

in medias res

Editorial Policy

In Medias Res is a journal devoted to the dissemination of the liberal arts in light of the Christian intellectual tradition. Our publication's title derives from the Latin language, the ancient tongue of the Western Academy and Church, and denotes the state of being "in the middle of things." We select a broad range of publications, such as articles, essays, travelogues, reviews, poetry, fiction, and art, which represent the thought cultivated in various programs studied at the University of Saskatchewan. Indeed, the university must contain something of all these disciplines to be called a *universitas*, a whole which has sufficient diversity and depth to merit its name.

Situated as we are amongst many ideas, both within the University and the wider world, we are well-advised to reflect critically upon the principles that constitute our culture. The purpose of this paper, then, is to foster the intellectual growth of our University's students, to confront the philosophy of contemporary society, to reflect upon the Western tradition, and, peradventure, to incite the human soul. Students, faculty, and alumni are encouraged to contribute to this publication, and anyone who is interested in becoming a member of the Editorial Board is most welcome to contact us for further information.

All submissions and inquiries may be directed to
inmediasres@stmcollege.ca
Visit us online at: stmcollege.ca/imr



Contents

PROFESSOR'S INTRODUCTION: "Introduction on More"	3
SHORT FICTION: "Prue and Peter"	4
SOCRATIC PESTILENCE: "What Does Utopia Mean to You?"	6
POETRY: "Shaping my Reasearch Inquiry"	7
CULTURAL EVENT: "IMR Attends: <i>Utopia Conference</i> "	8
SHORT FICTION: "Bathhouse"	9
PRO et CONTRA: "Should Bob Dylan Have One the 2016 Noble Prize in Literature?"	10
POETRY: "The Ravens"	11
POETRY: "In A Garden"	12
POETRY: "That Moment You Spill Your Coffee....."	12
NON-FICTION: "her"	14
SHORT FICTION: "Cup of Piety"	16
POETRY: "Resident"	17
POETRY: "Planting 2016".....	17
BOOK REVIEWS	18
POETRY: "Visiting"	19
POSTCARD STORY	20

Editors-in-Chief:
Jaclyn Morken
Hailey Mullock

Editorial Board:
Marina Ellis (Art)
Emily Klatt (Non-Fiction)
Hannah Roberts (Poetry)
Julie Maseka (Fiction)
Kayla Schmid
Jessylee Wionzek

Faculty & Staff Advisors:
Dean Schmidt
Caitlin Ward

 /InMediasResSTM

 @InMediasResSTM

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

Cover Artwork: Stephanie Mah, "Nest Mums" | Inside Cover Artwork: Kathlyn Joy Zales, "Saskatoon Skyline"

Introduction on More

By Dr. Frank Klaassen | Department of History

Thomas More's *Utopia* is commonly regarded as one of the great works of the Western Tradition and certainly one of the most important and influential works of the sixteenth century. Its influence can still be felt in contemporary political discourse, popular culture, literature, and philosophy; so it is significant that the book's message is far from clear. The book follows the common form of renaissance dialogues in presenting multiple points of view while not giving any speaker a clear edge in their arguments. The result is a compelling discussion of fundamentally important questions about knowledge, ideals, and power. What is the role of ideals in the world of politics? Can they help us better understand

the world? What is the role of the intellectual? Should we be satisfied with making small changes in the world for which we might have to sacrifice our ideals?

Alternatively, should we remain true to our principles and thereby potentially exclude ourselves from the political process?

Many of the great monuments of western history and political theory during the renaissance were written by those who had been engaged directly in public life. Francesco Guicciardini and Niccolò Machiavelli are just two examples from the medieval and early modern period. As Member of Parliament, Master of Requests, Privy Councillor, diplomat, and Lord Chancellor, Thomas More spent most of his life directly engaged in the complexities of public life, and his work cannot be disengaged from it. In fact, most of the figures he has built into his dialogues were real people with whom he engaged in his various political functions, and some of the dialogues may well reflect the content of real

discussions. More would ultimately become Henry VIII's chancellor, the man who cleaned up problems for Henry with occasionally brutal efficiency. He was also a significant intellectual and close friend of Erasmus, the most significant humanist of the sixteenth century. Finally, whatever one might say about his willingness to operate in the dirty world of Tudor politics, he was also a man of principle, willing to die for his ideals. A crucial element in celebrating, engaging with, and understanding *Utopia* thus lies in the nexus of political and intellectual life and of politics and ideals.

More was fully and personally aware of the complexity of the questions he raises, and it is a

testament to his skill as a writer that the book has been understood on the one hand literally as a blueprint for a perfect state and on the other as a satirical critique of starry-eyed idealism. In

A crucial element in celebrating, engaging with, and understanding Utopia thus lies in the nexus of political and intellectual life and of politics and ideals.

fact, although both positions are present in the book, a careful reader does not get hung upon details. Instead, the ambiguity of his message is the real point. The work was not meant to argue any particular position, but rather to provoke discussion. That discussion is arguably still taking place every time we use Thomas More's word to describe a project or political point of view or read dystopic literature from *1984* to the *Handmaid's Tale*. But More has a wider message for the reader, that dialogue is our best (and perhaps only) means of understanding the complexities of human social and political life and that the answers to the complex challenges we face in any age are never simple. In short, the real Utopia is dialogue among equals, not some imaginary island far across the sea.

Prue and Peter

By Kane R. Fritzler

“Would you like to come for a walk with me?” she asked, innocently. Peter looked up from his book; the sun glared off of his glasses, preventing him from seeing anything but a dark silhouette. The voice’s body moved to block the sun, focusing his view of a stunning blonde girl, her hair toppling endlessly over her shoulders. The girl smiled honestly, awaiting an answer.

“What an interesting choice, to start with dialogue,” Peter commented, closing his book and slipping it into his knapsack.

“I’m sure he has a plan,” she suggested softly, playfully extending her hand. “Would you like to come for a walk with me?” she repeated.

Peter pondered briefly. “I think I would rather you sit next to me on this bench.”

“Perhaps we can do both?” she proposed. Peter smiled at this new possibility. “Do you have a name?”

“Peter,” he responded. “What’s yours?”

“Prue.” She smiled. Prue helped him to his feet from the bench and took his hand into her own. “Do you know where we are, Peter?” Peter looked around, but the only thing he saw was the bench he rose from.

“No, he hasn’t added much detail; a bench isn’t all that much to go off of.”

Peter gazed down at the green park bench sitting alone in the white space of the undescribed story. The paint was faded and chipped, but it had held him well as he read.

“I’d still like to walk, Peter. Even if it’s a little on the empty side out there.” Peter was shook from his trance and smiled in agreeance. They walked onward, Prue’s hand placed in Peter’s. There was a gentle breeze that blew a few small pink leaves onto the duo, and caused Prue’s hair to flow out behind them like a beautiful cape. The path turned to stone and large pink leaved trees rose higher and higher. They skipped along the winding path as the trees let go a gentle rain of pink leaves. “I think we’re in a park, Peter,” Prue guessed.

They waltzed and whistled for miles longer until the perfectly carved path turned to uneven rocks. The trees that once jutted from the earth now became overgrown and untrimmed. A short time afterwards they came to a wide river; the rocks rose high and the water ran fast. The breeze stopped as they stopped, and Prue’s hair fell from its airlift and came to rest at her ankles.

“We aren’t supposed to go this way,” Peter said firmly to Prue as he looked onwards, upwards, and backwards for a path that seemed more appropriate.

Prue disliked the idea that they had been led astray. “But then why would he make it look so beautiful? It’s dreamy, Peter. We should go to the other side.” The other side did look very intriguing, but dangerous. Perhaps that was the point. Peter agreed to cross the river; taking her hand, they tip-toed over the smaller rocks and floated through the air across the gaps between the larger rocks, ever so carefully. When they arrived on the far side of the river there was no path to follow at all. Peter fiddled with his moustache in thought, deeply worried by their new trajectory.

“I’m afraid if we go this way he will forget about us,” he said, slightly distraught.

"Maybe that's okay," Prue said, smiling. "Maybe the story is almost over." Prue was accepting of this, but Peter was not. "If he is really interested in us, he will show us what we need to see." She extended her hand once more, genuinely smiling. Peter took the hand. He required her strength to help him up the side of the riverbed, for he was old, and becoming weak. They walked onward, hand in hand. The trees shrunk and the pink grass began to fade. They abruptly found themselves at the edge of a cliff which they could see nothing beyond. Prue sat on the edge, inviting Peter to sit down beside her. He slipped to the ground and stroked his long grey beard, pondering the landscape.

"Is this the edge of it all?" Peter asked, looking out.

"Yes, it's the edge of it all," Prue announced. It was very tranquil, yet very ominous.

"Have you been here before?" Peter asked.

"I've always been here," Prue admitted, grasping the pink grass in her hands tightly so the ground slid between her fingers. Her back was hidden completely by her long white hair, her face victim to the gentle but overpowering glow of the sunset.

"I think this might be the end of the story," Peter said, looking out over the glorious hazy sunset illuminating the world.

"I think so, too. It was a short story, after all." She kissed him on the cheek, smiled, and rose from the park bench, taking her leave. Peter smiled, softly, and returned to his book.



Artwork: Nicholas Gabruch, "The Story of Two "

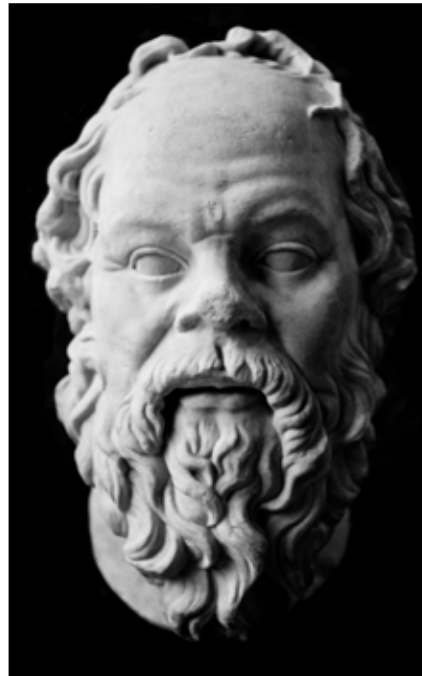
Socratic Pestilence: The Campus Gadflies Ask...

What does Utopia mean to you?

For each journal issue, members of the *In Medias Res* editorial board assail the University of Saskatchewan's academic community with a quasi-philosophical question, after the fashion of Socrates.

To me utopia would mean a world not run on money and power but instead run on the needs of humans and the world in general. It would be a world with no racism, no judgment or bullying, complete tolerance to each other. I feel that religion would be allowed but that tolerance of each other's differing beliefs and religion would be a must. There would be no use of religion for rules against women's rights, for racism or sexism against others, use as fuel for hatred due to sexual orientation or to just in general feel you are better than another because of the type of religion you believe in. Instead of caring about money, everyone would receive the pay needed to survive, to have housing, to have healthy groceries, have access to education. There would be no homelessness, no families struggling to eat healthy and nutritious food or keep a roof over their heads. There would be sustainable food from farming. Animals would be humanely killed for food. Also, the environment and keeping the world healthy would be a priority. We would reduce carbon emissions and not have companies dictate what they will and won't do for environmental health based on how much money they have. We would have a healthy, clean, sustaining environment. The animals would be thriving instead of being poached to extinction or die off due to global warming.

- Heather, alumnus of Nutrition



My utopia is a place where there is an absence of suffering, everyone is happy, treated with respect, we all live in peace, and your dog lives as long as you do.

- Colin

When I think of Utopia, I imagine an ideal society where the government is fair and void of corruption. There would be universal health and child care.

Where employers would value and emphasize a balance between life and work for their employees. Unemployment rates and homelessness would be

nearly abolished due to a strong government support system and crime rates would be very low. The ecological footprint of such a place would be small due to green initiatives and policies with an emphasis on environmental sustainability. Utopia is a model of perfection that should be strived for by government and society. However, its perfection is unattainable in the real world.

- Krystal, Nutrition

Utopia to me is a point in your life when you are completely happy. You are content with all areas of your life physically, spiritually, and emotionally. It is a point that everyone is continually striving for. And it is a point that very few humans get to reach for very long.

- Kelsey, Education

A place that is peaceful, without hate or war or poverty. Everyone loves and feels loved. A world where everyone works at a job they love, with people they enjoy. We all spend time in nature and eat good food. And let's be honest, everyone has a dog.

- Alexis

Shaping my Research Inquiry

By Momina Khan

I question!

Why does a thin piece of fabric on my head carry the weight of the world?

Why does my name switch to Alpha, Bravo, or Charlie at airports?

Why does my skin colour speak louder than my spoken words?

Why does my accent receive more attention than my English skills?

Why does my ethnicity appear quicker than my humanity?

Why does my difference lock my place as the ‘other’?

Why does my higher qualification adhere to odd jobs?

Why does my faith become politicized as an extremist ideology?

Why does my positioning face subjugation to systemic power and privilege?

Why does my identity become tormented in a dichotomy between home and land?

Why does my racial identity bump into racialization of identity?

Why does my citizenship demand a certificate of assimilation?

Why does my hybrid identity undergo ceaseless rupturing?

Why does my silence make the loudest noise?

We question!

What can we do to protect the rights and freedoms of all humans?

When can we be ready to affirm the identity of all citizens?

Who can we engage in combating the biases and assumptions?

How can we sculpt the colourless face of every race?

Our quest and attempt to honour Humanity Matters, not answers

Utopia for 500 Years

A Conference held at STM College on Thomas More's *Utopia*

"The conference seeks to address the varieties of utopia and utopianism that More's work and those influenced by it have dared imagine... [The conference featured] presentations on a range of topics that address More's *Utopia*, its context, reception, and influence, but also those that more broadly address the idea of utopias and utopianism in other political, philosophical, literary, social and historical contexts." - "Utopia for 500 Years"

(stmcollege.ca/conferences/past-conference-lectures/2016/utopia-conference.php)

What parts of the conference were open to the public and what did they involve?

The editorial board attended three events that were a part of the conference: the CBC Ideas panel, the Museum of Antiquities, and a free lecture entitled "The Impressive Utility of Thomas More's *Nowhere*: Some Minor Early Modern Utopias and Why They Are Interesting."

CBC Ideas Panel:

On the panel were five people: Dr. Terrence Downey, President of St. Thomas More College; Dr. Hayden King, Assistant Professor from Carleton University; Erica Violet Lee, representative of the Idle No More organization; Dr. Anne Prescott, Emerita Helen Goodhart Altschul Professor from Barnard College; and the CBC host sitting in the center of the panel. The CBC host had prepared questions for each person. Then there was a question period from the audience. This aspect of the panel was quite interesting as it became an "academic showdown" with people strongly fighting for beliefs over interpretations.

Museum of Antiquities:

The Museum of Antiquities displayed several copies of *Utopia* from St. Thomas More library's special collection. The Museum focused on displaying the work and the historical facts surrounding it rather than focusing on the variety of controversial ideas sparked by *Utopia*.

Keynote Lecture:

On Friday evening, Dr. Anne Lake Prescott gave a lecture in the St. Thomas More Auditorium on various lesser-known "utopias" and their relationships to Thomas More's original work. The lecture concluded with a question period, which in turn stimulated an engaging discussion between audience members and Dr. Prescott.

What was interesting about the conference?

It was interesting that *Utopia* is still so heavily studied that they can have major discussions 500 years later. During the panel there were still arguments over the interpretations. Despite the age of the text, there is still no consensus on the best or correct interpretation.

The conference was multidisciplinary, stretching beyond literature to fields such as philosophy, history, and religion. The multidisciplinary aspect was emphasized by the conference being multidimensional beyond the main conference.

If it had just been a lecture conference, we as undergraduate students would not have been as motivated to check out the conference. Without the multiple aspects of the conference, we may have felt overwhelmed by information and people with far greater knowledge on the subject than ourselves. The general layout of the conference encouraged discussion even if one didn't have expansive knowledge about the topic.

Why do you think that the conference might be valuable to the college?

The conference really highlights the University as a significant contributor to the discussion on *Utopia*. It also draws attention to the impressive collection of the STM library on More and his works.

The publicity of the conference likely made U of S students, and possibly the general public, more aware of St. Thomas More College. As STM is a liberal arts college, the awareness of St. Thomas More College also brings out the liberal arts that can get lost in the bigger sea of arts and science.

Bathroom

By Diana M. Thiesen

I remember how the building had been built so that clean women with clean children could feel safe. Because our women weren't clean. Our children weren't safe. But we would be made to be.

The walls of the building peeled away in thin ashy strips. Everything smelled of dry dust and disease. It was in those halls that I first felt fear of my brothers and sisters and the ferocity caged within their eyes. Ravenous with the rage of being unable to retaliate on our captors.

I remember well the echoes of the crisp clean "click" coming from the heels of the nurses' shoes. I recall the slow sedated shuffle of my kindred ushered about in pharmaceutical precision. Shhh, Shhh, Shhh.

Our tongues were pulled from our minds and left numb in our mouths. No longer was the language of our Mothers accepted into our own ears. We molded our mouths to fit foreign sounds and were made to practice in hopes of forgetting the indiscretions of our skin and attaining the perfection of the civilized.

"You will speak like us here!" was spat with such rage, digging the shrapnel of words deep into my body. I had laid with wounds festering for months until it became years of poisoning. Bone deep and blood sick, a legacy for generations to come.

I remember her eyes, my sister, my friend, her eyes were red with blood lust seeping out from her soul. I watched her die drop by drop. But she wouldn't stop moving, fighting, not until she had smashed every bone in her fists against the walls and even then, she couldn't quiet her anguish, so she laid her head to the wall in hopes of finding peace where prayer couldn't reach.

They had placed chicken wire and bars over the glass of every window, just in case one of us became too brave. I remember thinking how I missed the farm. I missed the chickens, the open windows and the smells, the clean air, any breath of life.... how the only smells in that building came from sour powders and pills washed down with dirty bath water.

After- when I was allowed to go home, I remember how nothing was as it had been. My home was no longer my own and I was no longer me, it was as though I had been erased from the Earth and there was no reason to name an unmade grave. But I was not the only one who had been changed.

I remember the high tin sides of great grandma's bath. I remember how she crouched low in a mother's milk hoping to pull the darkness from her own skin. I remember the shame, hers and my own, as her flesh only made the milk appear more clean.

"Help me child, help me" she begged as she splashed the white over her shadows. How we scrubbed, how we cried. I remember how all we wanted was to be clean.

When the government cut funding, it was said that those who didn't finish couldn't be saved and so the children were taken out behind that building and a bullet laid into their brains. Now I wonder if they were the lucky ones and my soul is the one that will never be safe.

Pro et

Should Bob Dylan have won the

PRO

By Dr. Bryan Wiebe | Philosophy

Should Bob Dylan have won the 2016 Nobel Prize in Literature? *The answer my friend is: Yes. And you say, "For what reason?"* Well the Nobel committee said: "for having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition". Apparently then, the award is to recognize his poetry and since poetry is a kind of literature, an award for literature is appropriate.

The positive case for Dylan can also point to the volume and influence of his work. The Beatles learnt from Dylan that lyrics can be more than *She loves you, yeah, yeah, yeah*. Lyrics can tell a story. Lyrics can raise consciousness. Lyrics can playfully provoke reflection "Just Like [in] Tom Thumb's Blues"

*And your gravity fails
And negativity don't pull you through*

But controversy has erupted. For example, author Jodi Picoult tweeted: "I'm happy for Bob Dylan. **#ButDoesThisMeanICanWinAGrammy?**"¹ Actually, she could always have won a Grammy simply by achieving excellence in musical creation. This has nothing to do with Dylan's award. He has not received it for excellence in musical creation. I know we tend to think of Dylan as a musician and not as a poet, but *some* people are talented in more than one way. That lyrics should be regarded as poetry is about as surprising as discovering that we've been speaking prose all our lives.

Novelist Rabih Alameddine tweeted²: "Bob Dylan winning a Nobel in Literature is like Mrs Fields being awarded 3 Michelin stars." ("Mrs. Fields" refers to an American purveyor of mass produced confections.) The underlying reasoning here is that, since Dylan's work is popular, it cannot be good. While I admit that popularity is no sure sign of quality, neither does popularity rule out quality. To insist that quality must be inaccessible to the masses is elitist. This award has not often gone to popular work, but to insist that it never do so is unreasonable.

Others have lamented that, in giving the award to Dylan, more worthy authors were passed over. I will grant this is likely to be true. A number of my friends have told me that Leonard Cohen is a better poet. But this could be argued with every recipient. Unlike sports, the literary arts have no play-offs to decide the champion for the year. On the other hand, some seem to think that Shakespeare is the all time greatest champion. Shakespeare has never been awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. Given that it could be awarded posthumously to Shakespeare, one might say that every year it has been given out is a year they passed over a more worthy author. This kind of controversy creates discussion. This is good.

One final objection, writer Irvine Welsh tweeted³: "I'm a Dylan fan, but this is an ill conceived nostalgia award wrenched from the rancid prostates of senile, gibbering hippies." I take his point to be that Dylan is passé. (Although the reference to hippies may well be ad hominem.) But the assumption that only trendy awards are appropriate is clearly mistaken. Most "lifetime achievement" awards and inductions into "halls of fame" could be accused of nostalgia. Celebrating the excellence of these recipients is still worthwhile.

So to sum up: Lyrics are a form of poetry. He has created a large body of work that has been very influential. And the main objections are fallacious. So in Dylan's words:

*An' it ain't no use to sit and wonder why, babe
If you don't know by now.*

¹<https://twitter.com/ButDoesThisMeanICanWinAGrammy?src=hash>

²<https://twitter.com/rabihalameddine/status/786575235143245824>

³<https://twitter.com/irvinewelsh/status/786539790560878592>

Contra

2016 Nobel Prize in Literature?

CONTRA

By Caitlin Ward | Engaged Learning Coordinator

At some point, apparently, T. Bone Burnett said that there was “no way to adequately or accurately laud Bob Dylan. He is the Homer of our time.”

I say “apparently” because although I have seen this quotation in print and online many times, I have yet to find its source. I don’t necessarily doubt that Burnett said it, but since I can’t find where the quotation came from, I don’t want to state definitively that he did. In the age of the Internet, it’s too easy to rely on an inaccurate source.

There’s something funny to me about not being able to establish the accuracy of the quotation’s source, though, considering the inaccuracy of the quotation itself. In all likelihood, Homer was not just one guy. He was probably a bunch of guys who wrote a long poem in fits and starts over the course of several decades as it was performed around ancient Greece, and at some point it was all written down.

What this means for Burnett’s pronouncement on Bob Dylan, though, is that to be the Homer of anyone’s time means to be not merely Homer, but to be a bunch of guys who may or may not be (but probably aren’t) named Homer. Ergo, Bob Dylan is a bunch of guys. Probably not named Homer.

There is actually a lot of accuracy in this quotation, though I doubt it’s how Burnett meant it (if, indeed, he said it). Much of Dylan’s work is not necessarily original with him. His first album was almost exclusively covers of folk songs and blues standards. A Hard Rain’s a-Gonna Fall from *The Freewheelin’ Bob Dylan* is pretty clearly also a Scottish ballad called Lord Randal. Blowin’ in the Wind, from the same album, takes its melody from an African American spiritual called No More Auction Block. More recently, his song Shake Shake Mama from 2009’s *Together Through Life*, though credited to Dylan and Robert Hunter, sounds uncannily like a traditional blues song of the same name that I first heard on John Renbourn’s *Faro Annie*, which was released in 1971. Examples like these run through just about every single one of Dylan’s 40-odd albums. Though prolific and successful, Dylan has not always, or arguably even often, been very original.

That’s not necessarily a bad thing. Dylan began in folk music, a tradition that is meant to be built upon itself: ballads retooled and rewritten by each person who plays them, parts added until there are seventeen different verses with five separate points of view and no clear idea who has done what wrong to whom.

And though musically Dylan expanded beyond the folk tradition, spiritually he never did. Rather, he took the culture around him, with art high and low, and he crafted it into a body of work that reflected Western society, criticized it, and made something new out of the things he saw. He drew from poets and surrealists, but also folk songs and advertisements. In one sense, he is a single author. In another, he isn’t: his work is by a bunch of people who are and aren’t named Bob Dylan.

Of course, that idea doesn’t work particularly well with awards like the Nobel Prize, which hinge on the idea of individual genius — that there is an author so clearly superior to others they deserve a big ceremony in Sweden. They write Important Books about Important Things. And for some reason, we have to choose the Best Genius of the Year. And all the other people who wrote books feel a little bad about themselves for not writing an important enough book yet. Whether or not the Nobel Prize itself is a good idea is a question no one has asked, it seems, but either way, I don’t think it’s the right way to honour Dylan’s work.

The Ravens

By Graham Lehnert

The Ravens convened at the corpse
and munched upon the carrion.
“Caw!” exclaimed Bartholomew.
“Ca-Caw!” responded Marion.

“Indubitably, my good fellows!”
quipped Reginald, picking at the belly.
“A right good meal for three good birds!”
he said, with a mouth full of jelly.

A flattened fox before them lay:
A victim of the metal beasts.
But who could blame the Ravens for
indulging in these easy feasts?

“Ca-Car!” cried Bart,
The ravens all scatter;

And return to the roadkill fox
to chew the fat, grow fatter.

“For days all I’ve been eating
is rotten dried-out skunk.
This fresh, wet fox is such a treat!” Marion
screeched.
They gobbled up the gunk.

Devouring the dead thing,
they chat about the weather.
They discuss the mob (those murderous crows)
and occasionally adjust their feathers.

And once all the innards are slurped
and the meat is all but gone.
The Ravens bid each other “Farewell!”
and ramble ever on.
The early birds get worms,
But the Ravens sleep in late.
A free lunch daily for the scavenging horde;
All they have to do is wait.

A fox is cunning and sly,
But never as clever as the Ravens.
They understand life; Patience is key.
Yes, Death is good to the Ravens!



Artwork: Stephanie Mah, "Foraging for Luck"

In a Garden

By Danielle Altrogge

well, the garden is 5 clay pots
filled cautiously with dirt bought from a store
she has a small metal planter on her windowsill
where she swears she can see the radish sprouts moving as they grow—
nothing grows that fast

she doesn't understand soil
and planting
and waiting for sprouts
and patience

she bought a pair of those gardening gloves that
her grandmother would have sown
if she was still alive
if she had owned a sowing machine
they are white
(an impractical choice)
with tomato-polka dots
ripe
caked in dirt
she stitches rows of carrots

That Moment You Spill Your Coffee

By Andrew Wiebe

O Lady Fortune, sing a song
Of rough edges for my joyous
goblet—a dream-encrusted shrine—
a temple to Caffeine's bitter,
yet sweet sacred song.

The stars and then my garden Fall
As my cup runneth over. And
Deadly sleep overcomes my mind.
The cheerful song is now broken,
The Joyous dreams are now ashes
Because Fortune's fickle wheel turns
And she sings her hateful song
While she gazes upon the calm
And casual destruction of
My garden.

her |hər| pronoun

By S. Zahra Ghoreishi

It all started a few weeks ago, when I decided to write a paper on death and trauma. As English is my second language, I tend to look up many words in my (Apple) dictionary out of habit. This helps me remain cautious about word usage, possible connotations of words, or their cultural overtones. So, the first word that I looked up was ‘mourn:’

mourn |môrn| verb

feel or show deep sorrow or regret for someone or their death: *Isabel mourned her husband* | *she had to **mourn for** her friends who died in the accident.*

The next word on the list was ‘grieve.’ Similar to the entry of ‘mourn,’ ‘grieve’ involved a she in both example sentences: “*she **grieved for** her father;*” “*she did not have the opportunity to grieve her mother's death.*” I grew curious about the pronouns used in these examples. Two randomly chosen words had female subjects in their example sentences. Out of curiosity, I checked the entry on ‘weak’ to find out about the pronouns used, and the example sentence under ‘weak’ was: “*she was recovering from the flu and was very weak.*” Reading these sentences, I felt dumb, which according to my dictionary means “temporarily unable or unwilling to speak,” exemplified, in my dictionary, by this sentence: “*she stood dumb while he poured out a stream of abuse.*”

I had always considered dictionary definitions to be very objective and neutral in language and tone. But I found these gendered, sexist examples to be shocking. I thought one might argue that the scholars who rendered such definitions are uncompromising male individuals, but before formulating that thought thoroughly, I looked up ‘uncompromising’ only

to find out about “*the uncompromising ugliness of **her** home.*” Note that the example sentence for ‘uncompromising’ could be about *our* home, *their* home, or *his* home, but of all the possible candidates, *her* has been chosen. I found it a disturbing fact that concepts referring to negative, less powerful, or inferior qualities and positions have been attributed to female subjects while they could easily be attributed to either male, female, or even plural subjects. The discursive function of such statements would reinforce discrimination against women, and the entry of ‘discriminate’ in my dictionary reaffirms this: “*existing policies **discriminate against** women.*” The list of such words is not endless, but not short either: ‘nag,’ ‘belittle,’ and ‘retaliate’ are some other entries with gender-biased examples.

Some might resent¹ this piece of writing, condemning it as itself being biased in its selections, but I would encourage them to look up some words denoting power, health, and strength to see what pronouns are used in *those* entries.

¹resent |rə'zent| verb

feel bitterness or indignation at (a circumstance, action, or person): *she resented the fact that I had children.*

A Cup of Piety

By Delane Just

The cup refills itself. Each time I look, the bloody, inky depths reflect my cloudy eyes and aged wrinkles back at me until I no longer see. So, I keep drinking. The cup wills it, not I. It offers to me evermore, fills itself up, and begs me to indulge. I give it purpose, you see. When left on the counter, it cries. Its tears drip down its glass body. Wet rings stain the hardwood. It needs me.

The intoxicating smell did not tempt me, oh no. I care not for its sick, acidic scent, nor do I care for its dry, bitter taste. It's the gratification. The hazy, warm feeling captures me each time the rough fluid tickles down my throat. A lovely numbness falls over me when the cup fills once more. Yet, my husband yelled, screamed, hid my children away from me. I have a duty! I'm the only one keeping this curious phenomenon alive. He did not understand. So, he left.

I sat in my chair with my glass cradled between my fingers. I stared at a black screen. My mind drifted while drowsiness swept over me and cradled me in its painlessness. My fingers slipped. I let my precious glass fall and smash on the floor. What a fool I was. Crimson blossomed through the carpet. Marking it with the end of its life. Its bloody remains steeped through the fabric. The orange interior light caught on its broken, glass bones and scattered shards of light over the tawny walls. Now has my duty ended?

I stood, then stumbled, my knees spotted red. I dragged myself across the room towards the kitchen. Yes, the kitchen. The tiles felt like sheets of ice beneath my cracked palms. As I passed the bottom corner of the island, an intoxicating feeling passed over me. Sick and reeling, I pressed my cheek into the tiles. So soft, so soft. Perfect for a nap.

When I woke, I was in my chair. My toes ached and bled, my head throbbed, and oh the awful ringing in my ears, but before me was a fresh glass that brimmed with burgundy waves. The reincarnation of the one that lived before it. Inside its dome shape was an offering of life. I have a duty, you see, and I must fulfil it.

Resident.

By Mairi Anderson

in this house
I sit

between other houses
row on

row on row
on row

of houses all
lined up

side by side
by side

with streets and
cross streets

bordering each block
all fit

together in one
big chunk

of city. suburb.
urban sprawl

puzzle piece blocks
fit together

stacked up high
get higher

grow wider and
never know

your neighbourhood or
the neighbours.

Planting 2016

By Jessica Shirley

The air hits
Vapant and stale in comparison
To the forest
To where we learned to be in an unplugged frenzy
Of togetherness
Like a chain of animals
Wrought into living
Built into fighting
The elements and the danger

What danger spoke to us:
The stark lust?
Was it the harsh hitting of the rain,
When a tent is your keeper,
Guarding your secrets and your simple living,
Or the mirage of ice cream when sweat envelopes you?
Hoard of flies clouding your vision

In the end, who does your body claim itself as?
Are you nature's play-thing,
Or a pawn of the logging industry?
Does your heart ache in vulnerability
Towards the ones who adopt a niche-mask?
Is it a mask, or is it the soul's growth?
The master of a sunset,
The phantom bears and cougars,
The trench foot rotting your skin:
A recipe for peace

Returning to the material
I ache for planting's cake batter
Of struggle and hope
I yearn for the bursting of my heart
In a wild way
In a way that rips apart all I was constructed as
The trees upon trees
That breathe into the fabric of what it means
To us to be radically alive

Book Reviews



Take Us to Your Chief And Other Stories

By Drew Hayden Taylor (Douglas & McIntyre, 2016)

Reviewed by Julie Maseka

Canadian First Nations Science Fiction is a paradoxical genre Drew Hayden Taylor explores in his collection of nine short stories. Hayden Taylor demonstrates the natural connection between classic science fiction and Aboriginal storytelling through his hilarious portrayals of alien invasion, space, and time travel. Through his casual tone Hayden Taylor epitomizes traditional storytelling, weaving myth and music with modern Canadian culture. *Take Us to Your Chief* provides a fresh perspective on a sometimes stale genre with stories ranging from the light-hearted escapades of a Reserve Radio Station during an alien apocalypse (A Culturally Inappropriate Armageddon) to the struggle of an outer space machine sympathizing with the difficult history of First Nations People (Lost in Space). Hayden Taylor incorporates the magic and mystery of science into real human experiences, creating a bridge between the unbelievable and the everyday.



Utopia: A Revised Translation, Backgrounds, Criticism

By Thomas More

Translation revised and edited by George M. Logan (W.W. Norton, 2011)

Reviewed by Hannah Roberts

Thomas More's *Utopia* recounts the travels of the fictional explorer Raphael Hythloday, who returns to Europe from the New World after living five years amongst the Utopian people. Subtitled "The Best State of a Commonwealth," the book contrasts the communistic and hedonistic society of Utopia with society in Europe, satirizing contemporary political issues through Hythloday's report. "Utopia" has come to mean a perfect world, but the book is more complex than that, leaving vague to what extent Utopian society reflects the author's own ideals. Utopians justify seizing land for their colonies and believe it would be best if a

race they deem less noble were destroyed. Their system of governance allows them very little freedom, and it is easy to see how the concept of the utopian society transitions into that of the dystopian. More's book accessibly engages arguments of philosophy and politics, and should be a thought-provoking read to anyone with an interest in those fields.

Utopia was recently the subject of St. Thomas More College's conference "Utopia for 500 Years," held in honour of the book's 500th anniversary.

Visiting

By Jessica Shirley

A voice shimmers in the river
Small crevices in the sand
Make the shore a haven
For wandering souls
Soft November air hits your cheek
As you watch the stream flow
Miniature whirlwinds bring insects,
Sticks and chemicals
To their destination down the line

You wish to be a beautiful adjective
That could swallow your indignation
And give your soft spirit a jolt
The river is somewhere in between
It awakens you with a nudge
Because you sit outside its power
To push and pull with haste
Into its magnificent, brutal depths.

A crescent moon fades into view
And you know it is time
To return to solid plans
And reject the dream realm
Farewell to the river

I'll leave my heart safe on your banks.



Artwork: J. Sterling, "Submit"



Artwork: Freya Wang, "Yin and Yang"

Postcard Story

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

He wakes with the shadow of a memory on his lips. The air beneath his bed feels strangely cold on his bare ankles when he stands, so he walks quickly to the bathroom. He glimpses himself in the mirror, and tries to ignore the hint of unease lingering in his eyes. He barely registers that he is still wearing yesterday's clothes.

As he completes his morning routine, he feels an inexplicable compulsion. He must go somewhere, do something... The shadow hangs above him, always elusive, never absent. He shakes his head and hesitating only a fraction of a moment, goes to work. When he returns after an uneventful day, his spirits are marginally higher. He has found contentment in the mundanity of the day, for it has lessened that sinister urgency which has been pressing on him since the morning.

He enters his room, throwing his keys onto his nightstand as he sits on his bed. He is pulling off his socks when an uncanny chill runs down his spine. A great shadow rises before him.

"I know you," he gasps. "I've seen you before."

The shadow rushes toward him. His body goes limp. He falls backwards onto the bed, fully clothed.

He wakes the next morning with the shadow of a memory on his lips. Unbeknownst to him, as he stands up, a shadowy hand appears behind his bare feet. It stretches up and scratches a mark onto the underside of the bed.

A new day. A new mark.



In Medias Res

St. Thomas More College

1437 College Drive

University of Saskatchewan

S7N 0W6

 ST. THOMAS MORE COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

By Jaclyn Morken