



in medias res

EDITORIAL POLICY

In Medias Res is a student-run journal devoted to the liberal arts in light of the Christian intellectual tradition. Published annually by St. Thomas More College at the University of Saskatchewan, our title describes the experience of university life, in which we are always caught “in the middle of things”. Living and working among many ideas within the university and in the wider world, we

have the opportunity to reflect critically on society, culture, and ourselves. The journal aims to provide a forum for intelligent and meaningful community expression. We publish poetry, fiction, articles, essays, travelogues, photography, art, and more. Students, staff, faculty, and alumni of all disciplines and backgrounds are encouraged to contribute by submitting their work.

To submit your work or inquire about joining the editorial board, contact
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INSIDE COVER: JUST SIT AND WATCH THE WORLD FROM TIME TO TIME | NICHOLAS G

WHAT IS ONE OF YOUR FAMILY TRADITIONS?

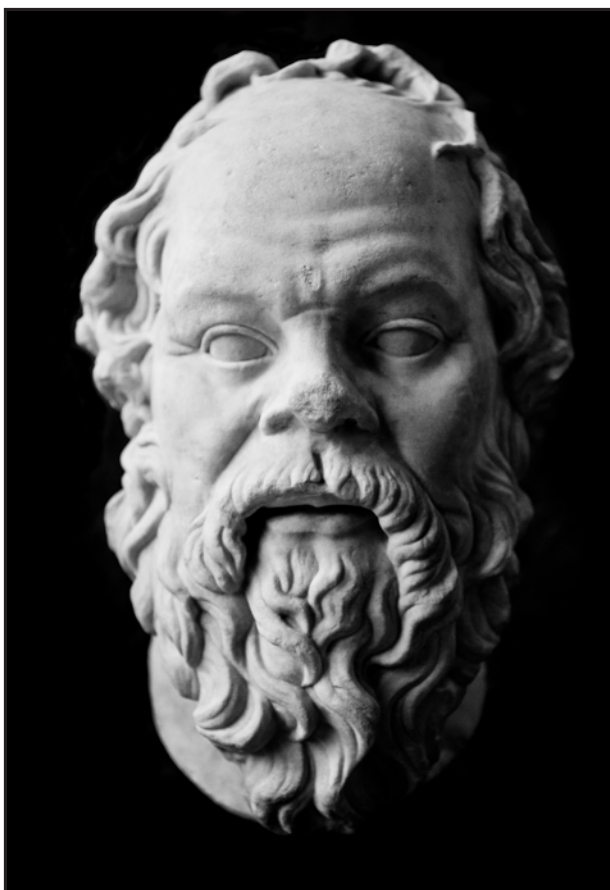
For each journal issue, members of the In Medias Res editorial board assail the University of Saskatchewan's academic community with a quasi-philosophical question, after the fashion of Socrates.

“Back home, in my family, whenever it was somebody’s birthday, we would all wake up earlier than usual and wake up the birthday person by singing together “Las Mañanitas”, which the traditional Mexican birthday song. No matter how tired we were, we would all gladly get up to wish one of us a happy birthday.”

*Diego
Mathematics*

“Each Christmas, my mom asks us which ‘special’ foods we want, and she makes us our breakfast of favourite foods. Christmas morning, we wake up, open presents, turn on the fireplace, and eat and drink coffee (or hot chocolate when we were younger).”

*Taylor Gray
3rd year Sociology*



“Because all my extended family lives in Ontario, my parents and I always fly to visit them every Christmas. Christmas Eve is spent with my mom’s family and Christmas Day is spent with my dad’s. This works out well, as it balances the traditions of each of their backgrounds (Dutch and English respectively).”

*Alex Jackson
3rd year Economics*

“Every summer my family goes camping and on the first night my dad makes hamburgers and kraft dinner while my mom finishes setting up the site. Then we sit around the fire and sing, even though I’m sure it annoys the people around us.”

Anonymous

The Gadfly

THE HOLODOMOR: IT WAS A GENOCIDE

Sam Campling

Many are unaware of what occurred in Ukraine from the late 1920s to the mid-1930s. It was strategically covered up. Over a decade of persecution, executions, imprisonment, deportations and death were blanketed by the Soviet regime determined to protect its totalitarian power and authority. 85 years have passed since the genocide of the Ukrainian people known as the Holodomor, and it is time for the world to acknowledge and recognize the deliberate and calculated starvation of the Ukrainian people simply because they were Ukrainian.

In 1932-1933, the Ukrainian peasants were subjected to famine as part of a genocidal policy, the intent of which was to ensure that Soviet Ukraine remained dominated by Soviet Russia. Joseph Stalin first ordered the collectivization of agriculture, confiscating the property of independent farmers and forcing them onto collective farms. This was followed by setting unattainable quotas for grain and confiscating all food products during searches. Guards in watch towers ensured no family consumed their own harvested grain, nor left in search of food. There was, in fact, a law

authored by Stalin himself that carried a death sentence or 10 years' imprisonment for the misappropriation of collective farm property.

Although estimates of human losses due to the Holodomor vary, millions of lives were lost. In many regions of Ukraine, an alarming two-thirds of the children did not return to school in September of 1933.

The genocidal policy of the Communist regime began in the late 1920s to break the Ukrainian national revival that was rekindling Ukrainian aspirations for independence. The Soviet Union could not remain intact without Ukraine and with a four pronged attack, as described by legal scholar and author of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide Raphael Lemkin, Stalin liquidated the intelligentsia from Ukraine, attacked the independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church, starved the farmers and resettled empty Ukrainian villages with non-Ukrainians. Stalin considered this genocide a "lesson".

Millions of lives were lost. Millions of people with traditions, familial memories and recipes that should have been passed down

through generations were gone in less than a year. The next part of Stalin's plan could play out. Denial. Depriving the grieving survivors of the chance to mourn their loved ones, and the opportunity to let the world know of these horrific events. An entire chapter of a nation's history eradicated.

Without this horrific genocide being discussed as just that, a genocide, the Ukrainian people will never be able to heal. It is important to remember the Holodomor and the people scarred by the "secret genocide". It is important to heed the lessons learned.

This genocide happened 85 years ago, and yet it remains relevant to global events today. Stalin may no longer be in power, but Russian President Putin continues to wage war against the Ukrainian people knowing that without Ukraine, there can never be a resurrection of the Soviet Union.

Still fighting for a voice, Ukrainians must confront their trauma, whether they were directly affected by the Holodomor or simply inherited historical wounds. The consequences of the Holodomor will always continue to shape the nation, but with the support of the international community, the acknowledgement and recognition of historical fact will help the Ukrainian people begin a

new chapter in an independent, democratic, European state.

Sam Campling is a third-year English major at the University of Saskatchewan with an interest in Ukrainian studies. She is currently serving as Vice President of Communications on the University of Saskatchewan Ukrainian Students Association executive. A member of the Ukrainian-Canadian community, she lives in Saskatoon.

DAMAGE CONTROL

J. Parucha

Sudden movement woke me as I felt my girlfriend jerk in the arms I had wrapped around her when we'd fallen asleep. Her body pulled away from mine, though she didn't pull herself completely out of my arms.

Sleepily, I called her name. Instead of a reply, I heard heavy ragged breathing, indiscernible angry muttering breaking the frantic rhythm of her breaths.

Blinking away the sleep from my eyes, I saw her curled up in a ball beside me, her arms over her head like a bomb had gone off.

I was pretty damn sure one actually did go off inside her head.

I called her name again. I didn't have to ask if she was okay; I already knew she wasn't.

I pulled myself close to her, tightening my embrace around her, but ready to let her go if she pushed me away. She didn't, but tensed when I closed the space between us. I wondered if I should have backed off instead, but after a moment, her breathing finally began to slow and she uncovered her head, her arms coming down to cling tightly to mine where they wrapped around her waist.

Resting my forehead against the back of her head, I let out a sigh of relief. Strands of her long hair wavered under my breath and brushed against my cheek. We lay there silently, listening to each other's breathing as we shared each other's warmth.

I finally spoke when she seemed to relax, the storm in her head having apparently passed. Or at least settled enough that she could let her guard down. Sudden breakdowns like this had happened often enough that I knew the calm didn't necessarily mean the storm was over.

"Babe, whatever you need, I--"

"Why are you still here?" She tensed in my arms, as if bracing herself for a physical blow. I frowned into the back of her neck and instinctively held her tighter.

She'd asked this question a hundred times and I'd answered it in almost just as many ways trying to make her understand. I cared about her. I loved her.

But explaining that to her seemed virtually impossible, as if she didn't have anything to ground her understanding of this one human emotion everyone else took for

granted.

“You know why.” I couldn’t hide the frustration in my voice, and regretted it the moment the words fell from my mouth in a low, annoyed growl.

She pulled away again, shrinking into a tighter ball as if doing so would make her disappear.

I swallowed back my annoyance. That wasn’t what she needed right now. “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to sound angry.”

Her non-verbal hum of acknowledgement didn’t sound convinced.

Damnit, why was this so hard?

I hesitated, then wrapped my arms around her again, pulling myself closer, but expecting her to push me away this time.

She didn’t.

Instead, she rolled over and buried herself in my chest, catching me by surprise.

“I don’t want you to leave,” she mumbled somewhere in the general direction of my heart.

I held her tighter, as if doing so would somehow make her understand. “I love you, babe. I’m not leaving.”

“Everybody lies, love. Everybody leaves.”

“Well, I’m not everybody else.” I kissed the top

of her head. “And I’m going to prove it to you, even if it takes the rest of my life.”

THE WOODS

Brandon Fick

This is a true story, son. You want to know why I don't want you to walk through those woods alone, well, this is why.

When I was a little older than you – ten or eleven – I had a terrifying experience. Back then, this was Grandpa's house and it was more secluded. Town hadn't expanded yet and we were on the outskirts, not quite in, not quite a acreage. We had two close neighbors then, and us kids were the ones who started the trail through the woods. It wasn't easy breaking brush, let me tell you, but eventually it saved time. Popped out right behind Greeson's Garage and from there you could run across the street to the credit union, post office, or hang a left down the old highway to the baseball diamonds.

Anyway, one day Grandma asked me to run for the mail. A normal fall day. Chilly, a gathering cluster of clouds. Puffy cumulus ones. I did this all the time when she was occupied and Grandpa was working. I remember I didn't want to at first, but I was bored, so I relented.

On the way there everything was fine. I heard chickadees and sparrows, saw a rabbit,

and crunched brittle umber leaves beneath my feet. Nothing out of the ordinary. But when I came out of the post office, the sky had turned ashen, the wind whipped into a whirl.

I began jogging because I didn't have a jacket and thought it might rain. I was halfway down the trail – leaves colliding, birds screeching – when a bolt of lightning hit a dead tree in front of me. It broke the rotted top off and blocked the way. Almost literally jolted. I wondered if something like that could stop your heart. Mine was going though, like a runaway freight. The air smelt like ozone and the greasy-black stump was all smouldering vapors. I was considering how to circumnavigate the tree when I heard a voice.

“Christopher. Are you lost?”

I turned around and saw an immense black man thirty yards away. No, not an African-American, a black, shadow man. He was seven feet tall. He was walking towards me. He was unnaturally quiet as his elongated feet glided across soil. If he hadn't spoken, he would have snuck up on me.

“Who are you?” I stammered.

“A friend,” he said. I didn't see a mouth.

“What do you want?”

“To help you, Christopher,” he purred.

“I hear you’re lonely.”

“I have to get home.” I remembered the mail, quivering in my hand.

“Wait,” he said, “don’t you have a secret you want to tell me?”

“I... I don’t know.”

“Search your thoughts. Have you committed a sin?”

I paused, bit my lip. “I guess.” Acidic dread churned up my stomach, through my windpipe, collapsed my throat.

“Tell me.” The man was fifteen yards away, still featureless in the filtered light of gloom.

“I killed our dog.”

“How?”

“I was supposed to be watching him, but I got distracted, and he... he fell down our well and drowned. I... I let him die. He was my responsibility... only a pup.” Some kind of trance was coming over me, my torso was being stretched through a vise and the man was absorbing the entrails.

The dark man laughed. Ancient and cold. “It sure was a pity, Sandy was such a playful pup.”

I was sick. “How do you know his

name?”

“I know many things, Christopher. Like how your mother is preparing a turkey. And your father is fixing machinery in a field five miles away. And how you lied and said you were watching Sandy. Naughty, naughty boy. What are we going to do with you?” Something darted out of his face. It could have been a tongue. “That’s not the only lie is it? No. Dirty little boy. I can taste your guilt. It tastes like... sweat and blood and other delicious fluids. Come here, let me touch you. Let me cleanse you.”

There were no words. I knew something was horribly, horribly wrong. The air was frigid, wind slashed, rain fell in heavy, putrid drops that stung my goosebump skin.

“Come to me.” The man unfolded himself and I saw slender fingers tapered to a razor’s edge.

“No.”

“No? Aren’t you tired of being alone? Do not resist, impudent boy.”

“No.”

“Christopher.”

“No!” I screamed, extricating myself from the spot, somersaulting over the decapitated treetop, landing facedown in slick mud and detritus. But I didn’t waste a

moment, gathering myself, panting and crying and clearing grime lodged in my eyes and nose. I knew if I remained there, he would have me in his dark embrace.

I ran as fast as my short legs would go, not looking back. Not daring. The clouds were ravenous, hungry monsters, trees were thrusting their lances at me, trying to stab my face, claw my eyes, birds began dive-bombing, roots groped for my feet, and part of me wanted to lie down and give in to the vile energy. If I could use one word to describe it, it would be malevolent.

The man chased me to our yard. I'm know it. It was hard to tell if he was on my heels or a ways back. He was so light of step.

When I got inside the house, Grandma was furious, for I was caked like a coal-miner, sopping scuzzy brown pools onto the hardwood. She asked what in God's name had I gotten myself into. I spit out that it began pouring, I tripped over a stump, and splashed into a huge pile of mud. She said it looked fine out. I looked out the kitchen window and, inexplicably, had to agree. Partly cloudy yes, but no behemoth monsters directing gales of wind and water, not even a drop on the back porch.

Miraculously, I managed to hold onto

the mail, but it too was soiled and nearly ripped to shreds. Grandma gave me a rare large swat on the rear and immediately sent me to my room. She said Grandpa would be talking to me about recklessness and responsibility when he got home. Turned out he was tired so I didn't get another spanking, only a half-hearted lecture about listening to Mother. So we had a late Thanksgiving dinner, I received a much-needed scrubbing, and the day was at end. I never told Grandma or Grandpa anything else about that day in the woods, anyone for that matter, until now.

I was down that trail many times afterwards, but I resolved never to go alone, not until I was sixteen or seventeen. This is how I want it to be with you. Those woods appear harmless, even merry under the right conditions, but don't get fooled. There is an underlying darkness. A seductive presence. Waiting for the opportune instant. I don't want my son to go through something so... so... scarring.

Do you understand now, Gabriel? Do you see why I was alarmed? Are you sure? If you ever walk through those woods, please, take a friend. Alright?

Well, goodnight son. Sweet dreams.

CHERRY AND OATS

Eunice-Grace Domingo

Your legs are smeared with midsummer dust and I
love them.

Time, like lace, is delicate around us and we
don't have enough red to pucker into bundles and
ship off to a Somewhere that resembles a
toy shop. Or perhaps a cloud.

We whisper willow branches into each other's testaments --
Never before have I prayed for another to
have a paradise on earth and
sunshine for breakfast;
I hope you are given love everyday and
rain comes to visit you every so often.

Must you beguile yourself of joy? There is a
world beyond us that is
much greener than silence.
But I understand that there is an
In Between:
Cherries do not marry the garden they bloom
in, nor the oats that hunger for their
gloss.
Yet I love your dying tempest --
before you fade, God applauds
and I
leave Eden for good.

THE IDOL

Eunice-Grace Domingo

I saw God teetering on a solid pedestal,
ancient and wrecked by the time it
invented. And it was
untouchable, just as it shouldn't be --
glass isn't armor nor safety nor
precaution, it is a
purgatory inhibiting sacrament --
and this is not the impediment nor
the Almighty, it is
the economic grain of rice
alight by fluorescent beams of
museum displays,
staring at the exhibits that replaced
its Kingdom.

The inscription says "The Idol," but
does it have to be in your image to be
God.

I assume its juttred belly and
many arms and piercing gaze is not who
you saw on the cross or the last
supper, but it must be,
since at one point, it was, and
how strange that omnipotence can be
excavated, polished, and given an
autobiography -- as if a civilization
could ever bury
eternity

THE PROFESSOR

Brandon Fick

“How dare you interrupt me!” exclaimed The Professor,
“I don’t wear pressed cardigans and hundred dollar
slacks for nothing! I don’t streak my hair grey and grow
a pseudo-goatee for this! I don’t orchestrate overcooked,
needlessly wordy lectures on postmodern theories
of industrialization in twenty-first century Japanese slums
to be cut off by pimple-nosed undergrads
more concerned with bagging the top sorority slut
than writing a three-thousand-word essay with full citations!
I am an academic! Hear me?! P to the H to the .d!
I make a hundred grand a year, live on a pristine acreage,
and go to cocktail parties to discuss the merits of Marx!
So, before you think of opening your filthy, unenlightened
mouth to correct me, ask yourself: am I The Professor?”

The pimple-nosed undergrad shifted uneasily in his seat.

“But sir, all I wanted to say is that your fly is undone...”

MIDAS

Dorion Zambuchini

In light of eve or light of morning,
King Midas lay outstretched and asleep
And his fingers gently do creep
To the flesh of his stomach, easily conforming

Despite ideals of kings typically adorning
Satisfied bellies by mutton of sheep,
Old Midas' flatness made it not a leap
To say that the Golden King was starving.

Alas, fearful thou should not be,
Though his hunger may lead him to dying
For the reflection of sunlight shines for all to see

And while midday and midnight unsatisfying
Eve and morn reflect ever positively
The thinness of the Golden King; beauty, tantalizing.

CULTURAL EVENT: *FIDDLER ON THE ROOF*

On December 5, 2018 *In Medias Res* attended *Fiddler on the Roof* at Persephone.

Why do you think *Fiddler* became a classic?

Fiddler on the Roof is such a diverse piece of theatre – it is funny, tragic, heart-warming, makes a compelling social commentary, and has quality music. With so many engaging elements, it is no wonder that both the story and dramatic adaptation have been so loved for so long. (Emily Klassen)

What did the play tell you about the nature of cultural traditions?

Fiddler on the Roof will remain relevant for quite some time, because while its setting and conflict are specific to Imperial Russia, the tension between tradition and progress is something every generation, regardless of culture, must confront. Not all cultural traditions can survive when challenged by social upheaval and new ideas, and for those who wholeheartedly subscribe to dated traditions, it is practically impossible to let go. This is why Tevye is such a compelling character: he is torn between family and belief, and can only stretch so far. (Brandon Fick)

How understandable would the play be for people inexperienced in theatre culture?

I have essentially zero drama experience, and I understood the show. It ties back to history more than it does to other theatre productions. (Chelaine Kirsch)

What did the show tell you about the nature of cultural traditions?

The show has an understanding of how cultural traditions affect generations. The older generation adheres to the traditions of the village and actively showcases their successes to the children. The tenderness of youth wanting to live differently and make their own choices greatly influences all characters in this musical. The show depicts both sides of the story as successful: Golde and Tevye met through the matchmaker but do still love each other, and Tzeitel and Motel marry even though they aren't adhering to cultural traditions by doing so. The show discusses quite prominently that the nature of cultural tradition affects everything someone does. (McKenzie Huyghebaert)





ART BY KATHLYN ZALES

CLOCKWISE

SPIRIT ANIMAL

CONSTANT MOTION IN JAPAN

POPULATE

VULNERABILITY





SUNSET | EMILY KLASSEN

A TILTING LIGHTHOUSE

Brandon Fick

Blood pumps the brain, fires the neurons, the upswell of memory detritus

Your lost days trickle towards reconciliation

Unspool like fine silken spider webs down the myelin-coated axons

Cry for the fabled days in the bosom of the town

In the bungalow basement, in the mall arcade, mini-golf, bowling alley

Washed out polaroids pulled out of the past

Waver in the sepia-dream like a tilting lighthouse in a tsunami of age

Waves rip the solitary pinnacle asunder

Awake to the fierce teeth of the future snapping like a deliberate turtle

You must close your eyes to the lure of pity