



in medias res



EDITORIAL POLICY

This journal is devoted to understanding the human condition which is to be *in medias res*, Latin, "in the middle of things". We intend to print a wide range of articles, essays, travelogues, reviews, poetry and fiction which highlight the interests, expertise and manners of thought cultivated in the various disciplines studied at this university. Indeed, the university must, in some sense, have portions of all things in order to be a *universitas*, a whole which has sufficient diversity and depth to merit its name. Situated as we are between many ideas, experiences and events, both at the university and in the wider world, we might benefit by recognizing and discussing the possibilities inherent in or constitutive of this reality. The purpose of this paper is to create a space where the life of learning and the life of the everyday can be brought together. Both students and faculty are encouraged to contribute to this publication, and anyone who is interested in becoming a member of the Editorial Board is more than welcome to come out to the meetings—no experience is necessary!

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST: On Contemporary Everyday Rhetoric

Professor Daniel Regnier | Philosophy

'Interest' is a strange word. It can be found in everyday expressions: "So, tell me about your interests." (Try to find a synonym for this ... there doesn't seem to be one.) It is very important in financial and economic contexts: "Interest rates are rising." (This has an ominous sense for those of us tending to the open wound that is a mortgage.) But it also serves in politics in critically important contexts in which the stakes can be very high: "It is a matter of national interest." Of course, at another level individuals, too, talk about their needs and desires in terms of interest: "I am just protecting my interests." The term is critically important because it is often invoked to justify actions – not just any actions, but potentially very controversial ones. So if this concept is going to play such a crucial role in what is – well, let's just say it – ethics, then perhaps we should try to get a better idea of what we mean by "interest."

The word *interest* comes from Latin, of course, from *interesse*, which literally means 'to be between.' (This bit of Latin is more than mildly reminiscent of the title of this journal *In medias res*, 'in the middle of things,' which is, of course, always extremely interesting.) From that basic meaning is derived the meaning 'to be different.' And maybe this is where the so-called 'impersonal' usage of this verb comes in. Interest, which literally means 'it is between,' ultimately means 'It makes a difference – interests, concerns, imports; is of interest, importance.' The etymology suggests a connection between interesting things and things which are different. It is as if to be interesting is precisely to be different.

At the everyday level of usage *interest* is one of those words that gets over-used. 'Interesting' says one with a wry and ironic smile when it would be rude to say 'that's completely stupid.' Or even the very serious philosophers will mumble pedantically 'interesting' when in fact they are simply too lazy to figure out why something is interesting. The everyday

sense of 'interesting' is, it turns out, very particular. It doesn't seem to have a real synonym. For example, one might try to replace interesting with, say, 'stimulating,' 'striking' or 'engrossing'. Yet none of these really means the same thing as 'interesting.' You don't have to be stimulated, struck or engrossed by something that is interesting. 'Interesting' suggests some kind of sober fascination, perhaps even a cloaked sense of wonder.

The absence of any synonym for 'interesting' in this sense, incidentally, seems to explain why in non-romance European languages (beyond even the radically Gallicised English we speak) such as German or Russian, the words derived from the Latin *interesse* are so commonly used. That is, just as in English, in such languages there is no real equivalent to 'interesting' in their own store of linguistic roots. (Strangely in some such contexts words based on *interesse* can sometimes sufficiently far from parallel English words, that they might qualify as 'false friends,' words that appear to mean the same thing in two different languages. For example in Russian

the when one says 'interesting woman' – *interessnaya zhenshina* – 'interesting' takes on an aesthetic, even an erotic meaning. *Interessnaya Zhenshina* would be much better translated as 'attractive woman' than 'interesting woman' ... there might be

something a little sexist here, a suggestion that a woman can only be interesting in one way; or perhaps it is a linguistic fragment of nineteenth century prudery, the relic of a time when one could only speak of attraction in oblique ways.)

But let's return once again to the ways we use this idea in everyday English. Doesn't 'interest' have to do with concern and care? That is, aren't we in interested in precisely those matters and people that we care about? And conversely, doesn't becoming interested in something lead us to care about it? Perhaps we should remind ourselves at this point about how university education – all education – (as

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Socrates so forcefully pointed out in the *Apology* and Plato in the *Republic*) is about caring, about some kind of commitment, and a commitment that interest evokes. The circle here – where care requires interest and interest requires care – may not be as vicious as it seems. These two ways of relating to objects, to other people, to the world, are perhaps two codependent elements of human reality. And rather than representing a circle maybe they should be understood more as a spiral. We become interested in something that we care about, learn more about it, then understand that there is even more to care about and more to become interested in. This seems to be the idea behind the rather abused expression, ‘life-long learning.’ In other words we never stop learning because we never lose interest and we never stop caring. Hopefully...

But this is where a less idealistic understanding of ‘interest’ becomes apparent. In fact, this idea of interest can be outright cynical. That is, when we talk about our interests not in the sense of the things that we care about beyond ourselves, but when we talk about our basic attachments and concerns. This sense of the word interest seems to understate things a little bit if taken to be a variety of the meaning of ‘being interested in’ something. For example, it sounds kind of silly to say ‘He is interested in providing sufficient caloric energy to his children in order that they survive.’ That is, talking about a basic need as an ‘interest’ seems to understate things quite a bit. The term starts to make more sense when we talk about the future: ‘He is interested in saving up money for retirement’. The idea here is that it is not a matter of survival in a strict sense but involves planning ahead into a future that should at least pique our curiosity.

But this brings us to the idea of people ‘having’ and ‘protecting’ interests. What characterising this way of using the notion of interest is that they are set up in an adversarial context. We talk of ‘competing interests,’ ‘conflicts of interest,’ ‘vested interests.’ But this is where I become somewhat suspicious of the term. On the one hand, it obviously serves an important purpose. The integrity of institutions is predicated on the full disclosure of such ‘interests.’ Some practices involving company boards of governance has been revealed to be nothing less than profoundly corrupt thanks to clear notions of ‘conflict

of interest.’ However, when politics and the relations between people become understood primarily or simply as an interplay of interests, then, it seems to me, we move towards a more impoverished way of representing interpersonal relations and politics.

An example of political questions in which ‘interests’ becomes a curiously important term is the recent (roughly a year ago) announcement that the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) would be moved into the new Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development and “work more openly to promote Canada’s interests.” (The board assigned to restructure CIDA currently includes the CEO of a large Canadian mining company ...) Of course, the term ‘interests’ is constantly invoked by the United States to justify what are often more than heavy-handed interventions in the Middle East. One has only to think of the still brutally vigorous drone program. Needless to say, the innocuous

sounding and vague meaning of ‘interest’ in such contexts seems in many cases to mask a rather cynical reality. In such contexts it is a rhetorical term, where, as in Plato once again, rhetoric is an art of persuasion not interested in truth, the opposite of philosophy. The rhetorical

The rhetorical force of the notion of ‘interest’ seems to come in part from its sobriety, neutrality, and abstraction, but also curiously from its tentativeness.

force of the notion of ‘interest’ seems to come in part from its sobriety, neutrality, and abstraction, but also curiously from its tentativeness. An interest in a foreign country is far from a commitment; it can be turned to disinterest at any moment. Interest, then, seems to be an appropriate term with which to talk about short term plans. For example, it is particularly useful in discussing business interests, because profitability is such a fickle reality. The markets change like the wind.

Or rather that is a poor metaphor. Because from another perspective winds are probably much more reliable than markets. At this point it is worth noting that the term interest is not only particularly apt at capturing a sense of desire for short-term gains, but it seems to be a particularly anthropocentric notion. That is, while it is possible to speak of the interests of people and of groups of peoples, and even disadvantaged groups of people, the term hardly seems to allow itself to be applied to non-human entities, such as animals and ecosystems. We hardly talk about the interests of the salmon or the caribou, or the interests of fescue prairie or boreal forest. No,

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consciousness. In our day when environmental degradation has reached a very perilous extreme it might make sense to think up ways of talking about what is right and good in terms that can take account of the good of non-human nature and the kind of time scales in which species and ecosystems must be understood.

Obviously, I am not meaning to suggest that we excise the word interest from our lexicon. But I am suggesting that its role in political discourse is at times dangerous. In fact, it recalls the cynical definition of justice that Thrasymachus (a Sophist and Rhetorician) offers in Plato's Republic. According to Thrasymachus justice is "the advantage of the stronger," a definition which Plato's Socrates takes apart rather efficiently. But "advantage" here could just as easily be translated as "interest" (the Greek word is *sumpheron*), while "the stronger" (*kreittôn*) could be rendered as "more powerful." Is justice "the interests of the more powerful"? I hope not. Yet there are times when it seems that by buying into certain ways of talking about politics that we might be convincing ourselves that it is.

What might be an alternative to thinking about politics, interpersonal relations and even business in terms of interests? An obvious candidate is the idea of the common good. Another is justice. These are words that might replace the priority in political discourse of the phrase 'economic interests' which has so thoroughly subdued the tongues of politicians in recent years. (A young friend of mine recently heard a speech by an important Canadian politician working in the 70's on YouTube and was in shock to hear a completely different vocabulary. She asked, "when was the last time you heard a politician passionately talk about justice?") And perhaps we could go even further. Perhaps we need to think more about our actions, individual and collective, in terms of care. Care, good and justice (a trio of platonic ethical concepts, as it turns out ...) are notions that allow us to understand long term commitments, which allow us to discuss non-human realities, some to be more concrete than the idea of interest. Why don't we try out these rather interesting concepts as we attempt to find ever better ones by which to make this world a better place?



JAZMIN KURTENBACH

Socratic Pestilence: The Campus Gadflies Ask...

Is Quebec's expulsion of religious symbols from the public sector under the *Charter of Values* justifiable?

For each journal issue, members of the In Medias Res editorial board assail the academic community with a quasi-philosophical question, after the fashion of Socrates. For this issue, we decided to inquire about Quebec's recent Charter of Values among students and faculty of the University.

"I believe it is a misguided attempt by the Quebec government to preserve what they perceive as Quebecois culture."

Anonymous, CMRS Student

"Does our understanding of freedom of religion include our exercise of religion? Which would also include being able to publically display one's devotion, which also has an evangelical aspect, especially for Christians, but also other religions as well – the distinctive dress or devotional items that certain people wear invites conversation about their faith tradition. It is understandable that the [Quebec government] would do it in the way that they have – the goal seems to be getting rid of women wearing burkas, as not in accord with Canadian so-called values. But it would be terribly arbitrary to ban the burka without at the same time banning other outward displays of religious devotion, since we live in a pluralistic society that has no established religion in its constitution."

Charles, Philosophy Graduate Student

"There's definitely both sides to the issue that are valid. On the one hand people should have the right

to practice religious freedom. On the other hand, other people feel that [religious beliefs] should not be promoted to them. But I know that that's not what people are doing [in their religious expression]; unfortunately, others are sensitive and they take it that way, that others are imposing their religious values and ideals upon them. People shouldn't feel threatened by religious symbols because that's not the intent behind wearing a cross or a turban."

Anonymous, Department of History Faculty



"The Charter of Values infringes on basic human rights, like the right to freedom of religion, expression, and being able to work without discrimination. Intrinsic to these rights is that they apply to all people and that nobody can take that away from you. I don't think displaying your faith or piety infringes on others' rights at all and therefore your right should be respected."

Anonymous, Arts Student

"I think that they're not putting enough thought into it. [This Charter] is probably going to have some very dangerous consequences. Not just for religious people but for everybody, because all of a sudden our freedoms are really being restricted."

Anonymous, Library Faculty

"It's a really complex issue because it is all based upon definitions of what is religious and what is public. From what I understand, even a crucifix inside the Quebec Legislature is actually deemed public because it's become a cultural kind of icon, whereas other things like, a burkah, are seen as very religious. So I think I wouldn't say I find it justifiable, but I see it as a very heated and complex issue because it is hard to really define what is cultural and what is religious."

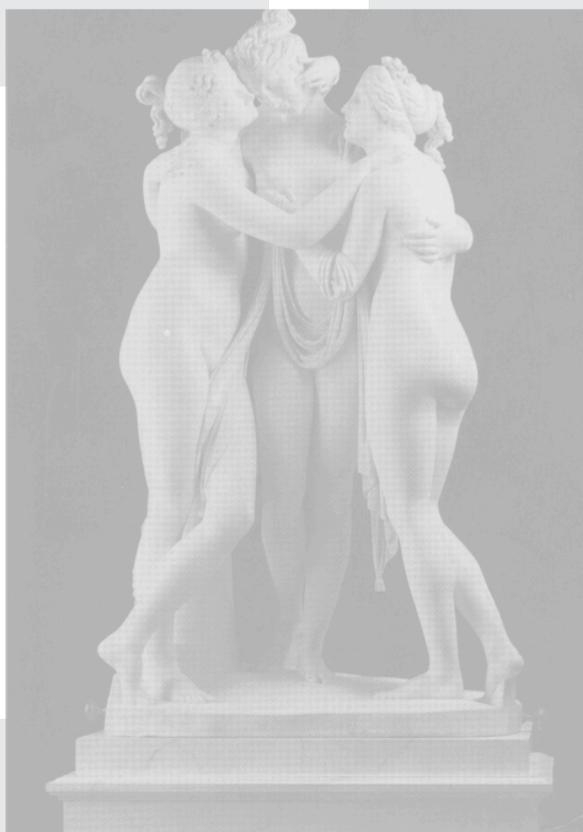
*Melissa Gan, 3rd year
International Studies*

"Too many people mistake the fact that religion is not simply about one's beliefs or creeds, it's also about culture and it's at the core of who we are as people. Just because in your tradition, your religious background or your family history, wearing something means little, and might even seem threatening to you, to others it is central to who they are."

*Professor, Department
of History*

"No not in any way, shape, or form. People should be allowed to express their religion as part of who they are to any extent, as long as it doesn't inhibit anyone else's rights."

Anonymous, Arts & Sciences Student



It does seem like once [the government] starts basically prohibiting certain expressions of religion in the public square – you know at first it's just with public servants – what else can't they do after that? It seems to be opening Pandora's Box.

Anonymous, CMRS Student

"Offering or allowing religious freedom to all is not accomplished by denying religious freedom to everybody. And I don't know this to be true but

I think it's particularly nefarious to limit outward shows of certain faith traditions like a turban or a certain kind of head scarf or a yamaka or anything like that. For example, there are some people who wear a cross or a Star of David or a symbol on a pendent around their necks that nobody sees, and so they're not going to limit that expression; but they are going to limit the pectoral cross on an orthodox bishop, or the head covering on a Muslim woman or a Jewish or a Sikh man. I think it seems pretty shady actually, I really do."

*Dr. Cichon, Department of
English*

Absolutely not. Religion is the most fundamentally human of expressions, and to make arbitrary limitations upon one's worship – when this worship is not directly inhibiting the rights of others – is a basic violation of liberty. Quebec's Charter is simply sentimentality forgetting its place; it is a sublime sophistry of progress, and an effective attack upon the first principles of humanity.

DF, CMRS

PRO

Pro et

Is Christianity re liberal

By Name

"Liberal" Christianity is a natural development of the faith. Among the basic tenets of the Christian faith is the belief in a personal, loving God, who reveals himself to us in our neighbour. A sterile adherence to the letter of the law is a hindrance in serving God in our neighbour and in ourselves.

The Liberal Christian (LC) worships alongside non-Christians in the name of tolerance, thus recognizing that all persons are worthy of human dignity and that every religion partakes of the truth of God. The LC is not afraid to poke fun at "sacred" things, for they arise from mere tradition and do not respond to the needs of modern man; he speaks the language of the people.

Also, the liberal Christian recognizes that in today's hectic world, people need more time to get things done; Sunday shopping, for instance, is therefore acceptable and valuable, for "the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath." The LC recognizes the damage done by the traditional, patriarchal modes of behaviour, and works to ensure that the rights of children are respected.

Furthermore, the liberal Christian recognizes that it is compassionate to end the lives of the sick, the elderly, and the unborn. Acknowledging that our sexuality is a gift from God, the LC encourages that we share that gift only with those we love and trust. The LC recognizes that sometimes we have to bend the truth in order to prevent hatred, enmity, and pain. Liberal Christianity holds that it is good pastoral practice to welcome the divorced and remarried into every aspect of church life, for they too are in need of God's love.

Finally, the liberal Christian is very much in favour of the redistribution of wealth

*We are here using "liberalism" with its contemporary moral, social, and and political associations without reference to any particular party.

Contra:

CONTRA

Reconcilable with Liberalism*?

By Dr. Elix Calder

Liberalism is opposed to Christianity inasmuch as liberalism implies a modernist or progressive notion of history according to which the man of the future is morally superior to the man of the past. Christianity cannot be progressive in this sense: the Church has a "deposit of faith" that it is bound to maintain, not change.

Christianity may allow for a progressive unfolding of the riches of Christ (like the tree that grows from a seed), but there is no room for change or development properly speaking in regard to faith and morals.

Liberalism is also opposed to Christianity inasmuch as liberalism involves the notion that religious belief is purely a matter of faith, i.e. blind and unfounded faith. Thus, according to liberalism, one cannot argue for the truth of one religion over another.

From this belief flows the liberal notion of the separation of church and state according to which religious faith is to be relegated to the private sphere, the "opium den of religious feelings." While the state may intrude on religion in the name of rights, religions must stay out politics because religious belief is personal and arbitrary.

To be itself Christianity must propose itself as the true religion, and the tradition of the Church has been to see faith as reasonable, i.e. Christians believe in Christianity for reasons, not blindly.

Among the basic tenets of the Christian faith is the belief in a personal, loving God, who alone deserves our undivided love and devotion, which devotion includes obedience to his revealed law as expressed in the Ten Commandments. On the other hand, the tenets of "liberalism" as defined by our inquirer, require the Christian to effectively abandon his commitment to all ten of the commandments.

The Liberal Christian worships alongside heathens, and refrains from attempting to convert the non-Christian in the name of tolerance. The LC tolerantly listens to others blaspheme her Lord in the name of free speech. The LC is a happy consumer seven days of the week. The LC knows that according respect to our parents and elders is a stale remnant of a bygone age of patriarchy. The LC knows that it is compassionate to end the lives of the sick, the elderly and the unborn. The LC is open to experience the pleasures of the flesh, so long as he has some kind of affective bond with his partner. The LC recognizes that sometimes we have to bend the truth in order to prevent hurt feelings. The LC thinks that it is good pastoral practice to welcome the divorced and remarried into every aspect of church life. Finally, the LC is very much in favor of socialist economic policies, because *some people just have more than they deserve.*

Poetry

Elegy in Drought

This paltry, piss-golden sunlight
Is every day's taunting phantom,
A side-thorn on this ashen road
Beyond which grain, I've heard, still grows.

When I'd grown, I'd prospered, you died.
You starve those whom you birthed – selfish;
All born to purple will turn grey.
I should have shackled you for seed.

How now can your faithful spouse and
Son live? I weep, repent; I know
You had suffered from overuse,
Dynamo unlearned, unchaste.

Today I believe in nothing,
Not even in grain. Nor in you:
Your Hadean womb housed its young
To eruct them into famine.

Bruce Parker

The Burden of the Mind

Knowledge contains no ledge which man can climb onto
It is a plateau disguised as progress
Adam and Eve rest among the ides
simply caught between

She May come to March
July was jealous of October's eyes
There were fifteen sins for every victory
and thirteen stomachs for all the food we ate

Every unraveling begins with a knot
The more I find
the more disoriented I become
It's the burden of the mind

Graham Wall

The Origin of Evil

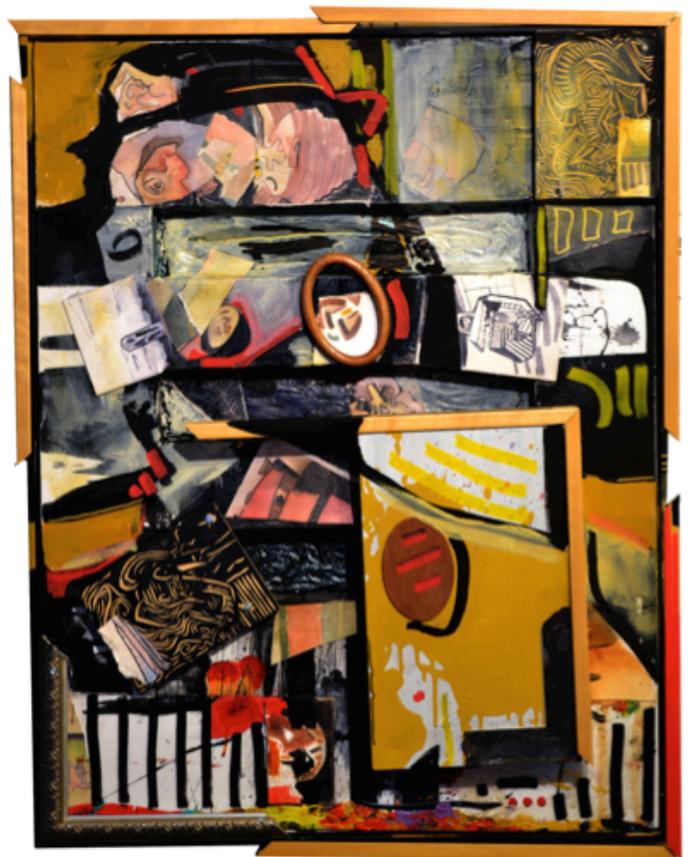
Omnipotent Zeus brought down Pandora
The goddesses granted her all gifts
She then eclipsed shining Aurora
But Epimetheus spied not the cliffs

For to obtain Jove's vengeance was she made
To bring to an end mankind's golden age
For Titan's tricks cost man fire, though through raid
Reclaimed, mere chains would not assuage Jove's rage

The Lame One forged her, beauty ascribed
Arraying her was bright-eyed Pallas
Perfecting the first of that deadly tribe
Whose fair faces conceal hearts of malice

Proud Prometheus why did you not cede
Jove his due, foresee the cost of the deed?

James Hawkes



TYSON ATKINS, ALL WAYS FROM HERE

Multidirectional [e]Motion

I've lived on the ward,

I've lived in a cell

I've lived in purgatory

in heaven and in hell

I've lived underwater where I could not breathe

I've lived in boxers' rings where I've fought, bled and seethed

I've lived alone in space

and under the ground

in places with search lights where help was nowhere to be found

in schools,

under desks,

hiding from atomic bombs

and in the backs of the jets that dropped them down
on our homes

In a shell,

in a tomb,

and high up in a tree

Whipped like a slave, I've been both caged and free

I've learned that true liberation must exist from within

I've somehow stayed alive as close to death as I've been

I am many things, fire, water, stone, air in variation

from one single droplet of water to a summer storm

from a breeze to a cyclone of the grandest form

blowing,

rushing,

or even softly flowing

to wherever it is I am going
to travel

next...

IMR Attends Kenneth Branagh's *Macbeth*

CULTURAL EVENT INTRODUCTION

On 19 October, members of the In Medias Res Editorial Board attended the National Theatre Live broadcast of Kenneth Branagh's production of *Macbeth*. This adaptation, co-directed by Rob Ashford and Branagh himself, was staged in a deconsecrated Manchester church, and broadcast through cinemas internationally. As is characteristic of Branagh's Shakespearean productions, his adaptation of *Macbeth* both included original thematic elements and a faithful understanding of Shakespeare's text.

I - First of all, did you like the adaptation?

KD: I thought the adaptation was quite good; My fears that Branagh may perhaps 'outshine' the other actors in his role were quelled by the outstanding performance given by MacDuff (Ray Fearon). Although certain aspects were a bit stylized for my tastes, as David pointed out last week, the impact of such stylization may be much more effective live as opposed to in a movie theatre. I thought the supernatural elements were extremely well done. For anyone who managed to get out and see Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan's *Macbeth*, it's interesting to note that Ed Mendez seemed to be very much adapting the style of Ray Fearon in his depiction of MacDuff, specifically concerning his grief.

DF: I thought that the adaptation was rather good. Branagh was not laboriously faithful to the text, but methought his departures from Shakespeare were subtle and tasteful. The adaptation's staging was spectacularly clever; that the tragedy was performed in a deconsecrated church, with a cross suspended high above the main stage, emphasized *Macbeth's* supernatural elements, as well as the spiritual degradation that the character of Macbeth undergoes. While a couple of the actors were not, in my reckoning, fit to their task – particularly Lady Macbeth, whose role is perhaps the most difficult of all Shakespeare's ladies – the tragedy was well-acted on the whole, and Branagh's excellent performance was not without company. In short, I felt that the Branagh's adaptation of *Macbeth* was a refreshing contribution to Shakespearean theatre, without attempting to be obscenely original.

MD: I agree. Branagh was superb as usual and Ray Fearon injected a great deal of passion into what is a very powerful scene, though one with scant dialogue. I found that the use of rain effects and battles scenes lent a certain 'cinematic' quality which was not unwelcome. As Kyle mentioned, the supernatural elements were quite good and especially eerie as the parade of kings was presented to Macbeth. I think that this version was an overall success.

JK: I really enjoyed the adaptation. I felt the staging and performing of the play in a deconsecrated church with the audience on both sides of the action to be a very interesting idea. The audience was very close to the action and it would have been great to experience in person. They stayed very close to the original, as far as I could tell, and the staging really worked out well for *Macbeth*.

II - There appeared to be several themes imposed upon this production of *Macbeth* by the adapters. Which of these themes did you especially notice? Were they effective?

DF: A theme in Branagh's adaptation that I found especially impressive was the omnipresence of evil, which was manifested in the Weird Sisters. Unlike any other adaptation of *Macbeth* that I have seen, the Sisters were lurking in the background of very nearly every important scene. Indeed, Branagh cast the Weird Sisters as having an orgiastic appetite for evil, and they attended every stage of Macbeth's spiritual degeneration with a sort of carnal-spiritual voyeurism. The omnipresence of the Sisters was set in deliberate opposition to the Omnipresent God, whose cross hanging high above the stage served as a constant reminder that goodness, like the Cross, can never be defeated; merely suspended.

Discussing Branagh's Adaptation of *Macbeth*

MD: Indeed, 'twas the weird witches' wanderings which were most memorable and which were a prevalent aspect of the production's theme of evil. The theme of the incarnate power of supernatural evil was visually ensconced in the line of kings, and this scene as a whole is indicative of the aforementioned evil. Though it should be noted that the witches' cauldron scene was not included, and much of the evil in the play remains in the shadows with the dark things that lurk in the night. Such a shadowy presentation of evil often holds our attention even when it is not in the limelight.

KD: I agree with David on that point. I also thought the production did a great job of emphasizing the notion of legacy. By showing the death of MacDuff's child on stage, and the wonderful effect in the supernatural scene featuring the line of kings descended from Banquo, this staging conveys the importance of heirs in a monarchy. I believe that this is a theme that would have really resonated with Shakespeare's contemporary audience.

HM: I found that the theme of destruction wrought when ambition goes unchecked was well presented in the play. I really felt the Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's overwhelming desire for power lead to the devastation of their kingdom.

III – The relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth is one of the most complex and important elements of the tragedy. Do you think Branagh's adaptation dealt with this relationship effectively?

JK: I thought that the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth was handled very well. Alex Kingston did a fantastic job as Lady Macbeth and she worked very well with Branagh. The way they handled the reversal of roles and the madness of Lady Macbeth was the best I've seen.

DF: The aspect of the Macbeth-Lady Macbeth relationship that Branagh's adaptation perhaps emphasized most was its sexuality. When Macbeth first returns to Inverness from battle, his and Lady Macbeth's first meeting on stage is one of mutual unrestraint, yet their interaction remains amorous and playful. Throughout the tragedy, the moral degradation and festering distrust between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth is signified by the sexual degradation of their relationship. When the two are alone together in the later scenes, their relationship is reduced to mere carnality, to mutual and insatiate lust, lacking the romantic play present in their first meeting. Branagh's treatment of the relationship between the Macbeths was particularly effective in this regard, and it evidently arises from a rich understanding of Shakespeare rather than a postmodern impulse to sexualize everything.

MD: I agree, the carnal passion of their relationship is useful in prefiguring their lust for power which drives them to the murder of Duncan and Banquo et al. One gets the impression from the play that Macbeth's motives are driven more by base desire than by logical thinking and a cold and staid relationship between himself and his wife could have negatively counteracted the passionately violent Macbeth. Although the actress playing Lady Macbeth was not the strongest of the cast, her work with Branagh was effective and moving. Particular mention should be given to the scene where Macbeth learns of her death. In many ways the degradation of their relationship is encapsulated by Branagh's handling of that moment. Overall, the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth was dealt with in a way that felt faithful to the text and to the story that they were trying to tell with this adaptation of William Shakespeare's Scottish play.

KD: They did. I think the Lady Macbeth is one of the most difficult roles to play. Many young actresses that play the role tend to over-sexualize it, while a strong mature actress can steal Macbeth's thunder in a way. In my opinion, this adaptation featured a Lady Macbeth that was a fair bit more sophisticated than others I have seen.

Discussing Branagh's Adaptation of *Macbeth*

IV – There were a lot of “big name” actors in this adaptation. Which actor’s performance was your favourite and why?

DF: While Kenneth Branagh’s role as Macbeth was characteristically compelling, I was most impressed by Ray Fearon’s performance of MacDuff. The director’s decision to cast so physically formidable an actor for MacDuff, a figure who is too often underwhelming in modern adaptations, was judicious. As Kyle noted, Fearon’s depiction of MacDuff’s grief was among the most impressive scenes of the entire tragedy. While many actors’ adaptations of MacDuff render him a stoic in this scene, Fearon’s MacDuff gives us a lamentation at once pathetic and fierce upon hearing of the murder of his wife and children.

JK: This is a close one, but I would say that Alex Kingston as Lady Macbeth was my favourite performance. The way she portrayed Lady Macbeth from her lust for power to her paranoia and finally to her madness was what made her performance stand out.

MD: Branagh’s performance was my favourite as he managed to bring a nuanced approach which retained subtleties within the character, as well as an intensity which grew as the play progressed and climaxed with a character far more disturbed and violent than at the start. In many ways, the character of Macbeth looks out into the abyss and abyss looks back through him. At the height of Branagh’s performance you can see the abyss looking out through his eyes and one can imagine the depths this character has sunk to in order to attain that which he most desires, namely power. The treatment of the classic lines which Macbeth speaks was handled with proficiency and lucidity by Branagh and he overcomes the natural clichés. “The play is the thing” wherein he catches the conscience of our viewing.

V - Depending on how one stages the Scottish play, the main character's progression into a monstrosity can either be seen as his descent into madness or the result of his interaction with the supernatural and demonic. This supernatural element featured prominently in this staging; how do you think this affects the theme or makes the production more or less effective?

MD: I believe the supernatural staging proved most effective and that any shifting of theme was congruent with the story and the characters. Although the supernatural in Shakespeare is sometimes downplayed to make things more “relatable” to a modern audience, it is a significant part of the Bard’s storytelling. Also, the supernatural was more natural to the audience of Shakespeare’s day than it is to our own. Thus, the use of the supernatural in modern productions often has to justify its existence in an otherwise “realistic” play. The decision to make the supernatural feature heavily in the story did not undermine the believability of the action, nor did it call into question Macbeth’s own will in the events of the story. While one could argue that Macbeth would not have descended to such murderous depths had it not been for the witches’ prophecy, I think it not so.

DF: As aforementioned, the supernatural element of the tragedy is most evident in the omnipresence of the Weird Sisters. Branagh’s markedly material vision of the Sisters – who often interact, even physically, with other characters in the tragedy – certainly emphasizes that Evil, considered as abstract, has a direct and devastating effect upon the material world. While Macbeth’s degeneration is fundamentally internal and spiritual, Branagh’s adaptation suggests that the supernatural has a substantial participation in his fall. Branagh’s prominent use of these elements was marvelously effective, and a faithfully Shakespearean vision of the supernatural, which well contrasts the follies of modern materialism.

ON LATIN

KYLE DASE

To study any language, whether modern or ancient, is beneficial. Anyone who makes a serious attempt at learning a second language will see an increase in their vocabulary and understanding of grammar. They will also gain the ability to interact with another culture or language group without the barrier of translation. In a broader sense, interaction with other cultures at such a fundamental level inevitably adds to and changes one's perception of the world around him or her, while, practically speaking, the knowledge of a second language creates opportunities that may not otherwise be available.

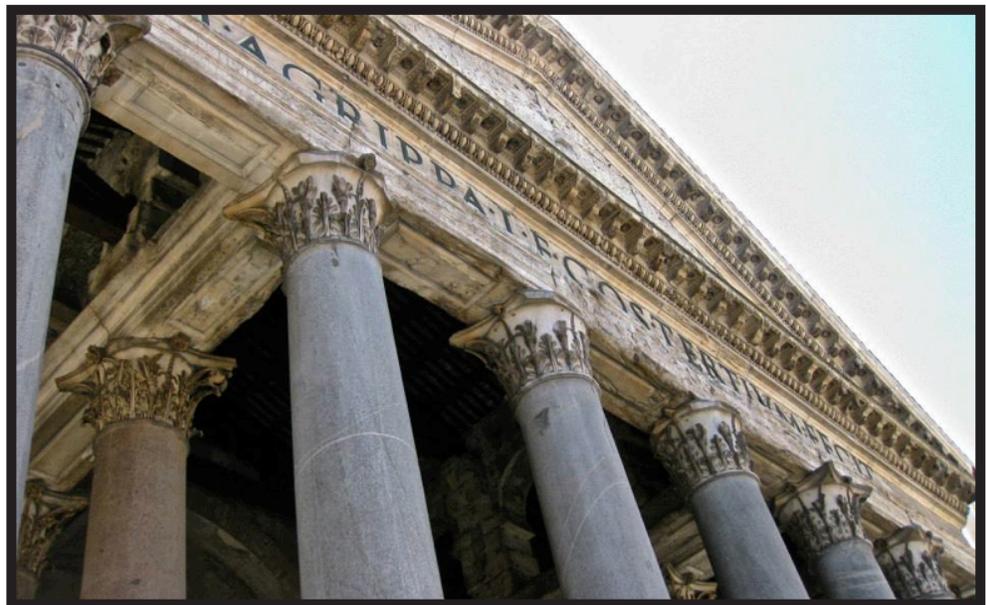
But why study Latin in particular?

The difference between studying Latin and other foreign languages is largely in one's approach when studying them. When studying modern languages, because the goal is most often to learn how to speak a language, an emphasis is put on learning phrases and vocabulary. The approach to Latin is much different because it is both a dead language and a highly inflected language. Therefore, the emphasis is placed on reading the language's literature and analyzing its grammar. This meticulous approach to language requires a different kind of focus and critical thinking.

For anyone who is interested in the statistics surrounding this argument, I strongly suggest reading the "Efficacy of Latin Studies in the Information Age" by Alice K. Devane. Devane, as a research paper for her psychology MA, provides a comprehensive survey on the benefits of studying Latin, particularly its effects on students at the primary and secondary levels, in far more depth than I could possibly provide here.

In her essay, Devane points to information that suggests "While modern languages require logical reasoning, they focus on the four proficiencies of reading, writing, speaking and understanding the language. On the other hand, the study of Latin requires that students use the higher order thinking skills, like analysis, synthesis and evaluation while translating at greater levels of difficulty." Moreover, Devane summarizes information that suggests that studying Latin, especially when young, can have a profound positive impact on ALL other areas of learning, including math, science, and even learning another foreign language.

This point is extremely important as it implies Latin is certainly not just for English or History students. Modern French, arguably the most practical second language to learn in Canada, is directly descended from Latin. Anyone studying French will find a plethora of Latin words that were either inherited from Latin or are loanwords adapted into the modern language at a later time. In respect to vocabulary then, learning French is made easier by having studied Latin. Of course, the same goes for someone learning English as a second language, given that approximately 60% of our vocabulary is borrowed from Latin and Greek.



JOSHUA SMITH

ON LATIN CONTINUED

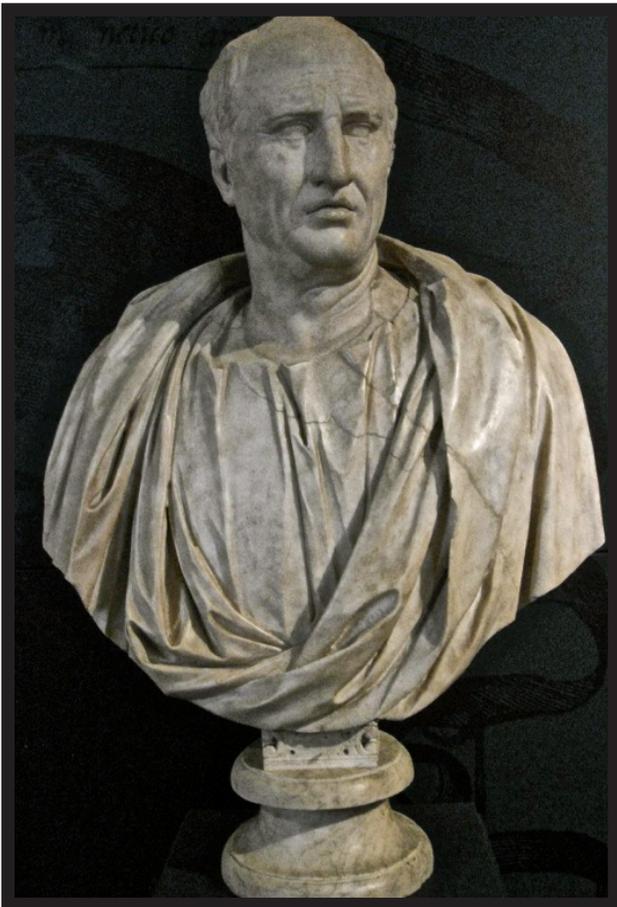
Any potential scientist can profit from the kind of focus required for the meticulous analysis involved in studying a dead language such as Latin. Moreover, most terminology in physics, chemistry, and biology comes from either Latin or Greek. The University of Saskatchewan even offers a medical terminology course (CLAS 103) for prospective medical students.

There is far more to studying Latin than its benefits to one's vocabulary or higher order thinking. Latin is THE most influential language in Western culture. In his book, *A Natural History of Latin*, Tore Janson provides a summary of how the Latin language has impacted the Western world for over two millennia:

Latin has, or has had, three distinct roles: It was the native language of the Romans in antiquity; it was Europe's international language until two or three hundred year ago; and it is the language from which the modern European languages have drawn the majority of their loanwords.

Latin is engrained within Western society and its role in shaping the vocabulary of modern Western languages alone makes its study worthwhile.

One often overlooked aspect of Latin is that once a person has a firm grasp on the language, translation becomes a creative process. It is not only useful to acquire the critical thinking skills required to read Latin, but it is also enjoyable and rewarding to employ them. Translating a dead language into a living one poses all kinds of unique challenges such as how one can effectively employ his or her own language to convey the original author's meaning or to infuse the text with one's own personality (see Seamus Heaney's *Beowulf* for an excellent example of the latter). This experience is enhanced by the very texts one is interacting with; highly sophisticated literature which has had a profound impact on Western thinking.



JOSHUA SMITH, *CICERO*

Latin's impact on Western society is undeniable, as are the benefits of studying it. It not only links us to the past but trains us to be more readily equipped to achieve tasks in our future, whether in the sciences or humanities. It grants us easier access to all of its descendants including French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese. For English speakers, the large number of loanwords from Latin as well as the language's colossal influence on English throughout its entire written history are reason enough to warrant study for anyone interested in acquiring a better grasp on their own language.

Whether you want to better understand grammatical constructs, read Classical literature and Medieval manuscripts, or exercise your mind with a unique challenge, the real question for most people is not 'Why would I study Latin?', it is, 'Why wouldn't I?'

Quid plura dicam?

WHETHER TRUTH CAN BE AN OBJECT OF HATRED

A Selection from St. Thomas Aquinas

Translated by David Foley

Summa theologiae I-II, q. 29, a. 5

Articulus V

Videtur quod aliquis non possit habere odio veritatem. Bonum enim et ens et verum convertuntur. Sed aliquis non potest habere odio bonitatem. Ergo nec veritatem.

Praeterea, omnes homines naturaliter scire desiderant, ut dicitur in principio *Metaphys.* Sed scientia non est nisi verorum. Ergo veritas naturaliter desideratur et amatur. Sed quod naturaliter inest, semper inest. Nullus ergo potest habere odio veritatem.

Praeterea, philosophus dicit, in II *Rhetoric.*, quod homines amant non fictos. Sed non nisi propter veritatem. Ergo homo naturaliter amat veritatem. Non potest ergo eam odio habere.

Sed contra est quod apostolus dicit, ad Galat. IV, factus sum vobis inimicus, verum dicens vobis.

Respondeo dicendum quod bonum et verum et ens sunt idem secundum rem, sed differunt ratione. Bonum enim habet rationem appetibilis, non autem ens vel verum, quia bonum est quod omnia appetunt. Et ideo bonum, sub ratione boni, non potest odio haberi, nec in universali nec in particulari. Ens autem et verum in universali quidem odio haberi non possunt, quia dissonantia est causa odii, et convenientia causa amoris; ens autem et verum sunt communia omnibus. Sed in particulari nihil prohibet quoddam ens et quoddam verum odio haberi, inquantum habet rationem contrarii et repugnantis, contrarietas enim et repugnantia non adversatur rationi entis et veri, sicut adversatur rationi boni.

Contingit autem verum aliquod particulare tripliciter repugnare vel contrariari bono amato. Uno modo, secundum quod veritas est causaliter et originaliter in ipsis rebus. Et sic homo quandoque odit aliquam veritatem, dum vellet non esse verum quod est verum. Alio modo, secundum quod veritas est in cognitione ipsius hominis, quae impedit ipsum a prosecutione amati. Sicut si aliqui vellet non cognoscere veritatem fidei, ut libere peccarent, ex quorum persona dicitur Iob XXI, scientiam viarum tuarum nolumus. Tertio modo habetur odio veritas particularis, tanquam repugnans, prout est in intellectu alterius. Puta, cum aliquis vult latere in peccato, odit quod aliquis veritatem circa peccatum suum cognoscat. Et secundum hoc dicit Augustinus, in X *Confess.*, quod homines amant veritatem lucentem, oderunt eam redargentem.

Article 5

Whether someone is able to hate the truth

It seems that someone is not able to hate the truth.

Objection 1. For *good*, *being*, and *true* are convertible. But someone is not able to hate goodness. Neither, therefore, can he hate truth.

Objection 2. Moreover, *all men by nature desire to know*, as it is said in the beginning of the *Metaphysics*. But there is no knowledge except of true things. Therefore truth is naturally desired and loved. But that which is naturally present in a thing is always present in it. No one, therefore, is able to hate truth.

Objection 3. Furthermore, the Philosopher says, in Book II of *Rhetoric*, that *men love those who are not false*. But they love them only on account of [love for] truth. Therefore man naturally loves truth. He is therefore not able to hate it.

But on the contrary, The Apostle [Paul] says, in Gal. 4:16, *I am become hateful to you, because I tell you the truth*.

I respond that, it ought to be said that good and true and being are the same in reality, but differ as considered by reason. For good has the notion of desirable, but not being or truth: because *good is that which all things desire*. And therefore the good, as such, is not able to be the object of hatred, neither in general nor in particular. Moreover, being and truth in general are not able to be hated, because discord is the cause of hatred, and agreement the cause of love; while being and truth are common to all things. But nothing hinders some particular being or some particular truth from being hated, inasmuch as it is has the aspect of something contrary and repugnant: for contrariety and repugnance are not opposed to the notion of being and truth, as they are to the notion of the good.

Now in three ways it happens that some truth in particular is repugnant or contrary to the good that we love. In one way, according as truth is causally and originally in things themselves. And thus a man sometimes hates some truth, when he wishes that what is true were not true. In another way, according as a truth is in man's apprehension, which hinders him from pursuing the loved object. Such as with those who do not wish to know the truth of faith, in order that they may sin more freely: in whose person it is said in Job 21: *We do not desire knowledge of your ways*. In a third way, a particular truth in the intellect of another is hated. Namely, when someone wishes to hide his sin, he hates when someone knows the truth about his sin. And in this regard Augustine says in the Book X of the *Confessions*, that *men love the truth when it illuminates, but hate it when it refutes them*.

Story Time with Chaucer

by James Clark

Picture 1: Grisilde is surprised and happy as she finds out she is the bride.

Teacher: "Children It's story time, gather around. Good good, now MICHAEL stop pulling Amy's hair... good. Now children today we have my good friend Shawn here to read to you about – what is it you're going to read to us?"

Storyteller: "It's Shaune actually."

T: "That's what I said."

S: "No it's spelt differently than what you said."

T: "So kids he's going to read you an exciting story!"

S: "It's the Clerk's Tale from Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales."

T: "Indeed..."

S: "Once upon a time in a beautiful place in Italy there was a kind ruler named Walter. His people wanted him to have a son because children are nice and grow up to be good people who can help everyone."

Child (1): "I'm hungry."

S: "So he told the nice people that he would choose a nice wife to make a happy family. He chose a peasant girl named ..."

Child (2): "This story perpetuates the stereotype of weak women in society."

T: "Shhh."

S: "A hardworking girl named Grisilde. She came to see who was going to be the bride and was surprised when it was her."

Child (2): "Oppression."

S: "Uh... and so she was very happy, and said to Walter, I love you and will do anything for you. And Walter replied, That is enough my Grisilde."

Picture 2: Grisilde's child is taken away.

S: "After their being married some time, a stork brought Grisilde and Walter a baby girl that they both loved very much."

Child (1): "That's not how babies are born."

T: "Please, Bartholomew."

S: "But Walter wanted to see if his wife still loved him, so he asked her to let the baby be taken away forever."

Child (2): "Like sole custody?"

S: "AHEM, and so Grisilde said, I love you so, and as you have given me so much all I have is yours, even this child I love so much. But she didn't really want to give her child away, especially not after having made the stork bring it all that way."

Child (2): "So it's a story about temptation and the advanced moral intricacies that all humans go through on their path to living a righteous life."

T: "And that's why this is the advanced kindergarten class..."

Picture 3: Grisilde's son is taken away, but she remains loyal, though unhappy.

S: "Soon after the girl was taken away the stork brought another baby, this time it was a boy. But again Walter told her that she would have to give up her baby. Grisilde was sad, but she told her husband that she had promised to do anything, so she would."

Child (1): "This guy's a psycho!"

S: "Walter was very happy that his wife was so good, and secretly he loved her more than ever."

Picture 4: Walter tells Grisilde he's getting a new wife, and that she must prepare for her.

S: "Many years pass and Walter tells Grisilde that he wants a nicer wife."

Child (2): "Just like Daddy."

S: "Grisilde replies that she will do what he wants and that she still loves him, and asks that she be able to keep her wedding ring because they spent so much time together. Walter then asks her to prepare everything for his new wife."

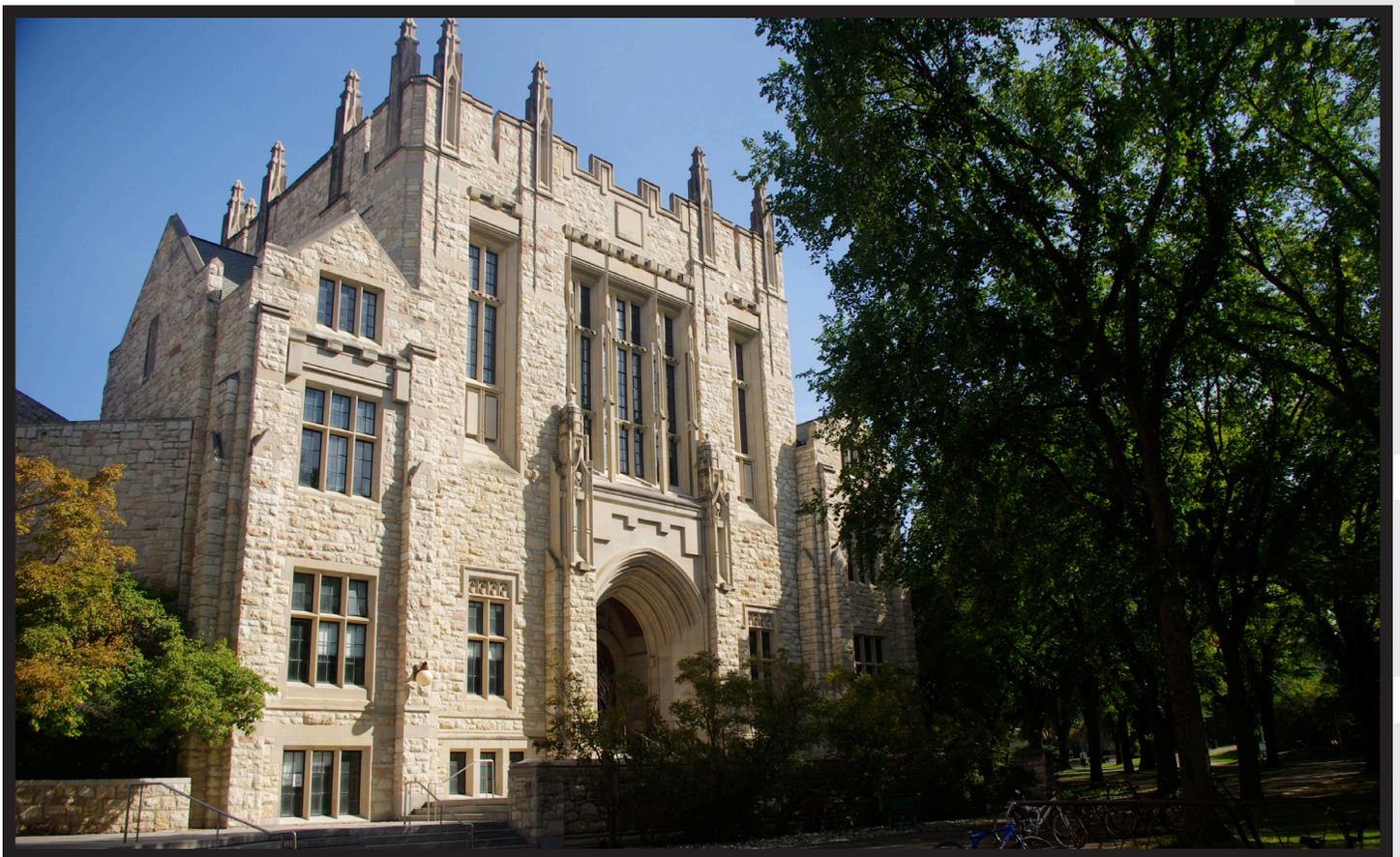
Picture 5: Grisilde is stunned as everything works out.

S: "In the end Walter tells her that all he did - he did just to see if she loved him. He tells her that his 'new bride' is actually their daughter, and brings out her son as well. Grisilde realizes that her hard work and virtue made everything turn out so wonderfully; she had escaped the trials of fortune. And they lived happily ever after."

T: "In the end, being good will make things work out well, just work hard and be true to yourself."

Child (1): "I find this outcome unlikely."

T: "Okay kids, nap time."



JAZMIN KURTENBACH

DEVELOPING ALLIANCES

Contemplating Education & Reconciliation at NAISA 2013

The University of Saskatchewan hosted the 5th Annual Meeting of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) from June 13 to 15. The conference attracted almost 900 people from all over the world to Treaty 6 territory, home to the Plains Cree, Woodlands Cree, Swampy Cree, Saulteaux, Métis, Assiniboine, Dakota, and Lakota peoples.

Attending the conference, we realized two things: first, that Indigenous movements and issues are simultaneously local and global in nature. Indigenous and non-Indigenous presenters came from all over the world to exchange their research and insight on science & technology, governance, art, colonialism, linguistics, food and sovereignty, Indigenous rights, justice and land issues.

Secondly, that Indigenous people are at the forefront of issues that are vital not only to their own communities, but to all people. Idle No More also had a strong presence at the conference. This movement, which stands for unity and solidarity across all groups, also reflects the idea of working together for a better future. At the Idle No More table, people from around the world shared first-hand stories about how the movement has impacted them and their communities.

Both NAISA and Idle No More triggered numerous discussions between us, especially in regards to "allyship" and what this role meant for us. We concluded that being an ally does not mean speaking for other people. Some might interpret this to mean that allies must not speak – that they should be silent so others can be heard. This may be true in some cases, but we also have a responsibility to share our stories and experiences with others when appropriate, so long as we acknowledge context and speak from the perspective of an ally.

"Allyship" also means taking action to foster reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups. We imagined living in a country in which the relationships between governments and Aboriginal people are genuinely guided by principles such as reconciliation, and not just by the need to fulfill legal obligations. Reconciliation is not an abstract concept but a practical idea lived through healthy and harmonious relations between people. Harmonious relationships demand mutual understanding and creating this understanding is a process.

Therefore, becoming an ally starts with education. As allies, we may have certain biases that we need to check, despite any good intentions. The university can be an important ally by providing

Reconciliation is not an abstract concept but a practical idea lived through healthy and harmonious relations between people.

the space for dialogue and learning, which are foundational elements of mutual understanding and reconciliation. Here, we can question our worldviews and advance our understanding of the world by gaining knowledge from

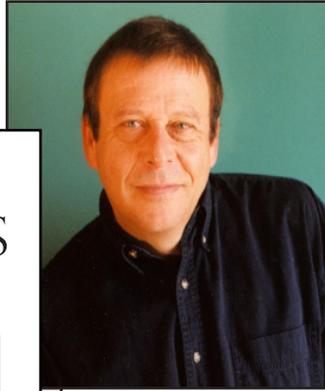
others. By learning about context, history, and cultural meaning, we can develop our judgment and sensitivities, making us stronger allies. Moments of reconciliation are not marked by guilt, but by wisdom and compassion. The process of reconciliation is not easy, but NAISA is an example of hope, opportunity, and change, and we are thankful for it taking place in Treaty 6 territory.

Thank you to St. Thomas More for sponsoring us so that they could attend the conference.

Miriam Müller & Taylor-Anne Yee

FACULTY FILES

GUY VANDERHAEGHE
Assistant Professor,
Writer



1 How did you become interested in pursuing writing as a career? Where do you write?

You know, I never thought of writing as a career. I never thought of it as something I would devote approximately thirty five years of my life to. When I first started writing I wanted to get a story published, and when I got a story published, and when I got a book published, then I started thinking I would like more time to write. So I took a variety of writing-related positions that would give me time to write, like a writer-in-residency, or teaching creative writing — which I didn't have a clue how to do back then because I'd never taken a creative writing class, so I was flying by the seat of my pants. And then gradually, over time, I don't know — It would be wrong to say writing became more like a habit, but doing it I found that I needed to do it. When I wasn't doing it, I missed doing it, I was anxious to get back to doing it. It kind of crept up on me and overtook me.

2 How do you gauge failure?

You know a failure. Or you should know a failure. When I was younger I couldn't recognise a failure, but when you get older, you get a sense — I think the way that any decent word person knows, okay, put those pipes together, but maybe they don't have that great a chance of holding, and I think that's true in particular with a novel. You could write 150 pages and you can say to yourself, "This is starting to wander badly, and I either have to find a direction for this and put the rings on it, or I have to go back to the beginning and

start all over again." In every artistic enterprise there is a failure. It's only the question of the degree of the failure. Nothing is ever as good as you hoped it to be. In Camus' novel, *The Plague* or *La Peste*, there's a character in there who's been writing the first sentence of his novel for twenty-five years. You could do that, you could spend twenty-five years trying to construct the perfect sentence, but at some point you have to say, "Okay, it's time to write the second sentence, the third sentence, the fourth sentence." But failure's inherent. Does a dancer ever dance a perfect dance? Likely not. Perfection is an ideal but it is unattainable.

3 Do you feel that your university professors were helpful in directing you creatively? Was their advice valuable to your style of writing?

Well, I have had professors who weren't even English professors that shamed me into writing better. I can remember my thesis advisor when I was writing my history dissertation. He said, "there are so many *buts* in this theatre that it sounds like an outboard engine idling — "*put-put-put-put.*" Once that's said to you (laughs), you become more careful about grooming the *buts* out of your prose.

4 What is the most effective method of combating writer's block?

Well, I would say that the simple answer is don't imagine you have writer's block. Often writer's block is an excuse. It's an easy way of saying, "I don't feel like writing, it's hard to write, I don't want to do it, so I must have writer's block." I have said to my creative writing class that the difference between a professional writer and an amateur writer is that the professional writer can make himself work on a day that he doesn't want to work. So it takes a certain amount of will to overcome writer's block. It's a funny thing — one of the tricks to get going when you feel you have writer's block is to rewrite what you have already written, and that will give you a certain amount of forward momentum and get you into whatever you were doing. Or, as Hemingway said, "Stop when you know what's going to happen" so that the next day you can at least get rolling.

FACULTY FILES

5 You intentionally stop writing at the point that you are most inclined to write?

Yes, feeling the urgency – part of the thing about writing is feeling an urgency to write. So sometimes it's good to stop writing when you actually want to write, which is exactly the state I'm in during this interview, because I was working this morning and I didn't want to stop, but I had to come and have office hours. So when I go home, either tomorrow morning or tonight I will feel a certain urgency to write because I got stopped doing it when life intervened, when I had an appointment.

6 What relation does contemporary literature have to the classics, or more generally to the writings of the past?

Literature is not a static thing. There's the past and the past is of fundamental importance to anything being done in contemporary times. But you cannot replicate the past. No poet will ever write like Milton anymore, and no playwright will ever write like Shakespeare. But the important thing is to have those kind of standards in your mind. In Richler's case, as a moralist, he chose Dr. Samuel Johnson. Because Johnson believed that small personal acts of morality were fundamentally important in forming a larger morality. And so Richler, who was post-Holocaust, and was a boy during the Second World War, he suddenly found himself in a century that had the memory of all the horrors of the War, of the genocide, and for him it became a manner of people behaving well in small things, first of all to inform their lives and keep them on a relatively moral-ethical key. But also, you had to be able to use that as a basis for saying whatever you believed was the truth about what was wrong with your society. Moral thinking actually has its basis in moral action.

7 How does literature relate to, and even anticipate, the discipline of Psychology?

There were writers who were existentialists before existentialism became a philosophy; There were writers who had Freudian or Jungian elements in their

work before there was a Freud or a Jung. Dostoevsky was a great psychologist; Herman Melville was a great psychologist. They were both 19th Century writers, before psychology really became a discipline. But, to use a cliché, they knew and understood the human heart in all of its complexity. The problem with psychology is that it categorizes types; but within those categories you are going to find a multitude of personalities who don't absolutely fit the clinical description.

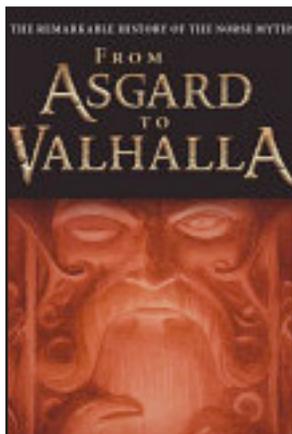
8 Has the neglect of classical literature in contemporary writing led to a degraded art?

I think it has led to a degraded response, in the sense that there are a lot of people out there who think, "if I don't know something, it is not important to know it." The best I can say is that the more you know about any art – painting or music or writing – the deeper your response will be to it. If I know something about paint application, and I am looking at a painting, I can judge whether this painter actually knows how to handle paint, and layer paint, and knows how to use a palette knife; I can have the initial response to the image, but if I look at it closely, and I see more than just a street scene, I am deepening my response. And it is the same when it comes to writing. The more you know, and the more you know about the history of any art, the deeper your response will be.

9 What are your current projects and what artistic direction are you hoping to head into next?

I'll be a bit cautious about this. It's been years and years since I've written short stories. That's what I'm doing now is I'm writing short stories. I have an idea for a novel that I'm not ready to write. I have two failed novels in my computer that at some point if I figure out how to fix them, I will attempt to fix them. Other than that, there's really not too much I can say, because I'm not sure myself. I think John Lennon said "Life is what happens when you're making plans", so I'm not making too many plans right now.

Book Reviews

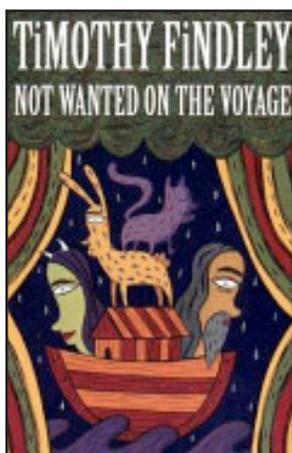


From Asgard to Valhalla

by **Heather O'Donoghue**

Reviewed by Mark Doerksen

Nearly everyone in today's society has some awareness of the Norse gods or their mythology. Heather O'Donoghue's *From Asgard to Valhalla* examines the Norse myths in the context of the religious, political, and social movements which have influenced the perception of Nordic myth throughout history. O'Donoghue provides a sterling narrative of the evolution and reception of Norse myth from its creation to its adaptation in modern media. With a clear purpose, few omissions, good sources, and a proper relation to its intended audience O'Donoghue overcomes any shallowness in contextualization, interpretation or style. It may not be for everybody, but for anyone with an interest in Norse myth, Vikings, or mythology in general, *From Asgard to Valhalla* is a fine publication. It may not be ground-breaking, but it is certainly enlightening for the uninitiated. *From Asgard to Valhalla* illustrates the tapestry of myth and equips its readers with the tools necessary to see the strands for themselves.



Not Wanted on the Voyage

by **Timothy Findley**

Reviewed by Joshua Smith

Timothy Findley's *Not Wanted on the Voyage* gives a postmodern bent to the well-known flood account found in the Book of Genesis. In an interesting twist, the events of the Flood are mainly seen from the perspective of Noah's wife, Mrs. Noyes, and her aging cat, Mottyl. Looking through their eyes, the reader sees what life was like for the Noyes family in the days leading up to the Flood as well as their experience once they are aboard the ark. They are forced to endure the hardships brought on by their tyrant leader, Dr. Noyes—better known as Noah—and the destruction of the world around them. Findley brings a certain realism to an often idealized biblical story that is quite refreshing and, though challenging at times, certainly welcome. I recommend this novel for those who enjoy new, and perhaps problematic, perspectives on well-known stories.



DF, TINTERN ABBEY

Postcard Story

"What's a postcard story? A postcard story is a condensed piece of storytelling in no more than 250 words. Use drama, poetry, humour, and dialogue to write one. Anything goes. There are no restrictions except the word limit. Stretch yourself by writing short." Guy Vanderhague

The Omnipresent

Among Robin's earliest memories is the sight of a dog lying dead in a mud puddle. He told me that he must have been three years old at the time. Before he could touch it, his uncle took him by the hand and pulled him away from its withered form.

"This is the best move," Robin said two years later to his brother, George. Forward, Down, Forward, High Punch. In a courtyard full of spectators, Sub-Zero ripped out Kano's spine. Robin laughed while George squealed with rage. "You're dead meat," George said, and punched him in the mouth. Their mother put an end to the resultant fight.

Robin's favourite movie used to be *The Guyver*. He first saw it when he was ten, two weeks after his uncle died in a farming accident. The movie helped Robin cope. He would return to it in years following, when other relatives had passed on.

Not until his eighteenth birthday did Robin hear the phrase, "Carpe diem." These words serve an obvious utility—one with which Robin has become familiar. It saddens me to think that my young friend, a successful businessman, should dwell on death so often. Perhaps, however, his way of thinking has proved to be for the better.

Bruce Parker



In Medias Res

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