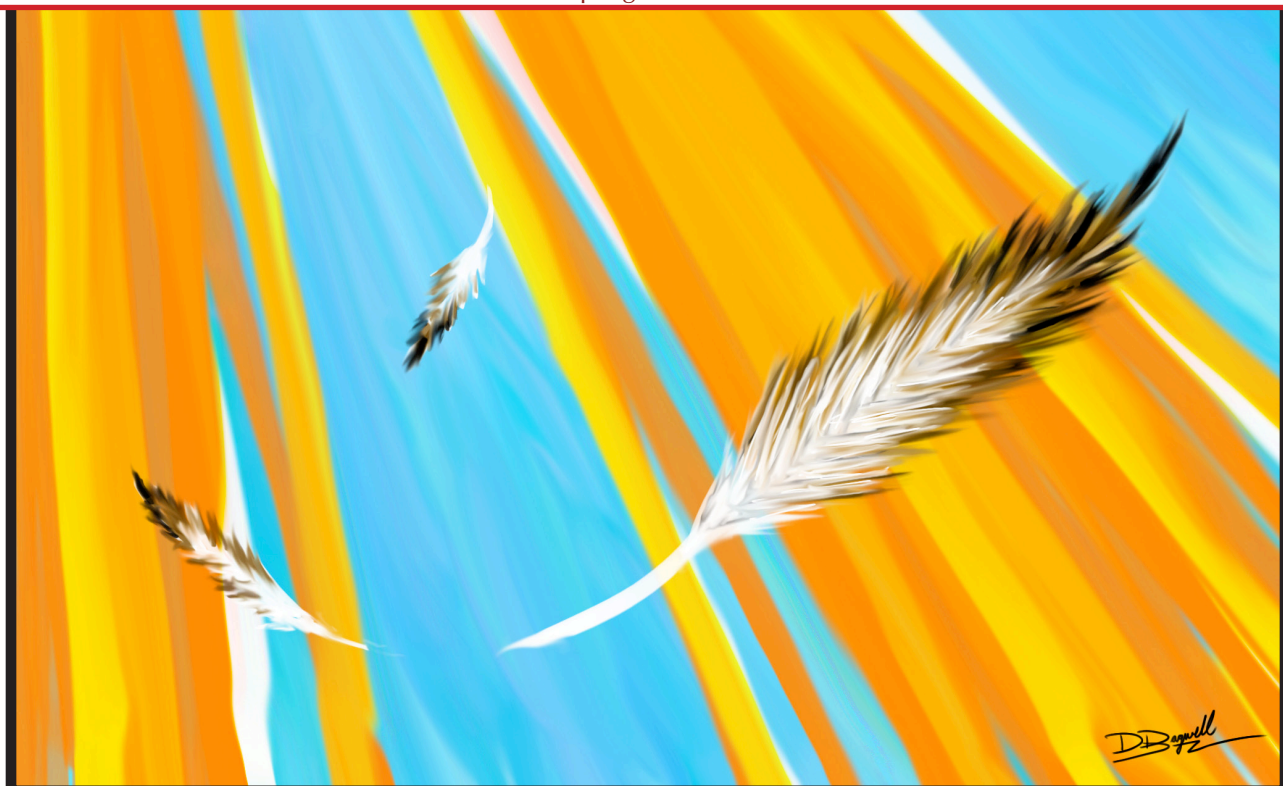




# in medias res

A Liberal Arts Journal  
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DBaynell

# 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)**



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# Musings on Mnemosyne: Memory in the Digital and Middle Ages

by Sarah Powrie

Since I teach literature of the ancient and medieval periods, I frequently address the importance of memory in these cultural contexts. In an age before the internet or the printing press, information was relayed through manuscripts or, more often, word of mouth, since manuscript production is a time-consuming and labor-intensive undertaking. With book collections being scarce, people necessarily depended more often upon their memories to preserve their histories. Oddly enough, the Digital Age with its promise of limitless archiving has given the medieval preoccupation with memory a new relevance. Digital memory uses the same language of storage and retrieval and promises to surpass the capacities of our own faculties, but arguably medieval tech-

Participants in this project wear a camera to record every moment of their lives: every view of the kitchen sink, every notepad doodle is scrupulously collected and stored in digital form for the “life blogger.” The authors hail this catalogue of personal data as a development that will fundamentally “change what it means to be human.” The gleeful optimism of this second book actually makes it more depressing. Does chronicling my used dental floss and crumpled grocery lists really capture my human identity? Still more disturbing, why would the authors believe that human identity could be constituted through these minutiae? It may be time for us as a culture to examine the role of technologies of memory and to reassess their benefits and deficits.

**“Google knows more about us than we can remember about ourselves.”**

nologies of memory are more sophisticated for the ways in which they recognize and cultivate human ingenuity. Two recent books ponder how the archiving potential of digital technology could change the way we think and interact: *Delete: The Virtue of Forgetting in the Digital Age*, by Viktor Mayer-Schonberger, and *Total Recall: How the E-Memory Revolution Will Change Everything*, by Gordon Bell and Jim Gemmell. *Delete* urges caution: our on-line confessions could return to haunt us, and the author provides examples of individuals whose all-too candid blogging as teens sabotaged them professionally later in life. The book suggests that Google has become an Orwellian Big Brother, since “Google knows more about us than we can remember about ourselves.” In contrast, *Total Recall* enthusiastically describes the project “True Recall,” which enables people to create continuously a digital diary of e-memory.

Medieval people devoted a great deal of thought to memory, and no one more so than Augustine in his autobiography, *Confessions*. Augustine was the Prince Hamlet of the late ancient world: a phenomenally clever guy who, when bound in the nutshell of his consciousness, discovered a kingdom of infinite space. He ponders the mind’s operation by imagining himself as wandering “through the halls of memory” as though his mind were an interior castle of many corridors and rooms. This analogy of the mind as architecture is not original to Augustine but was commonly used in rhetorical schools of the ancient world. Quintilian, when instructing his pupils as to how they might remember the many topics of an oration, advises them to create a mental image of a house and furnish its rooms with images representing

cont’d on next page...



the main themes of the speech. So, for instance, if the speech addressed nautical and agricultural topics, the speaker would imagine one room with an anchor in it and another with a plough. This mnemonic strategy shows that Augustine and Quintilian were both aware that the human mind tends to retain images more easily than it retains words—this is why professors are encouraged to use PowerPoint slides or other visual media, so as to reinforce visually the verbal content of their lecture. This notion of the mind as an architectural space hasn't departed from modern consciousness. In the movie, *Being John Malkovich*, when we as viewers finally enter the title character's subconscious, we enter what looks like a large dollhouse, where each room contains a vignette of Malkovich as a young boy, as a teenager, and as an adult. Each memory has its own room in Malkovich's mental architecture. More recently, the movie *Inception*, which features intelligence agents who infiltrate the dreams of others to extract or implant information, selects an architecture student, not a psychology major, as its protégé in subconscious espionage.

The mind as a vast architecture is a compelling image, since it suggests not only a functional space but an aesthetic one. Thus, any student of any discipline is both architect and interior designer, furnishing his or her own mind with objects of beauty and significance. The medieval visionary Julian of Norwich offers an excellent example of this kind of activity. In 1381, as she was enduring the pains of a life-threatening illness, she had a remarkable visionary experience of seeing and hearing the suffering Christ. Julian spent the next twenty years revisiting this transformative moment in her mind's eye, unpacking its implications, sifting through its significance. What emerges in her writings is a kaleidoscope of visual associations and spiritual reflections representing how her revisitation of this moment has blossomed into the fullness of manifold meanings. She becomes attracted to the image of Veronica, the woman who is believed to have wiped the face of Christ with a cloth, which then bore the imprint of his face. The name "Veronica" (vera-

icon = true image) suggests the role of this woman as the true image-bearer. You can see why Julian would identify so strongly with this image, since she understands herself as commissioned to present this image of Christ. We cannot underestimate her courage in writing about her visions at a time when women were explicitly forbidden from preaching. This multi-dimensional image for Julian is not simply mental furniture but a cherished event, whose meaning has intensified with time; it is not a stored artifact, but an intricate tapestry of complex patterns and colours.

While the medieval period esteemed memory, it also understood the importance of forgetting, which is perhaps what our own society has forgotten and needs to remember. The river Lethe, the river of forgetfulness, is the sweetest river in the world of the dead. In his *Divine Comedy*, Dante situates Lethe at the end of his journey through Purgatory, just before he enters the bliss of Paradise. Once Dante has crossed this river, he realizes that Virgil his guide has disappeared. Books have been written about the significance of this pivotal moment, but in the simplest terms, Virgil's disappearance signals that the burden of history has been erased. Dante's personal preoccupations have haunted him throughout his journey. Hereafter, he is freed from the historical and the personal so that he might fully engage the joyful immediacy of Paradise. The shadows of the past are forgotten, and irrelevant now, as he experiences the overwhelming joy of being welcomed home.

As a historical scholar I value the archive, but as a minimalist I concur with the architect Mies van der Rohe, who said that "less is more." I am suspicious of Total Recall's attempt to define human identity as a digital construction and also of its claim that the amassed minutiae of a life would yield an authentic personal history—it is more likely to yield frustration. Mayer-Schönberger's *Delete* reminds us that forgetting is a mercy and perhaps it is even a necessary part of the ever-changing, ever-renewing nature of human identity.

# Pro et Contra: Is Vigilantism Justified?

## PRO

Vigilantism is justified. Without people who would be willing to risk their own lives in the pursuit of justice, especially against corrupt regimes, no nation would be able to advance and develop properly. When considering what one ought to do, one ought to consider what is right, not only what is lawful. Because governments are fallible, what is lawful will not always coincide with what is right. In such a situation, citizens are justified in acting in ways that ensure that the right thing is done.

Consider this example: A dictator takes over a country and uses a military or police force to enslave the people to his will. He regards them as disposable and uses them only to maximize his own political and monetary gain. Clearly, no one would want to be subjugated to the will of such a tyrant, thus people would attempt to circumvent the dictator's rules and fight for what is right. Moral and pragmatic arguments support vigilantism in such a situation. This is because the law is not morally transformative; that is, just because it might be made illegal to rebel against the dictator, the action is not immoral. The law is not everything, and there is more than just the law that may justify an action.

Democratic nations have problems within their own judicial systems. It often takes much too long to prosecute cases and when they are finally dealt with, so much time has often passed that criminals get off the hook easily. Vigilantism could help to reduce the rates of crime in areas where there would otherwise be no proper justice regarded because of deficient sentences.

It is important to note that vigilantism actually exists in some form even in most fair legal systems. For instance, neighborhood watch programs exist in many municipalities and citizen's arrest is described in the law. It is simply the feelings that are associated with the term vigilantism that give it its bad reputation. In fact, it is and can be even more of a benefit for healthy societies. Vigilantism is not only justified but should also be expanded within the law to further ensure a right and just system.

By Brutus Vaine

## CONTRA

There is a reason the term "vigilante" has gathered itself a negative connotation. Taking the law into one's own hands eliminates the safety net; social contracts and legal mediation lose their value and power. Vigilantism discredits both society and legal authority by promoting personal vendettas, violence and chaos.

There is no such thing as a mutually accepted idea of good and evil—there is only the rule of law. The same event may be joyous and fantastic for one person yet, devastating or evil in the eyes of another. Without the rule of law, humankind loses its ability to regulate itself and keep order. The law creates recognizable grounds on which an authority can monitor and punish criminal behavior. Vigilantes snub the law and create their own definition of justice. Vigilantism encourages humankind to look past the rules of law in search of selfish and personal justice.

Seeking immediate, personal justice is a slippery slope for society. A dangerous attitude surrounds the actions of vigilantes. People are often dissatisfied with their judicial system and perceive the law to be unjust: they believe their discontent justifies personal action. Unfortunately, once an individual perceives their self as above- or outside- of the law, society as a whole suffers. Personal vendettas are usually violent, adrenalized, and unjust. The attitudes and ideas surrounding vigilantism serve tyrants, dictators and justify gang activity. Humankind is quick to forget 'an eye for an eye leaves the world blind.'

Simply ignoring the current legal system is not a strategy for improving the world's injustices. Someone who truly wants to enact change must do so within the confines of the law which have already been deemed acceptable by everyone and there are many options for this including peaceful protesting. Because vigilantism is fueled by a passion that often ignores the evidence and the facts, it does more harm than good and is thus not justifiable.

By Mondas Gantti

## Socratic Pestilence: The Campus Gadflies Ask...

# Why should we be good?

Once a semester, members of the *In Medias Res* editorial board turn their attention away from scrutinizing student submissions to scrutinizing students themselves. The goal is to know what students are thinking about philosophical issues. The method is surveying students in a Socratic inspired approach.

Kids these days. Young rascallions, aren't they?... Or are they? This time, The Gadflies were out and about in hopes of discovering how the campus youth perceive goodness and why it is important to be good. But what is "good" after all? The age-old question has been answered by just about every philosopher, religious leader, and 5-year-old who ever lived, but a universal definition still seems to elude us, let alone a persuasive reason why we should behave in such a way. So read on, fellow philo-philes:

"If you're good to other people they will be good to you back."

Anonymous - Archaeology 4th year

"Because it fulfils life for you. It makes you feel comfortable with who you are, and you know that you're doing good for society. You can wake up every day knowing you've done something good rather than feeling bad about something or feeling guilty."

Samantha Remillard - Accounting major

"Why not?"

Niklas Winnitowy - Undeclared

"We should be good because if someone is good it encourages other people to be good, right? So it's kind of like a pay it forward type of thing, I guess. If you're good it should encourage others to be good."

Megan Peters - Anthropology

"Because when we don't do right it causes harm. Therefore we should be good and do right. Isn't that the bottom line? If not for any other reason but because when we don't be good or we don't do right it causes harm to other or ourself."

Tina Baber - Undeclared

"Simply because it's more fun than not being good. Because it feels right."

Justin - History 4th year

"It's something that we're born to think. It's just the right thing to do unless someone is screwed up in the head."

Miranda - Bio-Tech Sales Specialist



"We should be good because it's apart of our social contract."

Michael - Arts and Sciences 4th-ish year

"I think the reason we should be good is like, well to begin with there is no absolute claim about what is good and what is not good, right. In different situations I can't just come and give an absolute or an already made definition of what is good. So that it's almost like, because of the complex nature of the world we have so many situations that arise we can't define good as one thing. The good thing in a certain case might be to kill someone so to save many... in that there is no absoluteness in good."

Azzedine Issa - Political Studies and Economics

"The reason why I'm good is because it's kind of like a relative thing. When you look at the human context and you try to analyze it, good is really a

movement towards our own perpetuation. The only reason I should be good is because if I am good I live in a world that is that much better and thus I can fulfil myself in this world."

Garret Bird - Archaeology and Drama

"I'll give you a bible quote, but it's not necessarily a biblical reference. There is a blessing and a curse in one sentence in the bible and it's 'You reap what you sew'. No matter what you do if you do enough bad stuff it's going to come back to you. So maybe if you do good stuff, good stuff will come back to you."

Reagan Seidler - Economics

"When someone is asked 'why are we good' I have an inclination to say it's logical through God that we are good beings."

Kelsi - Nursing

"People, I think, should be good because that is the way God created the world in the beginning: to be good. When he created it he said it was good, and therefore we should be good."

Alison Foth - Agriculture (Animal Science)

"The answer is we don't have to if we don't want to. Why? There is not real reason. If you don't want to be good you don't have to. What is good? Who can define what good is?"

Dan - Louis' Assistant Manager

"I think we should be good for moral reasons. For the purpose that we don't want to be frowned upon and considered deviant in society."

Ashley Fabbro-Ducharme - Arts and Science first year

"To make the better place for everyone."

Justin - Engineering

"If we weren't good the world would probably fall apart because, I guess, goodness keeps things moving in a good direction."

Anonymous - Arts and Science

"I would think that the reason would be because we have a certain obligation, I think, to be stewards, not of the earth, but of humanity... The easiest way to say it would be because we're obligated to as humans. We have a certain responsibility to each other to be good for their sake."

Reid Sonntag - Anatomy and Cell Biology

"I've heard that evil is the absence of good... if you're not good, then wouldn't everything tend to be evil?"

Anonymous - Engineering

"I think it's important to be good, for one, for the good of society. If everyone decided that they were going to be bad then there would be chaos, we wouldn't be able to achieve anything, wouldn't be able to work together. Number two, I think it's important for ourselves, for our emotional wellbeing and our spiritual wellbeing... I think it's important just because when we do good things it

makes us feel good it makes us feel like we are achieving something and accomplishing something in society."

Josiah - Psychology 3rd year

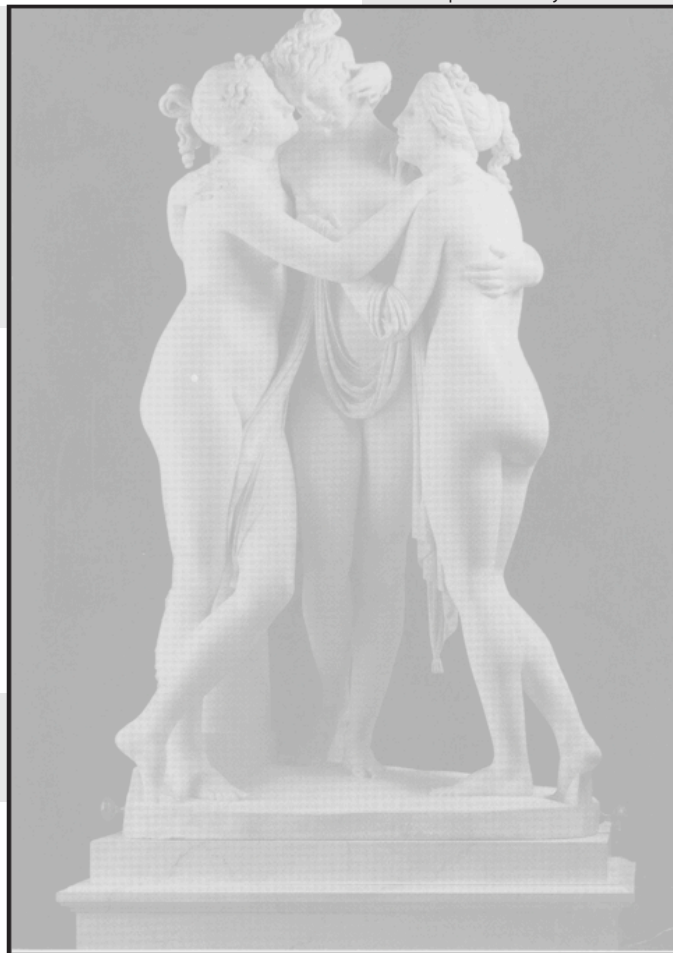
"We should be good because I think more and more as the pressures of different socio-economic pressures are hitting us we are realizing we aren't independent individuals anymore. I think the sense of individualism that was prominent 50 years ago, it's not the same as it once was... I think we're realizing we can't stand alone. In order to overcome things we have to stand together collectively... As pressure continues to climb I think we'll be pushed with the reality of I can't stand alone"

Jonathan Farrel - BSA Graduate

"Morality is ultimately subjective, but following one's

own moral code in the pursuit of 'good' grounds you in a sense of common humanity with others, without which life can be easily robbed of all meaning. Whether this 'goodness' is a manifestation of some divine nature is impossible to know, but at an earthly level it is definitely a human good. All of this depends on one's definition of good, however, which may place other objectives as ascendant over uniform good will to other. Makes you feel better about yourself. If you are a "bad" person, then inside you feel poorly about how you are as a person. That is a tough question!"

Daniel McFarlane - History





Originally published in *Prairie Messenger*

By Richard Medernach

# What's your share of \$10 million?

"You are warmly invited to join the community of Development and Peace members and partners in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East as they strive to build a world of justice where all live in dignity and peace." – Msgr. Pierre Morissette, President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. On March 9th the season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, a day where we are called to turn back to God. Ash Wednesday is also the day that Development and Peace's Share Lent campaign kicks off. This year, the goal is to raise ten million dollars for development projects with partners in the Global South as well as for emergency aid responses. So let me ask you, what is your share of that ten million to be raised? Lent is a time to grow spiritually – traditionally by making sacrifices – in preparation for the great celebration of Easter. For the last decade or more, Development and Peace's Share Lent program has been a cornerstone of my personal Lenten experience. I use the season of Lent to give up ignorance about a social justice issue and to take on prayer for and solidarity with the world's poor. I try to temporarily give up something that I value so that I can share with those who have so little; so that I can have a small taste of what life without instant gratification is like. It really is the least I can do.

This year, Development and Peace has produced a 30 page Share Lent Magazine to educate us about the work of D&P partners and to encourage us to engage in the Share Lent campaign. It is remarkable to read the partners' stories of triumph in the face of such adversity, all of which is made possible by the support of, and approach to justice taken by, Development and Peace. These success stories are made possible by the donations of people like you and me. D&P partner success stories include the women's organizations in East Timor who successfully created laws to protect against domestic violence, and the farmer's co-operatives in Sierra Leone who have increased local food production capacity by fifty percent. This list goes on. I would heartily recommend spending some time reading the Share Lent Magazine. It is uplifting and inspiring.

While the long-term development projects are D&P's forte, the organization, being part of Caritas Internationalis also has tremendous capacity to help in emergency situations. The earthquake in Haiti and the floods in Pakistan are the two recent examples. By working with local partner agencies that are part of the Caritas network, aid from Development and Peace can be quickly and effectively distributed and the transition from emergency response to long-term reconstruction can occur smoothly.

Whether you are new to Lenten discipline or a seasoned veteran, I encourage you to consider making Share Lent part of your preparation for Easter. It is really easy to do. A good place to start is

the 2011 Solidarity Calendar that gives daily suggestions during the season of Lent for prayer and donations related to Development and Peace. Some days are very simple such as the suggestion for Sunday March 13 where we are asked to pray for the people of Africa. Other days are a glimpse into something larger such as the March 28 suggestion to give \$2 in support of INSAN in Iraq that helps those who have been made homeless by war. Not knowing what INSAN is, I go to the Share Lent magazine (available online now and coming soon to your parish) and discover more about them. In doing so I learn about their struggle and their success and I gladly drop a toonie into my Share Lent jar. The purpose of the solidarity calendar is to get you thinking about social justice, praying for those in need, and sharing your blessings.

For youth looking for a Share Lent experience, perhaps your school or parish is hosting a Think-Fast. Although it's been a few years since my youth, I remember those 25 hour education and fundraising fasts as a lot of fun, very informative, and leaving me with a sense of accomplishment. It felt good to raise money for such a worthy endeavour and to have a sense of hope for a better world. Also of interest to youth, though not exclusively so, is the launch of Share Lent 2.0. Development and Peace is reaching out through Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and a new blog to spread the good news and to gain more supporters.

A new opportunity is available this year for those who wish to participate in online fundraising for Development and Peace. Through the Share Lent blog, you can learn how to set up your personal fundraising page to encourage your personal networks to support D&P. This is a great option for those of you who may have little money to give but who might be able to make a big difference by getting your friends and family engaged in the campaign. Perhaps you can offer your time and talents to friends and family in exchange for donations to Share Lent.

If you, like me, are long past your youth, you might consider stepping up to the level of becoming a share year-round member of Development and Peace. By making automatic monthly contributions, you can more easily support the work of Development and Peace. For me, it's easier to contribute a modest amount each month than a larger donation on Solidarity Sunday. I don't even miss the money because it's gone from my account before I knew I had it.

The theme for this year's Share Lent campaign is "building a word of justice". The goal is to raise ten million. What's your part in building a world of justice? What's your share of ten million?

For more information visit [sharelent.devvp.org](http://sharelent.devvp.org) or [facebook.com/devpeace](https://facebook.com/devpeace).



Joke idea by  
Paul Thompson

## \$50,000 Poetry Prize!

Recently, IMR was contacted by one of the publication's founding editors, Len Epp, who had this news release to share:

A group of leading poets from around the world has organized the biggest poetry competition in history. The new Montreal International Poetry Prize will award \$50,000 for a single poem of 40 lines or fewer, written in any English dialect. Designed to bring more attention to poetry and to encourage people from all over the world to enter their poems, the not-for-profit Montreal Prize represents a major contribution to the global cultural scene.

To reflect its global perspective, the Montreal Prize has assembled an editorial board of accomplished poets from Australia, Canada, England, Guyana, India, Jamaica, Malawi, Nigeria, Northern Ireland and the US. These poets will select 50 poems for the competition's shortlist, which will be published in a unique global poetry anthology, representing the very latest work from around the world. From these finalists, Andrew Motion, the 2011 prize judge and former UK poet laureate, will select the winner of the \$50,000 prize.

"Students may find it especially valuable to consider the idea of 'global poetry,'" says Asa Boxer, a Montreal poet and Montreal Prize co-founder. "Poets and poetry scenes tend to be nationally-minded. We created this project, in part, to broaden the horizons of our reading."

Funding for the project has been organized in an innovative manner, and along the lines of cutting-edge social entrepreneurship, according to Len



### The Unmoved Mover

Epp, another Montreal Prize co-founder. "While the prize amount has been guaranteed by a generous 'catalyst' donor," says Mr. Epp, "our not-for-profit model is based on the principles of community funding."

"Crucially, all poems will be judged anonymously - that is, the judges will have no idea whose work they're reading, or where the author is from," adds Mr. Epp. "In this way we hope to discover new voices and level the playing field for everyone who enters the competition." The early entry deadline for the competition is April 22.

For more information on the Montreal International Poetry Prize, visit <http://www.montrealprize.com>.

Beyond the fact that this is an awesome competition, it gives an idea of what you can do when you have worked on a journal like In Medias Res. If you are interested in becoming a part of the editorial board, please contact us at [inmediasres@stmcollege.ca](mailto:inmediasres@stmcollege.ca) or visit our website [www.stmcollege.ca/imr](http://www.stmcollege.ca/imr) for more information.

## IMR Goes to The Adjustment Bureau

**Darrell:** First of all, did you like the movie?

**Torrie:** Great movie. Entertaining and thought provoking!

**Kat:** Yes.

**Aaron:** The Adjustment Bureau, as a movie, is a refreshing break from the meaningless blockbuster hits that Hollywood pumps out week by week. The movie actually makes the viewer think about what the nature of his/her decisions is. To me the question that the movie asks is 'What rules us—free will or fate?' This is a tough question for anyone to answer because I think everyone wants to believe that they are in control of their own life. To say that the movie fully addresses this question of free will is obviously ludicrous. That would take a lot more than the 2 hours (give or take) that this film gives.

**Whitney:** Yeah, it was neat to see Hollywood deal with one of the questions that we've all been writing about since first year... It was an interesting perspective on the problem.

**Stephen:** I thought the movie was entertaining certainly, but it did not turn out to be what I was expecting and not in a good way necessarily either.

**D:** There seemed to be a few themes running through the movie. What are your thoughts about this?

**K:** I liked the mixture of themes: fighting for love and freedom, the fight between free will and fate, and the master plan that is created by an unknown source. I think that the variety of themes not only encourages the viewer to enjoy the movie, but it also gives the viewer the opportunity to think about the topics that the movie brings up.

**A:** I think that the film does have some philosophical tinges but it really is more of a love story than anything. "The Adjustment Bureau" in the movie could easily be replaced by some other opposing force- a jealous ex-boyfriend, David's important job, anything really- and the movie would seem like any other. The philosophical addition to the movie is that the opposing force is fate.

**S:** I agree that the philosophical idea of fate came across much more strongly in the trailer than in the movie itself, though it certainly was there. Rather, I should say that it seemed from the trailer that it was going to be a much stronger theme in the movie than it actually was.



**D:** Was the question of free will fully addressed, or is the movie better watched simply for its love story?

**T:** The Adjustment Bureau is a love story. If it is, in fact, anything else, that comes second to the romance.

**K:** The issue of free will in 'The Adjustment Bureau' is not fully addressed. I think if there is such thing as Fate, it has to be complete. If our lives are led by Fate, every single decision we make is because of our destiny. This was not the case in the movie because the characters were able to make decisions on their own (like the character played by Matt Damon, when he decided to give fate the finger and follow his heart), therefore their lives were not ruled by fate. I think the movie is better for the love story because it adds to the dilemma of whether one must follow the path that has been chosen for he/she or if they can choose to do as they like.

**W:** I agree. It was pretty romance-focused. It was the first time in my life that I've found myself with too many Matt Damon make-out scenes and not enough talk about philosophy.

**S:** I think as well that the movie is better appreciated as a love story. If someone wants to get a handle on the idea of free will they would be much better off reading Augustine or Thomas Aquinas.

**D:** Obviously we were hoping for the film to have serious philosophical import. Do you think that it did?

**T:** The movie creates a very entertaining idea of how free will exists by personifying fate. The plot of the movie, however, operates under the assumption that there is a plan and order in our universe. The story is a thought-provoking opinion—not an educational course in metaphysics. If you're interested in serious philosophical ideas, spend the \$20 bucks on a book instead.

**K:** I think the film did ask the question as to whether or not humans have the choice to live as they please or whether every decision they make is predetermined. I also liked the idea that the characters had to fight for what they believed in. It's a lesson that you have to work hard for what you want.

**S:** I agree with Torrie. The movie really does not have any true philosophical import. And, as I already said, the fact is that there are some philosophers who deal with the question much more deeply. The way the movie

ends with God basically granting free will to David and Elise seems pretty cheap—as if they are the only ones deserving of free will. Hah.

**D: I think, as Stephen mentioned, that the trailer was certainly misleading in terms of the way it tried to draw the viewer in by aiming at our curiosity surrounding free will. I'm not so sure that it really did so. Thoughts?**

T: The movie did a great job of tugging at natural human curiosity.

K: I think that the trailer was certainly misleading in terms of the way it tried to draw the viewer in with its aiming at gut feelings of needing to act upon something we strongly believe in, namely free will. I'm not so sure that it really did so.

W: The trailer put a huge emphasis on the need to fight for free will, but I believe that the theme of love came out a little more strong than the free will theme did.

S: We already know what I think about this.

**D: It would seem to be true that we have these strong feelings towards free will. Are these reasonable?**

T: Absolutely.

K: I think it's important to be able to make your own choices, especially when it comes to big decisions.

S: Definitely. There is no good reason why I can think of that we cannot all have free will.

**D: Do you believe that we actually have free will?**

T: We certainly have the appearance of free will, and I live my life accordingly. Unfortunately, there is no possible way of knowing anything beyond that.

K: I'd like to believe that I'm the one who decides how to live my life, but I have to admit, I like to think that I am destined to do something with my life.

A: Personally, I have tried hard to believe that free will exists. Like most people, I want to feel like I am in complete control of my life. But really looking back at it, all of my life's most important decisions were really no brainers and didn't involve much thought. However, to say that I am a total believer in fate is a lie. I have never felt like I was on a path laid out by God (or 'The Chairmen' as the movie calls it I think). So what does this leave? Well, I don't know. I could say chance, but couldn't that be another word for fate? Or are they different? If meeting the love of your life on a bus is fate, is being hit by that same bus fate as well? I think you have to ask this question because fate has to go both ways. I really don't think free will exists, but I don't want to chalk my life up to fate neither. I guess I like to believe we are governed more by concrete or empirically

tested concepts like human instinct, social contracts or political powers.

W: I think free will lies in the distinction between acting for good reasons and acting for bad reasons. In your example, if you follow your instincts unquestioningly, then you're acting for bad reasons and I wouldn't say that you're free. But if you question your instincts and do research into what ought to be done in your circumstances, then you are acting for good reasons and you can be said to be free. Although the data available to you on how to act is controlled by your environment, the degree to which you investigate them and reason through them determines whether or not you are free. Freedom without reason is randomness, which I don't think anyone would call truly free.

**D: Would you go watch the movie again?**

T: Um, YES. Matt Damon is dreamy.

K: Not in theatre, but I could watch it again on TV or DVD.

A: I don't think I will go see the movie again. It was a rather predictable movie once you got past the philosophical questions that it asked. I think it was a justifiable outing for IMR though because it does ask questions about being "In medias res" even if it is just a small look at a large question. We can't expect anyone in Hollywood to answer a question about the existence of free will, it's hard enough for philosophers, but the movie inspired thought and I think that was what it was supposed to do."

W: I wouldn't see this movie again for philosophical reasons. If I get low on the Matt Damon make-out scenes side of things I might.

S: Well I certainly won't need any more Matt Damon make-out scenes to make my life fulfilling, so I think next time I'll just stick with my books. Hopefully Hollywood will start to come out with some decent movies though.

**D: We don't usually go to a movie. Do you think that this was a good idea, or should we return to doing something out of the ordinary?**

T: So maybe the movie wasn't as emotional as our afternoon at the opera, but it still managed to get everyone of us talking and thinking. Time well spent!

K: I liked going to the movie, but I would like to do things out of the ordinary.

S: A play a Persephone would undoubtedly be more satisfying, so maybe that's where we'll head again next time.

W: Yeah, that last play we watched at Persephone was much more entertaining. We should find something different to do next time.



# Chasing Rainbows

By: Carina Puls

A rainbow appears  
Trail to a pot of gold  
Path to misery.

Danger, excitement  
An innocent beginning  
But it never lasts.

Gold turns into wish  
Chasing every fantasy  
Running fool's errands.

Blind from pure wisdom  
Refusing reality  
We hide from the truth.

Lying to ourselves  
Lost in the impossible  
Killing for the dream.

Storm clouds approaching  
Anger accumulating  
The end of friendship.

Brightness interrupts  
Lightning strikes through the grey fog  
Creates the fire.

Flames of destruction  
Consume until there is one  
Survivor standing.

After the damage  
A rainbow shows the pathway  
The consolation.

Above the shadows  
Rests the vibrant path leading  
To the pot of gold.  
The treasure is yours  
It came at a heavy price.  
Was it worth it?

Money over friends  
That is what you have chosen  
And a life alone.

A rainbow appears  
Trail to a pot of gold  
Path to misery.

photo by: Gibby Davis



# Incandescent

By Kimberley Hartwig

Summer is burning.  
Do you see it?  
The flames licking the trunks of trees  
and the bicycles of the boys up the road.  
It's growing now.  
Fuelled by popsicle sticks and Bermuda shorts,  
jump ropes and laughter.

Can you smell it?  
Smells like burning memories.  
It sticks in your nostrils like the  
sweet aroma of flowers.  
Don't let it go.

Can you taste it?  
Tastes like burning lovers.  
It gets caught in your throat like  
words that should have been said.  
Don't let them die.

Summer is burning.  
I can see it.  
I can smell it.  
I can taste it.  
And I can't put out the flames.

We're burning.  
Can you feel it?

# The Encompassing Shadow

Mark Doerksen

**I awoke to darkness.** The sweet smell of the sea wisped away to be replaced by sulphur. The touch of the sand was supplanted by brimstone. The cool ocean air had given way to a monstrous heat. Where I had once stood had now all become shadow. Had I died? I saw then a curious sight before me. A man dressed in bronze and holding a spear and shield. He stood looking down as if in curiosity. I asked him of my present location. He told me we must be in Tartarus. I asked him what Tartarus was and he responded most angrily with a diatribe about all his accomplishments.

The Great Achilles was who the man said he was. He told me of all his glories and achievements in his earthly life. He told me that he had gained fame and honour above all men through his participation in the siege of the Trojan city of Troy. He told me how he had lost all sense of honour and excellence after the death of his friend Patroclus, and how he regained it after the kindly king Priam convinced him to return the body of his son Hector, whom had been slain by Achilles. He was most bitter about the manner of his death and claimed that such an affront to his honour was unbearable. It was his damnation to the depths of Tartarus, however, that caused him such offense. Why, he asked me, was he being punished by the gods in the after-life after all the immortal fame and glory he had won?

I was greatly puzzled by his words. He still cared about all he had done in his earthly life. He spoke with as much pride about the horses, gold, and women he had won as though they were not beyond his touch. I confronted him about the futility of all he had gained and all the glory achieved since he now languished in the place of despair. Achilles responded with resentment. All the pains and trials of life did not make the actions of men futile, was his argument. The honour and strength of men was what was remembered, and Achilles determined that the darkness we then inhabited was made that much lighter by his thoughts of that name of Achilles ringing out from the lips of the bards forever more.

I asked Achilles who would praise his name once all those who witnessed his exploits died. He responded that those who had heard the stories would pass them on from generation to generation. Who, after all the kingdoms of men have fallen, would then sing the praises of Achilles? What worth would he find in the eternal night if none now lived to sing the songs? Achilles wasn't concerned with such things, he said. The world for him was as it was. He couldn't see the impending shadow.

I no longer trusted in the valour of men. I had seen a hero with all the bravery and strength of Achilles, and yet what did he achieve in the end? My poor

king lies fallen and cold. His kingdom came to ruin and all came to darkness. Whatever primeval forces which that drove such men drove them ever on to oblivion. A casket and a flickering flame at the end of the tunnel is how the journey ends. Where then did Achilles go? He went to the underworld Hel, or Hell, call it what you like. He's dead and I'm still here telling you of him. Until I can let go of the past and those men of renown who have made the world a stage for their heroic deeds and face my fate I suppose I shall continue to relate the tales of old. Those heroes and men like Achilles are soon fated to join me in this living despair. All their deeds have passed into shadow now. I roamed the shores seeking answers, but all I heard was the heroic past fading away. The exploits of great men became more distant. Where have the great men gone? Where are the likes of Achilles and the heroes of old? They have faded away as do we all.

In the black I saw a broken man. Achilles was back in Troy it seemed as I looked in his eyes. I realized then why he couldn't let go of the past. He had left himself nothing else. The world and his deeds in it were all he had and now that they had come to darkness. What could he do but hold on to the memories? I watched as he slowly, day by day, grew more and more distant until he faded away. He became a voice in the endless dark until that too faded. I heard the name of Achilles echo out from the world above as they sang tales of great deeds and daring action. The fools! Don't they see that Achilles is damned? Don't they see his exploits mean nothing? For all he did, Achilles still died and is here with me. All heroes die and all falls into shadow. Achilles fell when he realized that all that he had put stock in was not enough. So too I realize it. For days immemorial I wandered the shores remembering my old friends and companions. I lamented their passing and looked always for the meaning of my pitiful existence. It's not in the stories. The stories are dead. The past is dead. I am dead. But wait, I think I behold a flickering light in the north. It is elusive and I cannot find it. Does it hold my hope? Does it hold my purpose? I shall find out. Know this brave Achilles, if I find the reason, if I find the causes of all you have suffered and performed, I shall tell you straight away. Even if you are beyond the hearing of my words I shall tell you nevertheless. Until then, I wander, looking for the light. As I wandered the shores seeking answers to my lost past, so now I wander eternity. I shall not weary, but continue ever on to whatever end. I am forever feeling and forever wanting. I am forever hoping and forever doubting. I am forever seeing and forever seeking. I am the wanderer.

# If you win it, they will come: AN ECONOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF FILM, STAR POWER, AND THE OSCARS

by Reagan Reese Seidler



*"An offer they can't refuse."*

There's an old adage that alleges movies are recession-proof. As incomes decline, says the theory, a cash-strapped populace in need of entertainment will buy fewer vacations and,

instead, hit the cinema. But is this enough to explain the record-breaking numbers we've seen from some films in the last five years? More importantly, just how does one account for the billion-dollar difference between *Avatar* and *The Social Network*? Using econometric analysis – specifically, a least-squares multiple regression model – one can successfully break down the numbers and determine which factors influence a film's gross earnings, and by how much.

**Table 1: t-Test Results**  
( $\alpha = 5\%$ , critical value 1.67)

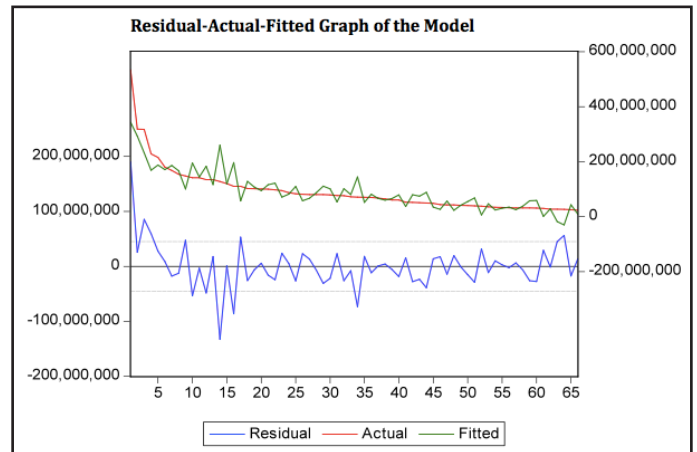
Category	t-Stat	Result
ADVENTURE	-1.358952	Insig.
COMEDY	-1.236142	Insig.
DRAMA	-0.589400	Insig.
FAMILY	-2.474393	Significant
COMPEARN	-0.137461	Insig.
OPSCREENS	4.594585	Significant
OSCARNOM	2.346433	Significant
POPAPP (RTC)	3.160831	Significant
PRODBUD	2.995962	Significant
STARGROSS	2.664034	Significant

When a consumer decides to see a film, two related choices must be made: first, the choice to go to the movies; and second, the choice to see a particular movie over all others. This assumption leads one to expect certain relationships among variables. Movies with certain strengths, such as an Oscar win, may induce consumers to choose both seeing a film and seeing that specific film. This should indicate certain properties will have high positive relationships with a film's total earnings. Similarly, if a competitor film has won an Oscar, the competitor's success will be a loss for others, as we assume films to be close substitutes for one another. The variables used in this study indeed reflect these expected relationships, and lead one to have confidence in the analysis.

The following results are based on a data set consisting of 66 of the top 112 highest-grossing films which opened in 2008. Variables are measured in terms of their impact on gross domestic revenue (USD).

*"Show me the money!"*

Films with high production budgets can employ the finest effects, directors, and production team, and are an indicator of its advertising budget and the potential a studio believes it to have. Similarly, the peak number



of screens on which a film plays reveals its distributive potential, as well as its success in generating attention.

The production budget coefficient indicates that revenue grows at about half the rate of investment. In other words, each \$1 increase of the budget increases earnings by 50¢. For every additional screen on which a film plays, earnings increase by \$55,584. These numbers must be interpreted in the context of Hollywood marketing, however, and may be influenced by economies of scale or diminishing marginal returns.

	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	-1.66E+08	45707891	-3.622114	0.0006
ADVENTURE	-34114907	25103835	-1.358952	0.1797
COMEDY	-29482742	23850603	-1.236142	0.2217
DRAMA	-16889465	28655358	-0.589400	0.5580
FAMILY	-82321587	33269409	-2.474393	0.0165
COMPEARN	-0.024837	0.180680	-0.137461	0.8912
OPSCREENS	55584.04	12097.73	4.594585	0.0000
OSCARNOM	6711915.	2860476.	2.346433	0.0226
POPAPP (RTC)	1015703.	321340.3	3.160831	0.0026
PRODBUD	0.496862	0.165844	2.995962	0.0041
STARGROSS	0.003181	0.001194	2.664034	0.0101
R-squared	0.751574	Mean dependent var		92454969
Adjusted R-squared	0.706405	S.D. dependent var		83190700
S.E. of regression	45076364	Akaike info criterion		38.23663
Sum squared resid	1.12E+17	Schwarz criterion		38.60157
Log likelihood	-1250.809	Hannan-Quinn criter.		38.38083
F-statistic	16.63936	Durbin-Watson stat		1.661575
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			

cont'd on next page...



*"To infinity, and beyond!"*

Genre is not the factor some might expect. Horror is the most successful genre: dramas earn roughly \$17 million less, comedies \$30M, and family films \$82M. However, statistically speaking, "family" is the only genre of statistical relevance.

*"I'll have what she's having."*

It seems the easiest way to make money is simply to make a film which people enjoy. For every percentage increase of popular approval, as measured by the Rotten Tomatoes Community Ranking, a film grosses an additional million dollars.

If the RT scale measures popular appeal, what about its critical reception? Luckily for cinema fans, artistic integrity pays off. The value of an Oscar nomination is \$6.7 million. That goes a long way, if you consider that *The King's Speech* had 12.

*"Round up the usual suspects."*

Rule of thumb: pull from the A-list. "Star Gross" is an ingenious measure of star power. For each star in the film, one calculates the total earnings of the films that star has appeared in during their lifetime. Then, the actors' totals are added together to create a film's "Star Gross". Rather than arbitrarily indicating actors as "stars" or otherwise, this offers a quantitative measure

of the stars' effect upon film earnings. The effect of inflation on box-office earnings also naturally favours the recent celebrities. It was upon this basis, however, that data from many films were excluded from the sample set, as the Star Gross failed to accurately capture the effect of the celebrities.

One could, for example, release a new feature starring the Queen, John Lennon, and Moses. While it would certainly draw audiences, the "Star Gross" would be equal to zero.

The "Star Gross" coefficient was \$0.0032. What does this mean? Take Tom Hanks, with a career gross of about \$3.9 billion. Using the multiplier, his appearance is worth roughly \$12.7 million.

*"Say hello to my little friend."*

Lastly, here's an astonishing claim: movies are not substitute goods for one another. "Compearn" measures the sum of the earnings of a film's top-5 competitors on its opening weekend. The coefficient -.02 means that for every dollar one of the five competitor films earn, the opening film loses only 2¢ - much less than the cost of a ticket. However, t-test results indicate this variable is not statistically significant. From this, it appears the question of "go to the movies, or do not" does not affect consumer choices at all. That puts the burden on producers, then: make a good movie, or else!



photo by:  
Gibby  
Davis

# The Pope and the Joker

Katherine Duncombe

A newly deceased Pope stood at the gates of Heaven and waited to be admitted by St. Saint Peter.

"I'm going to become a Saint, as well," The Pope boasted.

"Uh huh," responded St. Peter idly as he flicked through the pages of Heavens "in" book, seeking The Pope's name.

"Someday I may be doing your job. I was The Pope down there, you know," he pointed down at the earth.

"Here's your name. You're free to enter," said St. Peter, ignoring The Pope's last remark.

The great pearly gates swung open gracefully to The Pope and he entered, head held high.

After spending some time in Heaven, The Pope could not bring himself to enjoy the place he would spend eternity. The food was astonishing. Everything had a melt-in-your-mouth quality, yet the boisterous pranks of one particular man ruined the beautiful essence the food had. The music was usually divine, until the man screeched along to gospels and belched through hymns. The Angels were beautiful, but became frightful with rage when the man tried to pinch their bottoms.

The citizens of Heaven deemed this man The Joker.

One day, The Pope was seated upon a soft and fluffy cloud with a brother that had passed before him. They were enjoying each other's company, for they hadn't seen one another in quite some time. The Joker poked his head through the clouds on which they were sitting and startled them so they jumped and spilt their Heavenly tea. He laughed at their irate response and pranced away. A small group of people nearby observed The Joker's cruel prank, and came to sit with The Pope and his brother.

"How on earth did he get into Heaven?" One man enquired, an expression of disgust upon his face.

"He doesn't belong here!" Another added.

And so the group elected The Pope to go and speak with The Joker, to determine how he was admitted into Heaven.

The Pope approached The Joker and asked, "How did you get into Heaven?"

The Joker grinned ear to ear and gave a mischievous wink. "I made people laugh and spread joy when I was alive." He replied.

"That's it?" The Pope was appalled, and his jaw dropped in disbelief. "That's all?"

The Joker nodded and laughed.

"Why, that's unfair! I had to work to get into Heaven. I prayed all my life—"

"That's fine and all, but did you ever make anyone laugh?"

The Pope shuffled his feet and stared at the clouds in reply.

"Uh huh, that's what I thought. Anyway, I have business to attend to," he noticed a couple of Angels tittering nearby. "I'll see you later—"

"I can be funny," The Pope said defiantly before The Joker could turn to leave.

"Sure you can," he paused. "Prove it."

The Pope smiled when he recalled an excellent joke a youngster had told him years before — it had brought tears to his eyes. "A man walks into a bar and sits down, when he hears a tiny voice say 'Nice tie!', and —"

"Yeah, I've heard it. The peanuts are complimentary." He said, looking longingly at the Angels.

The Pope thought urgently to think of another joke to

please The Joker, but he was as distracted by The Joker, who was now whistling at the Angels. They glowered at him and floated away. When The Pope came up with nothing, The Joker began to leave again when a brilliant idea occurred to him.

"You want to be a funny man?" The Pope listened intently. "I'll help make you the ultimate funny man. If you really want to be funny, you must pull a prank... on God."

The Pope's eyes went wide, "On God? I don't think so—"

The Joker shrugged. "Fine, remain a humourless prayer man for eternity..."

The Pope grew angry. "I have served God all my life in the most patriotic way. To pull a prank on him would be..." he paused to find the appropriate word. "Treacherous."

The Joker rolled his eyes. "Really, you're so predictable. Do it and everyone won't know what to expect next!"

"I'm a good man, and I refuse to betray my Lord! Even if it means I'm dull —"

The Joker lost his temper. "DO AS I SAY!"

"NEVER!" The Pope shouted back.

The Joker became a great snarling beast of hatred, with hooves for feet, a forked tail on its backside, a fiery trident in its scaly hand, and pointy horns upon its red head. The Pope recognized this 'man' for what he truly was in an instant: he was The Devil.

The Pope abruptly remembered why he had approached 'The Joker' to begin with and repeated the question he was sent to ask. "How did you get into Heaven?"

The ugly beast leaned down and hissed at The Pope. "I hid in the soul of a man who spread joy and laughter at the exact moment he died, and with God so busy, he overlooked me," it grinned with slimy teeth and The Pope recoiled in horror. He grabbed the rosary from his chest and began to pray.

The Devil snarled in fury and raised a terrible claw to strike The Pope, when Michael the Archangel flew from above carrying golden chains made of love and threw them upon The Devil. They wrapped themselves methodically around the great beast and it could only writhe in anguish.

Then there was a blinding light that was God, and in a voice that rumbled like thunder, he addressed The Devil: "I knew what you were the minute you slipped into the young man's soul as he died and I know that you wanted to corrupt The Pope's heart so you could use him against me. But I needed to see if The Pope was truly as loyal as he claimed. By defying you as The Joker, he has indeed declared his loyalty to me,"

The Devil screamed angrily and The Pope glowed in pride. "As The Pope has passed the test, you will leave that poor man's soul here and never again will you pass the gates of Heaven in any form unless I will it." With that, the clouds beneath The Devil parted, and he fell through, shrieking and consumed in madness, leaving behind the stolen soul to fall through the earth into the kingdom of Hell.

From that day on, Heaven was as it should be. The food was astonishing, and had a melt-in-your mouth quality; the music was divine and so lovely it made all who listened to it weep in delight; and the beautiful Angels danced with joy. And what of The Pope? For his loyalty to God, he got St. Peter's job at the gate.

# The Way We Walk

Gone and dizzied ourselves  
While striding great circles  
And surely it's noted  
We've grown weak in the knees

The pressure of two legs  
Is weighing us down  
Best re-measure this burden  
Before a slip and a fall

And we know more is needed  
To find our way home  
Than a few disappearing footprints  
In the soot and the snow

So, green shoot to grey dust  
Best bind our tongues now  
Else, at soul's reflection, stare  
Murmur deep within a hag

Yet, if chosen to watch than walk  
Then when space and time transfigure  
Let's dignifiedly dive off Chinvat,  
Spare the humiliation of ourselves

By Marc Lagace

photo by: Gibby Davis





# A Split Shadow in the Valley

Eric Rausch

It does not befit a prince, Asmodeus, to inconvenience guests of the king by leaving too many dogs to guard the gate. Nor a demonlord, Asmodeus, to be seen outwitted by a devil's mere vassal. Yet both are circumstances you have always forced by playing guardian of the threshold to Hell's Third Circle, allowing none but your fellow crown princes access to the lower levels. It is an amusing but unsustainable situation, requiring interlopers to gauge the importance of their business in the lower Circles: which demonlord do they disobey by turning back, and is his wrath likely to be at all preferable to fighting one's way through Asmodeus' welcome? I am bound for the lowest Circle, however, at the behest of the one farthest fallen among us, and so there is no choice to be made; Asmodeus must be dealt with.

The malformed minions serving as his guards are taken handily. Their spindly limbs are impossibly strong, but the creatures have little recourse against the breed I represent, which is more powerful still, and has no need to be within arm's reach to destroy a thing. These specimens favour a quick set of attacks designed to stun, followed by a crude overhead smash. And in that moment when the mighty hands twine for the cause of crushing my skull and spine together, existence seems surprisingly potent. Some layer of skin is shed, and heedless of the bitter cysts my mind has developed of late, the serpent breathes his predatory nature anew. I love any creature which presents its vital parts so enticingly. For a moment they allow me to put aside what I have come to know.

Here now; the guards are not dead a moment before Asmodeus has noted the intruder. The surface of Hell breaks, ripples, and recrystalizes, is now composed largely of the demonlord himself. A little hill to my side thrashes bizarrely back and forth, in a rhythm that reveals the rocky aggregate to be his chin. His face is somewhat more difficult to distinguish – a few socket-like chasms, a range of stalagmites in a disarrayed imitation of a set of teeth, squirming and lengthening with his eager breath.

"You," he sneers.

"Me."

"Lazy slaves receive no clemency. Lucifer is displeased with your prolonged inactivity."

Asmodeus is a barely competent liar, but on this score, I suspect, not wrong. My service to the Fallen One of late has fallen ill of my solitary meditations. I have conducted some reconnaissance, captured a few lowly cherubs, paid visits to the mortals, and generated legions, but none of it within the century. Still, Lucifer tolerates a great deal of me, because I remind him of himself. A dispassionate deceiver, capable of corrupting roots where the princes would expend energies hacking trunks.

"I will hear that from the Morning Star himself, if you please."

"Hear from me what you need to know. I am not impressed by you; your failures outnumber your successes mightily, and I more than suspect it is a corruption by the Messiah of Nazareth that makes you stumble. You mortal-consorting lower abortions never fail to be shaken by his words. You will only be cleansed by drowning in a stronger will. Struggle as you like."

And at his command, every breathable particle in the Second Circle ignites – those in my vicinity, in my lungs and pores. I am no match for one of Hell's crown princes in a contest of force, and my defenses are overtaken instantly. The teeth of Asmodeus extend and taper, writhing like stone worms, closing around their frantic prey. They close in sequence like a zipper, pushing and breaking and reshaping me to smear like gristle between the teeth.

If we ever choose to have a Judgment Day of our own, Asmodeus, I intend to make you repay what you have cost me in doppelgängers. But for now, I proceed.

The spiral staircase of the Ninth Circle is the "bottom" point of reference for the two-dimensional cosmology the God-thing favours – of a Heaven at altitude and a Hell that is somehow submerged – and is incredibly cold. All walks of mortal traitors dwell here, frozen in a kind of dark ice that appears equal parts crystal and ebony – no glitter, no pleasant transparency. They are silent, and the only sound is the spritely cracking of bones, ricocheting about the vast pit as pressures shift below the ice. And at the centre is the cause of all this misery. Lucifer, waist-deep in the frozen ooze, wriggling his legs in imperceptible increments, birthing waves. Lucifer our king, a great caged pet. Trapped here by the God-thing but apparently not a great enough threat to Him to warrant destruction.

When I see him – a sallow, degenerated thing that a mortal might be relieved and vaguely disappointed to call his nemesis – I know I look upon a very dangerous, unimaginative child. I consider the loud, teeming empire Lucifer has in mind to forge in Heaven and discover I care nothing for it. In millennia I have seen enough that once my mind conceives of a possibility, I can instantly know the results – it has, as far as I am concerned, already happened. There is no pleasure in waging the wars – rearranging the matter, redirecting the energy – to actually bring the thing into reality.

And yet my "superiors" spend their energies on little other than renovating Creation. Leviathan, Amon, Asmodeus – all the rest – and king Lucifer frozen here, clutch passions and revenge fantasies hard. For all their powers and various fractions of omniscience, they still crave to hear the little sound of their saliva spattering on the face of the God-thing. Of immortals one

expects more maturity, but we are still amused by endlessly turning these cogs of causation, motivated to make our wars by the feelings that a victor feels, by the spoils. It is a system stupid beyond words, deprived of all meaning if the God-thing should refuse to weep for the Devil after He has lost, or better yet, refuse to resist at all. Force upon the vain Lucifer an effortless victory, and the Devil will feel he has lost. One way or another, Lucifer should count on Him to keep the demons from satisfaction of any kind; it has been my experience that holy beings delight in denying us our rightful prizes.

*"I see you there, come bow – pitch  
to Devil's eye is pale,  
So stalking shadowed stair so soft,  
no end is served  
But to test my patience which in  
cold has no reserve.  
Humbly bow, brother, and learn of  
portents I've kept veiled."*

See how he talks! I remember days, five or so centuries past, when we would all communicate by summoning up verse. It is appropriate that the Devil should continue its use; for all intents in purposes, that era, as much as this one, is where he resides. Nothing for him has changed in the intervening time. I, along with any other demon who has since had occasion to leave the Circles or was bred by such a creature, am long out of practice. Yet one never completely forgets a language, once it is learned.

"Archangel.

Speak slowly; such vibration in your upper half  
may the lower distort.  
If atrophy makes you restless, demand  
entertainment of a sort!  
Why, I've stowed away two cherub spines: one  
preserved, one planted  
In living angel still. Graft them together, it may  
please you well.  
You partake in mirth so seldom, one would think  
you were in Hell!  
You are meant to suffer here. Suffer not: the  
Father's will supplanted!"

A pause before he replies. And then:

*"Your half-insolence is half-  
jest, so I let it be.  
But for now turn eyes to the  
far dark corner and see  
The inscrutable forms that flit  
back-forth cross the dark.  
For many hours now I've  
watched them  
commute that space  
Where the four horsemen are*

*said to sit when idle – hark!  
Their sounds: the scream of  
air at sword's trespass, ar-  
mour being laced.  
Do not venture close, as that  
part of Hell is wholly theirs,  
But think why they prepare for  
war, and what it portends.  
Soon they'll ride on the world,  
and I climb these holy stairs.  
Freed of binding, I'll resume  
the war and bring its end."*

It is as Lucifer indicates: some kind of building pressure is localized in the far corner of the Ninth Circle. And though my line of sight is anything but clear, something of the horsemen can be sensed from their little rift in the shadows. There is power as natural and unstoppable as gravity, and a frightening absence of conscious thought. The mortals are not to be envied for the enemies they have made. Sooner than I thought, their Apocalypse must be at hand.

I return my gaze to Lucifer, wearing the devilish grin that is expected of me. I know I look upon my eventual destroyer. More generally, he will destroy all the races, but most galling is that when that great fire has passed over, he will remain. This universe which has painstakingly descended the spiral to Chaos – is tantalizingly close to the end – will widen again, and repeat its futile self. There are two main possibilities, as I see it. If Lucifer wins the second war for Heaven, up will come the castle that was his dream while in the Father's service. This dream was Lucifer's transgression, called "hubris" because Lucifer lacked something of power and subtlety, and failed. Only a minor tweak to his original design will be enacted, to acknowledge the evolution of his taste: in place of one of Lucifer's favoured musical instruments, Michael's wings will adorn the gates. He will make the God-thing watch awhile as his version of Paradise is painted over the original with the enthusiasm of pent-up millennia, and eliminate the strange entity when He refuses to bow. With this God's death, the first generation of this universe will be gone. And when all the second generation is dead – all the angelic beings, except Lucifer – the Devil will find his consciousness disturbed.

A realization will come, and crack his ancient soul: he is not by nature a destroyer. Need for revenge made him one, but when all the accounts are balanced to his satisfaction, he will again be ready to be a ruler – of the kingdom of angels he always wanted. But in place of archangels, seraphs, cherubs, he will have us: the demonic, diluted third generation. He will turn on us. Butcher us all, perhaps even weep for all that was lost to his rage. An amusing sight it would be, were its price not so high. Penance will become his obsession, and this new God will strive without rest to create the angels anew.

Should the Heavenly Father prevail, on the other hand, He will either prevent such a rebellion from occurring again, or allow it, and the whole cycle, to repeat itself. Both cases exhibit this one entity as wielding an indefensible amount of Order. No end to this tiresome tale of paradise and parricide.

I see the future too clearly to have any need to watch it come to pass. This War in Heaven, in which the near-omnipotent figures atop each faction are the only ones who matter, is a cycle that must not be re-entered. Its beginning must be averted, or its outcome altered. For though I was born the Devil's servant, any ties of true loyalty were severed when he revealed his inadequacy before the Messiah of Nazareth.

Using a thousand years' worth of conserved energies to project himself to the mortal plane even while cased in ice, Lucifer tempted the Son with kingdoms. The one who offered Christ real estate against inheritance of Heaven itself is no master of mine. I can only suspect he was attempting to duplicate my success at manipulating men in Eden, but the Messiah was not reaped of the same crop as that rabble. Lucifer would have done better to steer clear of him. At most, if Christ was very intent on his proposal of bringing a sword to the mortals and not peace, Lucifer might have offered to lend him one of ours. But instead the Devil demonstrated why he does not in the first place deserve the power he covets.

I serve only Chaos, and to It I make my vow: when at last my existence ends, no spirals of Order will be left to dirtily multiply. They will be grasped, drawn from end to end, and fed to the void.

The Devil launches forth a jaundiced, dismissing arm.

*"Time is not for us, or forgiving of  
the least taunts,  
But only briefly with us, therefore  
hone your teeth afresh  
And make ready forces, Mephistopheles. You'll eat divine flesh  
When a dialogue with God fields  
my last response."*

I must be careful. If the God-thing possesses half the power He has been attributed, I must consider the possibility that I am acting out a role for which I've been deliberately calibrated. Certainly the imagination is not taxed by the image: a forward-thinking God, knowing He should euthanize His evil child but lacking the medical details to know what poison will affect one already so toxic, plants in Lucifer's midst a virus that will adapt to his physiology. I may indeed be so microscopic a part of a divine plan. Perhaps no matter how perfect my own plans for cosmic cessation, I will only be allowed to go as far as banishing Hell and its denizens. But doubts will not undo this endeavour.

I require more knowledge of my enemies' capabilities, and a suit of armour to carry me alive to the

heavens when they open for the meeting of Father and fallen. Perhaps Archangel Gabriel could serve the first purpose; he might be convinced of the value of an exchange of information, if the proposal came from a high-caste demon thinking of defecting. And for armour, what shield could be found that is superior to Leviathan's skull? I will make a point of asking him for it.

Lastly, I require personal empowerment, to make the final bit of difference. Lucifer and the God-thing will provide most of the energy I require, but they will be sure to check their collision well short of forming a black hole. I want one – a large one. Unfortunately, it is a pathetic case of two entities being more powerful than they would really like to be, and so to preserve the universe they wish to rule forever and ever eternally, each dances 'round the other's power – one pushing forward, the other matching and adding a little more . . . and both grudgingly backing down before this gossamer reality rips. It was this way at Lucifer's fall, in all a strange spectacle: Lucifer resisting with what seemed to be the furthest reach of his ability, suspended between Heaven and Earth as the God-thing sought to push him downward. The God-thing decayed Lucifer's body on the spot, burdened his wings, attempted in all manner of ways to enact the traitor's disposal with the least expenditure of energy. But Lucifer continued to produce a little more energy . . . a little more again. Even as he shrivelled and yellowed, he did not budge, and so the God-thing allowed the stalemate to continue for well over a year, until the Angel of Light was depleted. The Creator refused to risk the single massive burst that would have sunk Lucifer like a stone. He will proceed with the same caution in the future, I trust, and something can be done to exploit it. Amplify the existing energy, or add more – these appear to be my options.

I wish there were time to more thoroughly scour the planes for an ally. But I have risked as much as I dare in testing the eight princes' loyalty to their king – quite absolute – and Heaven's gatekeepers are too cautious of me to allow my roaming too close or too long. It seems I am limited in my reinforcements to whatever legions I can conjure free of Lucifer's influence. It will not be much of an army.

Perhaps the most I can hope for is that one or two of Earth's mortals may see what I do and nod in assent. Their world is more directly touched by decay and regrowth, and it may be that they discovered the intolerable shape of an unending spiral long before any immortal ever thought to. What will they think I am? A second Lucifer – one who rebelled against the rebel – or the first Messiah to ever listen to their cries for some god-damned rest? Interesting.

Thinking practically, though, I am alone in this, and it is likely for the best. Lucifer's mistake was excessive pride, they say; mine will not be excessive trust in some ally the God-thing probably created to stab my unprotected back.

Wither ever, wither all.





photos by: Gibby Davis

## Do not believe by Veronika Makarova

Don't believe when you hear that death is the end.

Stretched and pinned to your spine, unable to move or to bend,  
You will lie for eternity with the pressure of earth on your chest.  
Don't trust those who say that death may be for the best.

Seamless wrap of the darkness, complete deprivation of sense,  
through eternity's heartbeat, as it shrinks and expands, tight and immense,  
If you could, you would cry for a glimpse, for a touch, for a pain.  
If the dead still could think, non-existence would kill them again.

No-one, nothing and never, nobody, nowhere, and none.  
Nothing comes out of nothing, there's something within, has begun.  
Flesh grows whole again and obedient as servants would be to a king,  
I can breathe, I can feel, I can see, swarms of memories rising as midges from water in spring.  
The synopsis welding the thought that cuts through my brain as a knife:  
I have been resurrected to teach to the living the meaning and glory of life.



## Faculty Files

Mary Nordick

Professor of English

### 1. Why did you choose English? Was there anything that inspired you to go into this field of teaching?

I have always loved to read because reading allows me to experience far more than I ever could in my daily living. As well, I find language fascinating. Words are magic, especially in the hands of skilled writers, be they poets, novelists, playwrights or journalists. As a child and teenager, I was never going to be a teacher, having too many in the family background and despite people telling me that I would be a good teacher. I entered University (St. Thomas More College) planning to major in psychology and become a Social Worker or librarian. My first year English teacher, Miss Marjorie Gilbert (a first time teacher) opened my eyes to the wonders of interpreting literature and I decided to do an honours program in English as well as a major in French. At the end of my honours degree, I decided that I was not ready for graduate work and thought that I might try Education. I took the internship post degree program and from the first time I stepped into a classroom I was hooked. Hearing one of my students excitedly tell a parent in a busy mall "That's my teacher!" confirmed my decision. Forty plus years later, I do not regret that choice. Doing what I love, talking about literature that I am excited about, meeting new students, seeing them hone their language skills and grow and develop as people, being challenged by students, and working with dedicated colleagues, what could be a better career?

### 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?

Ideally, I would like to see all students pursue a liberal arts education, taking subjects in the humanities, social sciences, and even some math and science, and then going on to specialize in chosen fields. Our global village world needs people who are creative, logical, disciplined, caring, flexible thinkers who can appreciate differences, who are open to new experiences, and who are willing to change while appreciating and learning from our rich human history. A liberal arts program can foster such thinkers.

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

I have always had an interest in pedagogy, the art of teaching, as I do believe that teaching is an art, albeit one that

requires sound knowledge and skills. Reading literature that delights and feeds me is essential, though teaching four first classes with maximum enrolment every term leaves little time for such pursuits.

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

I do have a family, having raised four children and hoping to be a grandmother in the not too distant future. I am also the eldest of eight siblings.

I occasionally write poetry, when I can find time or inspiration strikes (no major publication yet). The theatre is a love of mine and I indulge my delight in acting whenever anyone will give me a role in a play. Currently, I am enjoying working with the wonderful cast and crew of Newman Players' production of *Pride and Prejudice*. I have acted with Gateway Players, and Off Broadway Dinner and Children's Theatre and volunteer with The Fringe and Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan. My faith is very important and leads me to be active in social justice and community service. I currently serve on the National Executive of The Catholic Women's League of Canada as 2nd Vice President and Communications chair, which calls on my English skills for editing the monthly e-newsletter and The League magazine. Thanks to the League I went on a D&P Bishops' Mission to Africa last year, a profound life-changing experience that has led to numerous speaking engagements. I also serve on the board of directors for Friends of Loa, a non-profit development agency rebuilding a school in southern Sudan. I am active in my home parish, St. Philip Neri. Most rewarding, I have chaired and/or been a part of several refugee sponsorships.

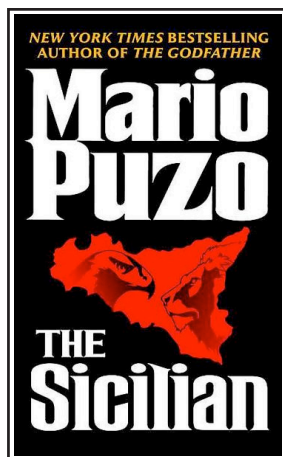
### 5. If you were to teach outside of your discipline, what area would you choose to teach and why?

I would like to teach English as a second language, although one could argue that it is not really outside my discipline. It is, however, different from teaching literature and composition to first year students. I have had some informal experience working with refugees and enjoyed the challenges of learning to communicate. I have taught French and Christian Ethics at the high school level as well. Of course with my interest in theatre, teaching drama would be great.

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

I do not have much time to go to movies or watch them on TV and oftentimes I prefer to read when I have leisure time. That said I could mention a few movies: "It's a Beautiful Life", a poignant story of a father's love during World War II; "To Kill a Mockingbird", southern racism seen through the eyes of a child; "Gone With the Wind", a sweeping romantic epic ("Frankly my dear, I don't give a damn"); musicals like "The Sound of Music", "Rent", "My Fair Lady", for great songs and memorable costumes; Disney movies for delightful animation and wonderful cartoon animals (Lucifer in *Cinderella* and Sebastian in "The Little Mermaid").

# Books Reviews



## The Sicilian

by Mario Puzo

Reviewed by Leone Zablotoni

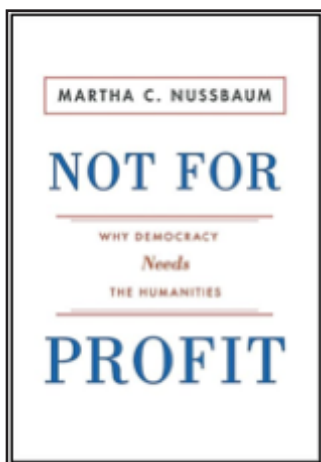
Fifteen years after the release of his iconic mobster epic *The Godfather*, author Mario Puzo returns to the world of the *Cosa Nostra* with *The Sicilian* (1984). Whereas his former work is a highly entertaining yet admittedly unfocused profile of mob life in America (much was trimmed for the film), *The Sicilian* focuses solely on one character, the real-life Sicilian bandit and folk hero Salvatore Giuliano. Fans of *The Godfather* will rejoice that this historical fiction takes the liberty of setting 1940s Sicily in the exuberant universe of the Corleones, with most events occurring during Michael Corleone's exile in Sicily, thus allowing for a subplot to form in which Michael attempts to meet with Giuliano. For the most part, however, Puzo tells the story of how 'Turi' Giuliano transformed from being a poor Sicilian labourer to Italy's Most Wanted by the tender age of twenty-one.

One of the most interesting elements of *The Sicilian* is how Puzo presents Sicily as a highly distinct culture from mainland Italy, whose subjugation of its neighbouring island

over the centuries ultimately gave rise to Sicily's infamous mafia culture. Although *The Sicilian* is a work of fiction, it provides a great deal of history and is a much better source of information on the mafia than even *The Godfather*. Initially, the mafia (called the 'Friends of the Friends' in Sicily) formed to protect the people of Sicily from a corrupt Italian government, but over the years the Friends became just another terror for Sicilians to endure. Thus, there came along Salvatore Giuliano: an outlaw in the eyes of a corrupt government, a threat to the mafia, and a beloved Robin Hood figure to his people. His story is a complex one full of romance, defiance, friendship, and – of course – betrayal as he and his band hide in the mountains of Sicily and terrorize the Italian government by raiding greedy landowners and distributing wealth and food among the poor. I am unable to comment on the accuracy of Puzo's account of events, but it appears to be generally authentic (of course, with some necessary license used throughout).

On the whole, *The Sicilian* is a better crafted work than *The Godfather*, as it avoids straying into pulp matter as the 1969 novel often did, but *The Godfather* at its best is still the more thrilling read. Most readers would likely get more out of *The Sicilian*, however, as the history is absolutely fascinating and left me feeling smarter and a great deal more knowledgeable about the mafia after having read it. To be fair, the book did ruin my desire to spend a vacation in Sicily, as it almost sounds likely that I would be massacred in one ancient blood feud or another.

ISBN-13: 978-0345441706



## Not for Profit: Why Democracy needs the Humanities

by Martha C. Nussbaum

Reviewed by  
Stephen Bagwell

In this book, philosopher Martha Nussbaum expresses her valid concern that too much emphasis is placed into streams of education which government

believes will more likely result in a net national economic profit. In undertaking a case study of the United States of America and India, the world's two largest democracies, she lays out the problems that are resulting from this misplaced emphasis and that will continue to occur if nothing is done about it. While Nussbaum focuses on the United States and India, her message is no less pertinent for Canada or indeed any other nation that believes in democratic rule.

The main problem with an educational focus towards economic gain is that it neglects to attend to those things that help to form the essential character of a sympathetic and responsible global citizen. Additionally, it fails to build one's critical thinking skills and thus the ability to lead

an "examined" life. If one believes that a democracy essentially relies on the fact that its citizens are capable of leading an "examined" life as Nussbaum proves, one would find it difficult to disagree with the rest of Nussbaum's proposition.

Nussbaum, in her manifesto, lays out the path for a system of education that she believes could help to stem the impending crisis. Her method is both philosophical and also practical, but more importantly, it is perfectly accessible to all readers. You certainly do not need a PhD to understand the point of this text. Nussbaum shows how a renewal of focus on the Humanities plays its part in a educational system that will create responsible global citizens. To be clear, this focus is not meant to extend to the exclusion of other disciplines. In fact, she is very much aware of the need to have engineers and scientists and economists. It may even be understood that a balanced education is most advantageous.

If one did not realize before reading this book that our nations are in peril, it will certainly become clear after. However, it is not too late to change the situation if immediate action is taken. And, to one who might fear that a focus on the humanities is simply an unnecessary diversion, it may be argued that such a focus will give people the skills to think critically and for themselves and to be innovative—all useful tools within a profit driven economy.

As such, this is a read that is not to be passed up, and at 143 pages, is certainly doable for even the most time strapped student.

ISBN-13: 978-0691140643



I HATE black liquorice, but that's what he brings me. Every-gosh-darn-time. Old bugger stares me down until I eat it- what the heck am I supposed to do? A few times I tried just stuffin' it in my pocket. He noticed- every goddamned time! Tells me I should eat it now, so it don't get hard.

Stupid stuff. You'd think he made every piece from scratch, put his blood, sweat and tears into it or somethin'. By the tastes of it, he probably just scoops it from the inside of his Ford's engine.

Poppa tells me I'm bein' rude- disrespecting my elders or some horse dung like that- but Poppa isn't the one that has to eat this stuff.

One time, when every one was fussin' over the baby, I fed it to Murphy. That dog eats everything, even frogs. For cryin' out loud, even Murphy spit it out! I bet the only reason that ol' geezer wants me to eat it is just so he don't have to eat it himself.

By Torrie Bulmer



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## 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, and dialogue to write one. Anything goes. There are no restrictions except the word limit. Stretch yourself by writing short.” Guy Vanderhague

“... If we don't take any actions soon, the trees will do so for us”. Those were the words of Nweke. He was the father of Izu age grade. I sat on the pavement of what had been my great-grand father's obi. It was now a small modern bungalow. I ruminated over those words hazily. They were not strange words given that our people were fond of weird but profound proverbs. It was maybe a thing of embarrassment that at my age, I found it difficult sometimes to dispel the literal translations of such ilu (proverbs). The other members of Izu had left that meeting with what I perceived was a forced sense of resolution. I could recall their vibrant chatter about what we should and would do. It wasn't the same with me. I had been indifferent and still was. Perhaps my sedation should have stirred up anxiety but it didn't. Maybe I didn't care enough or maybe Nweke's rants had not inspired me. His monologue was a reflection of what our community had become - a society apt in hyperbole, where words were used to compensate for little deeds.

I looked towards the entrance of the compound taking notice of the two palm trees next to my mother's vegetable garden. The trees swayed from side to side as the strong evening wind blew. It was like some sort of dance. The kind of gyration one would see when the young maidens danced at the village square. I played with the idea of trees assuming our responsibilities and thought to myself well, it would only be fair that they first learned to dance.

By Arinze Umekwe



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