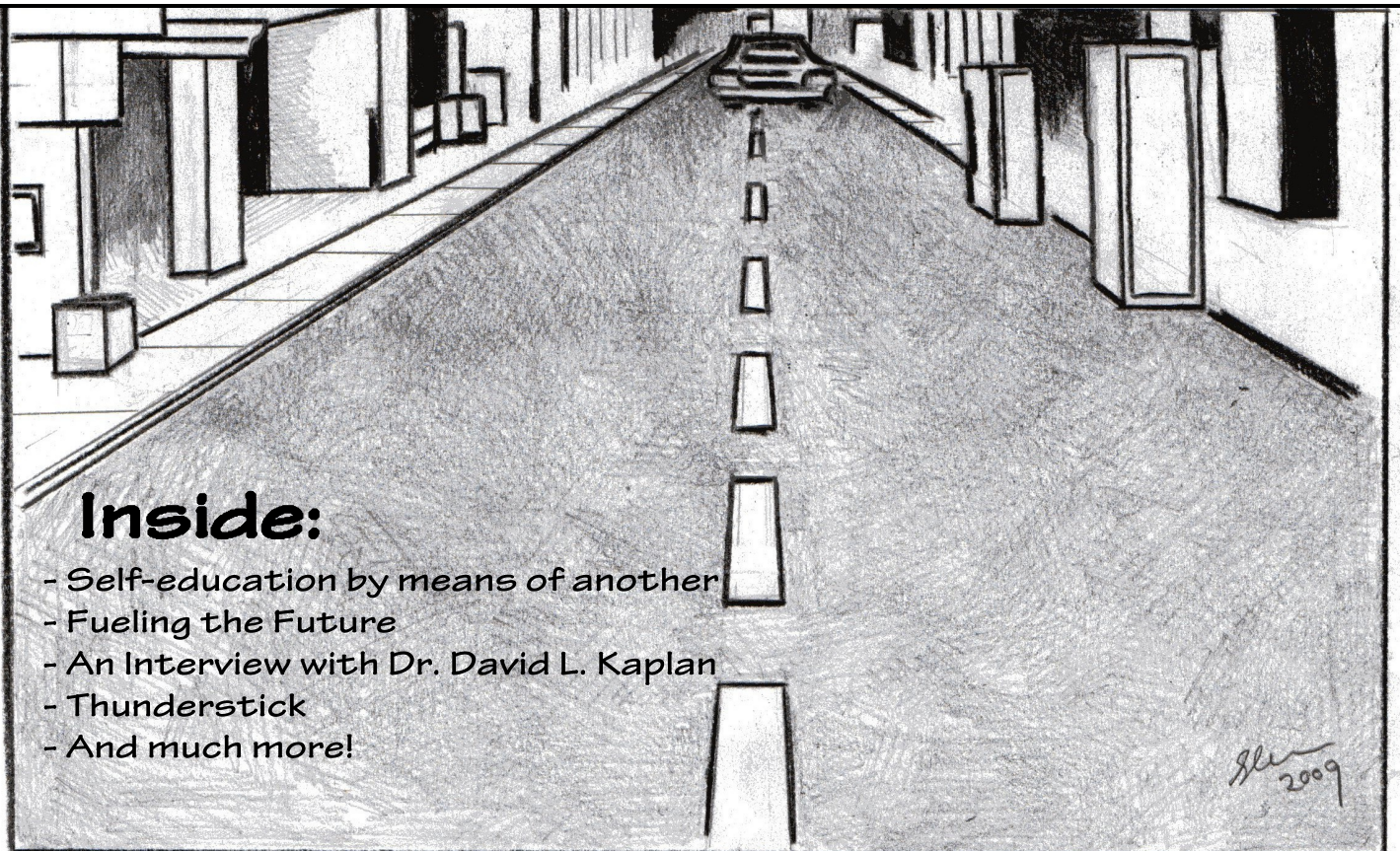


# in medias res

A Liberal Arts Journal  
Fall Issue 2009



## Inside:

- Self-education by means of another
- Fueling the Future
- An Interview with Dr. David L. Kaplan
- Thunderstick
- And much more!

glen  
2009



# 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 an *universitas*, a whole which has sufficient diversity and depth to merit its name. Situated as we are between many things, 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 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!

**Submissions can be made in electronic versions to [inmediasres@stmcollege.ca](mailto:inmediasres@stmcollege.ca) or to STM 223.**



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## ...self-education by means of another...

Michael Marder

Philosophy instructs us to be self-reflexive, if not self-critical: to distance ourselves (however slightly) from ourselves, to transcend our immersion in the here-and-now, to stop for a moment and to think about who we are, what we are doing, and why. The reflection ought to commence exactly where we are, *in medias res*, but it cannot remain shackled to this level of immediacy; instead, it must attempt to occupy an estranged position, or, at least to feign such estrangement, from which to view the everyday reality that surrounds us.

Let us, then, consider why we are here, at St. Thomas More College. The answer seems to be obvious. While some are at the College in order to receive education, it is the task of others to provide it, and still others are here to make the process of imparting knowledge possible in various indirect but, nevertheless, significant ways (by keeping the building clean and making sure that the lights are working, for instance). It might have escaped our attention, but in this seemingly uncontroversial response we, rather unphilosophically, took something for granted, violating the injunction for critical vigilance. More specifically, we accepted as valid the sense of education as a one-directional, osmotic transmission of knowledge from those who possess it to those who do not. This observation should reveal another crucial facet of philosophy, namely, that if we really want to be self-reflexive and self-critical, we cannot be satisfied with any pre-fabricated and unquestioned meanings of words and concepts that seem to make perfect sense. Sound definitions will be won after a long and arduous struggle against our inclination to rely on the commonplace, to operate “by default”, as it were. But even more precious than secure definitions are further questions that will surface as soon as we probe a little bit deeper, keeping the critical impulse alive. Philosophy is at its best when it gives birth to new queries, refusing to rest on the laurels of the answers it has provided thus far. In this case, the new question we are faced with is, “What is education?”

A brief recourse to the etymology—the study of word origins—of “education” will assist us in deepening this question. “To educate” is to draw out, to bring out, or to lead out (from the Latin verb *ēducere* which is also the origin of the English “to educe”). But what, exactly, is drawn out? By whom and out of whom, or out of what? Of course, the explanatory power of etymology has its inherent limits; it is not a magical recipe, prescribing a proper philosophical method. Having said that, the Latin root of “education” implies that, at this level of meaning, nothing is imparted *to* the students from the outside but that something is brought *out of* them into the light of day. What is it that is extracted, occasionally with much pain and suffering, from the students? Could it be knowledge itself? It is still too early to say.

Consulting the history of philosophy, we will readily discover that, in Ancient Greece, Socrates famously identifies himself as a “midwife of ideas”, proclaiming that, while regular midwives attend to the pregnancies of the body, he assists his

“patients” with the pregnancies of the soul. The point is that, in conducting dialogues with his interlocutors, he has not taught them a kind of esoteric wisdom available only to him, but has facilitated the blossoming of their own thoughts that, hitherto, had been merely implicit or unarticulated. Genuine education, then, does not entail “cramming” massive amounts of information. It ultimately boils down to a kind of self-knowledge that, even though it arises from within, is achieved thanks to another person, the interlocutor-teacher, who helps us render explicit what was already present in us as a mere potentiality.

Fast-forward to the nineteenth century. In the philosophy of G.W.F. Hegel, education also plays an important role, not

**“The educators’ success ought to be measured by the extent to which they manage to become superfluous”**

only at the individual but also at the collective level of entire societies and epochs of

human history. And here, too, it is understood, at bottom, as a gradual transition from what is merely implicit in us to the explicit knowing Hegel calls “self-consciousness”. For the children who are only embarking on the path of education, the interactions with the teacher appear to be external impositions curtailing their freedom. This view is vividly expressed in Pink Floyd’s hit song “Another Brick in the Wall” from the album *The Wall*. You will recall some of its lines, “We don’t need no education / We don’t need no thought control / Hey, teacher, leave the kids alone!”, reducing education to an external imposition and, indeed, a violation of the freedom of thought. To be liberated from this oppressive weight, it is not enough to rebel against the teacher, severing all ties with her, and, thus, falling into the trappings of much more rigid and less critical authorities, such as the advertisement industry. Rather, one would have to internalize the figure of the pedagogue, so that the process of education would turn into a self-education by means of another human being. The educators’ success ought to be measured by the extent to which they manage

**“If we really want to be self-reflexive and self-critical, we cannot be satisfied with any pre-fabricated and unquestioned meanings of words and concepts that seem to make perfect sense”**

to become superfluous, as they get replaced by a pedagogical authority within their students. The entire tradition of twentieth century hermeneutics, especially in the writings of Martin Heidegger and Hans-

Georg Gadamer, will be indebted to these Socratic and Hegelian approaches to implicit knowledge that awaits explication and elaboration.

To return to our initial battery of questions: What is drawn out in education, by whom, and out of whom? Could we say, perhaps, that we are drawn out of ourselves, brought out of the obscurity of our implicit knowing? And that we are led out, in the first place, by the other who is our interlocutor-teacher but, subsequently, having internalized this figure, by ourselves as other to ourselves? If this is so, then the critical injunction of philosophy mandates nothing but education, or self-estrangement as a conduit for self-knowledge. In the spirit of philosophy, the “answer” to the question “What is education?” is yet another question—“Who am I?”—each and every one of us tackles every day of our lives. And, like all philosophical queries, it does not correspond to a pre-determined, final response.

# SOCRATIC PESTILENCE: THE CAMPUS GADFLIES ASK ABOUT FREE WILL

In hope of gaining further insight into the student psyche, The Gadflies queried one of the oldest and most controversial philosophical problems, the question of 'free will' versus 'determinism'. In philosophy, free will is the doctrine that the conduct of human beings expresses personal choice and is not simply determined by physical or divine forces. Determinism on the other hand is the doctrine that every state of affairs, including every human event, act, and decision is the inevitable consequence of antecedent states of affairs. Which did students favor, and why? Here is what you had to say:

Note: The 'Gadflies' are not responsible for any atheism or corruption of youth that may or may not occur from this article

**Are you really free when you make choices and decisions, or is there something behind your choices and decisions which actually determines them?**

I would say that my degree of freeness is substantial but in my personal experience my decisions are either governed by some kind of political idea where I'm trying to gain favor, especially if there are girls. Like doing this survey – I would have not done it if I had known the question in advance or had not wanted to gain your favor. So either that or some deep insecurity that I'm trying to cover up based on what happened in grade 4 or some kind of old superstition.

–Reagan Seidler, 2<sup>nd</sup> year Economics

I definitely think that there are outside forces that contribute to making my choices and decisions.

– Autumn Rettman, 2<sup>nd</sup> year Sociology

Yes, I am really free when I make choices and decisions.

–Cameron Berg, 5<sup>th</sup> year Kinesiology

Both, because I think that Jesus dying on the cross for our sins predestined everybody in the world for the possibility of going to heaven. But, it is our own freewill and free choices that actually allow us to either agree with him and choose to live our lives in a godly manner or rebel against him.

–Garrett Schultz, 3<sup>rd</sup> year Religious Studies



You are free to make a decision as long as you are using your own will to power as in the Nietzschean perspectives. I'm very fond of Nietzsche.

–Mr.X, 3<sup>rd</sup> year Organic Chemistry

I think ultimately we are free to make our own choices but we are heavily influenced with our surroundings and by other people around us so ultimately we have free choice but really it's not as free as we like to think it is.

–Tyler Reimer, Classic Medieval Renaissance Studies

I suppose you are not really free when you make your decisions because there are so many background factors that determine your decisions. No matter what you do in your life everything sticks to you, if you will, like emotional impacts of that past or different people and situations. So when you claim to be free you're not really free because everything you do is a reaction to a previous action. Like when people say they are doing a selfless act but it's not really a selfless act because there is no such thing as a selfless act. There is always some aim – whether it be to help someone or just to feel good about yourself. So in the same vein I suppose you can't really ever make a truly free choice because you are just acting as a shadow of what you've previously done.

–Geoff Clayson, 3<sup>rd</sup> year Arts and Science on exchange

I think that there is definitely something that controls your decisions, so whether or not you think it's free there could be something subconscious going on that determines how you think.

—Laura Boettcher, 2<sup>nd</sup> year Biology

Yes, people's choices and actions are influenced by things outside of their own deciding factors. I wouldn't say that there is anybody who doesn't have something behind their choices that they're making — be it moral centers or not wanting to get caught, like personal ramifications.

—Phil Guenther, 4<sup>th</sup> year Commerce

I think there is definitely factors that preempt people's decisions such as religion, family, friends and what other people believe in that affects you.

—Heather Florizone, 1<sup>st</sup> year Arts and Science

I think we are limited by our mind's capacity. For instance when I make a choice I often don't really actually consider all the options I just kind of deny that there are other options and go for what seems easiest. So, I think we are limited although we don't realize it. We think are free but really we are limited by our own mind.

—Naila Kuhlmann, 2<sup>nd</sup> year Arts and Science

I guess it depends on what you're choosing to do or your decision. A lot of time people make a choice to go to university but it does have something to do with things like their parents. A lot of times it is our own choice but for a lot of things it's kind of predetermined and we might think it's a choice but really it's not our decision—it could be something we've grown up thinking we're going to do.

—Raelene Austen, 4<sup>th</sup> year Psychology

Yes and no. Most of my decisions are based on values from my family and religion.

—Amy Gibson, 2<sup>nd</sup> year ESB

I don't think that you're truly free in making your decisions. I think there are many outside factors operating upon the individual. Guiding the individual, leading the individ-

ual or maybe even forcing the individual to act according to maybe not what you want to do, but what you should do or what you could do. So no, I don't think you're a free agent of action—I think that the ultimate forces are acting upon you.

—Anonymous, St. Thomas More Faculty

I think there has to be something behind your choices because none of us are a blank slate. We are all born into our particular families and that experience has to have an impact on the kind of choices that you're going to make. All the life experience that you have, like if you grow up in a war zone, you're going to relate to and it will inform the decision that you make. So absolutely it is circumstantial, but you could also make a choice given your education or religious group or the kind of support you have to change your life.

—Sharon Wright, Medieval Historian

Yes, you are really free when you make a decision because every decision you make counts. Decisions can either make or break us so you it's all about you.

—Welley Lamadine, 3<sup>rd</sup> year International Studies

You aren't completely free because past experience shapes your ideas and morals regardless of what they are.

—Anonymous, History

I think that you are free when you make choices and decisions although there might be things that influence them.

—Miranda Wood-Sparrow, 2<sup>nd</sup> year Arts and Science

I would say that you aren't really free because you always have to think about other things when you're making your decisions. You have to consider other people. So other things are affecting your decisions so it's not entirely you alone that is making it.

—Astrid Jorgenson, 2<sup>nd</sup> year Nutrition

My values and what I believe in always determines what my choices are.

—Anonymous, St. Thomas More Faculty

## Fueling the Future: Are Cars More Important than People?

Richard Medernach

“As long as Africa produces what it doesn’t eat and is not producing what it does eat, it will never have food sovereignty.”

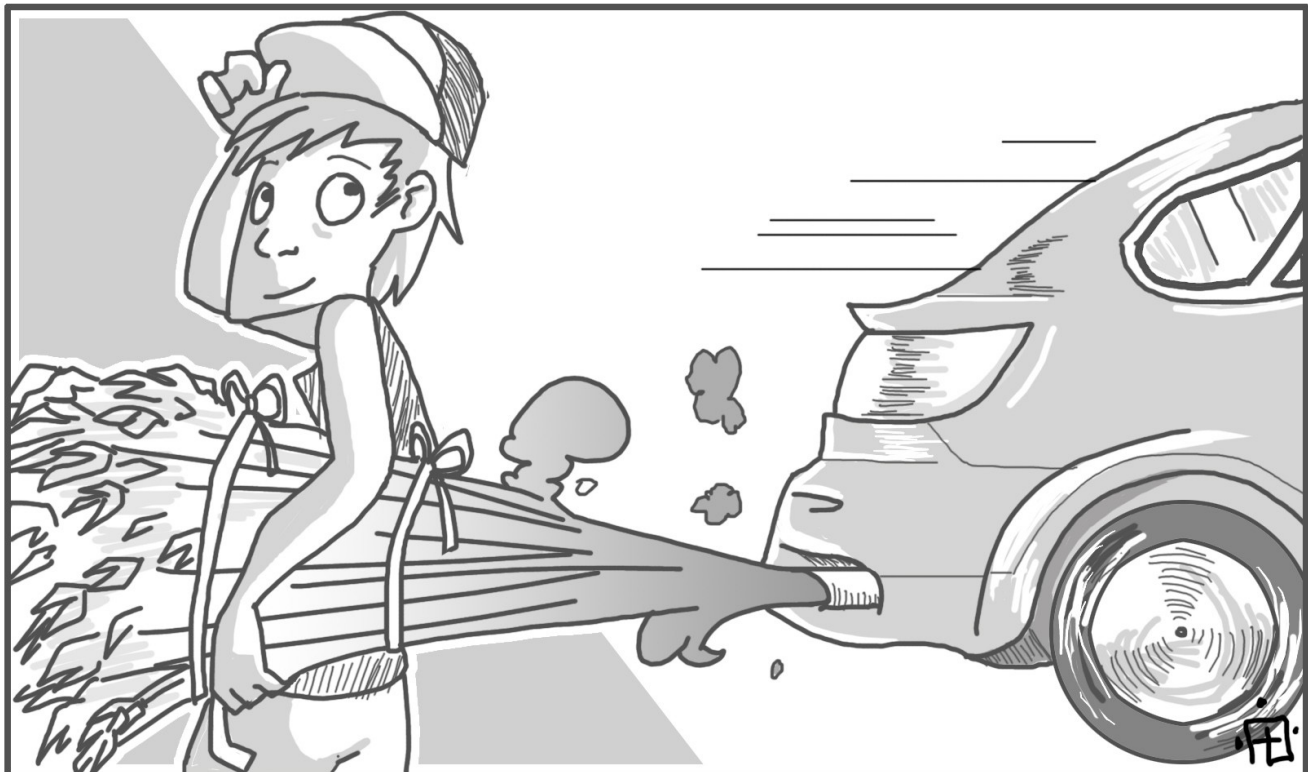
– Rene Segbenou, COPAGEN (West African Farmers Organization), November 2008

Less pollution from the tailpipe sounds like a good thing to me. Concerns about climate change and air pollution are serious, pressing, and they require new ways of thinking and acting if we are to leave future generations a suitable quality of life.

One of the proposed solutions to our addiction to fossil fuels is the use of biofuels, more properly called agrofuels because of their production methods. Using ethanol, biobutanol, or biodiesel rather than regular gasoline and diesel reduces the pollution produced by automobiles. It also helps contribute to our economy by driving up grain prices and stimulating research. Perhaps the best part of agrofuels is that they allow us to feel green without actually having to change driving habits. By those accounts, it makes good sense that the Government of Canada intends to legislate “renewable content of 5% in gasoline by 2010 and a 2% renewable content in diesel fuel

and heating oil by 2012.” When one looks a little deeper at the issue, however, it becomes evident why several environmental and social justice groups have come out against the current wave of agrofuels production.

One of the criticisms of agrofuels is that when their production process is taken into account, they end up increasing greenhouse gas emissions. In part, this is because forests are being cut down in the global south to make room for more crop production in response to agrofuel demand. There are different ways of producing agrofuels, some of which are more ecologically sustainable than others, but the primary agrofuels in production today are ethanol made by fermenting wheat, corn, or sugar, and biodiesel made from fats such as palm oil. Considering the amount of energy required to produce monoculture fields of wheat and corn, and carbon sinks that are lost when forests are cut down to make room for oil palm plantations, the environmental benefits of agrofuels are highly suspect. Carbon calculations are not the only problem with agrofuels. An equally pressing issue is the link between agrofuels and food sovereignty. Is land that should be used to grow food being used to fuel cars? As usual with environmental and economic issues, we in Canada are not affected to the same degree that people in poorer countries are.





It seems incredible, and is certainly appalling, that about one billion people were starving in 2008 even though the earth's food production capacity is sufficient to prevent this. Small scale subsistence farming is one of the touted methods of solving this problem. It is a key component to food sovereignty. Food sovereignty takes control of food production from large multinational companies and puts it in the hands of local communities. This is vital for the people of the Global South, but here is where the interests of agrofuel and food production clash. There is only so much arable land available and that means agrofuel production is competing with food production. Government programs in the wealthiest nations are encouraging this competition. This has resulted in higher food prices which are bad for urban poor and it discourages farmers from growing diverse food crops, which is bad for everyone.

An argument can be made that the expansion of agrofuel production will improve the lives of farmers by increasing commodity prices. For the farmers of Europe and North America, already employing industrial monoculture farming techniques, this is a good thing from a financial perspective. For the subsistence farmers in poor countries, the corresponding loss of biodiversity and loss of local food production puts those populations at risk of food shortages. A farmer's right to sell their crop for the best price regardless of the end use is not the issue here. The issue is economic and social policy that encourages switching land from food production to agrofuel production while a billion people are starving, or cutting down rain forests while our planet is heating up because of greenhouse gas pollution.

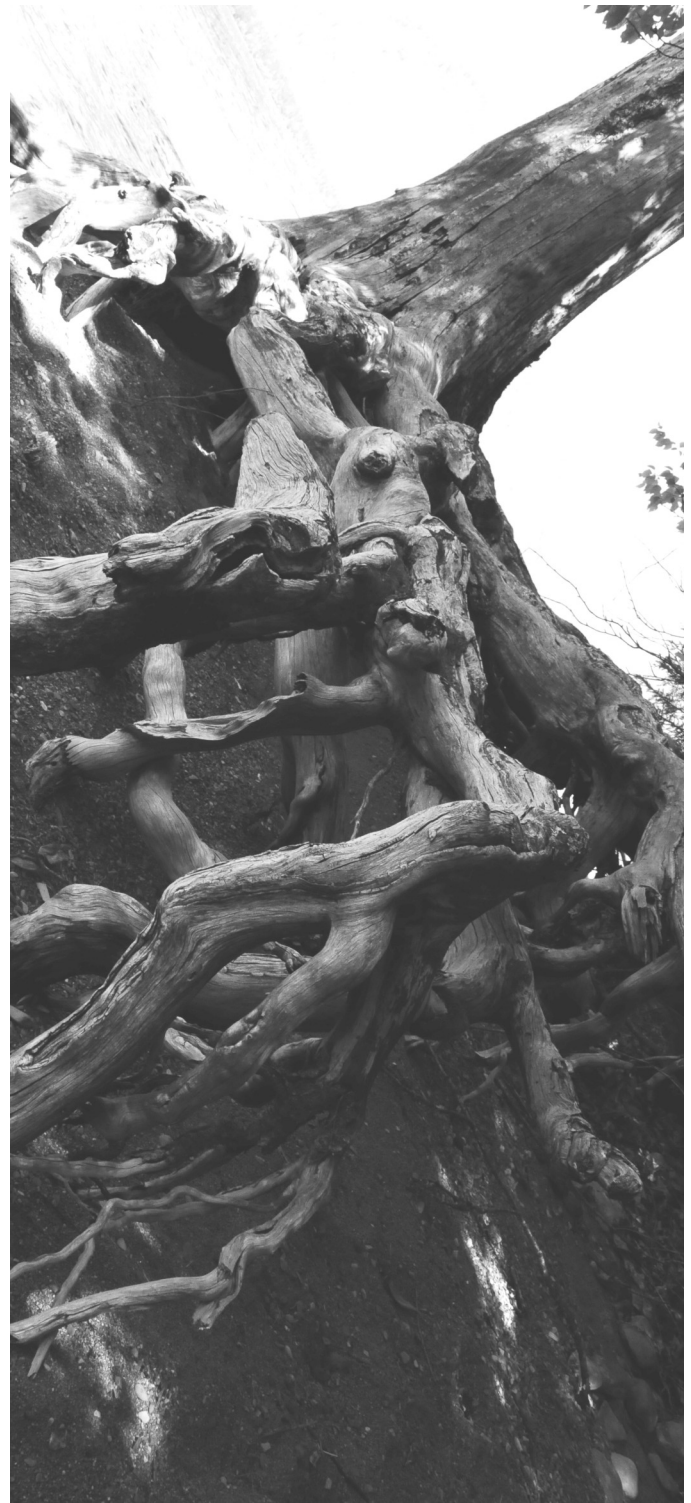
In the Choco region of Columbia, small scale farmers who had been living the principles of food sovereignty have been forced off their land to make way for palm oil production for biodiesel.

*"They told us we had to leave our land for a few months so that the army could defeat the armed rebels. Those few months turned into several years. When we began returning to our land in 2000, we understood why. African oil palm plantations had taken over everything, and our villages had been destroyed."*

*Don Oscar, Community of Pueblo Nuevo*

The Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace is working with partners in South America, Asia, and Africa to promote food sovereignty and protect farmers' right to choose food production over fuel production. Development & Peace is asking Prime Minister Harper to use his influence at the G8 meeting in June 2010 to improve support for small scale sustainable farmers in the Global South. Agrofuels should not be produced for the benefit of wealthy nations at the expense of the world's poorest citizens.

*Learn more and sign the petition at [www.devp.org](http://www.devp.org).*



© Gibby Davis

## Unsung Siren of the Sea

The vast bathtub blue  
sucks and swishes,

Tosses then turns,  
Shells then sand.....  
Sun  
Salt  
Seaweed

Powdered rock sifts through my toes  
Waves pulsate in rhythmic throws  
Soft and serene a bright orange shell catches my eye  
A smooth, polished wonder tumbling by

Stooping to scoop the marvel below,  
Holding  
Embracing

Sacrificing dry clothes  
I uncurl my fingers  
Sun jewel glimmers  
Water blurs hue, softens the vibrancy  
Perfect oval, little pores- engineering ecstasy

Bravo nature!  
Bravo sea!

Jealous turquoise ensues with painted calm  
Heaving the alluring stone deeper in my palm  
Then violently torn away  
Swept into the liquid's sway

Snatching!  
Clutching!  
Grabbing!  
Gone.  
Floor tile for dolphins.

- Janyne Laing

## Don't Forget:

Newman Players Presents:

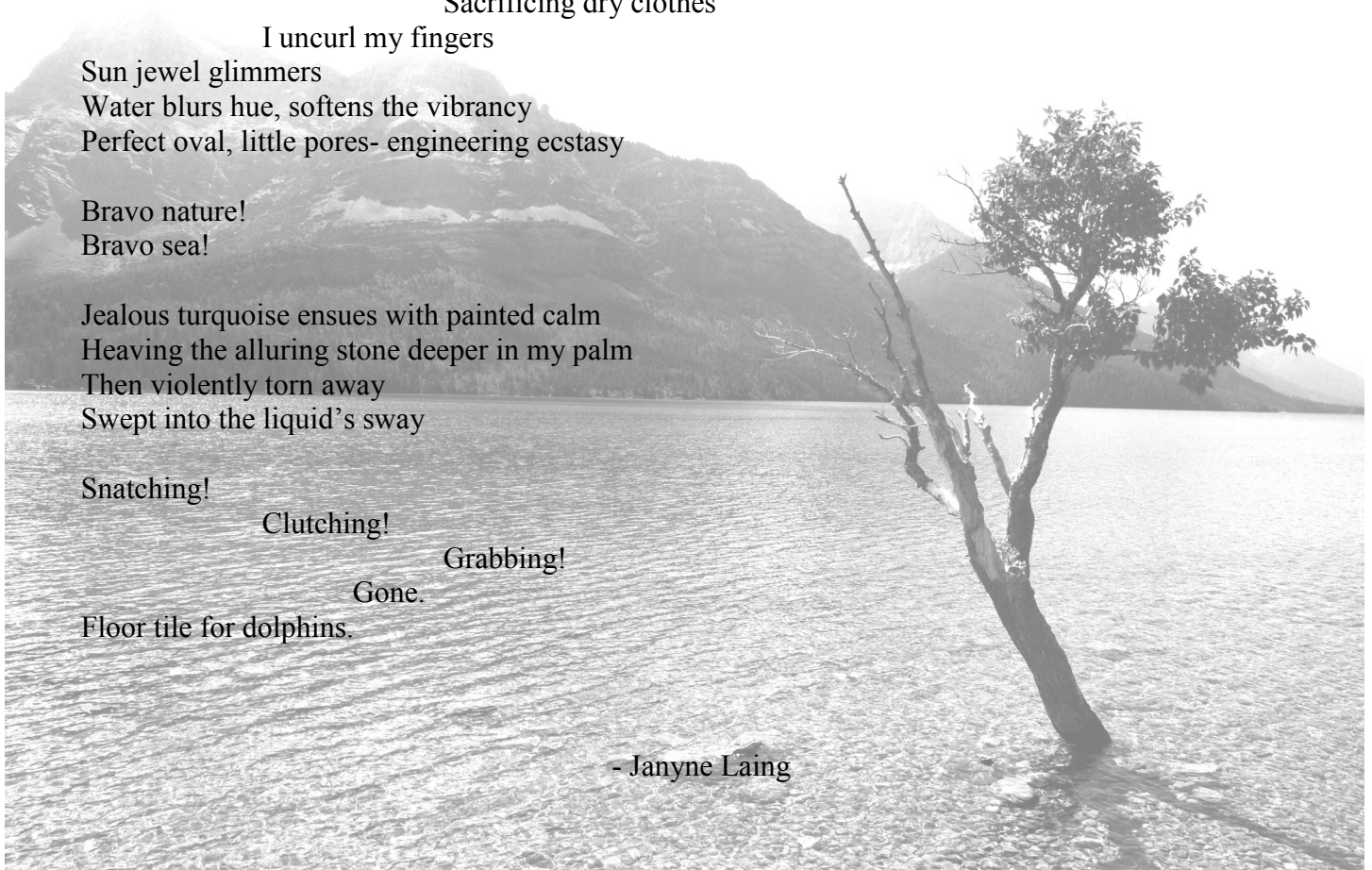
*A Man for All Seasons* by Robert Bolt

January 15 -17 and 22 - 24

Fr. O'Donnell Auditorium, St. Thomas More College

Ticket information:

[stmcollege.ca/newmanplayers](http://stmcollege.ca/newmanplayers) or 966-8946







## **“Objects”**

By Matt Courchene

Women are so often seen as objects and even more so today with the rise of pornography and other media outlets. The hole cuts through the center of her feminine identity while she has no head since we so often focus on the utility of the body and not the dignity of the individual.

## An Interview with Dr. David Kaplan

**Imre Borde**



Dr. David Kaplan has been a central figure in Saskatoon since he arrived over 40 years ago and has touched the lives of many inside and outside of the music community he came to serve and eventually lead. He has been department head of the University of Saskatchewan Music Department, conductor of the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra, and performed as a clarinetist on CBC radio. Recently, Dr. Kaplan was honoured with the naming of a new concert series after him. The David L. Kaplan Concert series, the first event which was held on October 29, showcased guest performers, violinist Elena Denisova and pianist Alexei Kornienko who came all the way from Austria. *In Medias Res* was fortunate to have the chance to sit down with Dr. Kaplan and to hear what he had to say.

IMR – What did you think of the concert?

I thought it was well done. As in the case of all great artists, they needed a little time to warm up, but by warming up I mean the first number wasn't up to my par, but then the nervousness goes away, and by the time they got through the Beethoven, and then after the intermission... they're just wonderful artists. And can you imagine getting them to come here? It was really magnificent. I handed them a composition I had written a few years ago, and I was told to present this composition to them, just a little composition I had written for a high school student, and now I've been told that they're going to record this number in Moscow. I enjoyed the concert. They were great personalities. First class! I wish the hall had been filled, but you can't expect that anymore. There's something going on all the time. Even tonight I'm supposed to go to another concert right after this interview...

IMR – How do you choose what you're going to do?

Well I guess it has to do with the importance of the activity, I'm finishing up some music for Remembrance Day, there are bands and choirs, and I write music for them every year.

IMR – So it has to do with whatever deadline is coming up first? Like how we have to prioritize which essays we need to write.

Well you got to get some of your activities. Now that I'm retired,

more or less, I have to put these things in perspective. I know I'm going to have a jazz festival, I know I'm going to have Folk Fest, I know I'm going to have a gig with my band in December, so you try float all these things around, you know, you try to spend some time – talking to your wife, to your children, and go swimming once in a while.

IMR – What are some of your next projects? What are you working on right now?

Okay, I'm finishing up, as I said, for November 11, a march for all four bands – when I started out with the legion, there was just a Salvation Army band, nice bunch of people, and a solo singer – that was about 25 odd years ago, and boy were they odd. But in recent years we've added more groups to help observe what's going on. And the next thing I have, a couple of weeks later, is something called the festival of light, that's going to be held at a Jewish Community Centre and it's going to involve about seven dance groups, and half a dozen instrumental groups, and soloists of one kind or another. One of the highlights will be a gentleman from the Hindu community who knows how to improvise quasi-Hindu jazz and he'll be joined by the cantor of the Jewish congregation, and the Klezmer band will be there as well. All of these things take a lot of time to prepare, and this should take me to the end of the year. Thank goodness!

IMR – You have been a key figure in Saskatoon for quite a while,



is there anything extra-special that stands out in your memory?

I'll tell you what; you make do with what you have where you are. I came from the United States, where we were building a brand new fine arts building, and I came up here, finishing up my doctorate, and I found no facilities at all. I did find someone by the name of Dean Kirkpatrick who had hired me for the College of Education. This guy was an athletic man. He had come from McGill to take over the Deanship, and he wanted to abide by Saskatchewan law which said that there was supposed to be music in the schools for elementary kids, but how were you going to get music in the schools if there was no one to teach it? Well, as I think I've said, it's the things we did with the things we didn't have that I'm most happy about. I was teaching a class for teachers in understanding the woodwind instruments, and I didn't have all of these instruments. So we took a silly old broomstick, and I made a bassoon out of it. We worked our butts off, and that is the thing I'm most proud of. I was department head for a long time, and we really worked hard to get the degree programs we thought were necessary for the province and the country, and before I retired in the 80's we had graduated our first two PhD students.

IMR – Do you feel there is maybe some apathy on the part of people in going out into the community?

I always felt what we needed was people who went out into the community. I didn't experience any apathy from my point of view, being so involved in the music part, nor on the part of the people in drama because they were so involved too. I always wanted a musical theatre program, but because we didn't get it, we did it on our own. So we got together and travelled all over the northern half of the province, performing. So I guess there was apathy, that there is always apathy, but I don't see it and didn't see it because I was so busy.

IMR – What do you think inspired you to keep that momentum going? You have always done so many extracurricular things...

I don't know. I guess I feel despondent and almost ill when I'm just sitting here like this and think, "There's nothing coming up tomorrow?" That can't be, there is so much to be done in this world, and we can help out with this, help out with that. I became a rotary member, and I became a member simply because I like their program, and I spent several years delivering meals on wheels, and you meet, oh, such interesting people. I mean, why are we here? I really ask myself, why are we here? If we have something to offer to our fellow human beings, then we should do it.

IMR – Word has it that you have quite the instrument collection. How do you find time to practise all of them?

Well it's not a matter of practising, but that's an interesting point you bring up. I was always terribly interested in travelling. Also, I was brought up in Chicago and there were so many different people, who would live in a neighbourhood, and so I grew up playing at all sorts of different weddings, and I couldn't help but become interested in the culture and the customs. So every time I would go on a trip, I started collecting instruments, starting with the instruments of the aboriginals in the United States, and then,

when I got a sabbatical in the seventies, I visited 25 countries and collected instruments from all of them and was sending them home the whole time. And, when you're collecting instruments you are learning about the customs of these peoples. When we started getting students from all over the world, they would also bring gifts of different instruments. So we developed a couple of courses that dealt with instruments, their history and how they were used. One class I taught, everyone had to learn how to play a different instrument. The collection has been promised to the university, but as of now, there is no place that's been found for the instruments. Some are kept here, others, across the city, in rooms that can be temperature controlled. There is no place to really keep these on campus other than in the Diefenbaker room where the Amati's are kept and they are slowly being destroyed. It's something to cry about.

IMR – Is there a favourite instrument of yours?

The instruments I have grown up with: the piano and the clarinet. The piano was "Now, if you practise for 40 minutes every day you can go play with your friends." I had such great motivation to play the piano. And, when I went to high school, John Marshall High School, I decided to join the band, and the music director told me that I would make a good clarinet player.

IMR – Do you think that younger people are still interested in classical music?

Yes, without a doubt. Even those who make much more popular music are often very capable classical musicians as well. Even the Beatles, who I hated when my kids would listen to it, but having now studied them and taught a bit of their music, I've learned to appreciate the talent behind it. I love good music of all kinds, whether it's good country, good rock and roll, or good gospel. It is simply lousy music which I can't stand.

IMR – Are there any particular pieces of music or composers which you really like?

Well you will get the standard responses that a lot of musicians will give you. I love the music of the Catholic Church. Had it not been for the Catholic Church, music would not have developed because there would have been no reason to play it. Bach, and Mozart, and Beethoven, were all avant-garde. So when we are hearing music that strangles our ears we just need to think back to these guys. A lot of musicians mention Bach, Haydn, and Mozart, Brahms, Beethoven, and so will I. I have always enjoyed Shostakovich for many reasons, none the least of which is how did he manage to stay in Russia, to stay alive? Here you have a guy who writes an opera where one of the main characters is an emperor, who slaughters his people, and Stalin gets up and walks out of the box, and when I heard about that I wondered when I was going to read his obituary. I love those who also did so much philosophically, and even here in town we have so many world class people.

IMR – Do you think it's ever too late to get involved in music?

Never. Never.

## Staying Present: An STM Intercordia Experience

### Kristen Vass

In partnership with Intercordia Canada, St. Thomas More College provides students with a 3 month international community service-learning experience. Students gain university credit in Sociology while living with and learning from people throughout the world. Kristen shared her experience with *In Medias Res*. For more information about the Intercordia program, please visit:

<http://www.stmcollege.ca/current-students/community-service-learning/intercordia.php>

My first month living in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, revealed many sad realities and to be honest sometimes it made falling asleep at night pretty hard. Seeing people everyday struggling to live, especially children, was extremely difficult. The first time I saw a person living in extreme poverty I was filled with a sense of anger and a desire to help. My first week at my placement a co-worker explained how many children inhale toxic glue to stave off hunger. She explained how the first time she saw it her heart broke, but later on it became a fixture of everyday life. I am struggling right now with this same change in feelings. The things that used to make me cry and break my heart, I now view with a certain degree of apathy. For me this is upsetting, because I know that poverty is a terrible reality that should never be ignored. For me this is a battle of conscience, because deep down I believe that I am a compassionate person. Now I am beginning to understand how I have been desensitized to the poverty and realities of my own country. I now realize that maintaining a motivation for change is a constant struggle. And though as hard as it can be to live with that kind of emotion, I never want to forget the struggles of the people I have met during this experience.





# DR. DAVID J. LUBAN LAW LECTURE

Veronica Carr & Quentin Plester

This year's Gertler Family Lecturship in Law featured guest speaker David J Luban. He gave a talk entitled "Tales of Terror: Lawyers, Torture and the Rule of Law" which outlined the tentative relationship between law and morality in cases of alleged torture at primarily US governed facilities. He emphasized the international community's concern, and the importance of the lawyer's role in law.

Dr. Luban is a world renowned legal ethicist. He was called earlier this year to testify before the United States House Judiciary Committee, and has published more than ten books primarily on legal ethics. He has a Doctorate in Philosophy and is currently at Georgetown University Law Center as the Frederick J. Haas Professor of Law and Philosophy. He has also held visiting appointments at Harvard, Stanford, Yale, Dartmouth and Melbourne.

Dr. Luban's talk outlined the problem of torture originating due to the unclear language of the torture statutes. With much room for interpretation, and under supposed imminent threat, lawyers, among other government officials, were able to justify torture and supposedly legitimize their actions. He described how the process of torture was legitimized from the Office of Legal Council assisting the Executive Branch through numerous memos that subverted existing statutes prohibiting torture.

Dr. Luban addressed two mutually exclusive roles that lawyers in this case conflated. The first was in the position of counselor for a

client, and the second as advocate for a clients cause. When the two roles are confused, he outlined how the law seems to be made in that instance when the client takes as truth, the opinion of the lawyer on specific legal matters. Rather than give an objective analysis of the statutes, the lawyers advocate for an interpretation of the law. Dr. Luban suggested three rules of thumb for lawyers in order to avoid these types of problems:

- 1) Asking whether your legal opinion would be the

same if your client wanted the opposite result from the one you know your client wants, 2) Offering your own best interpretation of law and 3) Giving an honest statement if it's not the mainstream interpretation (i.e. Would you still give this opinion if you knew it would become public?).

He quoted legal ethicist Richard Wasserstrom as saying of the unique nature of lawyers: "At best, the lawyer's world is a simplified moral world, often an amoral one, and more than occasionally perhaps an overtly immoral one."

Dr. Luban argued that lawyers play a role in defining law, and therefore they are crafting the countries values. He states that if we do not hold lawyers

**"Every lawyer who provides a client confidential legal opinions on which the client relies is in effect ...creating secret law."**

morally responsible for their role in defining law, we allow them to become "mini legislators." In

effect, "every lawyer who provides a client confidential legal opinions on which the client relies is in effect ...creating secret law."

He gave an interesting example of the uniqueness of Guantanamo Bay as an international symbol of the rule of law and it's absence when quoting a CIA lawyer from the minutes of a torture memo: "Torture has been prohibited under international law but the language of the statutes is written vaguely...it is basically subject to perception. If the detainee dies, you're doing it wrong." He stated that "Lawyers are where

**"At best, the lawyer's world is a simplified moral world, often an amoral one, and more than occasionally perhaps an overtly immoral one."**

the law in books gets translated into law in action" and cited "Honesty and fidelity to the law as important ....because you run the danger of hubris, turning your own pet theories into laws."

Dr. Luban presented a fast paced, impassioned lecture that clearly defined the issues at stake for law and morality when the use of torture is "permitted". It offered some startling pieces of information, and successfully kept the interest of the crowd, and, because of the ethical dilemmas, ensured the continued popularity of the lecture series among people from all sorts of academic backgrounds.

# IMR GOES TO PERSEPHONE

This semester the In Medias Res editorial board chose the Persephone Theatre and Theatre Network co-production of *Thunderstick* as its cultural outing. Starring Lorne Cardinal (as seen in the role of Davis on *Corner Gas*) and Craig Lauzon (as seen on *Airfarce*), this Kenneth T Williams play is set in Ottawa and Northern Ontario in October of 2000. It follows the journey of an alcoholic news reporter named Jacob and his newly widowed photographer cousin Isaac as they pursue a hot story and work through political, cultural, and personal issues along the way. Watch for the world première of the sequel to *Thunderstick* called *Bannock Republic* in Persephone's Deep End series later this season. Here's what we had to say about it.

John – So what did you guys think of the play? I thought it was pretty well done. I mean, seriously, for two people to be able to keep the interest of the crowd for that length of time with not a dull moment takes some serious talent.

Tiffany – Yeah, and with it being a story of two Aborigines, I think there must have been at least a few in the audience who could certainly relate to some of the more subtle points of the story.

David – I have to agree. However, some of the more fantastical elements just didn't quite do it for me. The whole helicopter chase at the end and the sudden tie to some African government conspiracy detracted from the story I thought.

Cara – You're right about those things being farfetched, I mean, even the chances of a drunkard being able to keep a job as a journalist at a reputable newspaper seems to stretch the imagination, but even so, I think they only added to the overall comedy of the play.

Sydney – The irony of Jake being a womanizer and being unable to hold onto a woman, while Isaac should have gone halfway across the world as a photographer and found the one he loved only to lose her to cancer struck me in particular.

John – And, don't forget about the whole "lesbian love affair"! Honestly, what do these cabinet ministers get up to...



Tiffany – No kidding! It's definitely safer to say that the play was a fantasy, I mean, what with Jake actually throwing up on then Prime Minister, Jean Chretien, and then him and Isaac being thrown in jail like it was planned all along.

Cara – I, on the other hand, thought the relationship between the drunk and the codependent was very real, and that the undertones of the play were very realistic. There was some serious stuff that was very cautiously and tactfully introduced. But even the way how both Jake and Isaac hid all their childhood feelings and only now allowed them to come out actually seemed to reflect what most people would tend to do. It was funny too, how they each tried helping the other when really they should have just been taking their own advice all along.

Sydney – You're right though. Those undertones were very real. The bit about the residential school experience, I thought, was well done. Just in that it's obviously been a very real issue for so many people and is certainly a dark mark on our nation's history. Those experiences which were suppressed and not until much later, if at all, were finally brought to light, and even then you could see the pain it caused Jake and Isaac to talk about them. To the actors' credit, they did the pain justice.

David – Though, do you think the play was the right time to talk about this issue? I think it may have lost some of its significance because of the fact that it was a comedy, especially with the "lesbian love affair" theme.



Tiffany – You guys just can't get over that can you, the lesbian love affair.

John – Well it was pretty funny, you have to admit, and well hey, don't give us such a hard time about it. I'm sure we weren't the only guys who thought it was funny.

Cara – I'll have to side with you too John. Who cares how crazy it was, credit is deserved simply because how would the writer even come up with such a thing?

Sydney – Getting back to the seriousness of the play, I have to add that even though it was a comedy, I think it was great that they mentioned the residential schools because it creates another medium for expressing the devastation that occurred and with much more emphasis than people are going to often receive simply by watching the news.

David – Yeah, and even though it's a very politically relevant issue, no doubt there is someone out there who would deny the horrible experiences ever happened. And on that note, what did you guys think of the vulgar language?

Tiffany – Definitely overdone! I mean, sometimes an f-word thrown in here or there is good for emphasizing something, but there was no need for it to be like every second word!

Cara – I have to disagree Tiff. For one, it definitely wasn't that vulgar, no way is it fair to say that every second word was a swear word. Certainly, vulgar language adds to the effect, but I think it's fair to say that people really do talk like that sometimes, and given some of the issues Jake and Isaac had, I wouldn't put it past them to be among them.

John – It was an f-ing great play! Ha ha...

Sydney – Would you go out of your way to see it again? I liked the experience because I had never been to a play before, but I think I would go to another play instead.

David – I've been to plays before, and this one was pretty good. Like John said, the ability of the two performers to maintain everyone's attention on their own for so long means that to understate them would not do it justice at all.

Cara – I would go again. I think I would better understand it a second time around, but it would be much cooler to see it the second time with the actors reversed in the roles and then being able to compare the two versions.

Tiffany – Yeah, that would be pretty neat. As for the venue, the stage was just the right size and the way they were able to transition between scenes without losing our attention. It definitely makes for a better outing than the movies these days.

David – With that, I have to agree. The dancing and the music between scenes was pretty funny. Lorne Cardinal and Craig

Lauzon have some pretty incredible dance moves.

John – Ha, I think I could have been spared that part of the experience, but there's no doubt that everyone should have the opportunity to see the class of the new Persephone theatre. There's no comparing it to the place where they used to hold their plays.

Cara – Additionally, I think there was a very clear philosophical outlook to the play. At first, when they were bringing out their own life philosophies I thought it was going to be stupid, but you could see classic philosophers getting a nod. Jake was like David Hume, going through life on impulse without really any sort of reflection on his actions, while Isaac was trying to repress all of his emotions and be above it all like Immanuel Kant. Like I said earlier with the suppression of their childhood memories and the counseling of each other that resulted from their problems definitely presented a part for these views to come out.

John – I thought that through the play, we were being shown that no one is perfect. No one is normal and everyone has issues.

Sydney – It's not interesting to be normal. It's much more exciting to have a pattern of stories.

David – I think part of it is to show that we should not be afraid of our past. Getting these issues our country has out in the open is important even though it may make us look dysfunctional. Besides all that, what is normal anyways?

Tiffany – Would it be safe to say then that you can sympathize with the characters?

David – Yeah, maybe a little bit.

Cara – I would like to hope I don't have as many problems as those two, ha ha.

Sydney – As for the characters themselves, Jake doesn't need someone to pull him through his problems but instead needs to man up and figure them out himself.

John – Whether that's the case or not, I thought it was funny that they were both going in circles. Not only literally because they were running around lost unable to read a map, but also because they didn't know where they were going in life.

Tiffany – For sure, this was a play that did it all. It parodied aspects of life which so many of us can relate to like the running around in circles, and the swearing, and relationship problems. Because of these things, I think it would have been great to see more young people there. Not kids necessarily because even though the concepts weren't really too adult oriented, the swearing might have been a bit much for them, but more university students could probably have benefited from it.

# PRO ET CONTRA:

## SHOULD CANADA PROVIDE FOREIGN AID?

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### PRO:

There is a great deal of suffering in the world much of which could be mitigated at least in part by foreign aid from developed nations to less developed nations. We have a moral responsibility to help other human beings to live in decent and humane conditions.

It is not very difficult for us to do help people in developing countries to live better lives. We live in one of the richest countries in the world. We spend enormous amounts of money on things which we really do not need. To take a modest part of our wealth and share it with those in need will not change our standard of living in any significant way. There is no reason why Canada should not be able to reach its target of 0.7% of its GDP going to help other nations.

Some people think that people in developing nations are poor because they are lazy or incompetent. This view is completely fallacious since one could only assert that they are suffering bad conditions now if they had in the past enjoyed the same conditions that we had. The truth is that people in underdeveloped countries – many of them children – are for the most part suffering through no fault of their own.

In fact, in many cases poverty in developing countries can be traced back to developed countries. Colonialism through the past two centuries destroyed traditional cultures in many parts of the world, set up governmental and business systems which were designed not to serve the interests of local populations but rather to serve the interests of developed nations. Many – but not all - of these systems have been eliminated, but very often no structures which allow populations to succeed in creating acceptable living conditions have replaced those which earlier exploited them. It is immoral to profit from others misery or to have profited from others misfortune and not to seek to set things right.

Ultimately the economic development that should occur thanks to foreign aid will benefit Canadians. Aid should of course be provided according to the idea that we “help people so that they can help themselves.” Ultimately foreign aid is about creating equal opportunity, not about giving “handouts”.

There is no reason to think that since we have problems “at home” that we should not try to help people elsewhere as well. We of course have an obligation to make sure that all Canadians are enjoying high living conditions. It should be noted that the per capita GDP is 8,719USD whereas the GDP of Niger is 391USD (the Canadian per capita GDP is 45,085USD).

There are wild disparities in the conditions into which people are born. We should try to make sure that every human being has the opportunity to flourish as a human being.

Abigail Rafi

### CONTRA:

There are reasons to suggest that one ought to put an end to foreign aid spending. First, foreign aid helps perpetuate the cycle of poverty and impedes economic growth in the areas which the government and private sectors are trying to ‘help’. Foreign aid does not create jobs for its recipients or establish free market solutions. It does not offer any chance of self sufficiency but instead cripples the people by making them dependent on aid. No country has earned long term growth by receiving aid, perhaps because it provides only “band-aid solutions” for much larger problems. As the old saying goes, “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.”

Canada does not have a good record of spending its foreign aid finances effectively. Knowing the method of government and its conditions is crucial in considering which countries should receive foreign aid. Canadian aid has a record of going towards governments of countries that do not have much economic freedom. In countries like these, much of Canada’s annual \$3 billion dollars spent on foreign aid and other international assistance never reaches the hands of those in need, but lines the pockets of those in power.

Foreign aid should help remedy the effects of bad governments rather than support them. To do this, it needs to be directed properly. It is the quality, not quantity, of foreign aid that counts – something it seems Canadian policy makers have yet to learn. Although Canada's intentions might be good, foreign aid is a much too complicated issue to simply throw money at. Canada needs a more effective strategy.

In fact, before we send any aid to other countries, we should stop and take a look at how financial assistance can be used in our own country. For every reason to send aid across the ocean there is equally imperative issue in Canada—five million Canadians live in severe poverty. In fact, if poverty statistics from Canada’s Aboriginal sector were taken separately, they would slip to 78<sup>th</sup> on the UN Human Development Index- a position shared with Kazakhstan. Perhaps it is time to expand affordable housing, raise the minimum wage, increase the Child Tax Benefit, and critically examine the reasons behind the *growing* trend of poverty for the “3<sup>rd</sup> world” populace at home.

Nik Francois



## Faculty Files:

**Dr. Patti McDougall**  
**Associate Dean at STM**  
**and Professor of the**  
**Department of Psychology**

1. Why did you choose Psychology? Was there something in particular that interested you in that area?

I grew up in Ottawa and when I was in high school the University of Ottawa and Carleton University sponsored this program of mini-courses that brought high school students to the university to study for one week in May. I was very lucky and I got to go in three different years. In Grade 10, I took a week-long course in psychology at Carleton University from an incredible professor and it was like an “aha” moment for me. I was drawn to the idea of studying and understanding human behaviour. I knew then what I was going to do for a career, although I thought I would go into clinical psychology. Later on, as an undergrad (and grad student), I realized that psychology was considerably broader than clinical and I decided I wanted to be a developmental psychologist.

2. In your opinion, what do you think constitutes a well-rounded Liberal Arts education? What Kind of value do you think a Liberal Arts Education possesses in contemporary society?

I believe firmly that there is an intrinsic value to a liberal arts education (e.g., learning for learning sake) but I am also very practical and I know people need to get jobs and move on with life. In my mind, a liberal arts education gives you a set of marketable skills that will take you places. First and foremost, a liberal education has to enable a person to communicate effectively, both in writing and in speech. At the same time, a person who has received a liberal education possesses the ability to think critically and analytically. Thinking critically and analytically is the essential component of all problem solving regardless of the profession one chooses. Moral reasoning is another element of a liberal arts education, and one that has very practical implications for almost every aspect of our lives both during and following university. A liberal education also has to prepare us to be generous and productive citizens, not only of the countries in which we will live our lives, but also of our evolving global society. Coming to know and understand Canada’s history and culture is important, but so too is coming to know and understand something of the history and culture of at least one other country. We can attain that knowledge and understanding by the study of language and identity and, if we’re really fortunate, that study will involve travel either during, or after, university. Finally, I would say that a student has received a liberal education if he or she has really struggled with one of more of the great problems that face us as human beings. Using the disciplines of the liberal arts to struggle with the great problems of humanity: that’s the real stuff of a liberal education.

3. What are your current projects and research interests?

My standard “cocktail party” sentence would be that I study social relationships in childhood and adolescence. For me, this has meant

studying friendship, peer acceptance and social status. For about the last decade, I have focussed a lot of energy on the study of bullying and victimization primarily in school contexts. We know a lot about the profiles of those who bully and those who are victimized and the shorter-term consequences of these experiences. What we don’t know much about is whether there are long-term outcomes associated with bullying. I’m working on a project right now where we’re hoping to follow-up with a group of students who took part in a study on school bullying when they were in grades 6 to 10 (back in the late 90’s). Now, these people are in their 20’s so it’s an amazing opportunity to go forward in time and see how people make sense of their early peer experiences when they are young adults. I’m also working on writing up a study I did to look at factors that influence whether early adolescents will intervene when they see bullying going on in school. I’ve come to the conclusion that if we’re ever going to systematically reduce bullying it’s going to mean shifting culture so that those who bully get a clear message that their peers aren’t going to tolerate it.

4. Outside of being a Psychology professor, what are your hobbies and interests?

As I reflect on whether I actually have hobbies and interests, I’m very afraid that readers will get the impression that faculty members are so consumed by their work that they lack outside interests. I’m a big reader (yes – it is possible to return to leisure reading after being overwhelmed by assigned readings in university). For me, I use leisure reading to shut down the “work” part of my brain that seems to run constantly. Also, my husband and I have a 9 year-old boy so I consider him to be my primary real-life interest. I like travelling, especially when it means going to hot places in the middle of winter.

5. If you were to teach outside of your discipline, what area would you choose to teach and why?

Assuming I would have the chance to re-train, I would want to go law school and then I would want to teach law. My Father was in the RCMP and from a very early age I was fascinated by the law. I think there’s something about knowing the “rules” and being able to make arguments and build cases that I find very appealing.

6. What are the top 5 experiences you think undergraduates should have before they graduate?

I just wanted to start this top 5 by commenting that I consider my undergraduate years to be some of the absolute best years ever. There were most certainly challenges and disappointments but there were also very good times and very good people.

1. Take part in something larger than yourself. This could mean joining a cause, volunteering, taking part in community service learning – anything that pushes you a little bit outside your comfort zone and helps you to know yourself better by encounter “the other.”
2. Engage in interdisciplinary studies. The reality is that things are interconnected so it’s worth challenging yourself to find and make these connections. (Okay – now I feel like I’ve had my teaching moment!)
3. Build a relationship with a professor. When I consider what characterizes those who stand before you in the classroom I think: (a) knowledgeable – yes, (b) talented – yes, (c) funny – sometimes, (4) human – always. It’s worth taking the risk.
4. Make some life-long friends. Nothing beats the shared experience of mid-terms, papers, and assignments to bond people together.
5. Fall in love, at least once.



**Being Young**

the longest of all highways  
stretches onward

my favourite songs  
slip from my car's tiny speakers:  
the music of leaping  
dolphins  
and weeping hawks

the invigorated light  
of a springtime mid-morning  
lights my way

four wheels unite the earth  
with the world / existence  
with the enclosed realm of my experience

fingerlike, the shadows of roadside  
trees point forward.

God,  
the greatest of all pacifists,  
rides shotgun  
as we chat

I ask when the phoenix  
shall rise from the Ash

and when my headlights  
will fall on sunset

lazily

I receive  
smiles in return, and whispered  
kisses too

so I yell about uncertainty

calm down like controlled wildfire.

in this manner  
my drive continues

full tank  
to half tank,  
a journey of connecting  
dots to other dots.

maps lie unfurled  
and scattered across the empty  
seats  
like ugly secrets and forgotten  
lessons

both hands on the wheel  
and neither

piloting my life  
recklessly toward self-betterment

oppressed by speed-limit

fleeing traditional yet towing it  
with me

monotony and highway lines

the jubilation of a rounded corner

a terrified yelp as I pass  
slow-moving traffic  
at worldview-changing speed

onward to the destinationless horizon

- Charlie Peters



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# Book Reviews

## *The Kite Runner*

By Khalad Hosseini

Reviewed by Janyne Laing



Hosseini's debut novel operates on a multifaceted scheme of excellent movie-like storytelling, profound humanistic themes, and personal-meets political resonance. The main character, Amir, grows up in 1970's Afghanistan and later immigrates to America; thus, the story not only spans decades of political turmoil and personal growth, but bridges oceans characterized by cul-

tural estrangement and subsequent integration. Beginning with a joyful scene in which a young, carefree Amir flies a kite through the winding streets of Kabul, the audience embarks on a journey consisting of colourful, cinematic scenes. The audience listens to the unnerving rumble of the refugee truck that is taking Amir from his homeland as a refugee, grows nauseous as they witness a public stoning endorsed by Amir's lifelong nemesis, and cheers for Amir who flies a kite high above the treetops in an American park, fighting for the trust of his adopted son as the cyclical plot concludes. The story's humanistic themes are exposed at the beginning of the novel when Amir's cowardice in the face of his friend Hassan's unwavering loyalty initiates a cycle of guilt and redemption which is left somewhat fragmented and unsettled at the story's conclusion. Hosseini reminds us that scars etched by human fault, whether self-inflicted or not, are difficult to heal.

The human story, however powerful, is only one layer in a complex novel that documents Kabul's political history and critiques American culture. The author's own experiences enrich the historical context of the novel which details the crumbling of Afghanistan's monarchy and subsequent takeovers first by the Soviets and later by the infamous Taliban. As well, Hosseini uses Amir's immigration to America to make his own cultural commentary. Amir's father, formerly an aristocrat in Afghanistan, works at a gas station and his pride prevents him from accepting welfare payments despite the poverty in which the family has been rudely thrust. Amir does not depict America as a land of saving grace; instead his experience is marked by his personal struggle to find a balance between his newly complicated American/Afghani identity. Through the voice of Amir, Hosseini comments on how the American view of Afghanistan seems far removed and somewhat ridiculous. He subtly criticizes Californians who drink Starbucks lattes while discussing the war in Kunduz-- a place they most likely have never seen or genuinely care about.

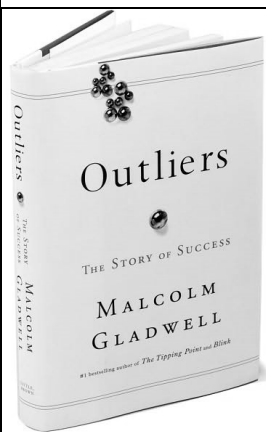
*The Kite Runner* has a multiplicity of layers; an entertainment value to satisfy the pop culture savvy Costco browser, a profound humanistic and multi-themed work for literary scholars to sink their teeth into, and a political message that is as relevant in latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as it is in the 21<sup>st</sup>.

ISBN-13: 978-0385660075

## *Outliers*

By Malcolm Gladwell

Reviewed by Michael Konrad



*Outliers* is the third book from the journalist/quasi-social scientist Malcolm Gladwell. Stylistically, *Outliers* is in the same vein as his previous books *The Tipping Point* and *Blink*, but, if anything, *Outliers* is more ambitious in scope. *The Tipping Point* dealt with social trends; *Blink* taught us the power of our unconscious mind; *Outliers* re-imagines the story of success and, in so

doing, forces us to think about the story of our lives.

Gladwell takes issue with the way we explain super-successful people, called outliers, in economic parlance. The usual story explains this in terms of intrinsic ability. Bill Gates, we think, is successful mostly because of his ability. The same would be true of the way we think of a star athlete or musician.

However, Gladwell takes us beyond simplistic descriptions based on intrinsic ability and asks us to look more carefully at the circumstances that allowed these great people to emerge. For example, Bill Gates' elementary school had a computer at a time where many universities did not. Because of this he was able to spend hours programming. By the time he was college-aged, he may have had more programming experience than anyone in his age group.

Reading through *Outliers*, you are exposed to the whole range of circumstances and environmental factors which influence success. You see how being born in January makes you more likely to succeed in organized sports, how the cultural background of airline pilots determines an airline's safety record, and how the year of your birth determines if you are going to be a software billionaire or railroad tycoon. You read about how IQ does not matter much in the long run and how being an ostracized minority can lead to success in business. By the end, I rethought a lot of my assumptions about life.

On the face of it, Gladwell's message may seem bleak. It seems to deny a person's ability to make their own life. However, that is not at all how I felt while reading the book. Instead of feeling limited by my environment, I felt freed from a perception of destiny. The great people of the world did not achieve so much because of some special capacity but instead simply took advantage of their circumstances and worked very hard to get where they are now. Gladwell introduces us to the 10,000 hours rule. To become an expert in anything, it generally takes 10,000 hours of practice. Bill Gates put in ten thousand hours of programming by the time he finished high school. Success is neither something that you are born to have, nor merely a product of your circumstances but, instead, something that can be achieved through hard work.

Overall, *Outliers*, like all of Malcolm Gladwell's books, is fantastic. Unlike many pop-science writers whose books often come across as a collection of interesting facts, Gladwell, using his patented method of writing based on nested metaphors, calls upon a great deal of research done by many different social and physical science and personal anecdotes to forward a cohesive argument about the world. Do yourself a favour and read this book, it could change your life.

ISBN-13: 978-0316017923

Walking to school, I am thoroughly harassed by angles and edges: those shapes that tend to rise out of the steam left by mechanical irons that smooth country contours. I have no choice but to walk in lines running parallel to the street, following the de-feeted cement artery that leads into the heart of the well-known. I come to a stop where the street I'm on unapologetically bisects another and watch as a red orb exhausts itself and drops its burden to a green orb below, directing forty feet, twenty minds. I wonder if that deviant neon green knows its Mother, but shrug it off because it's my turn to move. The law of the land dictates I follow the perimeter of triangles painted in Pythagorean perfection, lest I venture onto uncharted territory-- the apathetic lawn. Since class started five minutes ago, I decide not to break through the stream of students in order to bend lines, break angles and wreak havoc upon established formulas. Instead, like a well known algorithm, I follow a sequence of steps behind the steady student procession headed towards my destination. Black rubber circles jostle a stoic rectangle precariously balanced on top; the city bus screeches to a halt and exhales to release exertion before spewing forth a mosaic of winter coats with people buried somewhere beneath. In a world ordered by lines and angles and shapes, centuries of mathematical hypothesis and mental abstraction bear down on me with an oppressive heaviness. I sigh and remind myself, "It's only simple geometry."

By Kathryn Johnson



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**STM** ST. THOMAS MORE COLLEGE  
 UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

## Postcard Stories

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

### All hands on deck

It was a peculiar scene, to say the least. Our crew found the abandoned ship on a small anchorage just off the east coast. It was a schooner- two masts, the main mast being the tallest- and sails tattered, but still attached. However, my attention was quickly torn away from the details of the ship once I stepped on board. I boarded starboard and instantly felt my knees weaken. The state of the main deck was morbid, horrifying...yet, extremely curious. Severed hands were scattered across the deck. No bodies, only hands- most lying in puddles of dried blood. I scanned the ship, trying to rationalize such a gruesome state of affairs. Then it came to me; this crew must have been infinitely loyal, merely obeying their captain's command too literally. The whereabouts of the captain and crew still remain unknown, but I truly believe they abandoned ship out of pure embarrassment.

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