to light the limitations of one's ability to achieve personal transformations through tools and acknowledges the value of tools that augment one's abilities without transforming them. Ultimately, Ovid puts forth a relatively simple question: Can tools really change anything?

The narrative of Daedalus begins with the innovator imprisoned on an island, attempting to devise a means of escape and, "turn[ing] his thinking / Toward unknown arts, changing the laws of nature" (187, in Rolfe Humphries's translation published by Indiana University Press). The phrase "changing the laws of nature" implies that nature itself is a constraint. Though it limits an individual's abilities, such constraints may be overcome through the practice of "unknown arts," the usage of tools towards flight. Thus, for Daedalus to challenge the limits of nature, he must turn "towards unknown arts" by inventing pairs of wings to achieve flight. Though the mechanical wings are original creations, Ovid's characterization of the invention as an "unknown art" is surprising, given the everyday presence of winged birds. In this sense, wings are nothing new or "unknown," and the phrase "unknown art" may be taken to be a purposeful overstatement. Thus, Ovid calls attention to the imitative quality of Daedalus' winged creation. The concept of reapplication of nature is returned to later in the narrative through Perdix's invention of the saw, in which the young inventor studies a "fish's backbone" and is inspired to make "the first saw" based on its jagged form (189). By crafting a pair of wings, Daedalus has not created something entirely new, but reapplied an aspect of the natural world. The invention is imitative rather than transformative, and Daedalus' creativity cannot exceed what is found in nature.

The limitations of nature on both the functionality and invention of tools are fur-

ther referenced in Daedalus' preflight instructions to his son: "Don't go too low, or water will weigh the wings down; / Don't go too high, or the sun's fire will burn them. / Keep the middle way" (188). Daedalus' direction that "water will weigh the wings down" confirms the imitative, rather than transformative nature of his wings. The wings, like those of most birds, are not suited for the sea. Similarly, the wings cannot morph either Daedalus or Icarus into supernatural beings, as they cannot carry them "too high." The wings may only fly the "middle" course, in which the mechanical wings imitate those found in nature, but fall short of transforming their users into gods or birds.

To onlookers on the ground however, the wings do seem to give a divine transformation for father and son, as "all look up, in absolute amazement, / At those air-borne above. They must be gods!" (188). The statement that "They must be gods" recalls Jupiter's supernatural conversion into a flying eagle in pursuit of love in another of Ovid's myths. The mechanical wings enable their wearers to take flight and take on abilities that may only be achieved by the gods, such as assuming an inhuman form. The wings grant powers reserved for the gods, and thus seem to hold limitless power to Icarus. For Icarus, this power is even more liberating than his physical escape from prison. Hungry with power, Icarus flies too close to the sun. His fall from the sky is a painful reminder that the wings have not remade him into a god as the onlookers believe and, firmly discrediting any notion that a transformation has taken place.

Though Icarus places value on the supernatural abilities granted by tools, Ovid also emphasizes the utilitarian functions of tools. Tools are essential to the livelihoods of many in various fields of labor, and Ovid selects several examples: "Some fisherman is watching / As the rod dips and trembles over the water, / Some shepherd rests his weight upon his crook, / Some ploughman on the handles of the ploughshare" (188). Ovid suggests that these tools, such as a fisherman's "rod," shepherd's "crook," or farmer's "ploughshare" have value because of their importance to their respective professions. However, the examples chosen by Ovid are cases in which the tools make the tasks they perform easier. Fishing could still be accomplished with hands grabbing fish out of water. Ploughing a field or herding sheep could also be performed manually. Regardless of how hard the protagonists flap their hands, however, they will never achieve flight. But at what point does the tool stop being assistive and start actually changing the abilities of its user? By prompting this question, Ovid classifies tools into two categories: those that enhance ability, such as the fishing rod or ploughshare, and tools that grant entirely new abilities, like Daedalus' wings.

Ovid suggests that the category of tools that grants new abilities should be re-

garded with suspicion as they can bring out the worst in their users. Daedalus himself seems to recognize this quality of tools as he “cursed his talents” partially responsible for his son’s death (189). Daedalus’ inventiveness is both a blessing and a curse. It is the source of both wonderful innovation and irreparable harm. His talents bring out the worst within him—jealousy, recklessness, and deceit that come to light in his brief relationship with Perdix. The Daedalus and Perdix plot is described as a “story [that] / Reflects no credit on Daedalus” (189). Ovid’s statement has a double meaning; not only does the story not “reflect” well upon Daedalus’ integrity or personality, but also Daedalus cannot take “credit” for the transformation into a bird that Perdix achieves through the interference of a goddess.

Weapons, tools of violence that can bring about the transformation of the living to the dead, are curiously absent from the Daedalus and Perdix narrative. Despite the violence present in the story, Daedalus merely uses his bare hands to throw his nephew from a great height. As Daedalus is able to kill without the usage of any tool, weapons must be in the category of tools that only augment, rather than transform one’s abilities. Ovid thus comments on Daedalus’ innate capacity for violence; no transformations are required for him to kill.

Only divine intervention stands in the way of murder. The transformation of Perdix into a partridge is carried out by the goddess Minerva: “Minerva, kind protectress / Of all inventive wits, stayed him in air, / Clothed him with plumage; he still retained his aptness / In feet and wings, and kept his old name, Perdix, / But in the new bird-form, Perdix, the partridge, / Never flies high, nor nests in trees, but flutters / Close to the ground [...] / The bird, it seems, remembers, and is fearful / Of all high places” (189).

Dramatic irony is deeply present in Perdix’s transformation. Though Minerva saves the falling inventor, he is turned into a partridge, a tragic, comical bird, incapable of turning back to reach Daedalus’ height. It is ironic that Perdix, the creator of the compass, is limited from exploring all corners of the world. Perdix, when contrasted with Icarus, reveals additional subtleties in the overarching theme of transformations in the poem. The tools that seem to enable a transformation for Icarus only worsen his condition. Similarly, Perdix’s complete transformation at the hands of the god do not improve his condition due to his limitations as a partridge. Change, Ovid suggests, is futile—regardless of the forces that bring about the change. In the tale of Daedalus, Ovid rejects the virtues of transformations both by tools and by divine will. Though Ovid recognizes the value of the utilitarian function of tools, he does not portray the transformative power of tools in a favorable light. ■

CAROLINE MICHAEL

Comparing the Patient Care of the Hippocratic Physician and the Modern Doctor

In ancient Greece and Rome, there was a fundamental lack of trust in medicine. Disease was believed to have more divine origins than natural ones for most of the time from Babylon to Late Antiquity, barring the Homeric and Classical periods where people believed disease to have a more natural origin. As a result, it was antithetical for many people to believe that doctors and medicine could help patients get better when it was angry gods and goddesses making them sick. People valued making sacrifices to get back into the gods and goddesses' good graces more than they valued taking care of their bodies. Therefore, doctors had to work to get people to become patients, and those decisions were mostly based on the doctor proving his capabilities to the patient and their family. If a patient lost trust in their doctor's abilities, then treatment would stop and the patient would run the risk of dying from their illness, so it was critical that the patient was convinced of the doctor's competence at all times. Should a doctor fail at this task then he would run the risk of losing his reputation and thus his livelihood. In modern times, there is a similar pressure placed on doctors. While modern physicians may not have to prove the efficacy of medicine to most people, the fact remains that if a patient loses trust in their doctor's abilities, then the patient will find a new doctor. The fundamental outlook on patient care does not greatly differ between ancient and modern times, as both have to prove their expertise to their patients. The difference lies in the motive behind these physicians' outlooks and the lengths physicians go to prove their competence. Ancient doctors constantly had to prove their expertise to inspire confidence in their abilities and thus gain new patients to keep their reputation, while modern doctors mostly have to prove their expertise to new patients to keep current patients coming back and provide the best care possible.

One of the ways that ancient physicians believed they could be perceived as more trustworthy by their patients and their patients' families was through studying the *De-corum*, a Hippocratic treatise which placed emphasis on bedside manner, preparedness, and inspiring confidence in their patients. They believed that being seen as more professional would translate into them seeming more trustworthy and would thus give

them the possibility to later prove their skills and capabilities to their patients. Inspiring confidence would, in this case, inspire trust as well, which would both allow the physician to have an easier time in treating the patient and would help to raise the physician's reputation later. Having the patient and their family trust the physician would also have helped with telling the family about any negative prognosis that the patient might have, as according to ancient practices, the patient is never to know their negative prognosis because it could have a negative effect on the progression of the disease. Only the family is to know the prognosis, but they are not to know the specifics of the treatment unless it is vital to the patient's care. The author of the *Decorum* states that a physician must "only say what is absolutely necessary, for he realizes that gossip may cause criticism of his treatment" (Uden 41). This is essentially a safeguard for the physician not to have to defend his methodology or prove his capabilities to the patient and the patient's family at every step of treatment. If the family knows the generalities of the treatment, but not the specifics, then they do not know enough to be critical of the physician's work.

In modern medicine, however, it is critical that both the patient and the patient's family are well informed about the progress of the condition, the treatment plan, and any other relevant news, regardless of whether or not it is negative. *The Oncologist* published a specific protocol called SPIKES, which describes how to break bad news to cancer patients because it is ultimately their lives that are being affected, so they deserve to be a part of the discussion regarding their treatment. It states that, "The goal is to enable the clinician to fulfill . . . four . . . objectives of the interview disclosing bad news: gathering information . . . transmitting the medical information, providing support . . . and eliciting the patient's collaboration in developing a strategy or treatment plan for the future" (Bailea). It is important to keep the patient informed, regardless of how a physician may be criticized regarding the treatment of that patient because, in modern times, it is more likely that a doctor would be more harshly criticized for not informing the patient with regards to their condition than they would be for supposed inadequate treatment in the family's opinion. In this case, modern physicians have to prove their professionalism to their patients by including them in the creation of a treatment plan, rather than having to prove their skillset and capabilities as a physician.

The priorities between ancient and modern physicians differ greatly when it comes to prognosis. Ancient medicine did not rely heavily on providing the best care to patients so much as it relied on taking cases that would raise the reputation of the physician and allowing him to safeguard himself by refusing to take on cases he deemed

incurable through prognosis. The author of the Hippocratic treatise, *Prognosis*, states that, should a physician be able to predict what will happen to a patient in the future, “he will increase his reputation . . . and people will have no qualms in putting themselves under his care” (Lloyd 170). This treatise claims that being able to predict the progression of disease is important, not to provide the best patient care, but so others will be impressed with the physician and be more willing to go to him as a doctor. The reputation of the doctor seems to be just as, if not more important, than the actual care of the patients themselves.

This is not typically the main concern of modern doctors when dealing with the progression of an illness. Most modern doctors do not seem to place as much emphasis on prognosis, instead placing emphasis on treatment of the patient and keeping all relative parties informed, while at the same time trying to provide hope of recovery. An *ACP Internist* article reports that a “study of 300 cancer patients referred for hospice, 22.7% weren’t given a prognosis at all, 37% were given the same prognosis the physician believed, 28.2% were given a prognosis that exceeded the physician’s private estimate, and 12.1% were given a prognosis worse than the private estimate” (Berthold 2011). In modern times, doctors are less likely to discuss prognosis with their patients at all, as it does not increase reputation and is actually viable to have a negative effect on patient’s wellbeing in the end, which is the main concern of physicians. However, there may be a skew from the average in this data set. Given that this study was of hospice care cancer patients, it is likely that these doctor-patient relationships had been formed over a longer period of time than most Hippocratic physicians spent with their patients, and it is probable that a bond was formed between the modern doctors and their patients. As a result, it is possible that the doctors may have given a more favorable diagnosis than what they thought was likely, in an attempt to give their patients some hope regarding their conditions. The patients likely did not need to be convinced of their physician’s competence after such a time in their care, so the necessity of an accurate prognosis does not plague modern physicians in the way that it did ancient physicians. When there has been a long relationship with a particular doctor, people tend to trust their doctor to a much greater extent than what was normal in ancient Greece and Rome and trust their judgements, even when they may have made some mistakes in diagnosis and treatment in the past because of their history together.

On the contrary for Hippocratic physicians, distrust of medicine was a rampant issue that doctors had to face. This was especially true in Rome, where most doctors were Greek and therefore considered especially untrustworthy because they were for-

eigners and immigrants. Some Romans even went so far as to adopt specific lifestyles, typically advertised by Celsus, a well-known, wealthy Roman gentleman, so they could avoid doctors altogether. In *On Medicine*, Celsus claims that, “A man in health, who is both vigorous and his own master, should be under no obligatory rules, and he should have no need for a doctor” (Uden 87). Roman citizens did not believe in medicine mainly due to its origins. Romans tended to distrust anything foreign, be that Greek, Egyptian, or otherwise. Since medicine had such strong Greek origins, the distrust of medicine was rampant because the distrust of all Greeks was rampant and, as a result, the field of medicine in ancient Rome was not considered a respectable, science-based field, as it is in modern times. Instead, many viewed medicine, as philosophy than as a *techne*, or a skill one could acquire over time through work and practice. Medicine was considered useless and untrustworthy in many circles. Therefore, it was crucial that physicians work to gain the trust of their patients as quickly and efficiently as possible, so they could build up their reputations and be considered as trustworthy as a doctor could be in that time. Trust was rarely given to physicians, especially by Romans, and was quick to be revoked the moment it was suspected that the physicians were being greedy, which was typically the mindset of Romans when potions and draughts were prescribed as treatment. The only sect of physicians that seemed to have gained credibility in Roman life were army doctors because it was reasoned that not many unnecessary steps and ingredients could be involved in treatments on the battlefield; the main goal was to have the patient survive, not try to make money as many Romans thought of civilian physicians.

The idea that doctors are money-hungry and greedy is a problem similarly faced by modern physicians in the United States today. People are of the mindset that doctors needlessly prescribe drugs and surgeries when there are simpler options available to them, such as diet and exercise. Americans believe that doctors overprescribe in order to overcharge their visits and keep them coming back when the treatments fail to work. According to *The New York Times*, “only 34 percent” of Americans have confidence in the medical profession (Khullar). Many patients, and the public as a whole, tend towards the belief that doctors only care about being paid and not actually their patients’ well-beings, a strikingly similar mindset to ancient Romans. Because of this mindset, physicians have to work to gain the trust of their patients and prove that their knowledge, experience, and abilities will be helpful to their patients, just as Hippocratic physicians did more than fifteen hundred years ago.

Just as in ancient Greece and Rome, in modern times there is a lack of trust in

medicine and doctors. Physicians still not only have to prove their competence time and time again before a patient's trust is gained, but they also have to prove that they genuinely care about their patients' well-beings and not just being paid for their services. The fundamental outlook on patient care does not greatly differ between ancient and modern time: both have to prove their expertise to their patients, but they do it for different reasons and different lengths of time. Ancient doctors constantly had to prove their expertise to raise their reputations and thus their source of income, while modern doctors mostly have to prove their expertise to newer patients to keep current patients and improve their standard of care. This consistent lack of trust in physicians throughout millennia speaks to a gap in the education that doctors receive. Trust is a key feature in cohesive treatment of patients, and if physicians have to spend all their time proving how competent they are at their jobs, then it takes longer and longer to actually help patients. Clearly, there is something missing in training doctors if patients have to be continually convinced that listening to a physician's advice and following their treatment plan would be beneficial to their health, and it has been missing for centuries, if the parallels between ancient Greece and Rome and modern-day America are to be believed. Communicating and building trust between patients and physicians needs to be more focused on in medical education than it is now, so doctors can stop trying to prove their proficiency and focus solely on treating their patients. ■

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EVE WOROBEL

Essay on Water

I close my eyes, lean back, and am suddenly enveloped by water. My chest rushes with a sudden flood of panic, my vision clouded by chlorine blue. My gasp results only in a stinging pain in the back of my nose. I'm frantic. I pump my arms and legs vigorously, glancing upward.

For a brief moment, there is silence; the sun shines through the choppy waves of the swimming pool and I recognize the peace here. I try to breathe it in.

It is then that I remember the heaviness in my chest, that my lungs are burning, and that I am in desperate need of something. I pump my arms up yet again, pushing off the soft bottom of the pool. My feet feel the slight give of the sky colored lining. My body shoots up and as soon as I fear I won't reach it,

my head breaks the surface.

The air filling my lungs, air that I feel should bring relief, only draws attention to the places where it was missing. I give a violent cough and pool water splashes up into my mouth, nose, and eyes. I push myself to the edge and rest my forearms on the sandpapery ground surrounding the pool. The tan-brown pavement darkens, muddying under my dripping arms.

I lay my head down for a second. The ground's warmth radiates up through my cheek. I squint, then close my eyes, my legs floating up behind me. For a moment, I breathe until I feel a slight twinge in my lower back telling me this position is not sustainable.

I push my pruney hands down on the edge, feeling the tiny charcoal-colored rocks press into them. Warmish water flows off my body, both into the pool and onto the ground beneath me. I awkwardly hoist the rest of my body out of the pool with a half pushup, half dragging motion. Though the air is warm, the slight breeze on my soaked body makes me shiver for a moment, goosebumps forming on my arms and legs.

I pad across the pavement, examining the abstract red-pink rivers the indentations of the graveled concrete left upon my arms. I notice the way my sloppy footprints heat up and expand in the sun. Walking over to the sun-chairs where my mom's tote bag is, I rifle through and find the biggest towel. *Dibs*. I wrap it around myself, plopping my

butt down on the chaise that has been baking in the sunshine for the last 30 minutes.

I lay back and close my eyes, my hand dropping onto the glass-topped table to my right in search of my book. I pick it up, the pages growing damp from my wet hand, and begin to read. Finally, real warmth, real peace. I doze...

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I loved to be in water, the salt of the ocean in my hair turning it crispy and wavy, the peace and refreshment of lying back and floating. I loved the warmth of the muddy ground squeezing between my big toes in my front lawn when the sprinkler *tsk-tsk-tsked* in waves, back and forth. I loved the gentle heat of a shower on my back when I came inside from a day in the snow or on my face when I was rinsing it of the sweat that made my skin feel tight as it dried from my cheeks.

But I hated the way water felt cold and sharp from that summer sprinkler, when I would shriek and sprint away as it moved just a little bit too fast for my feet to avoid. I hated the pit in my stomach that moved to my throat whenever I smelled the chlorine chemical-y scent escaping into the lobby of my swimming lessons in the fourth grade. I hated the way water made little blades of cut grass stick to my legs and ankles when I ran across my lawn in bare feet. I hated the power water had over me. I needed to drink it but I couldn't live in it and be a mermaid? This balance was confusing.

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My eyes open just slightly. My mom is swimming laps in the pool. *Stroke, stroke, breathe, stroke, flip, stroke.* I wish I could swim like that.

My skin is baking in the heat, the little droplets evaporating off my feet and upper arms. I brush them away and close my eyes again.

I see the pink inside of my closed eyelids as the sun shines through them. This moment may not be bliss,

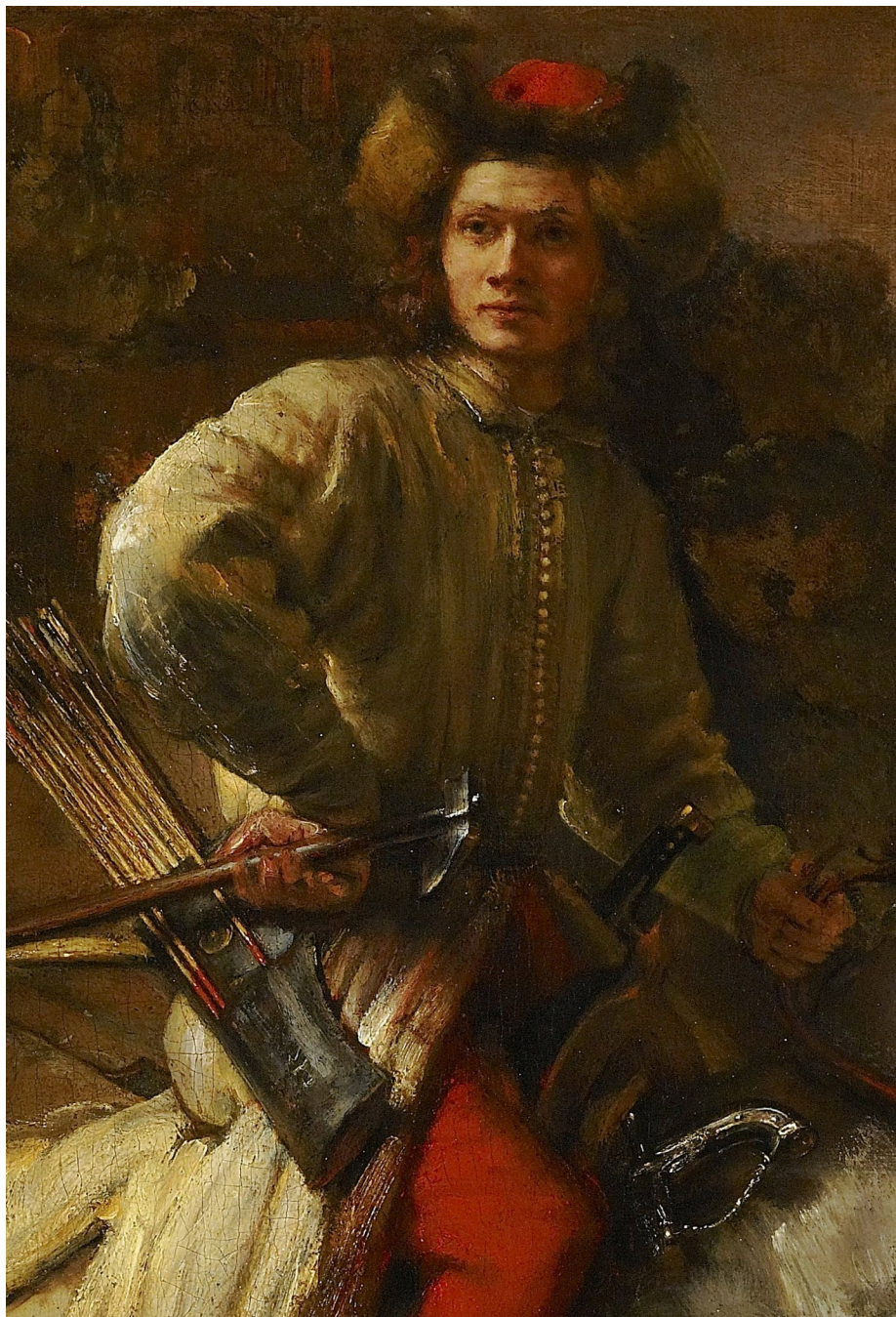
but it is something worth feeling. ■

HELEN HOUGHTON

Real Rembrandts? On the Authenticity of *The Polish Rider*

In 1968, the Rembrandt Research Project was founded to answer the essential question “What is a Rembrandt?” Arising from the growing speculation over the authenticity of various works by the master, seven Dutch art historians were asked by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research to organize and categorize research on Rembrandt, with the aim of discovering new facts about the Dutch Golden Age painter and his studio. Now considered the foremost authorities on Rembrandt, they decide if a painting is a “genuine” Rembrandt. As a result of their work, the number of definitive self-portraits by the artist has been reduced by half, but not without controversy. The culmination of the Project’s work, *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings* published in six volumes, has been met with considerable push-back, which can be seen through looking at the argument surrounding the 1650s painting attributed to Rembrandt, *The Polish Rider*. The painting’s unfinished quality and judgements by notable art historians have left its true attribution up to serious and continuous debate. The case against its attribution to Rembrandt provides insight into the studio practices and life of the painter.

The inherent difficulty in the reattribution of Rembrandt paintings is the trouble of determining what a “genuine” Rembrandt painting constitutes. Anthony Bailey writes in his 1994 book *Responses to Rembrandt*, “The concept of the ‘essential Rembrandt’ ought to be based on the twelve paintings that can be proved indisputably his, by way of documentation and unbroken provenance,” but twelve isn’t very many examples to go off of, which creates the need “to separate Rembrandt from Rembrandt legend” (Bailey 18). Scholars need to pull out what is concretely known about Rembrandt from what they assume to know or assume to be true. This becomes more difficult when you consider, as Clifford Ackley does in his book *Rembrandt’s Journey*, that “Rembrandt was not always the perfectly consistent, logical Dutchman he was originally anticipated to be” (Ackley 13). His works had a pronounced, uneven quality, with the style changing and evolving with experimentation and new developments in technique. Additionally, the style that he was so loved for became simple for his pupils to emulate, as Paul Crenshaw noted in his book *Rembrandt’s Bankruptcy*, making it “easy to acquire



a high quality Rembrandtesque work without having to deal with the long wait, the high price, and the obstinate character of Rembrandt himself” (Crenshaw 32). These factors, combined with Rembrandt’s tendency to have his students’ work “signed by the master,” creates a large and “controversial body of authentic drawings,” (Bailey 43, Ackley 13). “The ordinary gallery-goer might imagine that a Rembrandt signature on a painting offered some assurance of authenticity,” asserts Bailey, “but scholars often dispute these warranties” (Bailey 43). With “only one other full-scale painting of a man on a horse attributed to Rembrandt” to compare to, that work being the Portrait of Frederick Rihel in the National Gallery in London, one can begin to see the multifaceted dilemma of claiming that *The Polish Rider* is a genuine Rembrandt work (Bailey 21).

It is well worth looking into the studio practices of Rembrandt in detail given the large number of students he maintained. While not the first artist to have a school, he is made distinct by the sheer number of students he taught at any given time, with “more than fifty artists who studied and worked with him” (Bailey 41). As a way of training, Rembrandt often had students copy his own works to learn to emulate his style, for “being an apprentice involved making copies of one’s master’s painting” (Bailey 43). With Rembrandt being an art collector and dealer himself, he often sold his students’ work, with some estimates stating he “made up to 2,500 florins annually selling his students’ work,” and “in 1792, a French art dealer named Lebrun warned that many paintings claimed as authentic Rembrandts were in fact by his pupils” (Bailey 43, 7). Some, such as Arnold Houbraken in 1718, Rembrandt’s first biographer, even accused him of being “money mad, or taking on large numbers of pupils at high fees, or of manufacturing for gain unfinished proofs and variants of his prints to feed the appetites of collectors” (Ackley 12). There is, with this, the fear that he may have added signatures to his students’ works to fetch higher prices.

Other dealers are known to have had similar practices, for “dealers even in the seventeenth century may have added a Rembrandt signature to such works, and some scholars believe Rembrandt may have done so, too,” but this was not an uncommon practice among artists for “Titian and Raphael, among others, signed their pupils’ work” (Bailey 7). Other scholars take a less negative view, claiming there may have been “a good deal of collaboration between master and assistant” as opposed to works being outright fakes (Bailey 45). Some are even given the designation of being “re-

worked by Rembrandt” to give credit to the original painters (Bailey 45). “We know that Rubens frequently collaborated with his assistants,” says curator of the National Gallery Arthur Wheelock, “I suspect Rembrandt did as well. Livens, Flinck, Bol, van den Eeckhout, and de Gelder are all distinguished artists from Rembrandt’s orbit who could well have worked on painting with the Master” (Bailey 46). The collective practices of Rembrandt in his studio are a large source of ambiguity in the authenticity of the works and why there will always be doubt in their attribution.

Between the lack of documentation and the way the master ran his studio, it is not unsurprising to find that people question the authenticity of Rembrandt works, thus catalyzing the creation of the Rembrandt Research Project. The first three volumes of the Corpus alone rejected 120 works as not having been by Rembrandt and are “therefore deattributed, disattributed, demoted, or rejected” (Bailey 11). Several notable works have been rejected by the Project’s findings, such as the 1654 painting *Portrait of a Young Woman with her Hands Folded on a Book*, which was thought to be a Rembrandt for more than 300 years and reattributed to his pupil William Drost. John Van Dyke, a leading authority on Rembrandt reattribution, led the charge of discovering true authorship during the last century, reattributing “various *Saskies* to Govert Flinck; the *Woman Bathing*, in the London National Gallery, to another pupil, Gerbrandt van den Eeckhout; the *Sibyl*, at the Metropolitan in New York, to William Drost” and many others (Bailey 44-5). Drost is thought to be the most likely candidate for reattribution of *The Polish Rider*, with Josua Bruyn, chairman of the Foundation, believing this painting “was by a little-known pupil or follower of Rembrandt, William Drost, and not by the Master himself” (Bailey 3). Whether individual works were done collectively or by a single other artist and claimed by Rembrandt, there is ample evidence to suggest that *The Polish Rider* is not a genuine Rembrandt but indeed by a different painter.

Despite all this, *The Polish Rider* is still considered by most to be a Rembrandt. Many theories have arisen to explain why the work is so unique compared to other works by Rembrandt, some of which have convincing historical evidence to support them. The main one remains that the painting was a collaborative project, either one touched up by Rembrandt as stated before or as a work started by Rembrandt and “finished by a later hand” either one of his pupils or whoever purchased the work (Crenshaw 142). Another, based on the appearance of *The Polish Rider*, noted that “the background is developed only to the dead-color stage, whereas parts of the horse, its tail, rump, and legs, are still in a preliminary stage of completion,” makes the claim that perhaps he did not have time to finish the work, instead “Rembrandt may have finished some works

in a hurried fashion in order to include [it] in his bankruptcy sales,” (Crenshaw 142). The evidence for this is compelling, given the recorded history of his financial troubles and the fact that he had declared bankruptcy and had his possessions sold at auction at least once in his life. “The paintings may have been finished quickly to be included in the voluntary sale held by the artist at the end of 1655,” so either the painting was rushed through or simply left unfinished in order for it to be sold (Crenshaw 143). In the same vein of reasoning, he may have “finished paintings without care because of his financial pressure,” either through distraction or inability to purchase more supplies (Crenshaw 143). These theories assume that Rembrandt is the principle artist behind *The Polish Rider*, retaining his attribution for its production.

As the debate stands today, the painting is still considered to be by Rembrandt. The Frick Gallery, which displays the painting, still attributes it to Rembrandt alone, reluctant to forfeit the credibility of one of their greatest treasures, as reported in a 1997 edition of *The New York Times*’s “Inside Art” segment. The fourth edition of the *Corpus* listed the painting as his, while also addressing the uncertainties given the large amounts of evidence to the contrary. The art community may never know for certain the true creator of *The Polish Rider*, but as more evidence emerges on the work and the conditions in which it was produced, hopefully more light will be shone as to the painting’s true origins. ■

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“The worst decision I ever made was finishing my PhD.”

– Sassan Tabatabai

BRIAN JORGENSEN

In the Quantification Lab

“I think you need to see this,” said the young lab assistant. His mentor, the Chief Researcher, came tolerantly over.

“Look at these numbers,” said the assistant.

“This makes no sense,” said the chief.

“I know.”

“Have you checked everything?”

“Yes.”

“The only thing that would make sense—”

The assistant waited. He had been afraid to say it.

“—doesn’t make sense, but it would be—”

The assistant put on a look of eager reverent awaitingness.

“She is a time-dilator.” The assistant, hearing his mentor actually say this, was too awed to respond. He found he was shaking a little.

“She makes more time than there is. This is crazy. We have to check the numbers—check everything.”

This took two entire working days and the results were the same.

The chief had had time to exercise the creative aspects of his mission. “She outpaces time in the office, all over the campus, and in the classroom. The numbers don’t lie,” he said.

“Sir, yes, and look at the SPENs (Student Psyche Enlivement Numbers), the DLs (Delight Levels), the QORCs (Questions Offered Response Considerations), the DRFs (Dialogue Resonance Factors), the COTAPs (Coherence of Themes and Principle Suggestiveness), the—”

“Yes, I see. More time has to be factored into all of them if the result-numerics are to be accounted for—and the numbers don’t lie, we know that or we wouldn’t be here. If there were more like her, we could cut down the length of the semesters even further, perhaps even cut a year off the—‘but fitter time for that’.” (He was thinking of Shakespeare.) “We’ll put it in the last paragraph of the write-up.” (He was thinking of Best Practices and the Watson/Crick article.)

“Sir, the electronics look fine, but maybe we could try to adjust our interview-scripts and standard questionnaires. She’s in Classical Studies, of all things, and that Core

Curriculum, so—”

“Our data-collection tools are fine. We’ve worked for years getting subject matter out of them. She’s a time-dilator, and we need to develop a scale for FTD (Faculty Time Dilation).”

“Sir, FTD has something to do with flowers. Just saying, sir,” the assistant said, seeing the chief’s reaction.

“We don’t send flowers professionally,” the chief said. “Our work has nothing to do with them. No overlap.”

One of their myriad recording devices was at that moment registering, in its mode, multiple deliveries of flowers to the desk of Professor Stephanie Nelson. They came from grateful students and colleagues, some of them a little sad even as they were happy for her. There were spring and summer flowers both. ■

“Eggs? Eggs? I don’t know what birds talk about.”

– Yuri Corrigan

“I used to skip class in high school and go down to the docks in New York City to wave to people on cruise ships I didn’t know.”

– David Roochnik

ELIZABETH HUELSENBECH

To My Laptop, Shirley

My stout and sturdy MacBook Pro,
Thou hast left me adrift in a river of woe.
On these waters, where once we labored and laughed,
My burdened iPhone is my only life raft.

For despite the IT man's ministrations so deft,
Of a logic board, thou art bereft.
Indeed, there's no logic to thy fatal necrosis,
And thy loss fills my mind with illogic psychosis.

From essays on Dante to Dragon Age lore,
To Star Trek, to Sims, to poetry quite poor,
Thou hast carried me, fearless, on this strange college journey;
In thy absence I'm but a cripple on a Stone Age gurney.

All these years I have taken thee for granted
When I should have been grateful, bewitched and enchanted.
Beloved laptop, thou who hast left me too early:
With mournful respect, I now dub thee Shirley.

O Shirley, thou art lovely, with thy space grey exterior;
How can I proceed with a laptop inferior?
To the Apple Store I suppose I now must travel,
But my heartstrings your memory will forever unravel.

FAISAL HALABEYA

Penelope's Game

The *Odyssey* would not be complete without the reunion of Penelope and Odysseus after twenty long years. But the events surrounding their rendezvous are unusual. Rather than simply embracing Odysseus after he reveals himself, Penelope instead “tests” him—sitting “deathly still in wonderment” when she first sees him (23.105-6) and refusing to even fully believe that he is mortal (23.197-8). Still, although Telemakhos is highly critical of her incredulity, there is a case to be made that she is acting quite strategically. After all, the text makes careful work of emphasizing both Penelope’s skepticism as well as her despair at this point in the epic. But even if we don’t fully accept her tact as justification, there is an even more interesting scenario we will explore: that she may not be testing him at all.

When Odysseus first returns home, his great hall is occupied by suitors—“brazen upstarts” as they are called by Athena—all hoping to “win [his] lovely lady” while she grieves for him (13.471-6). Athena then transforms him into a “dirtied, contemptible” old man so that he will be unrecognized by the suitors while he plots their murder (13.505). He then stays with the swineherd Eumaios until they head to his home together. It is in this form that he first appears to Penelope and the suitors, his disguise obscuring his identity from them. Here, we come to the first indication that Penelope is justified in testing Odysseus after he has slain the suitors. She has endured twenty years without Odysseus, and in that time, there have been many occasions when, as Eumaios puts it, “wandering men [have told] lies for a night’s lodging” (14.151). In line with this skepticism, he also mentions that Penelope and Telemakhos “will put no stock in any news of [Odysseus] brought by a rover” (14.150). Understandably, this is a rational reaction. Penelope, due to her level-headedness, realizes that if she finds hope in every small indication of Odysseus’s return she will be constantly disappointed when it turns out to have been fallacy or a tale spun by some traveler to get lodging for the night. Penelope is not particularly optimistic about the possibility of his return. When Odysseus, in the form of a beggar, tells her he “played host and took Odysseus home, saw him well lodged and fed” (19.229-30), she retorts by asking for “proof, if it is really true” (19.257). Any other person might jump at the smallest hint of possibility that their husband might be alive and on his way back home, however her skepticism stops this reaction and instead highlights her hopelessness.

Furthermore, as Professor Uden pointed out in his lecture regarding the tale, the exchange of stories was integral to *xenia*—the guest-host relationship—and did not mean that all stories were to be taken literally. Indeed, we see Odysseus, an experienced voyager in this world, fabricate lies with ease throughout the epic. The poet calls him the “master of improvisation” (14.228), and we even see him concoct forty lines of backstory when he first returns to Ithaka (13.326–366). When one takes into consideration both the propensity for lying that seems to plague Penelope’s world as well as her despair and skepticism, it becomes clear why she has every reason to test and disbelieve him.

But there is another, more interesting theory behind the apparent “testing” that seems to take place between Penelope and Odysseus. It is likely that Penelope actually recognizes Odysseus much earlier than a reader might initially believe. In fact, one can argue that as early as their first conversation in Book 19 she shows signs of knowing that the man before her is really her husband. Right after “the beggar” tells her of hosting Odysseus, she weeps “relieving tears” (19.254). This is in contrast to, for instance, when in Book 1 a minstrel sings a sad song about the Homecoming of Akhaians. Upon hearing the tune, she remarks that it “wears [her] heart away” (1.392). She even wishes for death at 18.252–8. During this encounter with the disguised Odysseus, however, she is “relieved,” and one explanation is that she has now recognized her husband. Her tears in this later scene are tears of joy in contrast to the despair she held earlier.

Further evidence lies in the fact that she immediately asks for proof, as mentioned earlier, that “[he] was host in that place to [her] husband with his brave men” (19.258–9). Previously, we explored the possibility that her doubt here was indicative of her hopelessness. But something peculiar happens next. She asks him to tell her “the quality of his clothing, how he looked, and some particular of his company,” which of course he is able to do (19.261–2). If she were truly so despondent, why would she ask for such specific information? Perhaps it is because she recognizes him and realizes that he has some sort of plan. In fact, she actually offers him assistance, saying he shall be her “respected guest” (19.301). Now they are playing a game, where they have recognized each other but pretend not to, so as to allow Odysseus’s plan to materialize. The game concludes later, in Book 23, when they finally acknowledge each other.

One last note that further highlights the likelihood of this scenario: the name of the Book itself. Book 19 is called “Recognitions and a Dream”. These names were given by the translator, but do they not seem to suggest that there is some sort of acknowledgement—if not explicit, then implicit—between husband and wife?

There is one qualm to resolve, however. If Odysseus and Penelope have at this point recognized one another, there is no need for her to test him after the suitors are dead. But regardless, she still feigns obliviousness when she first lays eyes upon him. What is her motivation? If one were to argue that she is not justified in her actions, this fact would be a good place to start. But within the interpretation we have constructed, this is all a part of the game they are playing. There are elements of trickery and playfulness all over their interaction. Even when he is disguised, Odysseus ponders the fact that though “his heart ached for her lady,” his “eyes might have been made of horn or iron for all that she could see” (19.248–51). He refers to his stoicism as “this trick [he had]” (19.251). This language suggests some jest in his manner, too, and the “game” Penelope and Odysseus play is based on this duality—knowing who the other is, but not showing it fully. There is also a history of Odysseus being tactical about how much he reveals, namely with Athena. The entire life story he tells Athena (who is disguised as a young man) is all a lie. But what makes this scene fascinating is that Athena in fact smiles when she realizes the trick he has played. She says, “two of a kind, we are, contrivers, both” (13.379–80). Surprisingly, she loves that he has attempted to deceive her! Generally, the epic views some level of trickery in a positive—even divine—light. Perhaps it is a mark of intelligence to be an improviser who is capable of lying creatively. In that case, the game Odysseus and Penelope play is a virtue—a mark of mental dexterity—and there is no reason why it shouldn’t be justified. As Penelope says to Telemakhos when he doubts her apparent skepticism, “if really he is Odysseus . . . we two shall know each other better than you or anyone” (18.122–4). We have no reason to believe this wouldn’t have been the case all along.

Our discussion of the game Penelope and Odysseus play leads us to ask another important question about their characters. We see how deceit plays a major role in the story and in their interactions as well; does this mean that they are bad role models? To answer this question, we need to examine their strengths and weaknesses in the story of *The Odyssey*.

Penelope has many characteristics that make her an excellent role model to us today. She is both loyal and mentally strong throughout the entire arduous ordeal of missing her husband for twenty years. There are several times when she could accept a “bitter marriage,” as she calls it, but she rejects them each time (18.339). Even Odysseus himself said upon his departure that once “the beard [darkens] on our boy’s cheek, then marry whom you will” (18.336–7). Even so, she manages to avoid this temptation, making her a role model for her patience, perseverance, and loyalty.

Odysseus, on the other hand, is much more of a mixed bag. On one hand, he shows incredible courage in the face of death—both literally at the hands of the *Kyklops*, as well as when he travels to the underworld. When faced with the *Kyklops*, though he “felt a pressure on [his heart], in dread,” he still introduces himself and his men and asks for lodging and *xenia* (9.278–93). In the underworld, he comes face to face with his mother, and “longs to embrace her” (11.229). But still he finds the courage to continue the quest on which *Kirke* sent him. Yet for all his bravery, he also treats women terribly and is often vain. While disguised as a beggar, he insults one of the housemaids, calling her a “slut” (18.420). And right after escaping the *Kyklops*, he cannot help himself but to identify himself and bring a curse from *Poseidon* on him and his men (9.551). In these instances, we see why *Odysseus* might be a less than ideal role model for us today; his vanity and insolence are troubling.

Throughout an examination of both *Penelope* and *Odysseus*, one remarks over and over again on their skepticism. For *Penelope*, we see this trait when she doubts any news of *Odysseus* and when she asks for proof from the “beggar”. With *Odysseus*, one instance that truly stands out is his questioning of *Athena*’s identity—a brash act given the fact that she is his immortal protector through the epic. “Can mortal man be sure of you on sight . . . O mistress of disguise?” (13.399–400), he exclaims. Perhaps the fact that the two lovers—*Penelope* and *Odysseus*—have this trait in common is a sign of what makes them extraordinary—even heroic. Undoubtedly, their skepticism and wit get them through twenty years apart, and see them through the complicated process of their reunion. One can find many valid reasons to not emulate their actions and their characteristics, but one reason we might want to, at least to some degree, is that the sheer tact, loyalty and mental resolve they so clearly display can only be acts of love. ■

“When I was in the Army, all I guarded was the food.”

– Christopher Ricks

APOCRYPHAL CANTOS FROM DANTE'S INFERNO:

Hell's Hidden Rooms

a collaborative project of the C6 section of 102 in Spring 2018

THE PEDANTS

Thomas Morin writes: An apocryphal canto that takes place before the arrival at Circle Two but after leaving Circle One. This place is not named, but is reserved for the pedants, those whose care for trivial details led them away from faith. Their sin is punished by having the opportunity to leave the underworld, but constantly stressing over trivial details and ne-ver being able to leave. Dante's confusion about the matter and Virgil's explanation.

Now, as we approached this place, we saw a sight,
Nothing like what we had seen before this scene;
Such a strange site, I thought it was an eye's slight.
A gala before us, lit and all agleam
About to start, it was a grand party
Angels were seated, their wings looking pristine
There was music playing so very hearty
And beautiful light and delicious, warm food
A wondrous, happy affair it looked to be.
Around this gathering was a group so rude
They were moving tables and chairs the whole while
Never joining in to be in festive mood
Their spirits grew in a way much more vile.

Anxious they were, obsessing over things too small:
"Which seat should be where?" "Which glasses should be used?"
Such concerns kept them from enjoying the ball
Although they planned the event, they seemed abused
Never able to reap the good of their work.
I turned to my great teacher, by this confused
And asked him why these unhappy spirits had to lurk
And to my question he gave this wise response:
"The moods of those shades you see will never perk
For in life they were pedants, never nonchalant

About things too small to matter, keeping them
 From bigger ideas they would otherwise want,
 And from these things their unhappiness does stem.”

“You see, dear friend, in life they acted like this.
 Then, they sometimes were called students or scholars,
 Sometimes even poets are put on this list.
 “The study, the rhyme,” they would always holler,
 And these trivial things they held very dear.
 These worries made them in flesh only bawlers,
 Their faith in God outweighed by unfounded fears.
 So they spend their time keeping to their custom
 Even though it has always led them to tears.
 They focus on matters small as a button
 Such as the napkins and the shine of the spoon,
 Even the placement and cut of the mutton.
 And so these shades know not what might be their boon.”

“This party you see before us is for them.
 The angels are there to lead them above here.
 Once the event is done, theirs will be heaven
 But the pedant’s path is in no way so clear
 They care too much for what does not have import.
 Because of this, the Father they will not hear
 As to the small details their care does resort.
 Come on now, let us leave this place behind us;
 We have more to see in this infernal court,
 Such as those who care for treachery or lust.”
 And so we made our way next to Circle One
 To see those in life who had been much less just
 Than pedants whose habits could not be undone.

THE PROCRASTINATORS

Dana Almborg writes: I am placing Circle 2.5 between the lustful and the gluttonous. These sinners are guilty of procrastinating, so they are chased by demons because they were only motivated by panic to work in life so in death they are forced to keep moving to stay ahead of the demons, which are always a step behind them. The sinners on the ground are the ones that couldn’t keep up with the deadlines; they

didn't just procrastinate, they never got the work done. Neither the sinners nor the demons ever gain any ground. (Our classmate Angelo Schimmenti has given me permission to throw him into Hell.)

As we continued downward,
We saw those exhausted sinners
Running forever forward

With no end within reach
From demons they'll never escape.
A familiar shade besieged

By the swiftest demons
Caught my eye as I ran to speak
With the soul damned by inaction.

"Who are you, I asked of the shade,
And why do they chase you?"
But the demons ran too fast,

And the shade could not slow down to speak.
But my guide told me the shade was Angelo
And I knew his sin, and I understood.

In life, these restless souls
Moved too slowly until
Panic forced them to act.

In death, with demons at their heels,
Their panic never fades
So their movement can never slow.

They run in circles,
Endlessly, with no goal ever reached.
As we walked alongside the sprinting sinners,

I saw shades trampled

Beneath the mob's feet,
Those who couldn't keep pace

Are forced to feel the weight
Of each demon
Upon their backs

The shades underneath try to run,
But the weight on their backs
Holds them down, stuck forever on the path.

THE INCONSIDERATE

Raffi Balian writes: Circle 4.5. Dante and Virgil journey past Circle 4, which is filled with gluttons. Between the Fourth and Fifth Circles lie those who were inconsiderate in their lifetimes. Dante and Virgil only have time to meet two sinners, who reside in the Circle for different reasons: one never cleaned up after himself, and the other took more than his share.

As Virgil and I descended past the circle stuffed with gluttons
We came across a group of sinners cast off to the side;
I approached one warily, nervous to push the wrong buttons.
“Who are you?” I asked. “What is this circle in which you reside?”
“My name I shall not reveal,” he said, “but my punishment is this:
For being inconsiderate of others, eternally in this circle I am tied.
For my malice I suffer the same punishment, the opposite of bliss:
My bowels always ache, a horrible pain that I can never shake
So every day, I speed towards the only bathroom in the abyss;
However, upon arrival, I see that the seat is covered with snakes.
Since we left bathrooms filthy during our lives, leaving others to clean,
We now pay the price, the snakes causing our chronic headache.”
As he finished his sentence, his face instantly turned green;
He quickly turned, and clutching his rear end, he ran.
Hopping from foot to foot, he hobbled to the latrine;
As he opened the door, a horde of snakes burst from the can.
He glared at the horrible toilet, an option he could not stand for;
Realizing his doom, his face fell, for he was a depressed man.
He carefully walked in and closed the stall door as he swore.
As the snakes devoured him, we knew his punishment was clear-cut,

His reward for treating a communal space like a muddy floor.

We walked on, curious to see others in the circle covered in smut.
From afar, we saw a man in a glass box taunted by a demon of hate;

As we approached, we saw a demon stuffing food into his gut.
The man inside the box was gaunt, pleading for food on his plate.

The demon laughed, taunting him with delicious snacks:
“What sin did you commit so that you suffer this eternal mandate?”

He replied: “In my past life, I was greedy. I would take food in stacks.
I left none for others and for this, this punishment I suffer forever.”

Angry, I replied, “Curse you! May you forever experience these attacks!
You deserve to suffer for being inconsiderate in this endeavor!”

Virgil and I showed our backs to the man and continued on our trail.
My guide turned and said: “Being inconsiderate has no benefit whatsoever.
Damn whoever acts this way, for they are always doomed to fail.”

THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS, IMPATIENT & RESENTFUL

Peter J. Schwartz writes: Still the Fifth Circle. The Wrathful and Sullen. The Self-Righteous, Impatient and Resentful. Masshole Motorists, Boston Bus Drivers, and Public Complainers.

As we turned into Commonwealth Avenue
My guide, walking backwards and toward the right
Warned without overmuch ballyhoo
Don't step on that, you'll remain acolyte
Beyond your four purgatorial years
Several decades, or many, stuck tight.
The local natives, of course, have careers—
They're not going anywhere soon;
Like that man Charlie, they circle for years
Splitting ethical hairs picayune.
As befits such a city of schools,
There's a lesson here that's opportune.
In our fine old city of Boston, founded
The books say—upon a hill,
The divines on each other have rounded
Concerning everything, good and ill.
From soul elixir it's gone to a toxin

Everyone's looking for someone to kill.
 They started with matters of doctrine
 Which soon devolved into matters of spite.
 Burned a number of witches to save them,
 Then looked for others to set alight.
 At the time this did seem right comportment
 At least until sixteen seventy-eight;
 That year gave us the Fire Department
 Fees, permits, inspections at so much a head,
 Offing witches required such parchment
 Locking them up, much baked beans and brown bread.
 Whom to get angry at now? people wondered,
 Whom to yell at and wish they were dead?
 Witness here the first man who thundered
 "It's green now, asshole!" and tooted his horn
 At a motorist trying not to hit a drunkard
 While passersby stared at both drivers with scorn.
 It seems that more people took action
 Since in this circle we have the low-born
 Tensely perched before barking-throat klaxons
 In drivers' seats that are glued to the roadway
 Behind them, shouting, the best Anglo-Saxons
 Never making the slightest headway.
 The lights turning yellow, red, yellow, red, yellow
 No trace of green Monday to Sunday.
 Passing left, Maseratis bellow:
 "Turn right on red, shithead! Wake the fuck up!"
 While the stalled drivers, sallow,
 Fiddling with gearshifts, try not to crack up.
 In the same lane a bus adds to the din—
 It's a bus lane the bus has now snuck up.
 For centuries now, the driver's been
 Cursing passengers filling their farecard:
 Every two minutes, one taps the thin
 Plastic against the reader; the driver thinks: "*Retahd!*"
 How can a mere six steps confuse Ivy Leaguers?

Forget it—it's free today." But now a blowhard:
 "Bloody immigrants—free ride—intriguers—"
 Seated shades squirm and pretend not to hear;
 Cellphones shine to repel bottom-feeders
 Earbuds drone to make all disappear.

THE RACISTS

Rownyn Curry writes: The Seventh Circle, those violent to their neighbors. Rownyn the pilgrim with an anonymous guide encounters the place where racists suffer. They are punished by eternal visions of their victims, but cannot look away because their eyes have been covered by skin (play on "blinded by skin color"). Rownyn is understandably shaken, and soon leaves to the next section.

We crossed the heaving stones of the seventh bridge
 to that place where those violent against neighbors reside.
 Past the repulsive Minotaur, over a crumbling ridge
 we came upon a group most peculiar in its divide
 from the other sinners that suffered in that rotten pit.
 As a child caught stealing from his kin attempts to hide
 from the blow he knows will be his punishment,
 so these pathetic souls cowered
 and at times rose to flee, open mouths flinging spit
 that bathed the rocky ground. How my stomach sours
 when I recall the horrid sight of those faces
 eyeless, but for skin-covered indentations which they scoured
 screeching as they went, tormented by traces
 of something I had yet to understand.
 "O you who have fallen out of God's good graces,"
 I beseeched, "tell me what causes you such pain in this dark land!"
 A spirit, finding me by sound alone,
 stopped his restless twisting and extended a hand.
 "We are those who hated our brothers and sisters; so
 blinded by color, we pursued their downfall,
 sowed their destruction, their disenfranchisement. Oh,
 how I wish not to see the faces of those whom I called
 horrible names, all those who I made to moan
 with my cruelty. How I wish for God to see how appalled
 I am at my actions, my unfounded hatred of skin tone."

And I, surprised at this lively lamentation
 but pleased to see a deserving bigot atone,
 said to the shade: "Your oration
 reveals the nature of your infection.
 Unwilling in life to make the observation
 that all people, regardless of complexion
 are worthy of equal treatment and equal respect."
 The shade turned away out of dejection,
 and my guide and I resumed our trek.

THE INDECISIVE

Chastidy Rubin writes: In the Seventh Circle of Hell, past the people who have hurt others, and before the people who have hurt themselves, Dante encounters the Wall of the Indecisive, where souls are split in two upon the posts and pales of a fence. Virgil explains how these people got here. Dante meets Hamlet, who tells the pilgrim of the visions which torture him, of the choices he vacillated between in life.

The fence extended far as I could see. As I walked closer, Virgil cried,
 "Watch out for the wall of the indecisive, for they've been positioned
 to be tortured by the decisions they did not make before they died.
 Since they did not choose a path in life, they are here to be partitioned

on this cruel fence as its palings continually split their souls.
 As we followed the fence, a man exclaimed, "Who are you here for?"
 Needle-sharp fence-spikes had transformed his eyes to holes.
 From his flesh, torn fundament to navel, flowed blood and gore.

He spoke to us: "I am Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. I am unable
 as I perch here to see you. I can only see the competing choices
 I failed to make in my life. In one eye I behold my kingdom unstable,
 Claudius as king, my mother at his side, their sinister voices;

in the other I see Ophelia lamenting on the floor!
 I want to console her but it is too late to act.
 I am tortured by my ambivalence evermore,
 cut in two with the decisiveness I lacked."

We continued to walk, past Hamlet's lamenting sound

until finally we found at the end of the fence
 a heap of torn demi-souls writhing on the ground.
 Moving past this carnage, on our journey went.

THE PRANKSTERS

Rachel Shuman writes: Dante and Virgil enter the Malebolge. Upon entering one of the ditches, the ground opens beneath them to reveal Risata, the chasm in between Bolgia one and two designated for pranksters. In this place, they meet Sir Toby Belch, a man condemned to this Circle of Hell for playing manipulative and disturbing pranks on a servant. Sir Toby convinced his friends to play both physical and psychological tricks on the man, eventually going beyond the moral scope of the time.

In this place in Hell called Malebolge, we stood upright
 Our rapid breaths by the deafening silence were exiled
 Surrounded by the only thing that travels faster than light
 That which swallows light whole, like an indulgent child
 Flooded our eyes as it filled the abyss over which a bridge was cast straight
 Leading to the ten ditches, each as ominous as the next, our minds beguiled.
 Upon approaching, we were bombarded by screams of a scorching fate.
 Upon entering, the floor cracked beneath our feet and collapsed,
 Giving way and revealing a chasm as the air began to mutate.
 Muffled voices floated out from the cavity. Cautious,
 We kneeled over the jagged ledge to decode what the whispers said.
 Our hands clutching the ledge, our arms began to fail us
 Leaning further and further into the endless darkness ahead.

Pulling through to stand on the underside of the floor where we had knelt
 The voices seemed to fall around us like bubbles popping in our ears.
 Looking up, we saw disfigured bodies emerging. We felt
 Grey rotting fingers reaching out, yellow claws grazing our faces...
 Eyes glowed in the darkness, each tear on their faces like a welt.
 One malevolent hand clung to my clothing by the laces,
 Inquiring who this living body was that mocked his torture.
 I in turn asked who it was that now clung to my tresses
 The corpse pulled itself close, his words hot against my cheek.
 He told me his name: Sir Toby Belch, a prankster in his past form,
 Condemned to climb the walls of the chasm in an attempt to reach the top.
 False hope and false truths motivate the swarm, yet reaching

The opening drives them to encounter the greatest prank of all:

For as they approach, the opening heals itself causing all to fall
 Back to the bottom of the pit, where they are thronged
 By spiders wearings the faces of all those their pranks had wronged.
 Overwhelmed, Virgil climbed out of the hole, pulling me out with him.
 As I exited the pit, a thunderous noise rattled the stone walls
 As the floor that had collapsed began repairing itself as if on a whim.
 As it did so, Sir Toby was pulled back into the chasm, eyes filled with tears.
 The sound of rumbling stone mixed with the fading screams was grim,
 Reverberating off the stone walls and collecting in our ears
 Like a horrible kind of infernal music.

THE MANIPULATIVE

Angelo Schimmenti writes: In this *bolgia*, we find manipulative people, those who use lies to emotionally control, gaslight, and scheme. In life, they weave a web of lies to catch and control their prey; so in death, they are caught in a cycle of shifting back and forth between monstrous spider forms to hunt each other. They can attempt to undo the webs they are stuck in, only to fall in the chasm and be dragged back up by the spiders. A subtle reference to Severus Snape is made. Iago, of Shakespeare's *Othello*, bites Richard Nixon, who turns into a spider. Margaret of Anjou unties the webs, and falls. Haman, villain of the Book of Esther, hunts down and bites Cotton Mather.

And as we went, we came across a chasm
 Strung over the top, a web of monstrous making
 With souls entangled, and with their every spasm
 They'd draw the eight-legg'd beasts toward their quaking
 And as the beasts approached, the souls tried to unweave
 That very web that kept them aloft and shaking
 But if they could, their suffering they'd not relieve
 But plunge into that dark and deepest maw
 And be dragged up, their fate again to receive.
 If they could not, they'd find themselves in the jaw
 Of the very beast that they'd soon come to be,
 Weaving more webs, and finding more souls to gnaw.
 I asked of the poet, "What is it we see?"
 Said he to me, "Observe these vermin, liars of the worst kind,
 The manipulative, who control their prey and chain the free,

Ensnare their senses and bewitch the mind,
 Swap out will for will, thought for thought, and make them hollow.
 So, set against one another, they weave their webs to bind
 Each other and themselves, and so in their sin must wallow."
 And so I knew them, even in their savage form, by the eyes:
 I saw Iago, chewing the legs of a leader, preparing to swallow,
 Saw the ruler, screaming, "I am not a crook," saw his failing guise
 As his flesh tore away like the peel of a rotting lime,
 And thus the monstrous creature from his innards did arise.
 I saw that sly lady from Anjou unweave her restraints in time
 To fall, shrieking, her voice fading into the deep.
 I saw the vile vizier of Persia, his face wet with slime,
 His legs hairy and stretched, as across the web he'd creep.
 He found a bulbous reverend when he made the webbing twitch,
 And pouncing upon that firebrand, bit him, made him weep,
 "I am no dev'lish villain! I sought to catch the witch!"
 But that did not sway his hunter, who continued with his meal
 For his soul was not sinless, but black and dark as pitch,
 And so his shape deformed like wax, his true self to reveal.

BETRAYERS OF GOD FOR EARTHLY PLEASURE

Dave Park: At the entrance of the Ninth Circle. A traveler into the cave. The Cave of Ice and Loneliness.
 A man who betrayed God for earthly pleasure. A man dancing with a devil in hallucination and forever
 in loneliness.

As I entered the cave, the coldness seized my pain.
 So cold as to numb my sense,
 But in the deep coldness did I see a man sighing in vain

So long and deep to ease
 My way, but fear made me stay.
 "Oh, mighty God, why don't you cease

To freeze my soul, I pray day by day
 That one day You will bring warmth to this frozen world."
 Though quite silent, I could hear him pray.

So curious I was, that I took bold
Steps towards the man.
As I got closer to hold

The man's hand, he began
To weep and groan. He snatched my hand
And cried: "The light shone on this lonely man

When my faith dwelled in God's land.
But this lonely man of faith has become a man of pleasure.
Where is my hope in God's land?"

This lonely man suddenly danced in despair,
Never had I seen anything as abhorrent as this man's motion,
A convulsion as shuddering as a devil's flare.

When I looked at the eyes of passion
Fomenting fear arose in my veins
And his glare consumed me into a dark perturbation.

When I opened my eyes, I was locked in chains
Of ice and my body was turned downward.
The lonely man came closer to me in pain.

The man said in emptiness, "Don't say a word
While I was dancing with the devil.
She brought a fire to the world so cold."

But never did I see a devil,
Nor fire, but eternal coldness.
This cave was mere pale a soil of frozen ill.

May God's kind fondness
Someday warm the coldness
Of his terrible loneliness.



Michelangelo's *David* at the Academia Gallery, photographed by Alex Lo in Florence, in January 2017.

ZACHARY BOS

A Plan to Drain the Sky

et eunt homines mirari . . . et relinquunt se ipsos

- Augustine

I propose we drain the water that coats
the inward-facing surface of the sky,
to strip heaven of its artificial
uniformity. We draw down the sea
until new islands begin to nose up
through its wide blankness and expand until
they touch sides and merge, archipelagos
becoming continents. We continue
until the waters are gone, utterly,
and the whole sky's underlying roughness
of gullies and plateaus and peaks and vales
is laid bare. Then we can raise telescopes
and scan the drying ooze plain for turtled
boats, ruined harbors, dying baffled whales.

JAY CLARK

Raised Atheist: Three Core Encounters with the Bible

I. *“God Told Me to Do My Homework”*

“Are you going to Heaven or Hell?”

Well, I’m really not sure, but a billboard by the highway in South Carolina promises to reveal my fate—all I have to do is call. I am sitting in a van full of sleep-deprived, road-weary BU students on our way back from spring break in Florida, and my fellow Core student in the seat next to me decides we need answers. She dials the number on the billboard and, without warning, hands me the phone.

“Speakerphone?” I ask the van.

“Speakerphone,” they confirm. Silence descends.

A moment later, a man, whom I shall call Greg, picks up the phone: “Hello, this is Greg from GospelBillboards.org, what can I do for you today?”

“Hello! I would like to know if I am going to heaven or hell,” I inquire politely. I really am curious to see what this man could tell me over the phone about where I’ll find myself when the rapture comes.

Greg patiently tells me about repentance and forgiveness, taking the muffled giggles from the rest of the van in stride. I have to say, I am a little disappointed that Greg did not have any radical insights into my personal destiny. He tells me that we are all sinners and need to repent, but I’ve known myself to be a sinner ever since Ruby Rose led me to the rainbow light in 2015 when she joined the cast of “Orange is the New Black.” I don’t think I’ll be repenting for that.

Even though Greg’s message so far is lackluster, I ask him for passages of scripture to read. I have my Bible in my backpack for Core (though I have yet to crack it open), so perhaps I can learn a little something from it.

“Yes!” Greg says, enthused by my curiosity. “John chapters thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, and, you know, the Gospel of Matthew is actually a really good place to start. So I would read the Gospel of Matthew.”

I thank Greg, he says a short prayer for me, and we say goodbye. I turn to the girl next to me, eyes wide:

“We have to read Matthew for Core by Tuesday. God just spoke to me through

Greg from GospelBillboards.org. And he told me to do my homework.”

Come Tuesday, I relay this event to Dr. Gabrielle Sims during class.

“Well,” she says, a large grin on her face, “I’m glad God is on my side.”

2. “*A Fresh Take on the Eucharist*”

My corner of the room in CC102 discussion has never been a quiet one. Our latest antics include a reevaluation of the Eucharist, and after an extensive conversation, we have concluded that Christians are doing it all wrong.

The Gospel of John starts, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). Now, if we take the Word to be the Bible, then the Bible must be God. Throughout this Gospel, Jesus asserts that he is God Himself, such as when he says to his disciples, “He who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:8-9). If Christians are to eat the body of Jesus Christ, and Jesus is God, then they are really supposed to eat God. And, as we have already established, the Bible is God. This leads us to a sound conclusion in the form of a command for all Christians: eat the Bible.

Dr. Sims, ever-patient with our antics, laughs when I explain this argument to her. She explains to me that in the Christian tradition, reproductions of the Bible are not themselves holy, so it would be okay to eat them. Dr. Sims goes on to say that this is not, however, the case for the Torah and the Quran. Each printing is holy, and is not even to be put on the ground.

“So Jewish and Muslim people would get mad at me if I ate those ones?” I ask, slightly crestfallen.

“Yeah,” she says

So while we know it is okay, encouraged, even, to eat your Bible, hold off on the Torah and Quran for now. Regarding the suitability for consumption of other holy texts, stay tuned. The answers are yet to come, but I am confident we will find them.

3. “*Bible Thievery*”

Several months ago, my girlfriend informed me that she intends to read the Bible. All of it. A respectable goal, no doubt, but this is coming from the woman who has very little free time, no patience for bullshit, and a love of telling deeply religious people that she was “raised atheist” because she finds their resulting confusion amusing.

As an active duty member of the armed forces, she explained, she feels she needs a more nuanced understanding of the text central to so many American citizens if she is to be a good public servant. Fair enough.

“But I still can’t believe you, of all people, went out and bought a Bible,” I said.

“Oh I didn’t buy it. I stole it!” she exclaimed, very proud of herself.

“You stole a Bible? Really? We’re off to a great start here.” So much for those Commandments, although I can’t say I really expected anything more (or rather, less, depending on how you feel about the Bible) of her. Apparently, this Bible had been lying outside of a storage room for a few weeks, so she didn’t think anyone would miss it. A questionable defense at best, but I’ll let it slide.

“So how far have you gotten?” I asked. Having slogged through all of Genesis myself, and knowing my girlfriend’s temperament, I could not fathom this woman sitting through chapter upon chapter of “who begat whom.”

“Genesis... 2? Yeah. Genesis 2. It wasn’t very exciting,” she said.

Good Lord! She hadn’t even gotten to the begetting yet!

“I hate to break it to you,” I said, trying to contain my amusement at her oblivion to how far she had yet to go, “but that’s the best part of the whole thing.” I advised her to quit while she was ahead.

A few months later, I again inquire about her progress:

“Have you read any more of the Bible?”

“... nope!” She provides no further elaboration.

“That’s nice,” I say, remaining the unconditionally supportive partner, even though I have absolutely no faith that she will ever finish reading it. At this rate, the day of reckoning will come before she even gets to the part about how you aren’t supposed to steal. ■

“That was the one funny point in the entire lecture. Now it’s over!”

– Stephanie Nelson

SAMANTHA VATALARO

Two Goddesses

She carried herself with the easy grace of a bird, and Ishtar hated her for it. This other, with alarming eyes, a straight back, and her brow set in a way that meant, “I know exactly what you’re thinking.” Wrapped in robes, bearing weapons, hair plaited: The grey-eyed one.

Ishtar hated her.

Ishtar hated her, and yet still Ishtar sought her out above all the others. This hate made her uncomfortable. Why it did so, she could not say, yet when the air turned gritty with smoke and the sounds of battle—*when had war gone from swords and arrows to guns and smoke and bullets?*—Ishtar would rise and find her, as she did this time, as she did every time. Without fail, she was both surprisingly relieved and utterly furious that she could always be found. Her blood ran hot as Ishtar watched the other settle under a tree to size her up with those terrifying eyes.

“Ishtar,” said the other, tipping her head slightly, never looking away. Her dress and armor were spotless. “You seem to have developed quite the talent for finding me at times like this.”

“You,” Ishtar snapped back. She took a step forward and then back again, averting her gaze. She hated looking into those eyes. “You think you can take credit for the success of my favored ones and get away with it?”

“War favors none,” the other sighed. “I do only what I must.”

“You do nothing of the sort!” Ishtar glared at the goddess, the agitation of being judged wearing her patience thin. “You call yourself a goddess, but what are you really? A thing in a cloak. A wrapped-up bird, bound with your thoughts and your rules and your logic! You sit and cower and call it strategy.” Ishtar stalked forward. “And still you come here to watch over the field of battle, where the soldiers give themselves over to *me*, and you claim to know war!” She spat at the grey-eyed one’s feet. “You are not a goddess. You are a judgement upon them.” She pointed with one bare arm towards the horizons, where armies clashed and the smoke rose in a smudge against the sky. “Bound by their minds. Bound by their imaginations. What goddess could ever be bound?”

“And you?” The grey-eyed one questioned. “Are you a goddess because you do your harm directly?”

"How dare you! I love them!"

"Do you?" The grey-eyed one stood with one fluid motion. Ishtar tensed. "You love and discard them like a child does toys, my friend."

"I am not your friend."

"Why not?"

"Because—" Ishtar huffed. "Because you represent everything I dislike." The grey-eyed one inclined her head silently, waiting for her to continue. Ishtar tossed a bejeweled hand carelessly. "You hold yourself above the world and think it gives you power. You forget that all the power there is comes from the very nature you renounce."

"What do you mean?"

"Like with war." Ishtar tilted her head and caught the sounds of battle on the air. "And the passion that runs in it. Or—" She reached up and touched the necklace around her throat, glittering blue against her skin. "The passion of others. A lover. A family. A baby." She looked the grey-eyed one in the eyes at last. "Anything that creates. Anything that destroys. The energy they make. You cower from it. You hate it."

"I have never claimed to hate war," she said evenly. "I have never claimed to hate passion. And nature is what I draw my strength from. We are two sides of the same coin, Ishtar."

"Impossible."

"No," said the grey-eyed one. "I am the thought that orders nature. You are the nature that powers the thought. You walk bare-skinned through the world, loving and hating, creating and destroying—I follow alongside, and I make sense of it all. Without you, I would have no purpose. Without me, you would not know enough to love and hate at all."

"Impossible," Ishtar said again, though she sounded uncertain. She turned sharply and looked towards the armies, still fighting. "The humans still worship me, you know. Even if they don't know it. Whenever they fight, whenever they love.... When they stoke their fires, or run from thunder. I am there when they lust, when they covet, when they dance, when they brawl. I have always been worshipped by them. I always will be. They sing of me even now, though they do not have the word for me."

"And who do you think has helped them find the words for that song?" The grey-eyed one leaned on her bronze spear. "Who do you think guided them to seek out new strategies in your battles, new ways of thinking about your pleasures and torments? Who stood beside them as they learned to understand the thunder in the heavens and turn the fire into power? We are one and the same, Ishtar. They have remembered us

both, if not in name. They live and die by us, even if they no longer sing in temples or bring offerings. These humans depend on us, just as we depend on them.”

“These humans,” Ishtar echoed, staring across at the battlefield. “Our humans.” There was a pause, and then the grey-eyed one came and stood beside her. The two stood on the overlook and watched the battle rage on. It could have been hours, it could have been seconds. Time matters not to a goddess. The grey-eyed one eventually broke the silence.

“Athena.”

“What?” Ishtar said, looking at her companion. The grey-eyed one looked back.

“Athena. My name. If we are to understand one another, you should know my name, as I know yours.”

“Athena,” Ishtar said, the name feeling odd on her tongue. “A strange name for a strange creature.”

“Charming as always,” Athena said. “I expect I’ll see you soon, Ishtar. The humans cannot keep themselves from war for long.”

“They love and fight so ferociously,” Ishtar said. “So it has been, so it will always be.

“But the scale of it, these days—” Athena stopped herself. “But that is a topic for another time. We will meet again, as we always do.”

“Unfortunately so,” Ishtar replied. Athena gave an elegant shrug.

“Unless, of course, they’ve forgotten you by then.”

“Wicked thing!” Ishtar lunged at her, only to find nothing in her grasp but a handful of grey feathers and the flutter of wings about her head. She smiled for a moment.

She did hate her. But at last, Ishtar felt comfortable in the hatred, for beneath it there was almost something like... fondness. Finally, at home in contradiction, the goddess smiled.

If Athena was a bird, then she was the wind that swept alongside beside it, ever-changing. ■

“When I grow up, I want to be a farmer.”

– Gabrielle Sims

EMILY CIOCH, ELENI CONSTANTINOU,
MORGAN FARRAR, AND VARTIKA GOVIL

The Significance and Evolutionary Purpose of Anxiety in Women

Abstract

Anxiety is defined as a strong emotion or feeling that causes an individual to fear an event either in the present or in the future. This type of fear is often illogical and induces a number of symptoms, including increased heart rate, dizziness, and sweating. The causes and sources of anxiety, which are statistically more common in women than men, have evolutionary origins. In the environment of evolutionary adaptation (EEA), individuals feared stimuli such as venomous snakes, which threatened the viability of humans. The anxiety-like behaviors needed for survival in the EEA are in an evolutionary mismatch with current industrialized societies. Additionally, due to hunter-gatherer models present today, women in the EEA likely experienced higher levels of fear and anxiety-like symptoms in order to remain sensitive to their environment and protect themselves and their children. We propose that, due to the change in technical, professional, and personal expectations and stressors that women experience today, this predisposition to fearful thought has been over-amplified to produce chronic anxiety in women. To test our hypothesis that women in the EEA experienced a different and more mild form of anxiety, we propose to study the Aka people, a group of hunter-gatherers, in comparison to industrialized Bostonians. Through a set of observations and surveys, we hope to determine common stimuli that trigger anxiety between both populations, as well as the frequency of anxiety in men and women of both populations. Through conducting this study, we expect to find similarities in the broader types of fears and worries across populations, but differences in categories of fears and worries between genders. With such research, health providers will have a more complete understanding of why anxiety exists, enabling more effective approaches in treating the underlying mechanisms of anxiety across genders and populations.

Introduction

Anxiety, a prolonged sensation of stress and worry, is a phenomenon seen in approximately 19.1 percent of U.S. adults (NIMH). The disorder has a similar physi-

ological response to fear, which prepares the individual for immediate action: muscle tension, increased respiration and heart rate, and a rise in blood pressure (Fredric 2014). Proximately, these bodily changes contribute to an ability to handle immediate stress, heightening alertness and a physical readiness to respond to threats. However, there is a significant difference between fear, which is an adaptive function, and the anxiety we see today. Fear is a normal response to an unconditional stimulus, usually something dangerous, while anxiety is the result of an individual linking a neutral stimulus to a fear-producing unconditional stimulus, thus causing that what was neutral to evoke fear (Marks and Nesse 1994). With the introduction of industrialized communities, humans today seemingly encounter a constant amount of environmental and mental stressors, which ancestral humans did not face. Although stressors present in our industrialized society are usually not as dangerous as the ones faced by our ancestors, anxiety and fear surrounding stressors relative to the EEA, such as snakes, spiders, and injury, are still present, suggesting that these fears are evolutionarily ingrained (Lebron-Milad et al. 2012).

The earliest remains of modern humans, *Homo sapiens*, are approximately two hundred thousand years old and have a brain relatively similar to that of modern humans. In particular, the neocortex—the newest part of the brain and the region responsible for higher functions like sensory perception—was roughly the same size as it is today, which indicates it functions today in a way similar to that of our evolutionary environment. However, within the last five-hundred years, society has shifted to be more industrialized and has become a predominantly *delayed* return environment (DRE). A DRE functions in such a way that the reward, or outcome, of an action is not received immediately, a result driven by the rate of technological and societal development within the last one-hundred years. In contrast, the human brain evolved in the environment of evolutionary adaptation (EEA), which is an *immediate* return environment (IRE), where actions deliver instant, clear, and immediate outcomes (Scott 2013). A delay in outcomes paired with the human brain's predisposition to be highly active and sensitive to stimuli creates a mismatch between modern industrialized society and humans today, as seen in the presence of high levels of anxiety. Stress and other traits associated with anxiety were useful functions in the EEA, because they helped individuals to survive and take action in the face of immediate problems (Daskalakis et al. 2013). Humans are biologically programmed to give in to a “fight or flight” mode in potentially dangerous situations, but our current lifestyle leads us to experience more stress and worry, thus feeling less in control of our environment (Bateson et al. 2011).

When the rational brain is unable to deal with the stress of conspecific danger, primitive de-escalating strategies are activated and can present themselves as anxiety disorders (Bateson et al. 2011). Chronic stress was not experienced in the EEA since an IRE did not allow for long-term problems or stresses. Unfortunately, current industrialized societies often delay rewards until some point in the future, as well as prolong problems over long periods of time, thus creating uncertainty, and fueling anxiety (Clear 2016). One example of this is the presence of income inequality, which is a social determinant of health and a large determining factor in causing anxiety in humans. Evidence shows that larger differences in social statuses lead to worse social relations. This contrasts to hunter-gatherer societies, which are largely egalitarian (Hewlett 1993). In these groups, there is little to no competition amongst individuals regarding resources or status, allowing for extremely healthy social relations and thus decreasing anxiety. Industrialized societies unfortunately prioritize and compete over resources, wealth, and status, creating additional stressors that were not present in the EEA (Wilkinson 1999).

The properties associated with anxiety were likely present in some form in the early human ancestral environment, especially for women. Having a heightened sense of awareness and fear would have been extremely helpful, as women were responsible for gathering essential foods and supplies, as well as caring and protecting their children (Altemus et al. 2014). Research shows that the way a new mother acts can be linked with activities in the prefrontal cortex, midbrain, parietal lobes, and limbic system. An increased activity is noted in these regions of the brain that control empathy, anxiety, and social interaction, indicating that the maternal feeling of overwhelming and consistent worry is a result of reactions in a mother's brain (LaFrance 2015). Furthermore, while the primary physiological human stress response is considered to be "fight or flight," behaviorally, females are more inclined towards the pattern of "tend-and-befriend" when compared to males. Tend and befriend is an attachment caregiving system that has shown to play a role in maternal bonding and child development, where tending includes activities and behavior directed to promoting safety by protecting the offspring, and befriending aids in this process by creating social relationships, especially with other females. Since females are usually the more invested parent, particularly under stressful situations, their stress response has evolved to maximize survival of both self and the offspring (Taylor et al. 2000).

The onset of anxiety disorders peaks during adolescence and early adulthood, the same period at which ancestral females would start having children. There are also researched sex differences that promote reproductive success that likely increase vulner-

ability of women to mood and anxiety disorders. For example, adaptive behavioral differences in terms of childrearing seem to include, in females, superior social cognition and capacity for attunement with others, important for cognitive and social development of offspring (Altemus et al. 2014). However, these sex differences are also thought to result in women experiencing more sensitivity to rejection, criticism and separation, which are key features of anxiety disorders (Altemus et al. 2014). Additional research illustrates that although men generally have more traumatic experiences, including serious accidents, violence, and war, women are more vulnerable to situations that are unpredictable, such as sexual assault and abuse, which makes them more susceptible to anxiety disorders (Craske 2003). Another study suggests that women have more persistent amygdala responses to negative material, especially familiar negative material, in comparison to men. This is correlated with negative mood, anxiety, and depression, thus suggesting that women might be biologically more vulnerable to anxiety (Andreano et al. 2017). This is further supported by studies that found men and women fear the same stimuli, but feel that fear in different ways (Lebron-Milad et al. 2012).

Taking these factors into consideration, we hypothesize that women in the EEA, due to environmental and social conditions, constantly considered the safety of themselves and of offspring. Due to the change in expectations and stressors that women experience today, this predisposition to fearful thought has been over-amplified to produce chronic anxiety.

Broader Impacts and Conclusion

Understanding the evolutionary explanation for causes of anxiety will allow scientists to focus on new research perspectives in the treatment of anxiety disorders in women. Currently, research has shown that the common practice of cognitive-behavioral therapy and pharmaceutical medication is not nearly as effective as once expected (Hoffman et al. 2013). In fact, typical treatment often leaves remnants of anxiety that have debilitating effects later in life (Hebert and Dugas 2018). Considering the consequences of untreated anxiety on women today, it is necessary for more appropriate forms of therapy and medication be used to address the evolutionary basis from which anxiety stems. Because of the pervasive and constant nature of unnecessary fear, current treatments focus on addressing the tolerance of uncertainty and evaluation of fear-based worries. These new forms of therapy have shown to be incredibly effective in helping individuals eliminate almost all of their anxiety and give them the tools to address any remaining anxiety. (Hebert and Dugas 2018). This effectiveness is also re-

flected in the success of practices of mindful meditation, as it allows individuals to take time to cope with their stress and stress hormones (Hoge et al. 2018). By examining the basis from which anxiety stems in women, that of fear necessary for survival of oneself and others, we are able to more accurately treat the mindsets that perpetuate anxiety, not just the symptoms or the surface level issues.

Furthermore, by understanding the differences in industrialized societies and the EEA, our society can better understand what triggers anxiety and how to possibly minimize such triggers. After all, more women in industrialized societies generally suffer from anxiety in comparison to women who live in more egalitarian hunter-gatherer societies. For example, in industrialized societies where higher male status and power through a patriarchal organization underlies societal functions, women feel more pressure to subdue their emotions and are repetitively taught that they have less control over their lives, thus causing anxiety in women, which they are ultimately not allowed to express (Craske 2003). Furthermore, technology poses another threat to mental health, especially because humans evolved in a societal organization of approximately fifty people. Today, through technology, humans have access to almost seven billion individuals, a significantly greater amount of people than our immediate ancestors; the amount of negative information and other anxiety-inducing stressors have massively increased, adding to an already stressful world (Cartwright 2016).

With such information, our community has the tools to realize the dangers that our modernized society poses on women and determine improved treatment for women to diminish anxiety. Women themselves can understand the cause of their anxiety when it occurs and can have better control over their lives as well. More specifically, women from certain societies can utilize various techniques that will quell their anxiety, as well as have the ability to realize which specific stimuli may trigger their response. Through studying the Aka population and their anxiety triggers, as well as the prevalence of anxiety, anthropologists may better understand the impacts of the mismatch between the EEA and our industrialized society. Especially if, as hypothesized, the Aka people suffer from anxiety at a significantly smaller frequency than Bostonians, then perhaps industrialized people should attempt to adopt some of their cultural norms. For example, domestic violence is rare, and the society is egalitarian between men/women (Hewlett 1993).


The study of anxiety across populations and between genders can give us a broader understanding of the impacts the disorder has on different people and societies. Examining the evolutionary significance of anxiety, heightening awareness and preparedness

for dangerous stimuli, allows for an in-depth perspective of how anxiety functions and therefore a more appropriate treatment of the mismatch between current industrialized societies and our genetic programming. Through examining the purposes and impacts of anxiety on women in the EEA and today, comparisons can be made to help further apply effective treatments on the uncertainty mechanisms driven by anxiety. Analyzing the evolutionary foundations to anxiety in women will change not only the treatment, but the social understanding of the impacts it has on all populations. ■

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“I like rocks.”

– Andy Kurtz

DANIAL SHARIAT

Bach's Musical Humanism

One of the most important philosophies of the Renaissance was humanism. It was the rejection of scholasticism and the embrace of antiquity. It was that breaking of standards that led to the admiration of the natural world and the human form. Notably, many of the fathers of the Renaissance were Catholic or from Catholic regions such as the states of Italy. Bach, a Protestant, however, showcases many humanist traits in his music while not completely abandoning the scholastic practice. Bach's music shows a resulting humanism while taking an alternate (particularly Protestant) path to that humanism that ultimately can be seen in his secular, humanist piece, the *Toccatà and Fugue in D minor*.

One important point that must be made is that Bach did not abandon, reject, or even significantly try to reform scholasticism. As Nietzsche said of Bach, "In Bach there is still too much Christian [dogma], crude Germanism and scholasticism; he stands at the threshold of European (modern) music but [at the same time] glances back toward the Middle Ages" (Flindell 8). Bach was a devout Protestant, and because of his beliefs, he was a unique figure amongst the Renaissance figures. His inspiration did not lie in the Greek and Roman traditions of the past; it was still in the scholastic caste of the Middle Ages. In this way he was similar to the artists of the previous age, but the differing factor was that he was not Catholic. While the Catholic tradition was not as flexible in the roles of individual religious musicians such as Bach, Protestantism most certainly was. The new emphasis on the individual and his relationship to God created a shift of the "center of gravity from religious authority to individual conscience." (Urbiniati 55). Bach made full use of the Lutheran spirit of reformation in finding inspiration for his work. As Leo Schrade describes:

An idea brings the reform to life; in this case it was the Lutheran idea of the Protestant church. Bach visualized a new regulation of religious life through music, a "birth of the Church out of the spirit of music," to give a famous expression a new turn. (154).

This created the mindset of change in Bach. It is not the same as the artists and poets of Italy, but Bach still saw himself as being an agent of reformation in his art

form. He saw that an individual is worthy enough to reinterpret the religious stories and traditions. This led to some of his most famous works, such as Toccata and Fugue, which will be discussed momentarily. First, in order to understand the extent of the difference Bach had to the music that came before him, it is beneficial to compare his religious pieces to those of the medieval ages. An important figure of that age would be Hildegard von Bingen, a medieval nun and composer. Although she predates Bach by many centuries, the contrasts show the development of the role of music in religion very well. Hildegard's music was very monophonic meaning there was little to no harmony (Bent and Pfau 1). A heavy use of melisma made her work very meditative in nature (6). This meditative nature aided in the pious character of her music. It was very clear that it was written for religious purposes, and not necessarily enjoyable during non-religious situations; the music was a tool. Bach, however, decided on an entirely different approach. He made the music itself an important feature, to be admired by its listeners. His cantatas, such as the *Magnificat*, show this. In the opening chorus there is such a thick and glorious polyphony of sounds that it inspires feelings of grandeur in the listener. As the piece continues, Bach uses his tools as a composer to enforce or express the emotions of the figures of the story. As the first soprano solo is joined by the chorus, there is a constant modulation between major and minor modes, with accompanying ascent and descent to illustrate the inner conflict of Mary as she considers both the blessing and responsibility that had been given to her. The music had transcended its use as a tool to be another point of interpretation and appreciation. It had become enjoyable beyond a religious context, and its capabilities in influencing human emotions had been utterly tested. Listening to the *Magnificat* might lead some to think it is still a product of the scholastic school as it serves a religious story instead of as an appreciation of the natural world.

All the previous discussion of Bach's humanism can be greatly represented by his masterpiece, *Toccata and Fugue in D minor*. A toccata is typically written for a keyboard instrument, and is meant to showcase the dexterity and virtuosity of the performer (Cladwell 1). A fugue is a compositional technique that interweaves subjects and counter-subjects. The strictness of the repetition is in between that of a canon and theme and variation music. Canons are very limited in how they are arranged while theme and variation is a style of music with very few rules or stipulations. A fugue also has more emphasis on harmony as the counter subject is transposed by a fifth, while canons repeat the exact same motif, this adds to the difficulty of composing a fugue (Walker). The piece can easily be analyzed to be a showcase of not only the skill of

the performer, but also that of the composer. The toccata, by definition, was written precisely to express the virtuosity of the player, and hold so much complexity that most listeners would be struck with awe as it is played. One example of this would begin at the 16th bar of the piece.



The right hand plays a series of arpeggios, moving quickly with every beat of the bar, before engaging with a syncopated exchange of chords with the left hand, while the feet must accompany with the descending notes. All before an incredibly fast and chromatic run. This is labeled *prestissimo*, one of the fastest tempos a composer could use. The overall effect is both overwhelming and soothing, awe-inspiring and majestic.

The Fugue contains multiple melodies that all must be played at once. As there are repetitions of a theme, no single melody is 'simple.' The result is a highly polyphonic piece of music. The ability of the performer to essentially have both hands act autonomously from one another is a feat in and of itself. As the fugue begins at bar 31, almost immediately at bar 40 the performer is confronted with this:



Here three parts must be played with two hands (which is typical for a fugue). The left hand must shift constantly to different harmonizing interval, one part performing a semi scalar movement while the other repeats the A to create a sense of groundedness. The right hand plays a part twice as fast as the bass clef, where again an A is

repeated, but by having it played after every quaver of the lower treble clef part, it creates the illusion of 4 parts playing, and adds to the complexity of the sound. This is one example where it is clear both the performer's skills are being tested, while the composer has also created something to sound grand and complex.

Furthermore, within this polyphony, there is little dissonance. The composer cannot rely on a chordal accompaniment, like in a chorale, to assist in creating a pleasant sound; every aspect of the piece is an independent agent. Controlling all these lines of music in order to maintain consonance would be like controlling an intersection without traffic lights. The composer of the fugue showcases a mastery of his abilities if he is able to write a fugue that follows all the conventions of the form while retaining its beauty as a piece of music.

Here in Bar 51 there is again three parts, each combining to create an incredible, distinct harmony:



Each beat of the bar contains a different chord, starting with A major, then D major, and a suspension with G minor 7 that is resolved with a C minor chord. None of these chords are in the original key of D minor, so effectively he has modulated four times in a single bar. The use of chromatic notes is both brave and masterful for his time. It again creates a complex series of actions for the performer to attempt to tackle while also displaying the mastery of the composer. In sections like this bar the humanist admiration for people and human capability is clear.

Bach played a great role in establishing the fugue as a staple of music composition. His preference for a toccata or prelude before a fugue became commonplace (Walker 17). Moreover, its use as a measure of a composer's skills was sustained, as in the nineteenth century, "fugue declined as an artistic genre, [however] it retained its place in compositional theory... a rigorous training in its own right" (Bent 24).

This appreciation of the people involved in the creation of art and their attempts to push the limits of human capability and cause the listener to admire natural abilities is an incredibly humanist attribute, and something very much expected of the Renais-

sance. Furthermore, Bach wrote many fugues for organ; this would mean the entirety of the sound would come from one individual. Playing an organ would not only consist of three or four melodies played with two hands on a keyboard, but also another played with the organist's feet. The entire timbre of a piece filling a church would come from one individual. This further agrees with the humanistic aspect of Bach's fugues.

Bach stands as a rather unique figure in the Renaissance. A member of a more scholastic school that, through the teachings of Lutheran Protestantism, created works resembling the characteristics of humanist works. The freedom he had in reforming and creating interpretations of the religious texts he held dear, leading to a great advancement in music composition. The individuals involved were given a new appreciation, and the art was appreciated for its own achievements in addition to its religious significance. Nietzsche's description of Bach being in between the medieval and renaissance periods is poignant, as Bach seemed to have arrived at the same destination as Petrarch, Michelangelo, and such, but not through the same path. Bach represented the Renaissance in many ways, but he especially represented a Protestant path to Renaissance humanism. ■

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HANNAH JEW

Peace & Prosperity: A New Dutch Home for a New Dutch Republic

The founding and flourishing of the Dutch East India Company—the *Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* in Dutch, or VOC—in the seventeenth century meant the proliferation of a new urban merchant, or *burgher*, class, especially in cities like Amsterdam and Delft. This early bourgeoisie class in the burgeoning capitalist republic created and nurtured a lucrative global economy, the fruits of which they showed off in sumptuous urban homes. Paintings of the day (themselves a profitable commodity in a booming art market) portray this conspicuous consumption via various objects tastefully arranged as still lives—objects like Chinese pottery and Sri Lankan pearls, displayed in art as they were in the home.

Likewise, genre scenes by artists like Johannes Vermeer and Pieter de Hooch portrayed a new social definition of home that grew with the economy, in line with the dominant Protestant thinking of the day. Their work is defined by harmonious interiors ruled by the lady of the house. They are presented as an escape from the masculine public sphere, with domestic virtue on display like an Oriental vase. Scholars largely agree on the reasoning behind these acts of display, but opinions are divided on how much of the depictions are based in truth. They can agree on one thing—that the Dutch home synonymous with seventeenth-century genre painting was an ideal. But to what degree are they a romantic fiction of domestic life? The pictures may be pleasing to look at, but did anyone actually live in a Vermeer?

The objects brought back to the Netherlands by the VOC were many and varied, but thanks to the surviving art from the period, there are some that stand out, like pearl jewelry, Turkish rugs, and “Oriental” silk. However, chief among the treasures being brought into Dutch ports were porcelain dishes from China, distinct in their blue-and-white coloring and lustrous surfaces. Porcelain was different from local stoneware or pottery; it was thinner, shinier, and more durable. In China, the technique had been developed in the thirteenth century: firing the piece in a kiln at 1300 degrees to fuse glaze to the clay and give it its shine (Brooke 61). The Portuguese had been the first to acquire Chinese porcelains; the first Dutch shipment made its way to Amsterdam in 1603. The VOC dominated the trade—by 1608 orders were being placed for over 60,000 items, including butter dishes, plates, fruit bowls, and jugs (Brooke 68). The

Asian dishes were completely unlike their European counterparts, which made them prized objects. “Difference became an invitation to acquire” (Brooke 82). writes Timothy Brooke. Scholars can agree on the thrill felt by the Dutch people at the prospect of gaining access to such exciting new goods. Karina Corrigan cites the new tactile experiences, like the cool smoothness of porcelain or the weightlessness of silk:

These luxuries also must have offered new tactile experiences, such as the feel of a cool, thin porcelain cup on the lips of a man who had only ever drunk from stoneware, pewter, or glass, and the soft, rustling weightlessness of a silk gown on the body of a woman who had only ever worn wool or linen. (127)

Julie Hochstrasser speaks of the easy touch of luxury a fine piece could bring to any home:

The quickly growing group of capital-wealthy burghers, who wanted and could afford a certain measure of luxury, ensured a market for the porcelain even though it was rather expensive; several decades earlier this would not have been possible. (211)

It is no secret that the Dutch merchants who benefitted from the VOC’s success wanted to show off their material success, and they did so pictorially as well as physically. Over the course of the seventeenth century, there was a marked transition in the trend of still life painting from earlier “breakfast pieces” displaying foodstuffs to more complex images known as *pronkstilleven* in Dutch—“still lifes of display” (Hochstrasser 1). These images, like Willem Kalf’s 1669 *Still Life with a Late Ming Ginger Jar* (fig. 1), put the precious objects that made their patrons and buyers rich—Chinese porcelain, Oriental textiles, and Mediterranean fruits in this case—front and center, to be celebrated and shown off. The expensive painting was such an item, too. The items on the canvas are rendered in exquisite detail, with light strategically playing off the shiny porcelain and glass to ensure they sparkled. The contrast of the simple dark background with the various surfaces of the imports—glossy porcelain, soft rugs, fuzzy fruits—further highlights their desirability. Explaining the ubiquity of porcelain in Dutch art and culture of this “Golden Age,” Brooke writes: “They were beautiful, and they came from places where beautiful things were made and could be bought. That was all, and enough to make them worth buying” (Brooke 82). He sees the consumption of decorative arts that dominates the fine art of the era as simple—why should life not be beautiful?



Top: Figure 1, detail of Willem Kalf's *Still Life with a Chinese Porcelain Jar*, 1669 (Indianapolis Museum of Art). Bottom: Figure 2, detail of Pieter de Hooch's *Portrait of a Family Playing Music*, 1663 (Cleveland Museum of Art).

In another form of such display, genre paintings, which depict scenes from that beautiful everyday life, proliferated alongside still life in the new Dutch Republic, and they, too, expressed this cultural joy in beauty. A large subset of genre paintings portray interiors, populated by people at leisure or going about household tasks, and especially women. Economic growth meant that burghers and their families could afford fine homes, and fine objects to fill them with. A close look at these scenes reveals homes as curated exhibitions of the VOC's finest wares: the showy objects from still life placed in action at home. The ideal Dutch burgher home would be like the one portrayed in Pieter de Hooch's 1663 *Portrait of a Family Playing Music* (fig. 2). The motif of a family unit playing instruments together and in harmony was a common one, a reflection of the prevalent Protestant notion of the family as the primary social unit. de Hooch presents a household both happy and prosperous. A cabinet on the right side of the painting, the popular *kussenkast* or "pillow-chest," so named for its three-dimensional paneling, is topped by a series of vessels, and there are at least two blue-and-white Chinese porcelains among them, distinct in both their coloring and their shape. (Westermann speaks of the popularity of these chests not only for storage, but as display mechanisms for porcelain. Eventually, the Delft ceramics industry would produce sets called "garnitures" exclusively for this purpose.) The *kussenkast* works with the marble floor, painting over the mantelpiece, and Turkish rug draped across a table—such a precious object was never placed on the ground in a Dutch home—to communicate this family's conspicuous consumption alongside their harmonious living. The vases and carpet serve as signals of good standing in the world at large. Brooke feels the same way, calling the dishes "symbolic of a positive relationship to the world." (Brooke 82) This family is as prosperous as they are peaceful, and the decoration of their home is used to show it.

Interiors filled with fine objects are a hallmark of Dutch Golden Age genre painting, and they were a favorite of one of the most famous Dutch genre painters: Johannes Vermeer. A pair of 1668–9 paintings, *The Astronomer* (fig. 3) and *The Geographer* (fig. 4), likely pendants meant to be displayed together, portray a wealthy young scholar at work. The same well-appointed interior, complete with pillow-chest, is the stage for both, lit by natural light flooding in from the window at left. The light draws the viewer's eye to the figure, but also to the sea of fine textiles that surround him, like the woven tapestries on the table. The astronomer and the geographer are both enveloped in robes of brightly colored, heavily draped silk, a far cry from the black silk garments commonly associated with wealthy Dutchmen of the day. These robes are *japons*, (Hol-



Top left: Figure 3, detail of Johannes Vermeer's *The Astronomer*, 1668 (The Louvre). Bottom left: Figure 4, detail of Vermeer's *The Geographer*, 1668-9 (Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt). Right: Figure 6, detail of Vermeer's *Woman Holding a Pearl Necklace*, 1664 (Gemäldegalerie, Berlin).

lander 180) a scholar's robes, yet made and designed in imitation of Japanese court dress. Fine fabrics from Asia were a coveted good, only available through VOC auctions. They were the sartorial equivalent of the Chinese vase, a signal of worldliness as well as wealth, "... bringing the entire global reach into Vermeer's small room in Delft" (Hollander 193). Vermeer, whose father was in the weaving business, was familiar with high-end textiles and their place in the merchant culture; they make several other appearances in the clothing and decoration of his interiors and the figures who inhabit them, (Hollander 84) as much a tool for communicating the subject's social standing as the painting's setting and props.

Some of Vermeer's other paintings, such as 1664's *Woman Holding a Balance* (fig. 5) and *Woman with a Pearl Necklace* (fig. 6), depict women in brightly colored jackets, presumably made of silk and trimmed with fur, garments both warm and expensive. Their activities, each admiring costly items of gold and jewels over tables covered in heavy silk or velvet, another Chinese porcelain on the table in *Woman Holding a Pearl Necklace*, speak to their wealth as much as their clothing does. Pearl jewelry, in particular, figures in both these paintings, another valued commodity from the Far East. The VOC sent ships to Gulf of Mannar, between India and Sri Lanka, for the fishing season to buy pearls directly from the source before sending them back to Amsterdam. There they would be made into jewelry, taking care to keep the threading holes small to keep the pearls' weight up and increase the price (Corrigan 172-3. This exhibition catalog includes an album of drawings and notes by a jeweler, many of which are regarding pearl jewelry, presented with a brief explanation of the seventeenth-century pearl trade in the Dutch Republic). A pearl necklace, like the one being held to the light in *Woman with a Pearl Necklace*, or the large earrings she wears, would catch a very high price indeed. Likewise, the jewelry box (itself an import, likely from Japan) on the table in *Woman Holding a Balance* is overflowing with treasures, including two pearl necklaces and at least two gold ones, the profits of the VOC brought home to be enjoyed by the lady of the house in private.

The seventeenth-century Dutch home was more than just a place to display wealth through consumption, though. Vermeer's genre paintings and others like them depict a defined idealization of the home as a social unit. To be more specific, the merchant families that bought these paintings of daily life wanted them to reflect what they felt a home should be. In the seventeenth-century Netherlands, the home of a wealthy burgher family was a private haven, a domestic escape placed in direct opposition to the public, business sphere of the world. Privacy is an essential theme in genre paint-



Top: Figure 5, detail of Vermeer's *Woman Holding a Balance*, 1662-3 (National Gallery of Art, Washington DC). Middle: Figure 7, detail of Rembrandt van Rijn's *Portrait of Jan Six*, 1647 (Museum het Rembrandthuis, Amsterdam). Bottom: Figure 8, detail of Quiringh van Brekelenkam's *Interior of a Tailor's Shop*, 1653 (Worcester Art Museum).

ing, with the viewer often placed as a guest or even an intruder to a scene. For example, Rembrandt van Rijn's 1647 etching *Portrait of Jan Six* (fig. 7) is such an image of privacy. The young man, one of Rembrandt's primary patrons in his later years, relaxes in a well-appointed interior, leaning against a window and reading. The space is cluttered, emphasizing the home as a lived-in escape from the pressures of public life. Yet, the evidence of public life and Six's position of a wealthy scholar still abounds. In addition to Six's reading, his hat and coat have been hung up behind him, and a stack of books sits on a chair in the left foreground. On the back wall, a painting hangs. Six's posture and undone collar, though, galvanizes the moment as a private one, and Six's home as his personal refuge—even if the outside world is never far away.

When discussing Six's portrait, it must be noted that the etching is a masculine version of that subtype of scene. Paintings portraying private moments at home were typically populated with women; the portrait of Six and the Vermeer *Astronomer* and *Geographer* stand out as images of men in the private sphere. The home was usually thought of as the domain of women and domesticity, as in the *Woman Holding a Balance* and *Woman Holding a Pearl Necklace*. Genre paintings presented an image of domestic perfection, so images of home are also images of women. In the idealized world of art, domesticity and femininity are intertwined, a separate space from the masculine public sector, even if that was partially a myth. Elizabeth Honig writes, "Dutch genre painting does not 'depict' daily life; rather, it provides imagined solutions to problems of lived existence, and the delimitation of spatial zones and gendered behaviors within them is a crucial problem that it addresses" (195). There is a sense of order and harmony in the idea of separate gendered spaces, as well as in the idea of completely separate public and private spaces. She also asserts that the prevalence of feminine subjects may be indicative of these paintings being marketed to a female customer: "The anticipated beholder of this art must have been female at least as often as male, and the very act of beholding was a private, domestic one" (193). After all, they were the ones who would be viewing these works. Creating the harmonious space depicted in interior scenes was the housewife's job, and in Honig's eyes they take on an aspirational nature.

That said, bourgeois burgher life in the world of Vermeer and de Hooch was not the reality for most. For most working class Dutch people of the time, home and work were more closely connected, often sharing a space as in the 1663 Quiringh van Brekelenkam painting *Interior of a Tailor's Shop* (fig. 8). This interior lacks the bucolic pleasantness of the burgher homes, portraying a tailor and his family living and working in the same room. Three of the figures work at a table on the left side, the fourth cooks by the

hearth at right, clearly defining this home as one where work and domestic life occur simultaneously in a shared space. The space is also much more plainly decorated than the wealthier homes depicted in the other works discussed. While there is a painting on the back wall, a hat has been thrown over it, and the room's furnishings are simple, and there is no jewelry or fine porcelain in sight. The merchant class may have prospered in the seventeenth century, but it was not all that comprised Dutch cities.

The space painted by Brekelenkam is also a mixed-gender one, defying the burgher idea of the domestic space as being ruled by the feminine, another more bourgeois idea. Honig affirms this idea, writing that:

The ideal feminine home is also a wealthy one; the heroines of domesticity are, by implication, the wives of men of substance... Dutch painting makes the connection between propriety and possession seem so tight that we neglect to ask: How many women really experienced this sort of existence? (198-9)

Being a well-kept housewife was, and still is, a privilege of the wealthy, the "leisure class." Home was more likely to be less a separate entity from public life than a conduit between them, citing the prevalence of thresholds and windows in genre painting. A home with a wife constantly occupied with domestic pursuits while the husband brought home the bacon was as much of a symbol of prosperity as any of the commodities bought and bartered by the VOC.

However, it does well to keep in mind that this idea of the home was new, and that there is some truth to the myth these painters peddled. The seventeenth century was a period of massive cultural and economic shift in Holland, and the paintings that survive the era, however romanticized, do have an inkling of truth. Svetlana Alpers argues that "So many cultural norms were under construction in Dutch seventeenth-century life, and I would argue, in Dutch seventeenth-century painting: our bourgeois way of living, sense of individuality, and ways of organizing society from banking to the house, notions of punishment, civic charity, and most particularly the household and family" (60). The bourgeois class itself was new, she argues, and pictorial descriptions of it are as much about trying to make sense of the changes of the day as they were about showing off. Alper reasons that the catalyst behind genre scenes' proliferation in the seventeenth century had to do with the changing definition of a household in Dutch culture at the time. It is a claim that fits well with Honig's about the domestic scenes (which makes sense, given that the two scholars have filled the same position

at University of California Berkeley) being geared toward a female market as a sort of aspirational tool, as the burgher wives of the time would have been a first generation in managing and decorating this type of home. Even if the paintings do not display the full truth of living in the seventeenth century, the domestic ideal that they portray was present and very likely real for some.

That is not to say that Alpers completely ignores the untruths of the home by way of genre painting. Her writing explores the juxtaposition of the notion of the home as private and feminine with the paintings themselves. Alpers notes that the private home, supposedly a place to escape from work, becomes the place of work for the artist, writing, “The basis of Vermeer’s attention to these women rests on the way he represents the house as his studio and the women in the house as his models” (Alpers 66). It is a point that establishes both the validity of the scenes and their inherent artificiality. For genre painters of the seventeenth century, and especially for Vermeer, who worked out of the Delft townhouse he shared with his family and mother-in-law, the home was the studio and workplace, as well, more like the Brekelenkam. In an ironic twist, Alpers points out that by painting pictures of domestic interiors, Vermeer was disproving the very myth he had such a large hand in creating. The world he depicts was his world, too, but his absence makes that easy to forget.

Idealism has been a continuous theme throughout this essay and larger Dutch Golden Age scholarship. In this examination of the artistic definition of the Dutch home of the seventeenth century versus the reality, it would appear that home is among the most sought-after ideals by the period’s artists—not unlike the Renaissance’s pursuit of bodily perfection. Prosperity had begotten a Dutch people concerned with upward mobility and financial success. If they could not have it, they could have paintings of it. Mariet Westerman writes that “Portraits and scenes of daily life put the home and the family on display as a way of imagining, reinforcing, and crafting an ideal of domestic order and virtue. It has been said that the Dutch favored these naturalistic genres because they saw in them a virtual mirror image of themselves” (Westman 135). The concern with conspicuous displays of wealth and creating the perfect home comes together to reveal the ultimate Dutch commodity—ideal living. The household painted by the Dutch Masters was a reality for the few, but one that sold as long as it seemed attainable.

The Dutch Golden Age of the seventeenth century was a period of change in the Netherlands, and not just because of the 1648 independence. Economic shifts manifested themselves in the household. Still life and genre painters used their talents to

portray the changing domestic tastes of the merchant class, as well as the changing notion of the household itself. In an era of growing economy, the bourgeois home was at once a refuge from busy public life and an extension of it, a commodity itself used for displaying the material fruits of economic labor. Artists like Vermeer, Kalf, and de Hooch sold this idea—conspicuous display of success. But the home had new social meaning to the burgher class, as well—it was a private and gendered space, the domestic and female sphere, a separate realm. The trouble lies in determining how much of the image in the paintings is a myth. While life in the Dutch Golden Age could be beautiful, lived in beautiful homes surrounded by objects from around the globe, it was not the universal experience. The beautiful Dutch home presented in paintings belonged to the wealthy, and even for them, the perfect interiors presented by artists could be merely something to aspire to. Scholars continue to debate just how much of the life presented in these paintings is truth and how much has been polished for consumption. Genre paintings, ultimately, were as much commodities as the items that filled them, and chief among those items was a new image of domestic perfection. ■

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C. VEGA

Ode to My iPhone

You were unattainable to me—
Hallways filled with students
haphazardly tossing you at their whim.
A precious piece, mom would kill me

if I treated the rent check with such aloofness.
You were a gift, a replacement of those previous,
of lower status. You signified a reckoning
within my own impostor syndrome. Years go by,

you are suspiciously faithful to the point
where sometimes, I think, you listen too well. Even so . . .
We have endured weeks without service, pinching pennies

to revive you; you have tracked my every step and logged
every keystroke. You have stuck close to me all this time
but your attainability was only ever part of the problem.



A gondola glides through a Venetian canal. Photographed by Alex Lo in January 2017.

DANIAL SHARIAT

A Lost Canticle

These three fragments of verse were written as if they together formed a rediscovered canto from Farid ud-Din Attar's grand epic, The Conference of the Birds. In classic Core fashion, I decided to cast Descartes as a character undergoing a Sufi mystical experience. – DS

The Birds Question the Hoopoe:

Mystical Hoopoe, you leave us unsatisfied
Your answers do not befit a guide
How can we believe the Simorgh's power?
When speechlessness leaves us dour

The Hoopoe Answers:

Your philosophy is shallow and worthless
You are lost if you think your desires harmless
Only when you release yourself of this delusion
You will be able to see through life's illusion

The Thinking Philosopher:

Descartes stood from his armchair
Hoping to cure his existential despair
Assured of the sanctity of his cerebral solace
Yet fearful his deductions were hopeless

Digging his thumb into the nook of his palm
He paced the room trying to stay calm
But his heart was being plagued with woe
As he began to realize he could never know

That same solace was all he could trust
The safety of his world turned to dust
The simplicity of perception was dethroned
As Descartes realized he was alone

"I may as well be an amorphous mass

Waiting forever
 for time to pass
 But I am tortured
 by sensation
 Doomed to worthless
 contemplation”

In the midst of his
 crushing bewilderment
 Lucidity became prominent
 As Descartes realized
 he was still walking
 And considered his body
 and stopped pondering . . .

In his shoe he started to wiggle his toe
 Feeling the leather shift to and fro
 He let his foot rock from heel to ball
 The sensation of bending muscles did enthrall

Glancing at his hand he felt hairs against his sleeve
 Then a wave rushed his arm as he began to perceive
 The true essence of his existence
 How to engage in spiritual subsistence

With focus he could feel his inflating lungs
 And the graceful air dancing past his tongue
 He perceived his heartbeat as not just a sound
 It turned his body into a drum with every pound

He saw the crackling fire and acted on
 His instincts, like a moth he was drawn
 Without thinking he grasped the searing kindling
 The confusion slowly began dwindling

As he massaged the burn clarity did sprout
 It was as if he was Michelangelo's Adam reaching out
 In that small contact between his palm and fingers
 He could feel that the very soul of God lingers ■



“Their souls rose free of
 all they'd been before;
 the past and all its
 actions were no more.
 Their life came from
 that close, insistent
 sun and in its vivid
 rays they shone as one.
 There in the
 Simorgh's radiant
 face they saw
 Themselves,
 the Simorgh of
 the world...”
 — Attar

CORY WILLINGHAM

Uncivil Civility and False Moral Permissibility

Civility is a term that can be defined in a wide variety of ways, with each definition carrying a different weight. Its meaning ranges from the simple presence or absence of manners to the fairly significant presence or absence of moral permissibility. In this essay, I will consider civility in the political sense, by which I mean civility as a performative rhetorical device used to appear morally just in front of an audience. Civility in this sense is used to make morally problematic actions appear morally permissible. If someone is performing, describing, or advocating for an action which they know their audience will find immoral, they may use performative civility as a disguise to mask the morally problematic nature of their actions with an appeal to civility in the political sense. I will expand on this point using four examples, the first of which appears in Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*. Here, the Athenian delegation to the island of Melos defends their otherwise morally problematic actions by civilizing them in the political sense. Centuries later, Machiavelli uses the same tactic in almost exactly the same way in *The Prince*. More recently, American politicians have done the same thing, albeit using different specific approaches to the achieve the same general effect.

Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* is a contemporary account of the multiple-decade war between the Spartan-led Peloponnesian League and the still-expanding Athenian Empire. Thucydides is a useful ancient source, because he provides an account of his methods and the reasoning behind them. Since my argument will deal with the Melian Dialogue, one of the many speeches he recounts, I will talk briefly about his rhetorical methods in the presentation of speeches. Acknowledging that he was not present for all of the speeches he recounts, Thucydides explains that, for those he did not hear himself, it was his habit to "make the speakers say what was in [his] opinion demanded of them by the various occasions, of course adhering as closely as possible to the general sense of what they really said" (1.22.1). I quote here from Strassler's Landmark Thucydides. It is known Thucydides was almost certainly not present for the Melian Dialogue, so we must pay careful attention to how he chooses to represent it.

As mentioned, I am concerned primarily with the Athenian effort to conquer Melos, or, as Thucydides puts it, “to reduce the Melians, who, although islanders, refused to be subjects of Athens or even to join her confederacy” (3.91.2). In this early passage from Book 3, Thucydides briefly mentions Athens’ first assault against Melos, which ultimately failed. They did not attempt another assault for several years. This first reference to a Melian invasion is significant because, in it, Thucydides lays the truth out bare in a way that the later passages try to hide: The Athenians attempted to conquer Melos, based purely on the fact that the Melians refused to submit to Athens. It is true that Thucydides tells us later that Melos is a Spartan colony, but that does not necessarily imply any strong alliance between Melos and Sparta, as evidenced later by Sparta’s failure to come to Melos’ aid. This early reference to the Athenian reasoning for conquering Melos informs our understanding of their second assault.

The second Athenian expedition, ten years after the first, was made up of (by Thucydides’ estimation) a total of thirty-eight ships and 3,420 soldiers of various utility (5.84.1). The island of Melos, while not tiny, is far from large, and certainly lacked a garrison anything close to that size—that much is evident from the fact that the Athenians never even consider that the Melians will beat them in combat, and that the Melians themselves never try to argue that point. This was an overwhelming show of force. The Athenians evidently hoped—and they later overtly say as much—that the Melians would surrender without a fight, cowed by Athenian might.

The Melian Dialogue itself is fairly brief. At first, the Athenians proceed, in their own words, without any “specious pretenses” (5.89), insisting that the Melians surrender based on a simple examination of the facts: Athens is strong, and Melos is weak—hence the famous line, “The strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must” (5.89). The Melians immediately make an appeal to morality, suspecting that this is their only possible avenue of escape, pointing out that if the Athenians continue to use such blunt methods of argument then no one will be able to be allowed to “invoke what is fair and right” (5.90). The Athenians initially brush this argument off, attempting to avoid a moral argument, but eventually respond to it. The Melians state that they may trust that “the gods may grant us fortune as good as yours, since we are just men fighting against unjust” (5.105). The Athenians refuse to cede this point, insisting that they have as much right to appeal to the gods as the Melians—and that, by extension, they are as morally justified in conquering Melos as the Melians are in fighting to preserve their liberty.

For example, during the famous Melian dialogue, it is exceedingly difficult to paint

Melos as anything other than an innocent victim, and it is equally difficult to argue that Athens is anything other than a bloodthirsty aggressor. The Athenians briefly try to argue that the conquest of Melos is necessary to keep the rest of Athens' allies from revolting, but that line of argument is only given lip-service. In point of fact, the Athenians were besieging Melos a second time for the same reason that they besieged it the first time: because Melos had yet to bow to Athens. It was their insatiable desire for conquest that led them to invade a neutral nation, and that same desire which eventually led them to kill all adult men and enslave all the women and children in Melos.

However, in order to make a case for their moral superiority, or at least equality, the Athenians say, "Of the gods we believe, and of men we know, that by a necessary law of their nature they take rule wherever they can" (5.105.2). Here is the essential claim to morality: The Athenians can't possibly be doing anything unjustified, because they are only doing what is natural. The Athenian delegates believe that what is natural is good, or at least, is morally unproblematic. This is the means by which they aim to establish moral justification. Therein lies the connection to civility. Were the Athenians to accept their status as unjust invaders, it would be difficult to convince either their contemporaries or future generations not to despise them. By adding performative civility to their argument using the claim that their actions are in accordance with the nature of men and gods, they refuse the moral condemnation that the Melians level on them. So, keeping our particular definition of civility in mind, i.e. that political civility is the ability to appear morally right in front of an audience, we see that the Athenians, though they are performing an act which is almost undeniably morally problematic, attempt to justify their act using performative civility.

It is worth noting that Thucydides actively draws our attention to the Melian Dialogue. The overwhelming majority of speeches in Thucydides are presented as a series of lengthy monologues, following basically the same formula throughout the *History*. However, the Melian Dialogue is, as the name suggests, a dialogue. This is a serious shift in Thucydides' rhetoric, and that in and of itself would be enough to hint that the reader should pay attention. However, there is another point worthy of discussion here. Dialogues were generally reserved for philosophers or actors. Philosophical dialogues frequently discuss abstract topics of note, such as what the nature of justice is, and whether or not might makes right, which is precisely the topic that the Melian Dialogue discusses. In drama, dialogues exist to build tension, asking the audience to anticipate the next response, to actively engage in the discussion. Not only, then, is Thucydides calling our attention to the Melian Dialogue by making it look different,

he is asking us to read it in a particular way, i.e., with careful attention to the moral arguments made and the drama that follows. As mentioned, Thucydides was almost certainly not in the room for the Melian Dialogue. He made a conscious decision to present it, not as a logical discussion of whether or not Athens would benefit by the conquest of Melos, but instead as a moral conversation about whether or not Athens could possibly claim that their actions were justified. Thus, I believe that the Melian Dialogue represents an effort by the author to point out the differences between using performative civility to justify an immoral act, and performing a genuinely moral act.

The Prince is also famous for its morally questionable nature, and there are reams of scholarship discussing whether it is an *immoral* or an *amoral* text. *The Prince* was written as a gift to a specific prince, Lorenzo de Medici, and has since been read as an earnest effort to persuade Lorenzo, a cynical effort to gain employment with the de Medici family, or even as a vicious satire aimed at hurting the young prince's chances of maintaining his rule. For the purposes of my argument, I will take *The Prince* at face value, assuming that everything Machiavelli literally advises is supposed to be taken as literal advice. With this view in mind, *The Prince* shares some common elements with Thucydides' Melian Dialogue. Both texts involve acts which are morally problematic, and both texts use performative civility to attempt to rehabilitate those acts.

The Prince offers advice on how to lead a principedom in a variety of circumstances. Regardless of who you call "the father of realpolitik," Machiavelli was certainly its strongest proponent in the sixteenth century. He wrote this work after his home city of Florence experienced a short-lived revolution, which he was a part of, and which was subsequently put down by the Medici family. Written as a gift to the scion of that clan, Lorenzo de Medici, *The Prince* serves as a guide for effective totalitarianism, which often requires, in Machiavelli's view, a degree of cruelty. The single line which is most emblematic of the text as a whole comes when Machiavelli discusses what a prince should do when he conquers a principedom previously owned by a royal bloodline. He says quite simply that, in certain circumstances, "it is enough to have eliminated the line of the prince whose dominions" the new prince conquered (9). This is an exceedingly blunt recommendation to kill men, women, and children. The book is full of similarly morally questionable advice.

Machiavelli does not stay in the realm of the abstract, however; he provides an exemplar. Cesare Borgia, by Machiavelli's estimation, is one of the most successful princes ever to have lived. To help prove this point, Machiavelli recounts the story of Remirro de Orco. Borgia had recently conquered Romagna, a province overrun with

criminals. So, Borgia appointed de Orco, who Machiavelli calls “a cruel and ready man” (29), as a sort of provincial mayor. De Orco quickly got rid of the crime in Romagna, and did so with characteristic cruelty, such that he became violently hated by the local population. Once the crime was taken care of, Borgia had de Orco cut in half and publicly displayed his body in Romagna. This was not some sudden burst of empathy for the people of Romagna—Borgia had appointed de Orco specifically because he knew him to be cruel and violent, and then, once de Orco had done exactly what Borgia had paid him to do, Borgia had him killed. This is the sort of person that Machiavelli thinks we should praise.

Had Machiavelli argued that his work is immoral but effective, I would not claim that he exploits performative civility in the same way that Thucydides does. However, Machiavelli does not make that argument. Obviously, his relationship with morality is complex, but he seems to insist that his advice is not *immoral*, but *amoral*. At the beginning of chapter fifteen, he pauses to briefly discuss morality. He says: “For a man who wants to make a profession of good in all regards must come to ruin among so many who are not good. Hence it is necessary for a prince... to learn to be able to be not good, and to use this and not use it according to necessity” (61). This is not an argument for an immoral prince. Rather, this is an argument that a prince should be above morality, that he should be able to recognize the moral solution and choose when to ignore it. In this sense, he argues that his advice is not always immoral, but rather, that it is geared towards understanding when it is appropriate to be immoral and when it is not.

More significant, however, is a quotation from the beginning of the work. Machiavelli presents much of his work as a handbook for “acquisition,” which is to say, a guide for how a prince should “acquire” and then maintain new territories. As early as chapter three, he delivers his primary moral argument. *The Prince* is full of advice for how princes should acquire territories—they should be willing to kill families, to follow Borgia’s example. The desire for acquisition seems cruel and unyielding, but Machiavelli says: “Truly it is a very natural and ordinary thing to desire to acquire” (14). Just like in Thucydides, we have an appeal to what is natural, and just like in Thucydides, it reads as an attempt to confer civility on an entirely uncivil topic. The desire for acquisition is part of human nature, a necessity of the human condition. By framing all of the atrocities, he suggests a prince should carry out as functions of a perfectly natural and ordinary desire; he attempts to mitigate the morally problematic nature of some of his suggestions, because he, like Thucydides, can fall back on the defense that he is only pointing out what is inherently true, and that his suggestions are only what someone

else would do if Lorenzo doesn't do them first. It may not make his suggestions morally *good*, but the appeal to what is necessary strengthens his moral position; there are some things that simply cannot be helped, and we can hardly blame anyone for doing what must be done. According to Machiavelli, acquisition is a thing which must be done.

So, both Thucydides and Machiavelli present immoral actions, but apply a veil of performative civility to them. The function of performative civility, as the previous examples have illustrated, is to confuse or distract the audience; by insisting that their actions are moral, even if they plainly are not, the audience is forced to reconsider their own view of morality, and abandon their certainty. If we take the Athenians at their word that the Melians would be conquered regardless of their intervention, perhaps the Athenians do not seem quite so evil. If we believe Machiavelli that *someone* has to rule the principedom in this manner, perhaps his advice doesn't seem quite so evil either. This technique is not restricted to ancient authors. Modern politicians use the same general tactic, abusing performative civility to confuse their audience concerning morally problematic acts, although they generally no longer use the rhetorical appeal to nature.

To examine the modern phenomenon of performative civility, I will turn to two recent U.S. presidents, George W. Bush and Barack Obama. Bush's approval ratings during his first term were remarkably high, thanks in large part to the public response to 9/11. There is a tendency, when a president responds to a national disaster, especially one caused by a foreign power, for the American public to massively support the serving president; this is sometimes called the "Rally Round the Flag" effect. As an extension of this effect, Bush was given a wide mandate to do whatever it took to "fix" 9/11. His administration began a series of practices which are now broadly considered torture—the Obama administration officially condemned these practices as torture—but were called "enhanced interrogation" at the time. Torture is generally viewed as an immoral act; the decision to avoid the word "torture" implies that the administration predicted that the public would receive widespread use of that word negatively.

Although the specific techniques were kept from the public, Bush began discussing the CIA's enhanced interrogation program in 2006. His approval ratings had been steadily declining, due in large part to the serious economic ramifications of his war in the Middle East, but there was no massive decline in his approval ratings in 2006. His efforts to civilize torture must have worked, because when he started talking about the torture program in euphemistic terms, he faced no meaningful censure. In fact, it was

not until this decade, after Bush was out of office, that anyone really began researching the public response to “enhanced interrogation.” While Bush did end his second term with extremely low approval ratings, his administration’s use of torture does not seem to have seriously affected them, and he did not face any real consequences, perhaps due to his efforts to redefine torture as “enhanced interrogation.” This would indicate that, not only is performative civility still alive and well, but that the general American public is at times unable to detect and confront it.

Barack Obama is famous for his affability and eloquence. He is the ultimate example of a civil politician—he loved to give speeches, and, generally, the public loved to listen to his speeches. While his approval rating was never as high as Bush’s was immediately after 9/11, it never got as low as Bush’s did near the end of his second term. We might reasonably expect that the politician who made himself famous by smiling and talking would be somewhat smeared if he were to support a massive drone bombing campaign that killed hundreds of civilians. While Obama did not begin this drone bombing campaign, he did expand it, and failed to prevent it from killing innocents. However, he is not remembered for this. He is widely remembered as the archetypical “adult in the room,” the “West Wing president,” who could make any problem go away with a speech.

Whereas Bush confronted his administration’s immoral actions and framed them in a civil manner, Obama simply waved his administration’s immoral actions away. He did not take the Thucydidean route of directly addressing the moral argument levied against him; rather, he ignored it, and behaved so civilly in every other aspect of his presidency that it is difficult to remember him as anything but civil. He, like Machiavelli, clouds the morality of his argument rather than attempting to polish it. Both politicians used civilizing tactics to either morally justify their immoral actions or simply distract attention from them. According to approval polls and general perceptions in retrospect, both politicians did so successfully. The strategies used by Thucydides and Machiavelli are alive and well. We are no less susceptible to persuasion than the ancients were. This is not an argument against civility, nor is it an argument against morality. It is, rather, a warning that we must be able to separate the civil from the apparently civil, the moral from the apparently moral. A clever politician—or, for that matter, anyone clever—can use the language of civility to disguise atrocities as morally permissible actions, and we must be able to perceive that and hold them accountable. ■

BRIAN JORGENSEN

On the Occasion of a Change of Directors of the Boston University Core Curriculum in the Year 2019

Herakles and Jason were talking, and one said to the other, “As we see, it’s a bourgeois oligarchic self-misdescribed democracy, my friend, and within that is an institution of ignorant numbers, but even such a milieu has, in its way, its heroes.”

“Like us?”

“Why, yes. The Twelve Labors accomplished; recruiting and captaining the boat-load of restless extraordinary talents; through opposition and nasty tasks, besting acres of flattened wood-pulp and blackened pixels, through sheer monstrosity, through boat-rocking, across roiling or horrifyingly indifferent seas. Succeeding.”

“You are speaking, I understand, of Stephanie Nelson.”

“Indeed.”

They went on to discuss, in unduly mythical terms, how the Director of Core hauled the program to new heights, dealt with hydra-like administrative matters, proceeded through lairs and snares with cunning and integrity (“wise as a serpent, innocent as a dove,” said one of them in ignorant echo), wove out of rich but somewhat recalcitrant skeins a tapestry of such seemingly infinite pattern and excellence of color as might, even flawed, challenge the gold of the fleece or the apples—they were interrupted by the master of those who know.

“Always comes the philosopher,” said the heroes. “Is it not enough that you insist on explaining to us the meanings of such as Roger Federer and Tom Brady, dizzying us with abstractions concerning individual grace subsuming competence, or the addictive excellence of quick-minded risk in the midst of twenty-one athletes, ten of them companions, eleven of them bent upon one’s bodily destruction and forever-recorded dishonor—this when we can no longer think of participating, and wish simply to watch and imagine, and not to theorize? And now you must parse and empuzzle even our latest and, philosopher, distorter of *theoria*, our subtler appreciations?”

“Noble heroes,” said Aristotle, “I think it much in accord with your excellences

that I offer gifts, such as I can, to enrich and further enable your ever-finer prowess of praise. Have you spoken of generosity? Of ready wit? Of mental as well as physical courage? Of the intellectual virtues? Of reanimating the old to gain knowledge of the new?" Not pausing to footnote his last rhetorical question, he proceeded to amuse himself, and perhaps them, by expounding his dogmas, applying these to the particular instance under consideration, and even thereby questioning their completeness: might there be, perhaps, a generosity that seemed somehow to go beyond its means, a wit for more occasions than the master had, in Athens, imagined, a friendliness, a going to and fro, for a greater cause—and on through his virtues he went, even considering a revision of his ideas on magnanimity.

"And as for magnificence," he said, "one thing we all have learned is that not every instance of that category need be physical. One might, for instance, produce, out of weakly coordinated and somewhat worn elements, a magnificent—"

They waited.

"—program."

The heroes, at first taken aback by this characterization of what, along with its leader, they had been praising, found a way.

"Philosophers produce strange names for things," they said. "But we are bound to be in it," they told each other. "It perpetuates our fame. I believe that we should be friendly to it."

"And there," said the philosopher, "let be my final point."

"Indeed," said the heroes, affirming the finality, waiting for the point.

"In this Nelson, all the degrees and types of friendship can be found in their liveliest and loveliest forms. A Chinese friend has said, 'Look closely into her aims, observe the means by which she pursues them, discover what brings her content—and can her real worth be hidden from you? Can it remain hidden from you?' Her students, her colleagues, her closer friends all testify to the truth of these otherwise somewhat extravagant assertions. But indeed this instance of Nelson, energizing me, as it does, with a willingness to extend my thought, suggests the need to consult with another." Aristotle left to seek that person.

"And we shall see with attentive eyes," said Jason and Herakles to each other, "who will arrive next to labor for and to captain this—program." ■

MARY SUMMERS & ELORA WINTERS

Core Bitmoji Expansion Pack

As a **digital bonus** for readers of this issue of *The Core Journal*, we have created a set of Bitmojis featuring authors and characters from Core readings. The image of Nietzsche below—embodying his philosophical mantra that “To live is to suffer”—is just a taste of what you can find in this content pack. Other avatars include Confucius, reminding you to respect your elders; Enkidu the Wild Man, showin’ off a big mood; Jane Austen with her rallying cry of female empowerment; Karl Marx, subverting the economic status quo and prophesying revolution; and the Simorgh hangin’ with the hoopoe and other avian friends. All the 2019 Core Bitmojis can be accessed at the homepage for this issue via www.bu.edu/core/journal.



“Bitmoji” is a trademark of Snap, Inc., the parent company of Snapchat. Use of the Bitmoji terminology is permitted here under US legal guidelines for parodic satire. Note: We appreciate that books like all other media are subject to translation and re-mediation, as technologies of communication and consumption change. And certainly, we think reading should be fun. However, we do not actually believe that Bitmoji is an adequate replacement for books. We invite our readers to strenuously question the processes of deracination and simplification through which important cultural and intellectual artifacts are commodified for use on social media platforms. - Eds.

CALLIE
ROSENSTEIN
*Lot's
Theme*

I wrote this piece for a fictional cult that commemorates the transformation of Lot's wife. (At services, congregants eat a teaspoon of salt to honor her fate.) First, I wrote a summary of the story: "Lot slept in his home outside of Sodom"; "God's messengers came"; "City was destroyed by fire and brimstone;" and, "Wife looked, turned to salt." Then, I translated the text into Morse code. Finally, I replaced dots with eighth notes and dashes with quarter notes. The musical tone changes to reflect the theme of each phrase; the part about God's messengers is majestic, while the fire-and-brimstone part is dark. - CR

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8

6

3

9

11

13

16

22

28

34

39

43

45

49

*To listen to an online recording of this composition, please visit the table of contents
for this issue at the Journal homepage: www.bu.edu/core/journal.*

CHLOE HITE

Neighbors

Next to my childhood home, in my neighbor's yard,
there is a koi pond. Narrow, deep, teeming
with fish turning over each other languidly.
It is there, through the wire fence separating my yard
of patchy grass, mud pies, chalk grime, skinned knees
and heels of hands, where I, a pint-sized anarchist,
wailing tyrannical in my youth,
with my black dirt and red blood and grey dust,
am separated from the edged gravel path and scissor-cut
grass and the deep, black pond of orange koi,
onyx and garnet triple set within emerald grass.
Silent. Ripened. This place, forbidden to me.
Accessible by those more enlightened than I:
The neighbor's quasi-feral cat.

The squirrel scuttling across on the telephone wires.
Worms tunnelling through the earth, silken and dreamy.
How do I arrive on the other side?
The fence will act as a cheese wire, cut me in a grid pattern,
I will fall to the ground in bite-sized cubes, my own flesh
arriving without me. The neighbor's cat will enjoy that.
To go around the back, through the cautious vegetable patch
would lead me out the garden gate.
Wary of splinters lurking in the fence separating
our yard from the street, and the alley full of glass,
and the detritus of wayward neighbors,
I see only another impossible route.
The front door is not an option. I have no idea
how to make a request of these people.

"Please let me into your sanctuary."

They would surely say no to an artless child.
 Property lines are devilish.
 What does peace know of me?
 It knows sharp edges and bulges protruding.
 Uneven mounds of earth and concrete
 chafing against flagstone, grinding each other down
 to an impossible, fine dust, a lovely way to play.
 Destruction and its joy.
 It knows me only in its absence, me, a cantankerous
 baby bounding through the raspberry patch in galoshes
 and dungarees. Irreverent, but curious, envy
 flickering on my face like sun-dapple through the briars,
 craning my neck. Such is my reverence for the haven

not five steps to my left. Peace knows nothing of me.
 We share no vocabulary; our languages do not intertwine.
 Much as I, in my toddler's babble, cannot convince
 the neighbor's cat to convey me over the thin barrier
 between my world and my neighbor's,
 Peace does not answer when I cry out for it.
 My words are English, the King James Bible,
 and peace is Aramaic, a Dead Sea scroll.
 How can we communicate over the centuries?
 One long children's game of telephone.
 I knew it once
 I bathed in the pool.
 I felt the fish, vibrant and perfect, sleek against my calves
 I felt the black water rushing around me, inside me.

Peace is a distant relative. When I am away,
 It whispers my name without recognizing me,
 when I am roaring too loud to hear anything, speaking in tongues.
 What does it know of me when I do not welcome it,
 when I do not allow myself to be lifted by my neighbor

Over the fence. Danger, joy, completion. Allowed
to be riotous elsewhere. Elsewhere, everywhere,
we are neighbors who do not speak across
the five feet between our properties.

God is the cat, the worm, the world rushing around
every body, every baby crying out, playing, shitting,
snottng, thrashing. Peace is there, elsewhere,
everywhere, every place we do not look and yet
somehow inhabit. We do not know it; it does not know us.
We exist just beyond each others bounds.

ABEL SHARPE

Sestet #2

Even Adam and Eve — each taking a dozen
Granny Smiths in their cradling arms to their bower —
Would only choose the one unbruised, pale green, and picked

To share, for they knew perfection only too well,
Both taking equal bites, each mouthful affirming
The last, but taking great care to avoid the core.

Our Contributors

Quinn ANGELOU-LYSAKER is a Seattle native and political science major. Outside of class, she can be found tutoring elementary school students, practicing ASL, and supporting Black community organizations as secretary of Sisters United. In Core, she has made many friends and drank a lot of free coffee. // Zachary BOS is an alumnus of the Core Curriculum and the graduate creative writing program at BU. He and his wife live in Central Mass with their tiny dog Lily. // Caroline BRANTLEY studies political science and Spanish. She intends to work with human rights and migration policy after graduation. She enjoys making her own hummus and reading angsty literature. // Lily CAMPBELL is on the pre-med track, majoring in behavioral biology and minoring in medical anthropology. After making a bet that she would not return to Core after spending a semester away from it, she now owes Prof. Hamill a large coffee as she intends to add a double minor in Core. // Emily CIOCH comes to BU from Upstate New York. Having completed the two-year program in the CGS, she is now working toward a degree in anthropology in CAS. // Jay CLARK is a first-year student, currently deciding between studying sociology or computer science. Their sources of joy include poetry, community service, and tree-climbing. Bridget COHEN is a second-year student focusing on anthropology, religion, linguistics and languages. She plans to spend the fall in Morocco to study Arabic and the intersection of Islam and politics in the Middle East and North Africa. // Eleni CONSTANTINO is wrapping up her last year at BU as a double minor in biological anthropology and Modern Greek. In her free time, she enjoys travel, playing the violin, and eating ice cream. // Hannah DION (@hj_inks) studies English and history. In her spare time, she plays trumpet with the BU band. Besides *The Core Journal*, her work has appeared in *Hawk & Whippoorwill*, *The Charles River Journal*, and *Clarion*. // Sydney ELLIS is pursuing a major in biology even while exploring the area of spoken word inspired by canonical literature. Core has helped to expose her to the inspiration that could stem from these books and provided a space for her to explore them. // Morgan FARRAR is studying biological anthropology. She is a member of several different BU communities, including CAS Dean's Hosts, FY 101, and of course, the Core. // Vartika GOVIL is studying health science in Sargent College. // David GREEN teaches humanities in the Core Curriculum. Rumor has it he is accepting donations of red pens. // Faisal HALABEYA is majoring in physics and math. His favorite Core text so far has been Plato's *Republic*, and he hopes to

center his interdisciplinary project around the intersections of math and philosophy. He enjoys biking by the Charles, late-night conversation with floormates in Warren, and reading random Wikipedia articles. // Bruce HALLGREN is majoring in English. He spends his free time seeking ways to mitigate existential dread, e.g. by listening to Outkast's "Hey Ya!" on repeat for hours. // Jonathan HAN goes by J-Han, Jon, and Han Solo, but not Jonny or Johnathan. He is a first-year student in CFA, focusing on the recorder and the rhombi. [*Untrue*. - Eds.] // Chloe HITE graduated in 2017 with degrees in anthropology and economics. She lives in Washington, where her work supports government science and technology initiatives to strengthen US and allied economic and national security. Poetry is her respite. In 2019, she will begin a graduate program at Johns Hopkins University. // Helen HOUGHTON aspires to be C. J. Cregg when she grows up. A political science major and future judge, she revels in chaos and likes her coffee with cream and sugar. // Elizabeth HUELSENBECH hails from Berkeley, CA, where she learned to love literature and boba. When she's not writing, Beth can be found working in the biogeochemistry lab or dancing with the Harvard Ballet Company. // Ralph INDRISANO was born in Medford in 1948. When he was six years old, his family moved to the North End; his memoir essay in this issue recounts some of his life growing up in that neighborhood. Ralph now works as a carpenter, a substitute teacher in Wakefield, and a teacher of woodwork in an afternoon program in Watertown. He has been a Little League coach for 20 years. // Hannah JEW studies art history. She is known for her leadership of Word & Way, her appetite for novels with plucky heroines, and her ownership of the creepy portrait of John Cotton that has lived in the Core office while she studies abroad in France. // Parker JORENBY is studying psychology and international relations. He participates in multiple bands, is a member of the band service fraternity and Army ROTC, and will serve as President of CAS Student Government for the 2019-20 school year. // Brian JORGENSEN was the first Dean of the Core, and taught in it for many years. // Alex LO has found time during his semester abroad to ride Space Mountain at Disneyland Paris a grand total of 38 times. // Caroline MICHAIL is studying neuroscience with minors in Deaf studies and classics. In her free time, she enjoys reading and having debates with her friends. Her ultimate ambition is to become a trauma surgeon. // Madison ROMO is studying international relations and Russian. She is a member of the BU Equestrian Team and of the CAS Student Government. // María Antonieta RONDÓN ANZOLA is a senior majoring in philosophy and international relations. She met her closest BU friends through the Core, and will miss the daily routine of walking into CAS 119 for coffee and random conversations. In

the future she intends to help rebuild her native Venezuela. // Callie (Caitlin) ROSENSTEIN has studied music for more than twelve years; she plays six instruments. She studies archaeology, and rides with the Equestrian Team. // Danial SHARIAT is an essayist, poet and musician, and a student of economics and mathematics. With the support of Core friends and faculty, he has published poetry and prose, and was co-founder of an intercollegiate economics journal. // Abel SHARPE is a junior from Bozeman, Montana. He arrived at Boston University five years ago: it was snowing and dark, and he stepped on a seal. // Jān SHODAM has been called a pioneer of publishing at Boston University. // Moeka SUZUKI is a political science major from New York State. Her drawing in this issue was for a museum visit with Prof. Nelson's first-year Humanities class. // Sassan TABATABAI is a long-time member of the Core faculty, and convener of the Persian program in WLL. This is his sixteenth year as faculty adviser of the *Journal*. // Samantha VATALARO is a first-year student in COM. Her writing has appeared in publications of the New York State Young Writers Institute, and on stage at the Cap Rep Theater in Albany. She was a national finalist for the 2018 English Speaking Union's National Shakespeare Competition. // C. VEGA is studying biological anthropology. Outside of class, she works in an anthro lab and serves as co-president of BU's spoken word club, Speak for Yourself. In her free time, she practices the drums, and browses bookstores for poetry collections. // Joseph WATERMAN (Core '91, CAS '93, GRS '03) wrote the paper from which the excerpts in this issue were drawn for a gathering of the Wranglers Society, a student group in the early days of the Core devoted to intellectual conversation. After his undergraduate work, he earned a PhD from BU with a dissertation on Hegel's master-slave dialectic. He lives in Louisville, Kentucky. // Cory WILLINGHAM is studying classics and political science, with a focus on the root causes of political ambition in minority groups. In his off time, of which there is regrettably little, he translates Latin poetry. // Eve WROBEL is studying political science with minors in French and international relations. She spends her spare time participation in Model UN, modeling for the student-run magazine *Off the Cuff*, editing for *Arché* philosophy journal, working the phone lines at Telefund, and cultivating her yoga practice. // Bradie WRIGHT is a postmodern neo-Marxist studying philosophy and political science. They intend to use their degree to explode the gender binary. ■

Visit bu.edu/core/journal to find an expanded/updated list of contributor bios for this issue.



SASSAN TABATABAI

Siren Song

your lips
lipping
my name

an annual anthology of ideas
and creative expression
from the arts & sciences
core curriculum at
boston university

آیا با خودم در تناقض‌ام من؟
باشد، خودم را نقض می‌کنم،
(سترگم من،
کثرت‌ها را در بردارم.)



Do I contradict myself?

Very well then I contradict myself,

(I am large, I contain multitudes.)

from Walt Whitman, Leaves of Grass

published since 1993

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