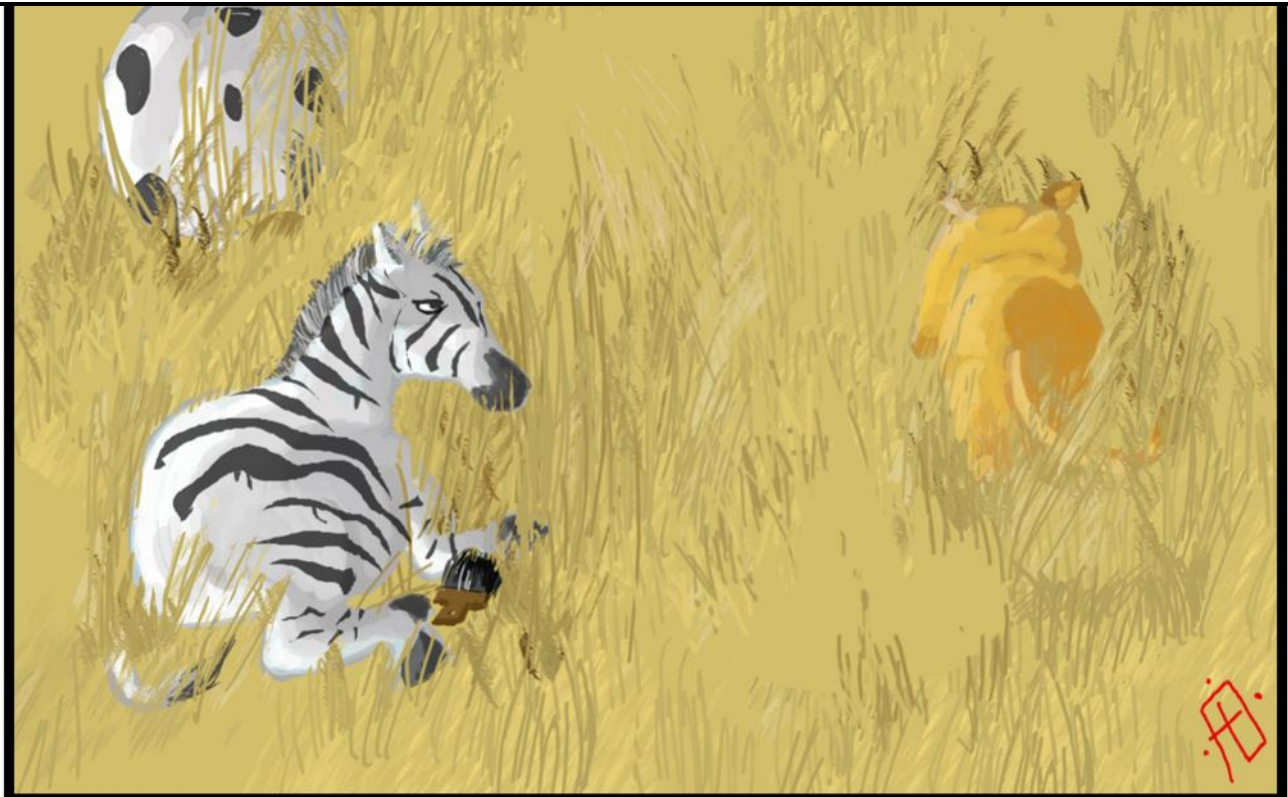




# in medias res

A Liberal Arts Journal  
Spring Issue 2010

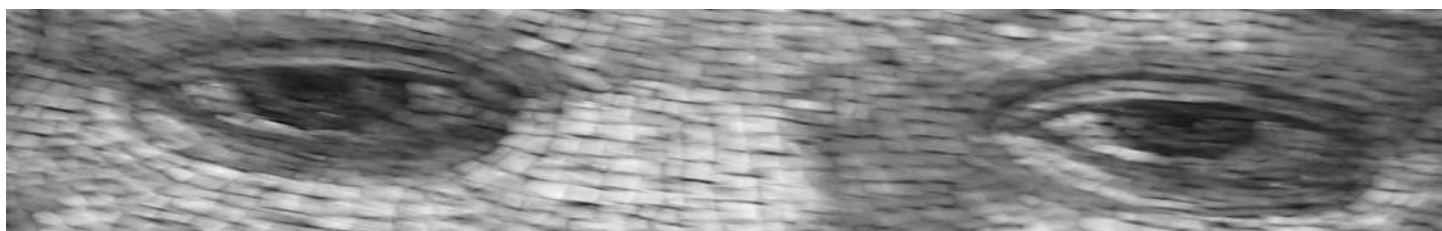


**Inside:** - Philosophy and the Problem of Evil - An Interview with Thomas Yu  
- Only Happy Between Here and There - And much more!

# 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!

**All submissions and inquiries may be directed to [inmediasres@stmcollege.ca](mailto:inmediasres@stmcollege.ca)  
Check us out online at [www.stmcollege.ca/imr](http://www.stmcollege.ca/imr)**



## CONTENTS

Philosophy and the Problem of Evil.....	page 3
Socratic Pestilence.....	page 4
See your Gift Grow.....	page 6
Adam & Eve.....	page 8
Sir Georgeo.....	page 9
An Interview with Thomas Yu.....	page 10
Student Panel on Effective Teaching Methods....	page 12
Only Happy Between Here and There.....	page 14
IMR Goes to the Mendel.....	page 18
Pro et Contra .....	page 20
Faculty Files.....	page 21
A Grammar Wizard on his Pet Peeves.....	page 22
Book Reviews.....	page 23
Postcard Stories .....	page 24

### EDITORIAL BOARD:

STEPHEN BAGWELL  
TORRIE BULMER  
VERONICA CARR  
JANYNE LAING  
ERICA LEE  
WHITNEY LILLY  
QUENTIN PLESTER  
TAYLOR-ANNE YEE  
LANE ZABOLOTNEY

DANIEL REGNIER (FACULTY)

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent those of the editorial board or of St. Thomas More College.

# Philosophy and the Problem of Evil

John Liptay

The terrible devastation and suffering associated with the recent earthquake in Haiti will perhaps lead some of us to ponder anew the problem of evil. Even if it is possible to turn one's glance from such events and images, one cannot for long avoid a confrontation with evil, for it is one of the most obvious and pervasive facts about our world. While the evil with which we are involved might (for now) seem trivial, just for that reason it might render the problem of evil even more inscrutable. As a man in his mid-forties, St. Augustine was bothered by an episode of his youth in which he stole some of his neighbour's pears for no good reason. How can senseless acts of stealing and the occurrences of earthquakes and other natural disasters be intelligibly accounted for? The question is properly philosophical, but is there a philosophical solution? Not entirely. While we can identify two opposing positions, neither offers what can be taken as a satisfactory solution to our problem, though their deficiencies differ in important ways with serious consequences for one's conception of human life and its meaning.

Non-theists see it as their duty to show that the evil in this world is incompatible with the existence of God. Some argue that to assert that God is all-good and all-powerful and that evil exists involves a contradiction, in that an all-good being would want to eliminate such evil and an all-powerful being would be able to. Others suggest that if God existed we would not find in our world at least some of the evils which *are* presently found. Non-theists, then, need to provide an account of evil and of the intelligibility of human actions and living in terms referring only to what is immanent within the world. The project has proved exceedingly difficult, as the proliferation of modern moral philosophies testifies. Moreover, any account of practical thinking presupposes human capacities required to choose and act, and involves reference to realities which define the context and field of choice and action. What are we to say about these further realities? How are

they to be explained? Does human life itself have some further point which it is important to acknowledge in one's practical thinking? Some think so, and appeal to an immanent eschatology as an aid to ordering, directing, and grounding practical thought; such accounts typically posit a happy state of affairs in which some distant generation will come to participate. Yet it is unclear how this is of interest or concern to those of us now existing, and why it should serve to motivate our action. Others suggest that the demand to provide a fuller account of life's meaning quite possibly cannot be met; as a result, "[l]ife may be not only meaningless but absurd," as we continue to seek meaning in a world without any. This suggestion is explicitly affirmed in the Sceptical Credo of Canada's most articulate sceptic. Having come this far, however, the non-theist faces a new problem: it is not now the problem of evil, but of *good*. If life on the whole is absurd, what can 'good' possibly mean, why should one strive after it, and what sense can such striving have?

**"In merely attempting to reconcile the existence of God and the evils of this world, however, the theistic philosopher recognizes the limits of philosophy..."**

For their part, theistic philosophers attempt to show that the existence of evil *is* compatible with the existence of an all-good and all-powerful God. Fundamental to their strategies is the distinction between natural and moral evil--evil suffered and evil done--and the idea that evil is a privation or lack of what a thing should have or be. On this account, evil is an absence of good that ought to be found in some thing or act. In voluntary acts, evil arises when the relevant norm or precept is knowingly set aside, ignored, or rejected through deliberate choice; the resulting act will then be lacking in some respect, as it will be less than fully reasonable. As for natural evils, they are suffered as a

result of some other thing exercising its distinct goodness, since the world is so

constituted that beings pursuing the good that is proper to them cause other things to suffer pain, loss, or defect of some kind. Theists point out that in both cases it is the good thing itself whose existence God wills directly, and that the associated evil is not directly willed or caused by God, only accepted or permitted. In this way, God is exonerated of the charge of *doing* evil in creating the good things whose subsequent acts and processes give rise to moral and natural evil, even if the presence of this evil remains somewhat mysterious.

Neither the non-theist nor the theist has, it seems, solved the problem of evil. But whereas the non-theist's failure seems to land us in absurdity, the failure of the theist allows for a rather different solution. Theistic philosophers--particularly those who are Christian and Catholic--can be satisfied simply to demonstrate that the world's evils do not tell against God's existence, and should ask no more from philosophy. For if philosophy offered a definitive solution to the problem of evil, religious faith would be rendered redundant and otiose. In merely attempting to reconcile the existence of

**"For their part, theistic philosophers attempt to show that the existence of evil is compatible with the existence of an all-good and all-powerful God."**

God and the evils of this world, however, the theistic philosopher recognizes the limits of philosophy even while making an important philosophical advance;

this advance makes possible an appeal to an extra-philosophical source (divine revelation) which points the way towards the total response to the problem of evil. It is a response, moreover, which intelligibly links--as the non-theistic position does not--the goods to be pursued here and now with the ultimate meaning and destiny of human existence; indeed, precisely in the context of contemplating this destiny, the late Pope John Paul II makes explicit its connection with human living: "[I]n meeting You, after having sought You for so long, we shall find once more every authentic good which we have known here on earth, in the company of all who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith and hope." Insofar as philosophy can underpin this vision or one countenancing absurdity, its importance for the study of the problem of evil cannot be emphasized enough--even if it cannot of itself solve the problem.

# SOCRATIC PESTILENCE: THE CAMPUS GADFLIES ASK ABOUT LYING

In hope of gaining further insight into the student psyche, law, and morality, *The Gadflies* set out asking students the seemingly simple question, 'When it is okay to lie?'. A lie can be characterized as an intentional untruth or falsehood meant to deceive. A potentially lesser known evil, the white lie, is regarded as a minor, polite or harmless lie for which there will be fewer consequences if someone is caught in one. Are either acceptable sometimes or are they merely tolerated? So, when is it, if ever, okay to lie? Here's how students responded:

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

There is no universal answer to the question. Morality is subjective. For an individual, it depends upon personal beliefs influenced by social factors and personal experience but for me as an individual, I reject Kantian morality. I reject morality as a universal law. For me, in a given situation I will weigh the pros and cons of the lie and if the pros outweigh the cons, the lie is acceptable to me.

Ryan Meneses - 2<sup>nd</sup> year Arts & Science

Ideally I'd like to say never, but there are certain instances where the small lie comes in. Where you think you should withhold information from someone to protect them, or what you think would protect them. But even that in the end eventually backfires on you. So really, it's probably never a good idea to lie. A better question would be when you should withhold information if you think it would protect someone from getting hurt.

Shaun Dyck - 5<sup>th</sup> year Education

I think it's... Only really okay to lie just a little white lie that's going to protect somebody else or something that they might want to hear, or something that will protect their self-esteem maybe. Just little things that you might not need to know that would make somebody else feel better.

Taylor Telter - 2<sup>nd</sup> year Anthropology

It's never okay to lie. Period.

Anonymous - 4<sup>th</sup> year Edward School of Business



**It's okay to lie when the benefit in lying is greater than the negative for it; the impact that it could cause. (I know that just in terms of relationships, it's better to maybe lessen the impact that it could have when there is almost no benefit to them knowing the truth.)**

**Gordon Derry - 4<sup>th</sup> year Business Economics**

I think it would be okay to lie probably when saying a white lie would kind of not hurt the person as much as telling them the truth. Kind of, I don't know you could say soften the blow. Then instead of hurting their feelings say a white lie. More or less.

Kerry - 4<sup>th</sup> year Biology

I think it would be alright to lie when the pain that would be caused from telling the truth would be greater than the benefits of telling the truth [Like when your girlfriend asks if she looks fat]. If a girl asks you, "Do I look fat in this?" you must weigh your options very carefully.

Stephane Gerard - 3<sup>rd</sup> year Geology

I think it's okay to lie when it's a small lie and in the end it won't really hurt the person too much. That is to say it is more on the positive side than on the negative.

Kevin Kermack - 4<sup>th</sup> year History

## **It is never okay to lie.**

### **Anonymous – 3<sup>rd</sup> year Sociology**

One could make the case that it's never right to lie... One usually appeals to consequences, but how can one know that the consequences actually will be better? One must be more definitive. The idea is that you can't make that claim. You can never know [the consequences]. And what you can know here and now is that telling the truth is the right thing to do.

Jonathan Liptay – Philosophy Professor

It's never okay to lie, but at the same time you don't have to be too blunt with people if you are thinking there is something that needs correction – sometimes it's not a good idea to openly come out criticizing someone.

Tom Deutscher – History Professor

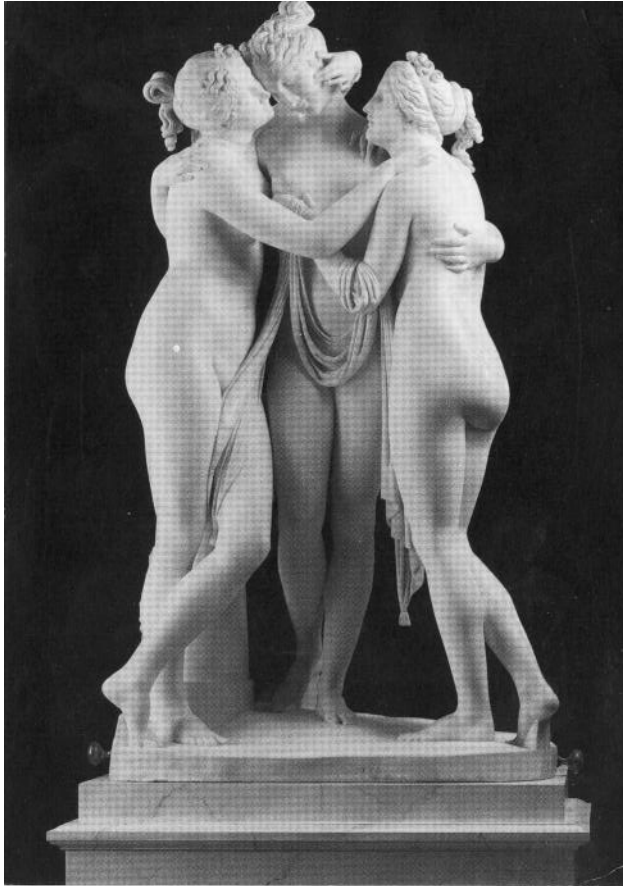
I don't think it's okay to lie ever really but it depends on the context of the lie and what you are lying about. If you are lying to not hurt somebody's feelings you can sometimes justify it, but all in all I still don't think it's right all in all. Say a friend of yours asked you if a new sweater looked good that they were super excited about and because they really like it you agree with them even though really you don't (like it). You could give your opinion like, I don't like it but it looks good on you. I don't know if that's really counts as a lie but it could be justified in circumstances like that.

Amanda Johnson – 1<sup>st</sup> year Psychology

I think it would be okay to lie, it just depends on context and your point of view. If you have zero morals and all you care about is what is in it for you then I would totally say it's okay. But, if you have a conscience and you're going to somehow feel bad for what you're going to lie about then no I wouldn't. I would say personal gain is the only reason to lie.

Peter Bazylewski – 2<sup>nd</sup> year Arts & Science

It's okay to lie if you don't want to hurt someone's feelings. Say your friend is wearing something and it's not very nice and you don't want to hurt their feelings when they ask you how you look in it it's okay to say, "Oh you look good," because it would be mean and harsh to say "You look ugly and should take it off."



Amanda Krikau – 2<sup>nd</sup> year Agriculture

I think it's okay to lie when it's going to hurt someone else's feelings to tell them the truth.

Jarrett Currie – 1<sup>st</sup> year Agriculture

It's okay to lie when the lie is beneficial and has little or no ramifications.

Anonymous – 3<sup>rd</sup> year Arts & Science

I think that sometimes it's permissible to lie especially when you're going to be preventing more harm than can be caused from lying than from not lying. I don't think that it's an absolute categorical imperative thing like Kant says. It's not like, "don't lie ever" but sometimes I think it's okay... In a personal relationship perhaps if you have a slip up and you cheat on the person that you're involved with and perhaps

it's a very serious relationship and it was just a one time thing and you feel really bad about it and you know that it's never going to happen again, then it would be permissible to lie by omission I would say...

Gabby Fuentealba – 4<sup>th</sup> year Political Science

I think if you're lying to protect someone then that's probably the only appropriate time to lie.

Anonymous – 2<sup>nd</sup> year Arts & Science

I don't know if you ever really need to lie. I think that it's better to set up your relationships with other people in such a way that you can bring up problems or questions that you have before they get to the point where you have to lie about them. So, yeah I can't really think of a time where I've lied outright about something since I was in my teens.

Meredith James – 3<sup>rd</sup> year Law



## See your gift grow: *Planting the seeds of justice and peace*

By Richard Medernach

*"Hunger is not so much dependent on lack of material things as on shortage of social resources, the most important of which are institutional. What is missing, in other words, is a network of economic institutions capable of guaranteeing regular access to sufficient food and water for nutritional needs, and also capable of addressing the primary needs and necessities ensuing from genuine food crises, whether due to natural causes or political irresponsibility, nationally and internationally."*

- *Caritas in veritate*, Pope Benedict

You are probably familiar with the old Chinese proverb, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." I suggest that for modern times it is more appropriate to say, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Change unjust legislation and international economic institutions and people will feed themselves for a lifetime." It doesn't exactly roll off the tongue but it demonstrates the need for, and the challenges of, building a culture of social justice in addition to charity.

The Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace has been a prophetic voice and agent for social justice for more than forty years. This is not to say that Development and Peace disapproves of charity, we raised over 13 million for emergency relief for Haiti after all, but rather that we know that political and economic justice is needed if human dignity is to flourish in the long term. It is important for us in Canada, with more wealth and political power, to work for a more level playing field so that the Global South isn't in constant need of charity. Development and Peace combines solidarity education activities with fundraising campaigns to help Canadians understand the underlying conditions that keep people poor and to encourage us to do something about it. This year, Development and Peace hopes to raise ten million dollars from our Share Lent campaign and to educate Canadian about the situations faced by small scale farmers in poor countries. Ten million is not a huge goal when you consider that Share Lent is a national campaign and that there could be tens of thousands of people contributing, but still it is no easy task to raise that money.

Canadians were moved by the crisis in Haiti and we responded quickly and generously. That is to be commended. There is little doubt that the massive media coverage encouraged our generous response. With so much money having been do-

nated to the Haiti emergency, I wonder about the less dramatic situations, the ones less attractive to the media but no less important in terms of human need. How will fundraising for those people be affected?

Take for example the Cindelar Institute for Rural Development. This organization, supported by Development and Peace, helps small scale farmers in Indonesia grow food in a sustainable way for the local population. It doesn't make for riveting news coverage, but in a country where some 37 million citizens live without food security, increasing the amount of sustainable local food production is very important.

You might also consider the impact that North American and European demand for biofuels is having on farmers in the Global South. A case in point is the plight of the Afro-Columbian farmers in the Chocó region of Columbia. Bad government policies and international market demand for palm oil for biofuels has forced many farmers off their land—sometimes at gunpoint—and taken away their food sovereignty. Development and Peace, through the Interchurch Justice and Peace Commission, is working with local groups in the region to defend human rights, to protect farmers who are attacked or threatened, and to create weapons free humanitarian zones. Providing funds for this group is important, but without political pressure from countries like Canada, the systems that create these problems continue to thrive.

The theme for the 2010 Share Lent campaign is "see your gift grow". It speaks to Development and Peace's focus on food sovereignty and also to the benefits of giving to an organization that not only does charitable work, but that works for justice as well. Your gift to Development and Peace, in combination with all the other donations to the Share

Lent campaign really can grow. It can grow food for the world's hungry, it can grow solidarity between us and our brothers and sisters in the Global South, and it can grow a more just global economy where God's creation is shared fairly.

For more information about Development and Peace and the Share Lent campaign, contact the STM Just Youth group at [justyouth@stmcollege.ca](mailto:justyouth@stmcollege.ca) or visit [www.stmcollege.ca/justyouth](http://www.stmcollege.ca/justyouth).

---

*Richard Medernach is a member and Share Year Round supporter of Development and Peace. He works as the Coordinator of Student Services at St. Thomas More College and is part of the STM Just Youth Group.*



# The Devil a Cello and the Ignorance of Man

## By Matthew Courchene



The devil, sitting on a chair, holding a cello, looking all sophisticated, hiding his face and no one knows he's there. The fiery red background and his grotesque arms are all that gives him away. But we are lulled by the music into a false sense of security and fail to see the warning signs.

Editorial Note: The background would, of course, be red if the image was in colour. Check out the issue online to see this image and others in colour!



# Adam & Eve

By Megan Burns



The myth of Adam, Eve and the creation of the Earth is as mystical as it is well-known. It incorporates a fantastical God, the miracle of creation coming down from the heavens and extraordinary good and evil. In my modern interpretation, I used acrylic paint on canvas to represent a business like, feminist Eve, and the average-Joe Adam. Adam and Eve are faceless, allowing them to represent all men and all women. Eve becomes the stereotypical business woman, tempted by the promises of capitalism, represented by the serpent wrapped around her briefcase. The Tree of Knowledge is a money tree, a temptation directed more at her than at Adam. Although Adam is her equal in dominating the world, Eve is clearly the woman in charge.

The texture of the painting and the impressionist style conveys movement. When looked at in the context of the subject matter, it too is ever-changing. Adam and Eve are not static people and their story is ever-changing, much like the world they are ruling over. The tones and colours of the piece also bring attention to the world of Adam and Eve, and less to the recessive heavens that they have ignored.



# Myths are things that never happened but always are

Sallust, describing myth in this wonderfully enigmatic way, provokes us to consider the power of myth: why would stories about imaginary people continue to fascinate us and even resonate with our own life experience? This is one of many irresolvable questions explored in English 272.3, Literary Uses of Mythology. From Odysseus to Luke Skywalker, the class studies mythological narratives, discovering how each historical period reshapes recognized myths to express its own aspirations or anxieties. After the class has studied a literary history of myths, the final assignment invites students to participate directly in this literary tradition by creating their own artistic renderings of a mythical narrative.

The following poem "Sir Georgeo" is an adaptation of the fourteenth-century romance, *Sir Orfeo*. Sir Orfeo itself is a medieval interpretation of the Orpheus myth recounted in books X and XI of Ovid's *Metamorphosis*. Ovid's Orpheus is a poet who descends into the underworld to reclaim his wife from the dead. The medieval Sir Orfeo is a knight and minstrel who travels to an enchanted kingdom to rescue his abducted wife from the wicked fairy king.

## Sir Georgeo

We often read and written find,  
Of an unlearned man that to us reminds,  
Times of war and wrought and woe,  
Of joy and gladness some did not know,  
Of all the things that men and women may confide,  
'tis love of their anthem they sing with pride.  
For his days were numbered but his time was spent,  
Two terms in office to Georgeo were lent,  
Listen now, please heed and regard,  
Sir Georgeo was a presidential retard.

Sir Georgeo was a king of old,  
In the United States of America lordship high did hold;  
Valour he had none and audacity some,  
To persuade the innocent with deceiving tongue.  
His father Sir Georgeo Senior came before,  
Ruling the country from shore to shore,  
Like Gods, the land they claimed,  
Democracy was the name they gave.  
Sir Georgeo, too, was fond of the land,  
Through Harken he profited from numerous oil sands,  
So there the she was, United States steady harmony,  
Sir Georgeo would soon turn this into catastrophe.

It so did chance in early September,  
When horror and dismay doth rue the day,  
Every person working prudently,  
Every street swimming with semblance,  
No Glory, nor gladness, soon grieving,  
Two planes crashing, New York City reeling,  
Soon to see the rubble there smoking and spread,  
And hear the thousands crying, shouting with dread.  
Suddenly the United States,  
With so much promise and potential at wake,  
Writhed and roared, her hands she wrung,  
Sir Georgeo declared, "A war on terror has begun!"

For when Georgeo heard these tidings sad,  
More pride and power ever in life he had;  
And swiftly thousands of men he sent,  
To Afghanistan and Iraq to fight for revenge,  
Sir Georgeo reminds us of Psalm twenty-three,  
But Osama Bin Laden, through fear does rule thee,  
He spoke 'Alas! I have more lives to lose than lost my own,  
I shall send every man, accuse every terrorist known.'

So for years his kingdom he forsook,  
She is still in constant healing after many more lives took.  
Sir Georgeo gazed about,  
Seeing the world he created of rout,  
With soldiers mourned as dead, but were not so,  
And those who were dead but did not know.  
For many he saw who bled with no arms, no feet,  
There were no terrorists; it was themselves they had beat.  
There too he saw his own sweet United States,  
Torn apart after two terms of mistakes.

Now is King Obama crowned anew,  
And the people of the United States grew,  
After two controversial elections,  
Conspiracy, ignorance of Katrina, and recession,  
Thus is the story of Sir Georgeo, who could not run the united land,  
God grant the welfare of Obama, who says 'Yes, I can!'

## An Interview with Thomas Yu

Stephen Bagwell & Daniel Regnier



Canadian-born pianist Thomas Yu was back in his hometown of Saskatoon on February 13 to perform the Piano Concerto No. 3 in D minor by Sergei Rachmaninoff, the same piece he played when he won the 2009 Bösendorfer International Piano Competition for Amateurs in Paris. He did not disappoint. With the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra accompanying, he delivered a most awesome and stellar performance. Afterwards, we we're fortunate to have Thomas, who also manages a full-time Periodontics business in Calgary, be able to sit down with us and share some of his thoughts on life and music. Here's what he had to say:

***Why did you choose Rachmaninoff's III Piano Concerto (the Rach III)?***

Well, when I spoke to Earl Stafford last year I gave him a list of pieces I wanted to play and actually I wanted to play a piece by a friend of mine who's a composer in Cambridge and who wrote an homage to the Rach III in honour of it. It's just as hard and just as long and I wanted to do it. It would have been a North American premiere, and it seems kind of exciting but I think with funding and everything, it just wouldn't have worked. Also on my list was the Rach III and it was kind of a dream of mine to play it from a really young age and to get the chance to play it already in Paris was kind of like one of those notches in my life that I was able to achieve and so how fortunate he asked me, "You know, we can't do the one your friend composed but how about we do the Rach III."

***How long did it take you to learn the Rach III?***

Somebody asked me that before. If I was to take a guess, I would say maybe eight or nine years to get to this point, but I had an on and off relationship with that piece. I would try it out and then get distracted by all the notes and all the other things I needed to do and would shelve it and eventually I came back to it and made a commitment to it. I remember for a national music festival, for each round that you do, you just have to learn a first movement and then if you get through to the provincials you have to learn the second movement, and then if you got to the nationals you have to learn all three and I didn't expect to get through to the

nationals on that one but I did, and I know for sure that I learned that third movement in two weeks! My music teacher, Bonnie Nicholson, was out of town and so I would go to her house and practise 'til 2 or 3 into the morning and got my notes down in two weeks but it was still like another good solid year to get the whole thing together. After that it was about learning how to make the piece my own and finding the things outside of the notes that make it come together.

***Are there any particular challenges in Rachmaninoff's work that maybe don't exist in other works?***

The thing about Rachmaninoff is that if you learn the notes you're about 80% there. So it is mainly really technical, a lot about learning the technique, and not just technique like playing the right notes but about being able to transfer your weight properly to create enough proper sound; balance, a lot of times you have multiple chords that you have to learn how play in the proper succession with the proper phrasing, proper voicing; that's where he challenges you. Other composers might take you to different philosophical challenges, but for Rachmaninoff it's all on the page for you. Once you get to that point, you're really close, so that makes up the largest part of the learning curve.

***Is there a particular piano that Rachmaninoff pieces are better played on?***

Yeah, it has to be a Steinway. Truly though, for Rachmaninoff I think you need a piano which has a huge bottom end, and Stein-

ways are known for that. Steinways aren't my favourite pianos but especially since I'm not built like a Russian—I'm fairly slight in figure—to be able to create those sounds which he expects you to create you need something with a big booming end.

***What sort of piano do you like?***

It's not really a brand that I like, there are certain pianos which I have played that come to mind. One is a Fazioli, which is an Italian, sort of cream of the crop. Just about anything I play on it sounds great. And another is the Bösendorfer, I played some in Vienna which were also incredible. The Fazioli is the nicest. It's just the price which is the problem. I practise on a Yamaha. For most people Yamaha's would probably be quite good.

***How do you prepare yourself for a concert like the one you gave last night?***

I think it's changed as I've gotten older. I used to be full of way too much energy, a lot of nervous energy, so I would do a series of stretches to get the blood flowing and listen to a lot of loud, loud music, nothing pertaining to what I was about to play. Everything I did was to distract myself from what I was about to do and to keep my focus. I think I picked it up from watching athletes at the Olympics who would just be listening to their music, zoning in, and getting into the mindset. Now, as I have a little less energy on reserve, it's a lot of meditation, making sure the energy level is right before I go on stage. I always say a few words to myself just before playing, just to get a few things off my chest, like "it's going to be a long haul – control yourself".

***Has playing along with a symphony changed the way you experience the piano?***

Oh yeah, pianists are sort of lone wolves out there. We spend all these hours alone in the practise studio to some degree but when you're out there you're part of the other people and the conductor comes out to keep you all together. Ensemble forces you to open up your ears and really listen for what's going on, even sounds in the back, like that one little decibel that lets you know that you're together and when you see the conductor's hands indicating, you almost have to have a split second wait to make sure the sound is traveling from the back to the front, and so timing becomes something of an issue. I have two ears, both going towards the orchestra. As a pianist, you have to give the orchestra the proper cue as well when you're playing so that they know that you're trying to do something. You create something of a wave pattern which you build up and as long as you remain in the wave pattern everyone will understand what you're trying to do. You can't just switch to another tempo. Same thing when playing in a band, but the difference is in an orchestra we're not so tight.

***Do you ever find yourself struggling to balance your piano playing and your professional life?***

Probably just now—like in the last six months—I've started to feel the pressures. In Toronto I would work and then practise all night. But now, in Calgary, just the fact that I'm moving on with new challenges and managing my own business I have to be on a lot of the time, with professional and intellectual energy, and that has to be left behind when you play. And so I find myself at the end of the day finding it a lot more difficult to make that transition from the polite and professional dentist to the rude and abrasive and animalistic musician.

***Have you found any of your musical skills transfer to other areas of your life?***

Yeah I think so, it's made me who I am. I remember a friend of mine who had never heard me play, who knew who I was, and after I finished playing for her one time, she said, "Now I understand why you're so calm all of the time and don't really have a temper, and now that I've seen you play piano I know who you are."

***Do you play any other instruments?***

I played third trombone in the U of S jazz band for a couple of years—Ha ha, third trombone—it's like the least important instrument in the entire jazz band. Nobody would know if I were playing or not.

***Are there any other works that you're planning on learning?***

Yeah, I have another concert I'm giving in two and a half weeks and I have some music I have to learn for that, but new music would be the Gershwin Concerto which is coming up in Regina on April 10. Last I checked I learned it over Christmas but I haven't touched it since then so it's time to get back on it. And so I'll probably have to fly to Toronto and see my teacher before then.

***Do you learn any contemporary music?***

One of my most favourite pieces that I have ever played is by Henri Dutilleux, a fellow who is still alive. He's 93-94, and he wrote a Sonata that is really, really cool and it's just amazing because I got a chance to meet him in Paris. He heard me play his composition and he wrote so many nice things in my book which is just great. You don't get the chance to sort of meet these people that you're learning, and it's just that much more of a thrill and more real.

***Do you think that there still exists an interest among young people in classical music?***

I don't think it will die, that as much as people are worried about it and the government keeps cutting funding to it, even though kids will get money when they start hockey but not piano lessons. I think that if people like myself can be a role model to even one kid out there that will keep the tradition going, and I also think that music today has been destroyed in terms of the industry and so the quality of the music is going down, distribution is going all over the place, and I think that eventually people will want more, that they won't want lyrics about garbage anymore, that they will want something better, and they may not want Rachmaninoff or something, but something of greater quality. I mean, nobody will remember who Lady Gaga is in a year, but it's been a hundred years and Rachmaninoff is still popular. I've always been about popularizing the music and making it more accessible, so that instead of country music, it might be classical music we hear over the loudspeakers, and in becoming more commonplace it will become better known.

***Are there any figures in the history of music which you look up to?***

Well composer wise, it would be Chopin. There is something really deep and dark about Chopin, the more you get the more you play. On the surface you think it's beautiful, but below there lie some lonely characters. Performer wise, Martha Argerich is probably one of my heroes, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Canadian Marc-André Hamelin and my teacher Bonnie. They really play the way I would like to be able to play.



## STUDENT PANEL ON EFFECTIVE TEACHING METHODS

### *In Medias Res* Editorial Board

In hopes of opening up the lines of communication between students and professors, Sarah Powrie, Assistant Professor in English at St. Thomas More (STM) College, designed a student panel entitled *A Student Panel of Effective Teaching*. The panel presented February 4 in the STM building.

"We each talk about what we want in the classroom but students and teachers seem to do this in isolation. This reinforces a lot of negative stereotypes of both groups and really we should be openly talking about our expectations with one another."

Twelve surprisingly comfortable students sat at the head of the classroom facing nearly thirty professors in desks eager to hear what the role reversal would reveal. The students took their turn either discussing specific practices in the classroom that were valuable to them or spoke about a unique teaching method that they found successful. Questions and discussion followed.

Stemming from her frustration with inadequate feedback from standard evaluation forms, Powrie wanted to bridge the gap between student and professor expectations: "The feedback (from evaluations) contradicts itself or is too imprecise. I understand why these things need to be anonymous so people feel free to speak, but the speaker matters in those (cases). It's unfortunate that I can't follow up with them because the feedback can be too vague. The devil is in the details. It doesn't give me a lot of opportunity to improve."

Due to the increasing role of technology over the past few decades, it's easy to see that the way we communicate with one another has radically changed. PowerPoint and YouTube are now expected in most classrooms and as Powrie mentions, "The whole lecture style of pedagogy feels really dated; the lecture may be a dead form." It should be noted that these examples pertain chiefly to humanities and social sciences.

Technology, such as e-mail, has also increased the availability professors as students are not restricted to office hours and classroom times. "With e-mail there is a kind of informality and availability that's implied. Teachers kind of resent that 7-11 culture of university – we need time away too," notes Powrie.

Although Powrie did not enter the panel with any expectations other than initiating dialogue, she was happy the students and teachers at last had the opportunity to articulate their expectations to each other directly and she comments that it was affirming to see so many professors attend.

"I'd like to see these continue in the future because it provides useful feedback and some profs have even mentioned after that they learned a lot more from this event than from their evaluations," says Powrie.

There needs to be representation from as many different disciplines as possible in order for the panel to be successful. The issue of representation by discipline does raise an important and related question: did this panel of students really represent the voice of most students on campus?

"This is probably the single greatest flaw in the student panel - those are probably the students who need the most attention or help but, unfortunately, they don't care as much or aren't as willing to participate. How do you get them out? It (The Panel) was valuable for sure, but the people needing the most

help were clearly underrepresented," claims Powrie.

Dr. Edna Froese, English professor at STM sent an e-mail identifying this problem but thanking the panel nonetheless for their efforts. "I don't know if you are aware of just what an unusual group of students you were. All of you are senior students taking 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year classes. You were articulate and eager to talk about your education. I am fairly certain that you are all the kind of student who will learn even when taught by the worst of professors. You have taken charge of your education, ready to ask whatever questions are necessary and prepared to take initiative. You may not know that you thus bring out the best teaching that your professors can offer. The various suggestions you offered and points you made in that panel discussion were good, I thought. They were a helpful glance into the minds of students. It would have been very interesting, though, to have had the viewpoints of the other 85% of the student body that was not represented there. We have to teach those as well: the quiet ones, the lazy ones, the completely undisciplined ones still more interested in gossip about their friends than the state of the world and their place in it, the suffering ones with more family issues in their lives than anyone should have to deal with, and the immature ones not nearly ready for university, yet pushed there by their parents and teachers. It's a good thing that most classes contain at least 3 or 4 students like you—interested, ready to work, eager for challenges, and able to speak out. You contribute more than you think, not only to your own education, but also to that of others."

Here are some memorable quotes from the panel:

**Nicki Sartoris, a 4<sup>th</sup> year Psychology major says that one of the keys to a successful classroom is "excitement or passion. Any class can be made enjoyable simply by the teacher exhibiting a sense of passion or excitement about the class material. This does not necessarily mean keeping students entertained . . . but presenting the information in such a way that the students believe the instructor really truly wants to be there. Even if the teacher doesn't like it they could always fake it."**

Shannon Friesen, a 3<sup>rd</sup> year Political Science major says, "It's all good for me to sit down and learn the history and the theories verbatim but what made the difference is when (the instructor) applies the theories to real life. Bringing in cartoons, current events, and documentaries applies it to a real world setting."

**Ben King, a Sociology honours student brings up the following: "I found it was very useful to have it (discussion) broken down into smaller peer groups because it facilitates discussion more than having the entire class open to discussion because you're face to face with your peers, 3 or 4 students and it's a little more comfortable."**

Chelsea Cox, a 4<sup>th</sup> year English major, suggests the following: "There are four main things that make a class, a prof or a les-

son stick really well in my head and those are creativity, openness, understanding and clarity."

Veronica Carr, a 2<sup>nd</sup> year philosophy recommended the following: "Tell me something my textbook won't. Be realistic with your expectations but challenge me at the same time. Have discussions but keep them under control - there is nothing worse than one student taking over and trying to teach everyone else. Make yourself approachable in and out of class and it never hurts to make yourself at least slightly personable - we definitely notice when you remember our names and when you take an interest in our lives or our programs."

Andrew Johnson, an honours English student, had a unique experience in an English class on satire. The professor gave students a choice between writing either a conventional term paper or their own satire based on a satirical model studied in class. Other than a length requirement the assignment was open and the professor helped workshop ideas if students wished. The satire was due two weeks before the end of class and everyone

was given a copy of each other's work. An optional extra class was offered at the end of classes to discuss each other's work - not marking the papers or fiction, but peer reviewing. "This is the only time in my undergrad that I've read anything else that another student has written and that was really interesting to get a sense of different student writing styles and where I fit in."

Stephen Bagwell, a 3<sup>rd</sup> year Philosophy major said, "Generally speaking, the biggest thing you need to do as a professor is to draw your students in and make them feel like they can come and speak with you."

If you wish to be involved in the next student panel or have any constructive feedback on the panel, please feel free to contact Sarah Powrie. As King stated, "Education is an exciting thing and when you can participate and really feel like you are contributing to your own learning and getting something out of it that way, it's a far more enriching experience."

---

## THE OLD LADIES

I know these two girls  
And they are so into pearls  
They love to dance and sing  
Both wish to receive that diamond ring  
These two ladies though old it's true  
They can do anything a younger gal can do  
I wouldn't put it past them to put someone in their place  
Sarcasm seems to drip from the lips on their face  
In manors identical like they came from the same mold  
Both pretty cool even though they are so very old  
How to describe these ladies to you...  
They could be compared to many animals at the zoo  
A monkey 'cause they are crazy fun  
A lion 'cause they are number one  
An owl for the wisdom in their age they have got  
A giraffe 'cause they can see over the walls that most animals cannot  
It is pointless to try and hide  
Your feelings and problems you have inside  
You cannot pretend you are ok, you cannot tell a lie  
These ladies are on the watch they have an eagle eye  
They are the brains. Like elephants they never forget  
Here's a promise to I will make, your time with them you won't regret  
They have many great characteristics all rolled into one  
And they are the best animals under the sun!

-Whitney van der Lee

## Only Happy Between Here and There

A Short Story by Eric Rausch

When at last he hopped up on the rail of the cantilever bridge, Derek had already proven that he was patient, ruthless, and a perfectionist. These traits alone did not constitute musicianship, but he had always believed that they would help him stay alive in the industry. He had nurtured enough connections in the local recording studios that he knew he could have gotten a fair shake, once the demo was together. The drum tracks could be synthesized, if need be, and in the absence of a vocalist, he would have sung the damn lyrics himself. There was dignity in a solo act, and until recently, he had been comfortable with the prospect of solitary artistry. The problem was not in those things, because synthesizers were invented with just this application in mind, and he had never claimed to be a singer. The problem was in his guitar – his Geriatric Axe – and with seventeen combined years of formal and informal training invested, it was the area of his life that would be his measure as a man. Incompetence here had no redemption.

He could handle the guitar; he knew that. Whatever the last college semester had leeches from him, it was not his skill – not even his confidence, really. But the fact remained that he had not played the instrument for four agonizing weeks; he could not touch the case without remembering the night of his greatest triumph – his

total inability to ever reach that height again – and he could not touch the naked thing at all. He stood up tall on the rail, melting the winter wind as it sought to fill his space. He looked at his shoes, his jeans; his whole sorry nine yards.

*What a deluded joke of a fetus*, he thought. Subsequent inner dialogue grew more vague.

*So now you Cobain your way to freedom?*

*Yeah, yeah . . .*

A pigeon had been wandering the periphery for a while, navigating the trusses of the bridge for sport or obsession, but only now became noticeable. A prominent neck powered its twisting step. Such a stupid creature; what could it possibly hope for? To defecate somewhat more skillfully than its filthy ancestral line? But, barring competition and predators, the animal was probably untroubled.

*Stubborn idiot.*

The bird messily fluttered onto the rail, and, once stabilized, began to get clear of the imminent ground zero. It was ratcheting towards some arbitrary spot, preparing for flight.

The night was late, and cold enough that, were he concerned with his health, Derek would have immediately sought some means to salvage his frostbitten

hands. Too late for that. He was finished in this world: he had already scrawled his PIN number on a sticky note and given it to a stranger, affixed to his debit card.

If he was going to do this with any amount of solitary dignity, he would need to get on with it. Even at four a.m. the bridge conveyed traffic; he could not count on the apathy of the drivers to last forever, and the last thing he wanted was for some middle class white lady to stop, attempt to “talk him down,” and write a book about it afterward. He had been patient in planning his death – he had chosen his fate a month ago, and even today had waited until the dead of night, scoped out his



Photo © Gibby Davis



resting place on the half-frozen river with care.

*Back to oblivion with this one, I guess.* He dragged the guitar case up with him. He was going to heave the case as high as he could before jumping, and he would attempt to catch it in mid-air. It would keep him busy on the way down. His penultimate word was a name, in a small, ordinary voice: "Adebayo . . ."

*What you told me . . . the words that brought me to this bridge . . . you must have understood them for a long time. Maybe you were still a child, squinting in that Nigerian sun – long before you ever came to this Canadian university, or even learned our mutual instrument. Maybe it was back before you even knew what American music was, and your whole understanding of the art came from the rhythm of those tribal drums, and the chanting voices that stand on top of their rising current to reach heaven.*

*I'm sorry about the epiphany you must have had, once you learned that we slavers and colonizers have made a ruthless entertainment industry out of it, and that your soul is the down payment to get in. It must have been hard to take. But that was your test, and you passed, buddy. You kept on playing. I'm having my test right now, and I'm sorry to say I'm not doing as well.*

*How strong you must have been, to understand . . . and still play . . .*

He screamed out something profane to keep the rush of fear under control, and pushed the guitar up and out over the river. He followed, and the rail sang under the slip of his shoes.

He snatched the case deftly by the handle. He was shocked; it had not been as difficult as he thought.

\* \* \*

"Adebayo," he said.

"Wow. My name's Ashley." She said it with playful spite towards unimaginative parents. "Don't speak; it gets better. I'm also from *Ottawa*. Would anybody more ordinary please stand up – *please stand up?*"

He laughed, a lively slash of white splitting his face and quickly healing. "Ah, you know that's quite unfair. You would not be so ordinary where I come from."

"And where is that?"

"Nigeria. A city called Lagos."

"Sweet. But yeah. Going by names and places, until you get to know me, I'm pretty much plain vanilla."

"Then I suppose I am cocoa."

"Nice." They sat – not alone – in one of the derelict classrooms in the lower anatomy of the music department. It was a famously dark and secret place on

campus, where the practice rooms were only marginally soundproof and many great sounds mingled below ground. This room had gathered the remnants of several ended classes, and hovered in an idle atmosphere. "So are you just down here to listen, or do you take music classes?"

"Oh, just to listen. I think I would enjoy my music less if I took it as seriously as a music major."

"But you do play, then? Can you play any traditional African instruments?"

"Not as many as it might look," he smiled, gentle even in mocking, "but I did pick up a few things before we emigrated. As much as one *can* pick up at five years of age. My father loved a style of music called jùjú, and so I learned to play the talking drums."

"Talking drums?"

"Kind of learned to play them. My main instrument is the electric guitar, which I learned from an uncle in Toronto. I occasionally use talking drums as accompaniment, but I have not actually touched them in years."

"No, but like, what *are* they?"

"They are not just of one size, but they are all long drums, see, and usually held under the arm, like this. You have a special stick to hit the top, and if you are good, you can play with the pitch to make it sound like spoken language."

"Seriously?"

"That is what they say, but between you and me, it always sounded like a *drum* to me." Their faces began to crack simultaneously, serving as mutual permission to laugh. "No; musically, I am more Canadian than Nigerian. But Nigerian music is not as mysterious as you might think; jazz and hip-hop had a great following in Lagos."

"Huh. So we can't do the instant-messenger thing with drums. Any chance of bumming a guitar lesson instead?"

He nodded, and the white slash of his teeth reappeared. "Cocoa can provide."

"I get frustrated easy, though, so maybe don't trust me with your prized guitar right away."

"Oh," he said, looking away. He could adopt a philosophical manner at times, but he preferred not to, and would keep any such ceremony brief. "Don't allow things like anger to interfere with your music. Music exists to resist them. It enriches the soul without asking for anything in return, so do not look for things to sacrifice for it. I have seen music majors do that; become stubborn and angry. They call it passion, but I think music is better at creating peace than ambition."

"Yeah, I think you're right." She smiled. She took

(Continued on page 16)

him seriously; perhaps he should do this more often.

A young man with vacant blue eyes had been standing across the room, and the shrill, almost deliberate scuff of his shoe at his approach was what drew the attention of the conversing pair. His interest was only in Adebayo, and he made no secret of it. The guitar case he held was a relic. He planted its base on the floor, and his hands on its head.

"Scuse me. I saw you play at a benefit a while back. Best solo I've heard in a while. I wanted to say that you're impressive," he smiled gamely, "and I'm glad you're here. It looks like you're the man to

beat. Basic natural selection, you know; we'll compete and co-evolve until we can't anymore. Could be fun. And we'll both be better players by the end, is the bottom line."

Adebayo was clearly not taken in by the introduction's friendly veneer, and only at length did he extend a hand, as if making the first gesture of greeting. "My name is Cocoa. This is my friend, Vanilla." His seriousness was difficult to gauge. The young man accepted the hand and laughed a single note.

"My real name's Derek, and I read yours on the program," he said. "But stage names are fun. See you next time you've got an axe behind it."

"You seem to have the wrong idea. I am not studying music."

"Some of the best ones never do. They just know it instinctively. I've seen that in a lot in Africans, you know; they seem to just have God's gift."

After he walked out of the room, Ashley shrugged. "Stubborn like *that*, maybe?"

Adebayo made no effort in the ensuing months to help manifest the rivalry that Derek had proposed, and Derek did not consult him further. Adebayo was simply not interested, but Derek appeared to be gaining something from the imagined relationship that did not require his rival's input. Any guitar performances that Adebayo gave – talent nights, stops along pub crawls – were religiously attended by Derek, who would leave the venue promptly after Adebayo was done. Eventually Adebayo trained himself not to acknowledge those cold



Photo © Gibby Davis

blue eyes when he found them in the audience. It did not appear to matter; Adebayo never reciprocated, but Derek continually returned.

Derek found incalculable value in every performance the African gave. There was some elusive, genuine brilliance about him, once the lights in the venue were down and the first few notes and riffs were out. In the fifteen or thirty seconds that followed, when he had forgotten self-consciousness and his fusion with the music was total, Adebayo was master of every set of emotions in the room, and he gave out the satisfying chords and invigorating solos with predictable generosity. *This is the new order of slavery*, thought Derek in these beautiful moments, refusing to cry but acknowledging the possibility. *When your slaves are hungry, you feed us well. That's more than you owe every pale face in the room, but you give it.* He would leave the place inspired, synthesizing enough creative energy to see him through the long night ahead, when he would self-isolate and spend seven or more hours jotting down music.

The Haitian quake enabled the greatest opportunity of Derek's life. Response to the disaster on campus was zealous and immediate as students – with and without funds to spare – waited for the hand that would take their money and press it against the misery televised in the streets of Port-au-Prince and Jacmel. Bob Marley was resurrected into service once again, and his voice levitated beside many a donations booth.

Both Adebayo and Derek signed on as musical talent for the major benefit concert. A fifteen-minute

showcase of eight improvised guitar solos was planned. Against a pre-arranged background track, each of the eight players would produce a solo, resulting in a large suite created with minimal preparation.

Adebayo supposed that this was the opportunity Derek had been waiting for; next to six other people though it was, they would be playing together. *Let him bask, if he wants to.* Refusing to give the matter another thought, he readied his guitar, squinted into the blue stage lights. When his turn arrived, he began precisely as he had envisioned; following the tempo of the background track, he would go with a slower, lighter-waving solo in contrast to the chromatic flurry that had preceded him. The notes came smooth and languid, and his left hand vibrated along the frets to undulate the sound.

It was dark out there in the crowd. He thought of a picture of a Haitian boy he had seen online, half his head sunken in, the gauze wrapped around the wound the cleanest part of him. Adebayo's playing became automatic as his mind slipped loose of his eyes.

How many curses had he uttered when the rent at his apartment had increased by one hundred dollars? And would that small child in Haiti say a single harsh word as he died tonight of a wound too complex to treat – as he was carried from the shanty and deposited in a dump truck for transport to a mass grave in the morning? It did not matter. Adebayo had monopolized all the four-letter words to chronicle his own suffering – using the most emphatic possible language as if to say that this, *now*, was his darkest hour; that his situation required the greatest recognition words could buy. Now there was nothing the Haitian boy could say to adequately express his misery; English had been pushed to its limits for Adebayo to respond to the cost of his one-bedroom apartment.

The privileged lust after all profane and dramatic words – it is why the front-page of any prominent newspaper must make a lurid statement big enough to affirm or deny life itself, and do so every week – but their meanings have long been wrung out by the attempts of so many speakers to say just one significant thing in their eighty years. What dignified way was left for the Haitian boy to die, then, but quietly?

And suddenly there was another guitar playing. An octave up and perhaps twice as fast, a countermelody had appeared, twisting vibrantly in the spaces between his long notes. This was unplanned and unsanctioned, but the crowd was going for it in a big way. Adebayo looked across the line at his seven fellow soloists, but only one was standing apart, a step ahead of the others, beside Adebayo. This was Derek, and his eyes were wild.

He took no control; he allowed Adebayo to lead, and kept his volume in check; this was a genuine duet.

They landed heavy on the final chord, timed with the background track's dwindling drum synth. Adebayo remained standing, waving dazedly, but Derek fell to his knees, peeling his fingers off the guitar as the sound diminished to silence, and was ripped up by voracious applause.

When it was finished, Derek approached Adebayo for the second time. The latter was at work tallying some portion of the night's proceeds, and Derek waited for a lull in the endeavor.

"I hope it didn't appear that I was trying to steal your thunder," he said, smiling, tired but crazed. "We actually ended up producing quite a storm together, huh?"

Adebayo smiled in turn, but it was far more polite than it was genuine. He rapped idly on the table at which he sat, and snapped the lid shut on one of the tackle boxes that had been employed to store change. "I suppose we did."

"You are a rare talent, Adebayo. I have a lot of respect for you as both player and person. I would even use the word . . ." his eyes wandered in the air, and he took a seat across the table. "Admiration. Would you be willing to collaborate on something of a more . . . official basis? I'm working on a demo tape, and I have several ideas about how this multi-layered sound of ours could be developed. I frankly can't wait to see what *you* can come up with, on top of it."

Adebayo stood up, and a stony breath seeped out of him like a sigh and a quiet growl combined. Derek looked up curiously at his counterpart. *Tall guy*, he noted.

"I am flattered," Adebayo began slowly, with a depth of voice that Derek had never suspected him capable of, "that you respect my abilities. And I am happy that we both can do some good with our hobby." Derek nodded, raising an eyebrow and grinning. "But I am finished with the guitar for a while. I have no interest in becoming professional, and I do not have the skill for it. I hope you continue to play, but there are people – many of them – far better than either of us, who want their albums recorded as badly as you. Myself, I do not want to make the sacrifices to become so disciplined."

He took the box of change with him as he left, as if to deny a drug-using beggar a final opportunity to feed his habit.

*You complete idiot*, thought Derek, staring into Adebayo's back. *You're a coward to waste yourself this way.* This conviction would not last.



# IMR GOES TO THE MENDEL

The *In Medias Res* Editorial Board recently visited the Mendel Art Gallery to check out the latest exhibits. Currently on display are pieces by Marie Lannoo in the exhibit "Through and Through and Through", by Ed Pien in the exhibit "Haven of Delight", and by Diyan Achjadi and Brendan Tang in the exhibit "Sugar Bombs". There are also a number of photograph and painting exhibits to take in. The exhibits run until April 5 so be sure to hurry to take them in. However, before you go, continue reading to find out our thoughts on these exhibits.

Daniel - So what was your favourite exhibit?

Taylor - I enjoyed Ed Pien's *Haven of Delight*, because it was interactive and involved a unique technique that you don't see in the same intensity as other pieces of art. My favourite piece, however, was called "Tree from Stations Along the Way" (although I don't think this was in any particular main exhibit). The artist took individual photographs of a neighborhood from one standpoint and pasted them together to create a large, panoramic view of the area. When the photographs were put together, the straight street actually turned out curved. It's hard to describe, but it was really neat.

Whitney - It is a tough decision, but I will settle on Ed Pien's *Haven of Delight* as my favourite. There was so much to it; the intricacy of the paper, the rumbling sounds, the colours, and the shadows combined for a really exceptional experience. Also, it made me feel like I was in the Fire Temple from Legend of Zelda, Ocarina of Time.

Stephen - I would have to say that my favourite exhibit was the one that included some good ol' black and white photographs of Saskatoon... I think it was about the only thing I could even partially grasp! Of course, I might just be saying all this to go against the grain.

Daniel - Hey, do you think the artist went about making paper cut-out art and also the light display?

Stephen - I think that the artist must have had an incredible amount of patience to produce these works by hand. I mean, they're vast! It's nigh impossible to believe that such a thing could even be created by hand. Honestly, had it been me, I probably would have shot myself long before finishing because of the sheer tediousness of the task. Kudos to the artist for that alone.

Torrie - You're right. It was such a large scale piece! How did he create all those re-occurring, intricate patterns, or the tiny peep holes filled with endless colour? I'm stumped, the only paper-cut outs I have ever done have been with scissors.

Taylor - I agree that the amount of patience and skill required to make these pieces is simply amazing to imagine, especially considering the size. I have seen many traditional Chinese paper cuts (the method, I believe, inspired Ed Pien), but much smaller than Pien's pieces. I think artists use scissors and knives to make the shapes in the paper. I think some knowledge of physics was used to help the artist create the light in the *Through and Through and Through* pieces. The only paper-cutting I

ever did was making snowflakes in elementary school... they always turned out terrible.

Daniel - And what did you think about the colours the light display produced?

Stephen - I think this had to be my favourite display by far. The most interesting thing about it is the fact that the colours could change so radically just depending on the spot from which you stood examining them. In one it could be entirely green, and if you moved a little to the right, it would suddenly be violet.

Whitney - I really liked that too. The intensity of the light reflected was amazing. If you're prone to distraction by shiny objects, this is the exhibit for you!

Taylor - I thought it was interesting that the piece was inspired by Saskatoon's own CLS Synchatron. It really makes you think about the scientific techniques that might have been involved in setting up the piece. The artist must have taken a lot of care in setting up the large display so that the light diffracted properly into the spectrum of colour that we were able to experience. I really enjoyed being able to see both vertical and horizontal "rainbows", depending on how you looked at the display!

Daniel - Cool, so what would you do with this work if you owned it?

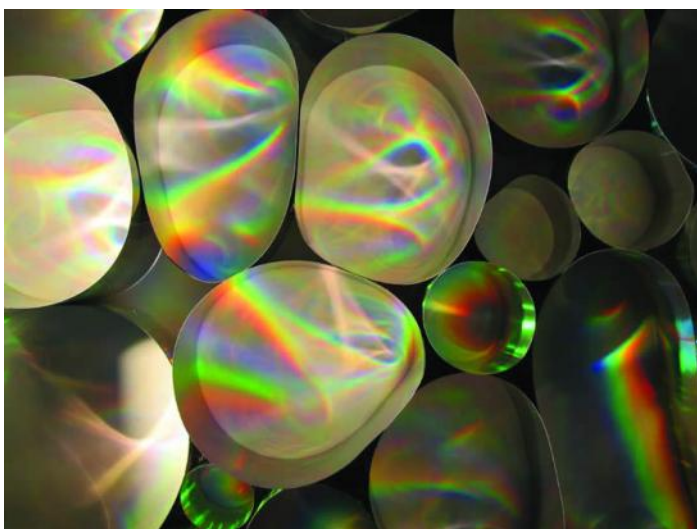
Taylor - If I owned the shiny *Through and Through and Through* piece, I'd just lie in it, just me and those weird blue slippers they force you to wear (although I don't tan, I wonder how useful it would be to darken skin-tones in the sun?). It's a pretty fun piece to be in, but unfortunately, it's not "practical" art in the sense that you

can't display it properly in your home.

Whitney - Display in your home?? They would BE my home! I think I would want the *Haven of Delight* as my bedroom and *Through and Through and Through* as my kitchen/dining/living room. My parties would be off the charts.

Torrie - I would give the art to Whitney and then attend of her parties!

Stephen - And I would come in with all of the sugar bombs to sweeten things up!



Marie Lannoo, *Through and Through and Through #22, 2009*, mixed media. Image courtesy of the artist. Image taken from <http://www.mendel.ca/onview/current/index.html> (accessed on March 15, 2010).

Daniel - **What do you think of interactive art as opposed to looking at traditional art "head-on"?**

Taylor - When it comes to contemplating the meaning, I do not prefer interactive art. I don't mind art being three-dimensional, like statues, but when I'm "in" among the elements of the piece, I feel like I'm at the Science Centre, or in a playground/carnival. I thought Ed Pien's Haven of Delight installation was really neat, but while I was interacting, the message escaped me; having to interact was just too distracting for me. The feeling is comparable to movies: to really get a sense of what's going on, I would rather watch one than be in it.

Whitney - I loved being in the art! Maybe that's just the egotist in me.

Stephen - Hmm, egotist... now I'm starting to see it... truly, the work is not to be understood until you stand within it, accenting it with a crowning glory from which all radiance emanates... In all seriousness, I'm way too much of a traditionalist and usually don't understand these newer art forms, under which I'm classifying the interactive art. That's not to say I don't appreciate it. Certainly, tons of time and lots of effort goes into it, it just isn't my cup of tea... speaking of tea, there's a café in the building...

Daniel - **Do you prefer art with or without a specific message?**

Taylor - I think the beauty of most art is that even if you don't see a message, you can at least still be in awe of the aesthetic elements. Personally, though, I like my art to have a message conveyed to me by the artist, conceptual art in particular. It's a fun challenge to try and find what the author's meaning. In my opinion, art and meaning go hand-in-hand. I think all art has meaning in the sense that the artist had something in mind - whether an inspiring feeling or a personal conviction - when creating the piece. If you ask the artists what they were thinking when they made the piece, they aren't likely going to say, "I don't know".

Whitney - I see what you're saying about there always being a meaning behind art, but there is definitely a difference between exhibits like *Sugar Bombs* in which sculptures were made to look like beautiful pottery and bombs at the same time and exhibits like *Through and Through*. The artist may have meant something specific in the latter, but I think it is more easily separated from the beauty of the art in that case. I prefer art that I can take and interpret differently each day depending on my mood. It seems like all that was striven for was to be beautiful, and it is. No social commentary necessary.

Torrie - Both of you make good points, ladies. I really enjoyed the freedom of placing my personal thoughts and feelings onto *Through and Through*. My imagination was at play with all those vibrant colours. On the other hand, *Sugar Bombs* -with its specific message- triggered my deeper thoughts. Interpreting the artist's message is always an engaging mission. My mind was more at work, rather than at play. I guess I enjoyed both experiences. I think it's great that the *Mendel Art Gallery* had such a diverse showing.

Stephen - Not to detract from what you all have to say, but that café did have fresh cinnamon buns...

Daniel - **Did you think this was actually art? (ex: Through and Through and Through)**

Taylor - It is definitely hard to get out of one's traditional sense of art (I'm thinking statues, framed pictures and the like) when it comes to pieces like *Through and Through and Through* or *Haven of Delight*. What does one mean by "art", though? Most people's answers will change depending on what the definition of art happens to be. Personally, I found Marie Lannoo's pieces on the wall more artistic than the larger installation, which looked more like a display than art... but maybe my concept of traditional art is just making me bias.

Torrie - Quit being such a stiff pickle, Taylor. Anything in a museum is art to me!

Stephen - Ah, who knows what counts as art anymore... in my opinion, as long as it looks like someone is passionate about something they've created, then that is practically art.



Ed Pien, *Haven*, 2007–2008, mixed media. Image courtesy of the artist. Image taken from <http://www.mendel.ca/onview/current/index.html> (accessed on March 15, 2010).

Daniel - **How did the exhibits make you feel? Did it make you think or feel?**

Torrie - The interactive art definitely plays with the observers' emotions and moods. I felt like a curious child or something; excited, curious, and sad when it finished.

Taylor - I agree with Torrie; I definitely felt like I was exploring a maze. Did anyone else peer into the holes in Ed Pien's *Haven of Delight*? If anyone's seen *Coraline*, they were like mini-versions of the tunnel she had to crawl through to get to her alternate world. I was a bit sad, too, when I was finished looking through all the little peeking holes because they were too neat! In comparison, I also

found the other exhibits more thought provoking.

Stephen - I felt particularly small in front of the great paper cut-outs of Ed Pien... In fact, I decided to just sit on the floor at one point and stare at them on the wall. Just to ponder them... and cinnamon buns of course. Mmm, mmm... those sure were tasty.

Daniel - **Did you feel any elements of the art felt unnecessary? What elements did you feel were essential?**

Torrie - I enjoyed every element I saw at the museum. I've always tried to tell myself, "The artist wouldn't include it if he/she didn't think it was important." I must admit, however, it is always difficult to know exactly what the artist is thinking. Maybe they included certain elements for their personal satisfaction, rather than the viewer's. Hmm...

Taylor - I definitely agree with Torrie. I think many artists are quite purposeful when choosing what to add to their pieces. An artist might even intentionally add something overwhelming/unnecessary as a statement - you can never know with these sneaky artists!

Stephen - Again, if someone is passionate about it, then it is practically art, and, as such, who's to say whether something is necessary or unnecessary about it? Just take it all in stride. I will definitely be making another trip to the Mendel in the near future and I will most definitely be paying another visit to the café again...

# PRO ET CONTRA:

## SHOULD “NAKED” BODY SCANNERS BE USED IN AIRPORTS?

---

### PRO:

Terrorism has, unfortunately, become a frightening reality that we must all face. Placing body scanners in airports is a wise and effective way for providing the safest flying environment possible. The idea of a stranger analyzing your anatomy is unpleasant—but it is a precaution that could potentially save many lives.

When it comes to protecting our safety, sacrificing some personal privacy is already widely accepted and tolerated. We allow airport security to investigate every inch of our luggage, inspect personal documents and even pat us down. Certainly, a computer generated body scan is no more a violation of our privacy than any of these existing safety measures. The already existing searches and inspections are accepted as precautions and in the best interest of the flyer; body scans are no different. Safety is, and should be, the priority.

Tiresome as safety precautions may seem, airlines are doing their best to make the body scanning process as bearable as they can. Did you know that the person operating the scanner never actually sees you in the flesh? All the operator sees is the computer-generated image of a body. After the scan is examined for explosives and other weapons, the scan of your body is immediately destroyed. If the idea of a body-scan still makes you uneasy, there are options. Canadian airlines give flyers the option of a full body search or pat down if they decline to use a body scanner.

Any further discomfort passengers experience towards the scanners is justified through the continued fight for safety. Body scanners are an effective way to detect bombs, weapons, or anything that could make an aircraft unsafe for its passengers. Scanners are doing far more than merely putting the customer's mind at ease. Terrorists have put a threat on our safety and our government is doing its best to fight back. Several governments across the world, including Canada's, have spent a lot of time, money and effort to ensure nothing of harm ends up on your next flight. Permitting a computer generated scan of your body in order to join the fight for society's safety is both reasonable and proactive.

Existing, and accepted, airline precautions demonstrate society's intense concern for safety. Threats to public safety, however, are on a frightening rise. Governments and airlines across the world have confidence that body scanners will help in keeping these threats under control and, more importantly, protect airline passengers' lives. Body scanners are simply an answer to society's call for safe flying conditions.

Alaine St. Cyr

### CONTRA:

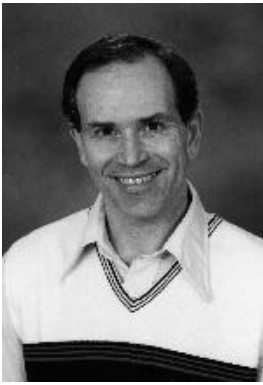
How can the airlines or government argue that the right to privacy is not as important as the right to life? For some, privacy and modesty is a matter of proper living within their religion and without pious conformity to these obligations their salvation may be at stake. Essentially we could be denying the right to life in the afterworld by stripping them of their privacy in such a way that the body scanners in airports would do. The body scanners ignore the cultural and religious insensitivity it demonstrates and the civil liberties it infringes upon. Even Pope Benedict XVI, spoke up about the machines stripping our human dignity, something no individual should have to sacrifice.

If the body scanners were an option, not a requirement, it may be feasible to bypass the aforementioned problem, however if an individual is deemed to have “extremely suspicious behavior” according to airport security, a full body scan is mandatory. Britain has even taken it a notch above that, declaring a “no scan no fly” policy that states that every person boarding an aircraft, over the age of 18, must pass through a full body scanner and be cleared. How long will it be until this is a universal standard for air travel? When did it become okay to limit the mobility of a human being?

The false sense of security fashioned by the body scanners is merely a reactive tactic against terrorism that solves nothing. Until our government comes up with a true preventative plan to protect its citizens we cannot keep throwing tax payer money at the problem hoping it allows people to sleep comfortably at night. Forty-four body scanners in Canada at \$250,000 a pop, including parts and training, seems like a large bill for something that is just going to further clog airport lineups and not actually enhance our security.

If there is anything that should have been learned since 9/11, it's that terrorists will find loopholes and adapt. If minors are not to be scanned due to child pornography laws then there is already an enormous shortcoming in the system. The scanners are also not able to detect low density items well, so one just needs to find the right tools for deterring the scan and, *voila*, easier than evading the good ol' pat down.

Angela deBoya



## Faculty Files:

**Dr. Ed Heidt**  
**Professor of English**

### ***1. Why did you choose English? Was there something in particular that interested you in that area?***

Besides the fact that I seemed to have an aptitude for language and enjoyed languages, I chose to study English literature because I enjoyed the art of interpretation. I enjoyed reading literature and exploring the various ways to interpret a piece of writing, starting with *The Wizard of Oz* as a child.

### ***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?***

A Liberal Arts education seems to have fallen in disfavor. Students understandably want to study more practical arts that they can use to get a job and earn a living. I personally was educated in the liberal arts so I want to see them continue – history, literature, languages, the fine arts, science, math, philosophy, the social sciences, theology – subjects that many people consider a waste of time now. I think a wise course would be to pursue a liberal arts education and then specialize in something practical later. The study of the liberal arts prepares the mind to be open to investigative, scientific processes. Philosophy and literature are excellent majors for someone who wants to be lawyer, for example. I think the liberal arts prepare and discipline the mind in the tasks of thinking and feeling. And, of course, I was trained with the Basilian motto in mind since I was 13 – “Teach me goodness, discipline and knowledge” (*Bonitatem, disciplinam, scientiam doce me*).

### ***3. What are your current projects and research interests?***

As I end my career as a teacher, I have been preoccupied these last few years with the art of pedagogy and what teaching actually is and how learning actually occurs and have experimented with various methods in that regard, some more or less successful than others. Usually, my pro-

fessional reading has revolved around pedagogy but less so now that I am stopping. And, ever since my dissertation in autobiographical literature in 1989, I have been fascinated with non-fiction, news media and documentaries, especially.

### ***4. Outside of being an English professor, what are your hobbies and interests?***

I guess outside of teaching, my greatest interest is in theatre and film. I enjoy movies of all kinds and go to movies and theatre and participate in the theatre as much as I can. I am always amazed when I meet young students from small Saskatchewan towns who have never seen a live play and how absolutely enthralled they are when they do. For me, seeing plays and being in a theatre is like being at home. I have also participated in so many fringe festivals and one summer in Winnipeg I won a super pass to get into any and all plays FREE – I will never forget that – I saw 40 plays in ten days!!!! I also like to read literary theory books as opposed to novels which often surprises people about me.

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

I have participated in theatre and acting all my life but never studied them so if I had my training to do over I would want to teach theatre arts or acting. I would have loved to have gone to the Yale School of Drama or Julliard in New York City. And I have this secret fantasy that I acted in a Broadway play and won a Tony award!!! The fact that I lined my brother and sister and cousins up on our grandparents' staircase and made them do my “tests” before they went out to play (and I was THEIR AGE!!!) indicated to me that I was a teacher before I even realized I was one. And, that I would force my brother to eat paper “hosts” and “serve my Mass” in our basement indicated an early penchant for the trappings of the priesthood as well. So the priest-teacher combination has been with me a long time and I feel so lucky to have been able to work at careers I also loved.

### ***6. Could you please list your top 5 favourite movies of all time and what appeals to you about them?***

“Woodstock”, “Hair” and “The Graduate” are three sixties' classics that define and express what shaped me as a teenager.

“If”, “The Strawberry Statement”, and “Clockwork Orange” were also films about revolution that affected my thinking in the sixties. And a student just last term re-introduced me to the book and 1970 anti-war film, “Johnny Got His Gun.”

The 1960 film “The Nun’s Story” with Audrey Hepburn captures the pre-Vatican II religious life style.



## A Grammar Wizard on his Pet Peeves

By Eugene Borgnine

It's not easy being a grammar wizard. I do consider myself to be a champion – a sage of an ancient and forgotten wisdom – but my brilliance goes largely unappreciated by the common man, who is, frankly, illiterate. Take, for instance, an incident awhile back when I heard a simple fellow struggling to express his meagre aspirations thus: "I wish I was rich." Out of duty and charity, I corrected him: "Pardon me good peasant, but if you – as I assume you were – were attempting to convey a hypothetical statement in the present tense, you must replace 'was' with 'were'." It took me several days to recover from the demeaning beating that followed, but I had served the English language in a time of need and could *ergo* walk with my head held high. Only moments after exiting my abode, however, my ears detected another grievous error nearby. "Whom is coming to dinner later?" barked the beast of a man. I could barely keep from ululating, as the peon was undoubtedly trying to sound educated. "Excuse me," I interjected, "but I couldn't help from hearing that you, an obviously educated man (hehe), committed a laughable offense to the language that you so clearly love. For 'whom' is an *object* and to use it as a subject is a futile attempt at sounding educ..." For some reason, I woke up in a hospital some weeks later and could not remember how the exchange had played out. Oh well, I would soon get back to my daily grind of searching for employment as a grammar wizard, and also pick up my comical nephew from elementary school later in the day. As I entered the school doors, I heard a girl aged 7 or 8 – well past the excusable age for butchering the language – explain to her comrade that she "seen" a cat in the sandbox at recess. Since I was in a building of learning, I scolded the girl as my teachers had done to me only decades earlier. I still don't understand why I am no longer welcome in the school. What is wrong with the world, that a man cannot shame a still malleable child into speaking proper English? Teachers today couldn't care less (not "*could* care less" as I so often hear at the local RadioShack) about their students knowing the difference between subjects and objects, transitive and intransitive verbs, and all of the treasures that I loved as a boy. But I shall not back down, for English needs to be protected lest we should all end up speaking *Newfie*. If we could all pay just a bit more attention to how we speak, I know that we could suppress the abominable movement which has already taken much of eastern Canada and – needless to say – Regina!

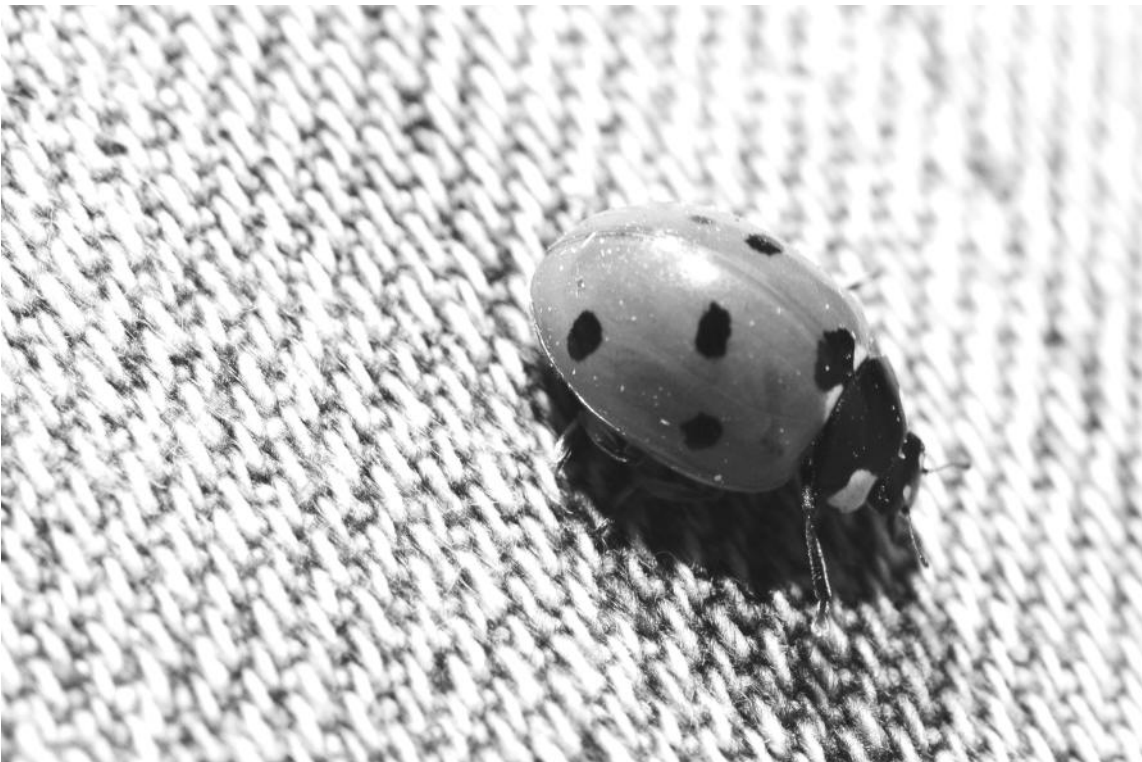
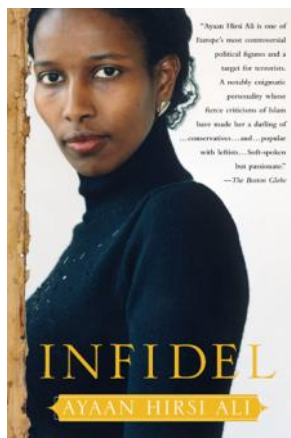


Photo © Gibby Davis

# Book Reviews



## *Infidel*

by Ayaan Hirsi Ali

Reviewed by Erica Lee

It is easy to look at another culture from the outside and pass judgment, but with *Infidel*, Ayaan Hirsi Ali gives us her first hand perspective on life as a woman in Islamic culture.

Born in Somalia, Ali spent her childhood moving around Saudi Arabia, a very conservative Islam

monarchy in which the Qur'an serves as the constitution, as well as Ethiopia and Kenya, two predominantly Christian countries. In each of these places, she contrasts her experiences and the people she meets, and questions why such social discrepancies exist.

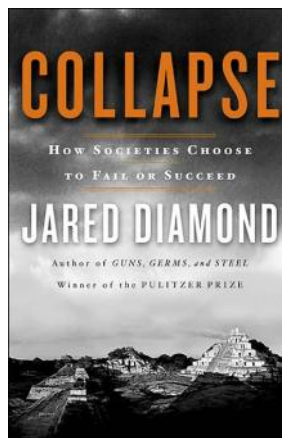
Ali was made inferior to her younger brother and to any other male. This is the law in Somalia, where in school the children were forced to sing allegiance hymns to Siad Barre, the Islamist dictatorship government which was in power for over 30 years. While her mother (and her absent father) were progressive, and wanted to raise Ali and her siblings in a more loving Islamic household, her traditional grandmother's interference reflects intriguing generational differences between Muslims.

The most illuminating moments of the book come from the honesty of Ali's writing. At many times in the book, the circumstances are difficult to read and even harder to envision; being a citizen of a free country where equality for all is the law it can be hard to comprehend such circumstances, but Ali guides us through her experiences with the amazing inner strength that shines through in her writing. With the naïveté of a young girl in she recalls how she was constantly told by her female relatives that her body was dirty, and that if a man were to rape her, it would be her fault for tempting him. From this, we watch Ali transform into a brilliant university student in the Netherlands, studying great Western philosophers and questioning what part of her Islam faith she can logically retain, if any.

This book is most important because it reminds us to question the situations we find ourselves in and the things we are told to believe. The strict rule of religion that Ali grew up under trapped many in a society that they were led to believe was the only way. While Ali was able to liberate herself through education, cunning, and pure luck, her former oppressors still attempt to silence her in the form of death threats.

This book reaches a wide audience by discussing topics such as religion, politics, education, culture, immigration and women's rights. Ultimately, though, it is a story of freedom, and the fight of one human being who ventures beyond the world she has always known to find her own definition of freedom.

ISBN-13: 978-0743289696



## *Collapse*

By Jared Diamond

Reviewed by James Butterford

After the success of his 1997 Pulitzer Prize-winning *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*, Jared Diamond had high expectations to meet upon the release his 2005 publication, *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*. The two books sound like they cover very similar topics, but with *Collapse*, Diamond narrows the focus to environmental

abuse and its effect on society – a phenomenally popular issue at the moment. *Collapse* is an informative, sometimes intriguing, and extremely well-researched book that became a New York Times bestseller, but it failed to achieve the same sensation as his previous opus due primarily (in my opinion) to its frequent redundancy.

For instance, in the prologue Diamond explains that there are 8 main categories of environmental abuse that can lead to societal collapse, but he proceeds to exhaust these points by stretching them over 11 major case studies of past and present societies, totalling 416 pages. Each case study exhibits several of the 8 categories so that, by the end, the reader has read them over... and over... and over. To be fair, he examines some non-environmental factors, but even they start to repeat after a while.

Thus, the problem with this book is excessive content. Each case study on its own is a prime example of expert historical and scientific method, and would hold its own as an independent volume. Diamond, a professor of geography and physiology at UCLA, shows why he is one of the most honoured in his field by sharing with the reader what is obviously a lifetime's worth of research. Unfortunately, however, *Collapse* provides an information overload; I found some chapters so similar to others that I failed to even remember what the case study was about days later. On the other hand, Diamond does a good job of beating his point into the reader's brain. It's hard to argue with his thesis that environmental responsibility is crucial to all members of any society, even when a society is at its strongest. It was striking to read about some of the dominant societies that fell just after they had reached their cultural peak due to poor farming practices, deforestation, etc.

The reader will probably feel smarter for having read Diamond's case studies and will easily pick up on the admonitions for our current situation. But then – after 416 pages of examples – come another tedious 100-plus pages of what he calls "Practical Lessons." In other words, this last section spells out what Diamond has been preaching for the entire book, but now in an even duller form of prose – just in case the reader wasn't capable of applying the case study lessons to real life.

In summary, *Collapse* is worth reading – just not the whole thing. I would recommend borrowing this book from the library, picking 4 or 5 of the case studies to read, (I suggest the chapters that deal with Easter Island, the Anasazi, Rwanda, Australia, and especially now, Haiti) and skipping the last section altogether, where the book – wait for it – collapses.

ISBN-13: 978-0-14-303655-5

My eyes burned. Instinctively, I knew I was outside, lying on squishy ground. My back was stiff on the uneven earth, my nostrils infused with the sour scent of dying vegetation. I squinted with one eye at first, afraid of what I might see. A looming gray structure spanned my line of vision overhead. I blinked burning eyes to investigate. Then a vibration began, thrumming through the ground and into my back. The throbbing grew louder, with intermittent thunking sounds creating a staccato beat. I sat up slowly, my body aching. I unconsciously raised my hand to a large, round goose-egg on the back of my scalp. That was probably the demons. Despite my head and sore body, I started when I saw the river. It was calm and clear in the tranquil morning air, the current creating minuscule ripples that meandered along reminding me of lazy summer days on the barge, swimming with my cousin during summer break. The hollow thrumming sound overhead tore me back to my cold, wet reality and to the mammoth concrete structure that had housed me for the night. Then realization flooded my mind like a tidal wave. I was under the Broadway Bridge.

By Joanne Brothwell



*In Medias Res*  
St. Thomas More College  
1437 College Drive  
University of Saskatchewan  
S7N 0W6

**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 Vanderhague

They say your life flashes before your eyes but my mind was frantically tying and untying a sailor's knot. The swinging, jolted shouts of the Chinese arguers behind me announced the volatile scene created by two trade companies at loggerheads. I was about to become the tragic consequence of their dissension. The plank had never been used, but there I was, staring down at the awkward timber protrusion cutting cat-like scratches into my feet while below me placid seawater sucked light out of the sky. A seemingly dismembered hand found the small of my back and pushed with the force of a tempest. The frigid waters parted unceremoniously, swallowing and pulling me down. My teeth clamped down on the dampening rope that was cutting permanent bracelets into my wrists. Left, right, underswoop and pull. For a second I watched the fibrous serpent fall away into the blue below, then turned my attention to the cannonball around my ankles. With the lubrication of water it took little manoeuvring to shimmy the iron off. Pumping my legs like a tadpole I kicked up and out. My lungs were starting to scream with the ferocity of a love-forsaken banshee. I broke the glass surface and swam. It would be hours before I reached Lampine Island, but it didn't matter; I would make it. It was then that my life flashed before my eyes. I saw my wife Charlotte. The birdbath in front of the townhouse I grew up in. I was free.

The mid-aged sea captain curled his toes over the edge of the plank while the swarthy Chinese trader placed a strong hand on his back. The sea captain muttered to himself, "Remember, left, right, underswoop and pull." The trader pulled the trigger sending the captain into the waiting azure abyss, staining the water with his own warm vermillion.

By Janyne Laing



*In Medias Res*  
St. Thomas More College  
1437 College Drive  
University of Saskatchewan  
S7N 0W6

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