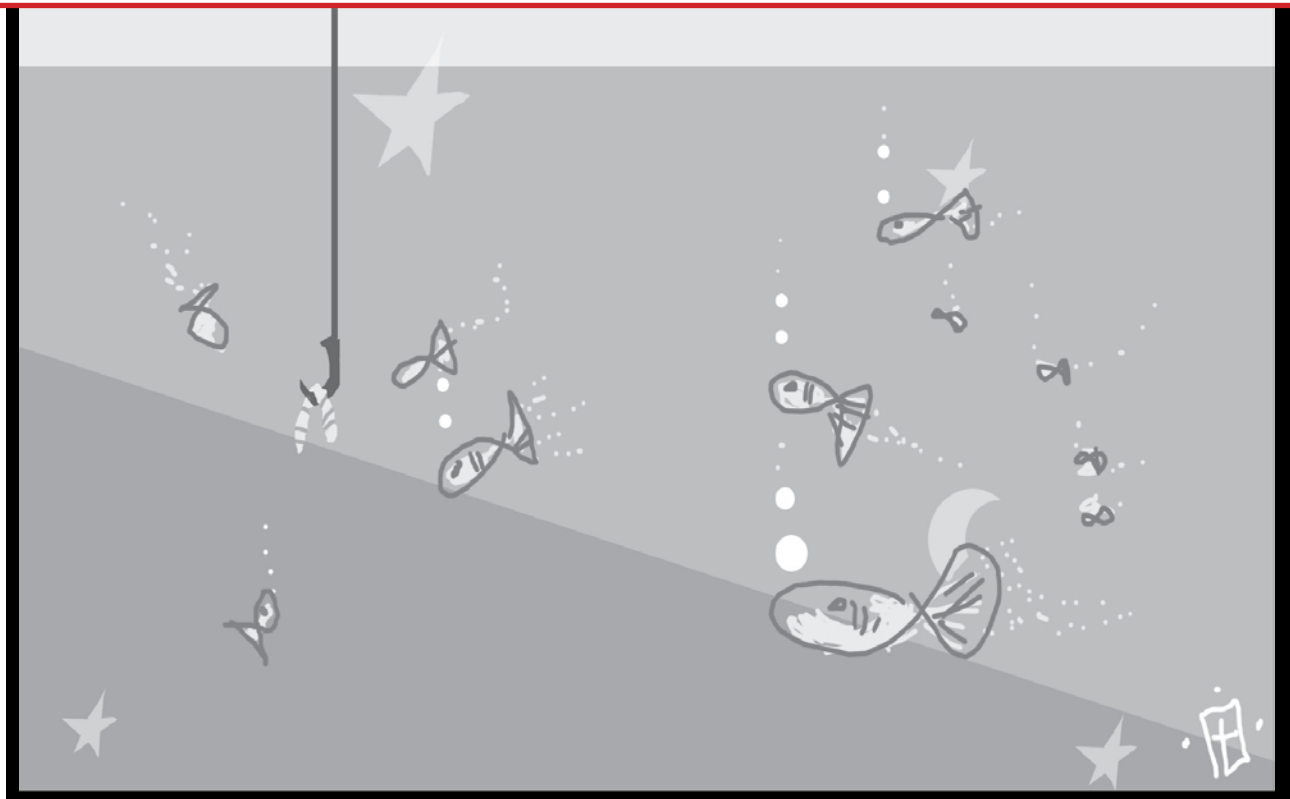




in medias res

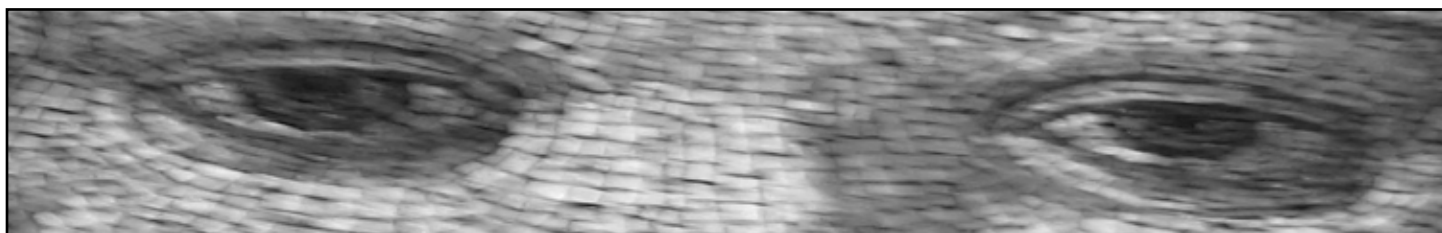
A Liberal Arts Journal
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EDITORIAL POLICY

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 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! Indeed, the university must, in some sense, have sufficient diversity and depth to merit its name. Situated as we are between many things, ideas, experiences and

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Rethinking Social Justice in a Globalizing World

By Darrell McLaughlin

One of the major challenges of our time is how to nurture social justice in an era where there has been a compression of time and space of human relations (Anthony Giddens, 1990). Concrete manifestations of this can be found in almost every aspect of daily life from our regular communication with people across the city or the world, the products that we consume, and the ideas that shape our understandings of events and of the world itself. Our actions increasingly have consequences locally and globally. Meanwhile, there is a persistent lag between how the processes of globalization are developing and our understanding of those processes (Appadurai, 2000). So great is the lag that to be intentional in our role of producing a more just, sustainable future, we must follow Michael Schwalbe's (2001) advice and be continually mindful of the consequences our actions and choices have on others near and far. The conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age are shaped by the distribution of money, power and resources at global, national and local levels, which are themselves influenced by policy choices. These social factors are largely responsible for social inequities - the unfair and avoidable differences in people's lives - and change within and between countries. In this article, I will discuss some of the barriers to achieving social justice in conjunction with globalization.

The same technologies that are making possible a global network of goods and services production/consumption are also increasing people's capacity to know what is happening elsewhere. This is occurring not just through the popular media but also through a growing number of international non-governmental organizations. This information is creating an emerging consciousness about our collective communities of fate that draws our attention to environmental, economic, political, human rights, and inequality issues. We rejoice in the pro-

found capacity of people to see themselves as global citizens, be it intermittently, and act in solidarity with others in times of catastrophes. Although these periodic acts of solidarity are important, they do not address the structural reasons for inequality and social injustice.

Social justice in a globalizing era, like so many other principles patterning social interactions, must be examined critically in light of changing and broadening context. Capeheart and Milovanovic (2007), document how meanings of justice have evolved over time but the most common meanings reflect the interest of the dominant groups in the respective societies. In the 1800s in Europe, according to economic historian Karl Polanyi, a radical break was made from previous social systems. Under capitalism the primary purpose of the economic

"The conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age are shaped by the distribution of money, power and resources at global, national and local levels, which are themselves influenced by policy choices."

system became capital accumulation not meeting everyone's material and social needs. During the emergence of capitalism, we see that philoso-

phers and social theorists, such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacque Rousseau, Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx, and Emile Durkheim debating and formulating the social bases for justice. Through much struggle, the dominant configuration of the modern state became based liberal capitalism. Not surprisingly the normative practices emphasized and valued rights of property, individualism, and European expressions of justice. That conceptual framework appeared to work for a while, . . . and for some. Over the years demand for an expanded concept of justice has emerged out of various groups' struggles. Social movements have also become more global in their efforts to redefine and work towards social justice. Although the conversation about social justice is more inclusive, some voices are still marginalized.

(cont'd on page 4)

Establishing a policy paradigm on the principles of social justice is a formidable project and yet absolutely essential. "While ethical and social justice issues are always contentious, controversial, and complex, they are also paramount human concerns" (Harper and LeBeau 2003: 203). The nation-state remains relevant in the process of shifting a public policy paradigm for it is within the boundaries of nation-states and its institutions - most especially universities like ours - that citizens form a collective consciousness of the society they want through addressing such questions as: what should be the distribution of the costs and benefits of production?; who is included in the distribution?; and how is the distribution to be decided? The 'what', 'who', and 'how' questions are taken up by Nancy Fraser (2007) in her theorizing of social justice in a globalizing, multicultural, post Keynesian-Westphalian world.

Fraser (2007) challenges social scientists, philosophers, and activists to create a social justice framework. She identifies three essential dimensions of social justice (or injustice): distribution (or mis-distribution of economic wealth), recognition (or mis-recognition through cultural norms of who to include in the redistribution), and political (or misrepresentation of the various interests in the process of governance). In her framework, social justice becomes a theory of democratic justice where justice emerges from the dialogue between all those affected by a situation while giving priority to the needs of the most vulnerable. Fraser's conceptualization of social justice contains a number of arduous tasks but I share William Coleman and Josephine Dioniso's (2009) view that the greatest challenge is one of recognition. That is, to see how, in a connected world, our lives are embedded in the lives of others. This embeddedness is producing a global community of fate. To paraphrase Jacques Derrida, justice has everything to do with orientation to the other, a duty to the other, in making room for the other to speak and be heard (Capeheart and Milovanovic 2007). This recognition will require learning

to look across disciplines and even across bodies of knowledge that are situated outside the Global North and Western ways of knowing.

Members of the U of S community are fortunate in that STM College has proposed a new minor, "Critical Perspectives on Social Justice and the Common Good". Once in place, the new program will encourage students and faculty to explore issues and problems associated with historical cycles of exclusion, inequality and marginalization and the social structures that recreate these patterns. Together we will begin to understand how we might respond to growing imbalances being brought on by processes of globalization. Given the intensity and scale of human need, there is some urgency to the task. The work we do locally is still critical because it is here that we have sustained encounters with each other and together discern what is social justice, how best to act on that understanding and how our social and geographic locations affect our understandings. It is in the context of local social relations that we initially know one another and identify areas and issues of common concern. It is also within the sovereignty of nation and community that social justice is actualized, at least in the short term, as our capacity of citizenship becomes planetary.

Darrell McLaughlin is an Associate Professor of Sociology at St. Thomas More College.

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The Lovely Heurodis

Within a grove
White willow branches lie in spirals on the ground
Crimson leaves blow back and forth beneath the pale of the moon
A young woman sleeps there under an oak, weary of pursuit

The leaves gather into a single procession
In the form of a crucifix they carry the girl to a distant river
Having done their duty they scatter in the wind
Never to return again.

Divided by nettles in the cold-running stream
Her breathless body cannot linger on any shore
In her village the old women whisper
'Heurodis' in the evenings when men are asleep

Daniel McFarlane

"Wool"

My beloved
Beloved
To be loved
Is to be needy
I need a body to
Hold
In my bed
Wool quilt scratching at our shoulders
Warm bodies, icy feet
Risky, risky
To be loved
By Beloved
When you no longer
Love him

Cassandra Stark

SOCRATIC PESTILENCE: THE CAMPUS GADFLIES ASK ABOUT...

How relevant is a person's public life to his/her holding public office?

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. This semester's glimpse into the student psyche focuses on the divide between public and private life. We asked students, "How relevant is a person's private life to him or her holding public office?" Has Trudeau influenced the whole of our generation? Here is what we learned:

It seems that if someone is going to go into a public position, they should be willing to have all eyes on them, and a certain amount of scrutiny constantly being held to them.

Sam Schneider - 2nd year Arts and Science

I think a person's private life doesn't necessarily affect their ability to do their job so it shouldn't really make a difference... I think we should rate a person's position in office based on how they can actually do their job rather than what they do in their private life.

Jesse Witow - 3rd year Philosophy

I guess it depends in how we define private life or public office or what exactly we're speaking of, but in general I would say not at all.

Rae Kroshus - IS / Linguistics (Alumnus)

I'm going to say completely irrelevant. As long as they're of good morals I don't think their private life should have any effect on their public office positions.

Jason Venne - 1st year Arts and Sciences

It's relevant in that it is important to know the person's background, because one's experience affects [one's] views, and those views are relevant to how effective [one] would be in public office.

Anonymous - 2nd year Law



I think that a person's private life is definitely relevant to their holding a public office because if they are going to conduct themselves in a certain way in their private life its going to transfer over to how they might conduct themselves in a public setting. So if they have poor private life morals or issues, then it might transfer to how they might make decisions or how they operate for the general public. It's tough to have a good sense of public morality if your own private morality isn't very good.

Ryan Spencer - 2nd Year Geological Engineering

It shouldn't matter very much since ideally we'd be basing our opinions of politicians on their policies and not treating them like celebrities whose private lives actually matter, unless they have a criminal record.

Ishmael Daro, 3rd year Political Studies

I don't think that a person's private life should matter for their election into public office, be it their beliefs or their actions, unless they have a criminal record with repeat violent offensive or they are a pedophile – those are the only two cases.

Andrew Roebuck - 3rd year (ish) biochem

I would think that it is very relevant. Just because your personal factors, like who you are, sexual orientation, colour, what you believe in, all those kind of things, are part of the reasons people vote for you and having a good cross section in public office is what you need. So I think it would be relevant.

Anonymous - 2nd year Law

I think that it is important because it can influence the way you think and the way you perceive things. I don't think its so important that people should hold something against you. If you are running for public office and you're gay or bisexual I don't think anyone should really relate that to how you're going to run an office. It might change the way you think and how you relate to other people and things like that.

Ellen Morrison - 1st year Commerce

Your private life should be kept private from your public life but unfortunately people look to your private life when you are in public office to judge your moral character. I think it happens but I don't think it's necessarily a good thing.

**Anonymous - EBS
5th year, BA third year**

When I hear about someone's private life, what they're like at home, I usually don't take that into consideration, depending on what office they're in. If they running for government, or for anything for CEO of a company- it doesn't really matter what kind of background they have or what they've done in the past, its just what they're like now.

Justin McWeely - 2nd year Commerce

There is no relevance to their private life unless if it is something completely ghastly. I mean I don't want a convicted sex offender to be in charge of children's rights. Basically their religious beliefs or anything like that shouldn't enter into political office in any way; it should be whoever is most right for the job.

Tannara Yellan - 4th year History

I don't think that what people do in the privacy of their own home should have any bearing on whether they should be in office or not as public figures. The only time I think that it should be taken into consideration is if it is something illegal or immoral. Like if it involves children. If it is just consenting adults and we're talking about marriage or dating or whatever they want to do behind closed doors, as long as it doesn't involve children or minors or that sort of thing, as long as its consenting adults, I don't think

anybody needs to know this. I would be more concerned with their ability to fulfill their duties in office.

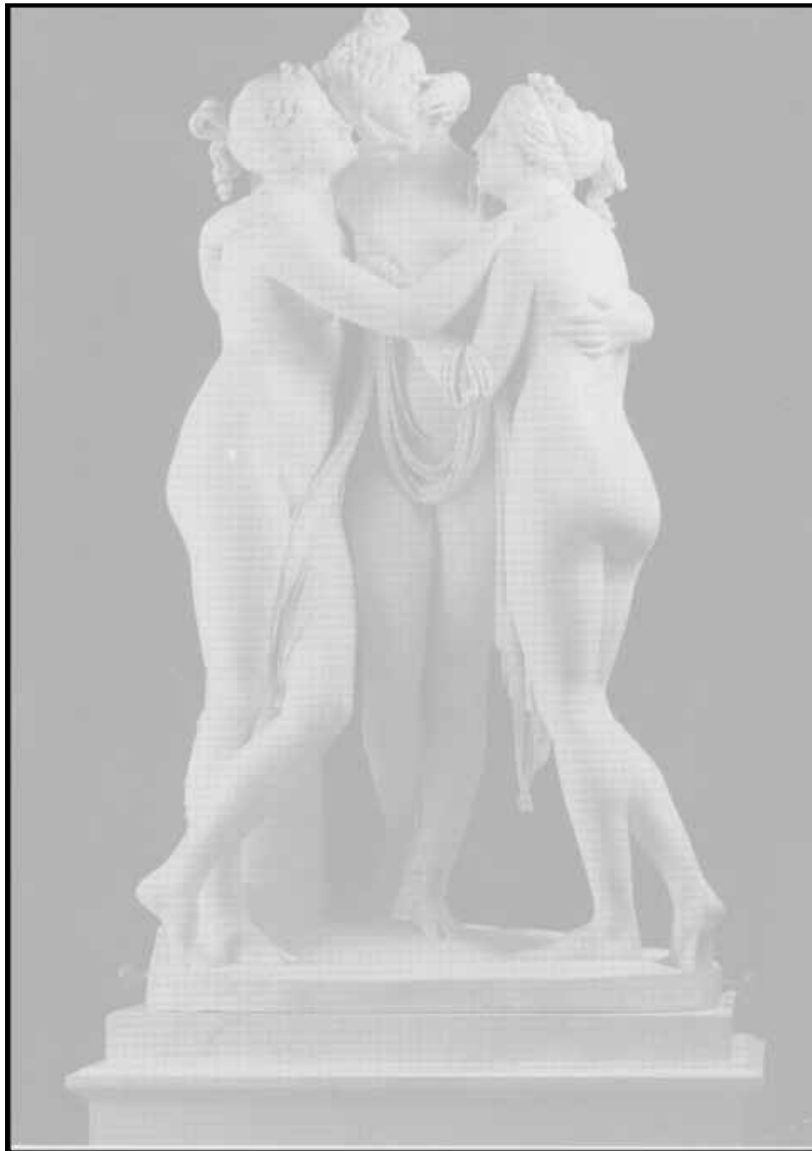
Jan Foy - 2nd year Arts

I don't think it is very relevant for a person's private life to be involved. Because what happens in their house doesn't necessarily reflect their work ethic or what they bring to the work place. People can hold it in separate divisions in their lives. And I think that it shouldn't be a big deal in sight of whether they should hold public office or not. I think a lot of people go in and do a lot of searching and bring up dirt that isn't really appropriate for a public office position. The private life isn't involved in the public office at all, so why should it be brought up?

Chelsea Radle - 2nd year Arts

Parts of their private life, if it is something where it is value-wise, that they are going to be being into office and if that's going to be relevant to how they make decisions and run things. A lot of people in office, you find out about these cheating scandals or this and that, and I don't think that's as relevant as their views on bringing up children or religious beliefs... I think those areas of your personal life do come into effect.

Tanya Sales - 3rd year Kinesiology



Awareness Leading to Happiness and Harmony

by Lalit Kilam

The existence of life is a thought through which, if properly reasoned by applying logic, we become aware of the fact that the only life we have is the present one. On par with this is the knowledge of life. We know that life at present times is picking up speed indeed; it is a basic truth. Benjamin Franklin's thought about time is that it is a luxury of life. He also stated, "Dost thou love life."

The fountainhead of life is Ayurveda, which is a system of diet, healing and health maintenance and is the oldest science of life. It is the principle of life, which, if applied, results in holistic health, harmony, and happiness. It is a system of medicine, but it also aims at knowing one's essential nature. It teaches us to understand our body. With that knowledge, we are able to identify activities, conditions and foods that keep us healthy and in balance. Ayurveda principles are utilized to prepare a balanced meal and create a constant harmonious environment.

The functioning of our body and the tendencies of it are directly related to five elements that act as the basic energies in everybody and everything. The five elements seem to be strongest in our personalities and, according to the science of Ayurveda, we are constituted of different combinations of these elements (which are space, air, fire, water and earth).

These elements get mixed in varieties such that each form of matter is distinctly unique. In the case of a human being for instance, space corresponds to the spaces within the body (the mouth, the nostrils, etc.), air denotes the movement (of muscular and/or nervous system), fire controls the functioning of enzymes (in the intelligence and digestive systems), water is in all body fluids (saliva and digestive juices), and earth manifests itself in the solid structure of the body (in the bones, teeth, flesh and hair). If the percentage of these universal elements is known we can do better to preserve our health.

The science of Ayurveda divides the human body into three basic components: Dosha, Dhuta and Mala. These are also said to be composed of the five elements, are linked to each other and are influenced by the external environment. The main pillar of the human organism is this triad; dosha, dhuta and mala. The trio should be in harmony with each other with all of the components properly balanced.

The ancient science of Ayurveda provides guidelines to identify our constitutional nature that

enables us to live wisely on the earth. The trio is responsible for the arising of natural urges for preferences in foods (i.e. their flavor, taste, etc.). They are responsible for emotions such as fear, anger and greed and also of understanding, compassion and love. According to the Ayurveda, food is agreeable to different people according to their innate disposition. If a man's diet is pure, his mind too will be pure. 'Purity of mind follows from the purity of diet' and purity of thought and other qualities depend on the purity of mind.



The following are a few suggestions for well being according to Ayurveda.

1. The most important thing is to eat food close to their natural state (i.e. fresh food and most nourishing).
2. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables.
3. Have plenty of dairy products such as milk, cheese, and butter.
4. Eat bundles of carrots and beats.
5. Allow sufficient time between meals.
6. Eliminate processed food and also, if possible, red meat.
7. Drink plenty of water.
8. Eat sunflower seeds, nuts, and almonds.

Ayurveda in Sanskrit means knowledge of life. Dosha in Sanskrit means humors in the body. Dhuta in Sanskrit means tissues. Mala in Sanskrit means metabolic end products.

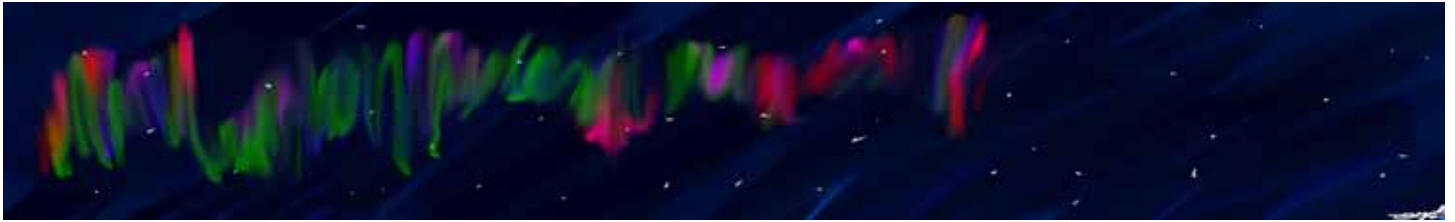
INTERCORDIA COFFEE STORY

BY: IAN REGNIER

The first day my fellow Intercordian Alex and I arrived at our placement community La Garnacha we were told of the one tool required for work: machetes! "Well", I amusedly thought "don't know what boss in Canada would tell me that on the first day." After a trip to the hardware shop in Estelí we returned the following morning sporting our new gleaming machetes. Lolo, our fellow worker at La Garnacha, immediately filed them down to a pristine edge and handed back my razor sharp darling. "Muchísima gracias", I triumphantly exclaimed taking a few practice swipes. Soon enough, Alex and I were mastering our technique clearing out land for a fresh new batch of coffee plants by cutting away vast rows of thick overgrowth along a steep whirling hillside dipping into the majestic Segovia mountain range. The topography of this manzana dazzled the eyes much more than a ho-hum Saskatchewan prairie acre. Our coffee crew consisted of us Canadian boys along with Lolo, Toño, Denny, Rafael, and Ronal who all showed us how to dig into the earth or as they said "¡Saque la tierra!" For two work weeks straight we followed their lead carrying giant crates of coffee on our backs down the rugged terrain to fill our newly dug holes. By the end of these 30-degree plus labor-intensive days we would be covered in dirt, sweat, mosquito bites, and sun burns with aching muscles and sore backs but it was in this gritty condition that I found a true appreciation and compassion for coffee growing and its work ethic. I had only known the process from the nice Tim Hortons employee handing me my XL regular on a typical university morning. I now understood the effort exerted for me to enjoy that essential caffeinated morning beverage. Not only was this getting my body in ridiculously

good shape but I also learned a fascinating amount about the world's second most traded resource! Lolo, who hailed from the Nicaraguan coffee capital Matagalpa, taught us everything from the three different types being planted (Catimorra, Caturra, and Arabic) to when the seeds were ripe for the picking (three years for our plants). Once again, where in Canada could I find this? After our hard days of work we would saunter over to the boss Patricio's place and pour ourselves a well-earned cup of "el café". Punch out at La Grancha involved sitting down, sipping on my mug, smoking Casino cigarettes, and talking in my new second tongue with my new friends. This was total integration into the Nicaraguan workingman's life. I was somewhat sad when we finished planting our manzana and did not work with coffee for a while. A few weeks later we fertilized some ripe coffee plants at different locations making countless trips with huge sacks full of goat manure on our backs to pour around the bases. Needless to say, this job cannot be romanticized quite as much... However, I must say that poetic memories of coffee planting arise every time I now have a fresh brew to my lips.





A Canadian Fairy Tale

a short story by Dylan Robertson

Far north, where there is nothing but ice and snow, lived a young girl named Sedna. Endlessly curious and as bright as a star, she lived with her parents and four brothers. Every week, her father and brothers would go out and hunt for food, leaving Sedna and her dear mother to take care of their small, modest homestead.

Every night after they returned from the hunt, the family would sit in a circle as her father and each brother would tell a story about the hunt. Each week, Sedna would hear stories about hunting elk and seal. However, what she was really interested in was when her brothers would describe all the wonderful places that they had gone. Over the years, she heard stories of endless, green forests and vast cliffs of rock that stretched as far as the eye could see. Such sights intrigued Sedna to no end, and as every hunt came and gone, she became more and more interested in joining her brothers on the hunt.

Sedna was always curious as to why she could not go with her brothers. When Sedna was eight years old, she first asked to go with her brothers. “No,” her mother had said. “Your brothers are men, and you would not be able to keep up with them through the deep snow.” But this only encouraged Sedna, and every week before they left to hunt, Sedna would sit and watch as her father and brothers fastened snowshoes out of twigs and bones. Every week, Sedna would take a small amount of sticks from her brothers, until she had enough to create her own snowshoes.

A few months later, when Sedna again asked her mother, her request was turned down once more. “No,” her mother had said. “You are too weak to use a bow and arrow, and your reach is not long enough for a spear.” Once again, Sedna would not take no for an

answer, and the day after he returned from the hunt, she asked her brother to teach her how to use a bow and arrow. Within a few weeks, Sedna had become a decent shot.

Sedna’s mother knew that she could not continue giving her daughter excuses forever. One night, she made a plan with Sedna’s father: she would scare her daughter into giving up her outlandish requests. The next time Sedna came to her and asked to be able to hunt, her mother was prepared. “No,” she told her daughter. “You may not go. If you go, you might be caught by an Inupasugjuk.”

Sedna was confused by what her mother had said. She had never heard of such a creature before, and she asked her mother what it was. “An Inupasugjuk is a giant,” her mother explained. “They are twice as tall as an inunnguaq, with fingers the size of walruses. Their footsteps shake the ground and crack the ice. They are rarely seen, and only the most unlucky travelers will ever encounter one.” Sedna’s mother’s warning was clear. “The Inupasugjuk are drawn to travelers who have lost their way. They leave hunters alone, for they respect the traditions of the hunt, but if they encountered a young girl such as yourself they would not think twice about picking you up off the ground and carrying you away. If you encounter one, only by proving yourself as a skilled hunter will they leave you alone.”

The mother was sure that her warning would scare her daughter into obeying her, but Sedna’s curiosity could not be broken. In fact, the prospect of meeting a giant only served to further fan the flames of her interest.



She began to ask her brothers if they had seen any signs of giants on their hunts, and when they returned from a poor hunt she blamed it on the “hungry and greedy giants”. A few weeks later, Sedna once again asked to go on the hunt. This time, her mother had run out of patience with the young girl. “No,” she told her daughter. “You cannot go out on the hunt because I said you cannot. You are a woman and your place is here. You will not go on this hunt, or the next, or the one after that and you will stop asking.” Her mother’s stern ultimatum worked – following it, Sedna quietly dropped the subject. Her mother, believing the matter to be finished, moved her attention elsewhere.

But again, Sedna’s curiosity would not waver. On the night of the next hunt, after her father and brothers had left and her mother had gone to sleep, Sedna quickly and quietly gathered her belongings, including her snowshoes, her bow, some arrows, and some dried meat before sneaking out under the cover of night. She had thought up a simple plan; she would follow the tracks that her father and brothers had left in the snow, never stopping unless to eat, until she had caught up with them. Then they would have no choice but to allow her to participate in the hunt, giving her the chance to finally prove herself.

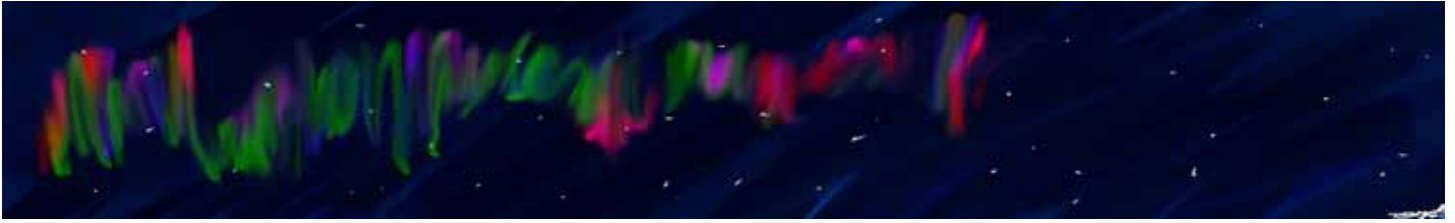
Outstretched before her was a path of snow prints that extended into the darkness ahead of her. She followed them for hours, all the way to sunrise. And yet, she did not see any her father or her brothers. All she saw in front of her was the five sets of footprints. Nevertheless, she continued to follow them throughout the day, only stopping briefly to eat. She never once thought about turning back. By midday, she

had travelled far enough that she could see the sight of icebergs and ocean from far in the distance. The tracks travelled parallel down the coast, and Sedna did not dare tread any closer to the water out of fear of the ice breaking apart underneath her. By evening, Sedna had stopped several times in order to rest, but the fear of never catching up to her father and brothers began to poison her mind and she would not allow herself more than a minutes rest before continuing.

That night, a heavy snowfall began, and by morning the path that had been laid before her had disappeared under a blanket of fresh snow. Sedna found herself alone in an endless ocean of white. Fear quickly overcame her determination, and while she fought off the desire to curl into a ball and cry, she reluctantly decided that it was foolhardy to continue her chase. Scared, she decided to turn around and try to make her way home before she ran out of food. Tired and frightened, she walked until she could walk no more, and collapsed from exhaustion.

The trembling of the Earth below her caused Sedna to rise from her slumber. She did not know how long she had lay unconscious for, but it was now night, and through the darkness that surrounded her she could hear the sound of thunder. The Earth shook as if it were about to break into a million pieces as she clumsily attempted to rise to her feet. Still exhausted, she began to run, but she did not know which way was safe. She ran from darkness, into darkness, until the trembles of the Earth became so powerful that she fell and began to crawl.

(Cont’d on page 12)



From within the darkness in front of her emerged the figure of a giant. It was a woman with long black hair dressed in clothes that seemed to be patched together by dozens of smaller pelts. The Earth trembled with every step that she took, until her giant feet rested only a few dozen metres away from where Sedna lay in awe. Before Sedna could react, the giant spoke: "Little girl, what are you doing out by yourself?"

Sedna was surprised that the giant spoke the same language as her, but she remembered what her mother had said to her: "...they would not think twice about picking you up off the ground and carrying you away. If you encounter one, only by proving yourself as a skilled hunter will they leave you alone." Having little choice, Sedna stood up and looked the giant in the face as she yelled. "I am not a little girl! My name is Sedna, and I am a great hunter!"

"You claim to be a hunter, but you appear to be but a child," the giant replied.

"I would not lie about my skill, giant. My arrows fly farther and straighter than anyone else's, and my snowshoes are crafted to be the finest in the world!" Sedna yelled, brandishing her bow and showing off the snowshoes on her feet.

"But if you were a hunter, why would you be out in the wild by yourself? It is dangerous for anyone to be out by themselves after dark."

"My hunting party could not keep up with me!" responded Sedna. "We were tracking a herd of caribou across the tundra for two days and two nights straight. My party wanted to rest, but I will not let the caribou get away!" She directed behind her towards her tracks in the snow. "I have been tracking them all day and I am close!" She prayed that, through the darkness, the giant would fall for her deception.

After a moment of silence, the giant spoke once more. "I see only your tracks, little girl. If you are tracking caribou like you claim, where are the tracks

from their hooves?"

Sedna thought for a moment, before she was hit by a burst of inspiration. She pointed to her left, towards the darkness. "The herd is over there, just behind the darkness. I have been tracking them from an angle in order to lead them to a cliff, where they will be unable to run from my arrows. You can go look if you do not believe me, but please don't scare them away."

Again, the giant stood in silence. Sedna was unsure if the giant had bought her lie until the giant grunted. "Very well, I will go and see if you are telling the truth," the giant said, before turning and walking away. Sedna watched the retreating figure of the giant slowly disappear into the darkness, until only the tremble from the giant's footsteps could be felt.

Sedna waited and listen for a minute, before a massive and sudden crack ripped through the air, followed by a loud, horrific scream. Upon hearing it, Sedna turned and immediately began to run away, putting as much distance as she could between the giant and her before she again fell due to fatigue.

She awoke to find herself being carried. However, upon opening her eyes she was not greeted by the sight of the Inupasugjuk, but instead the familiar face of her father. "If we had not been drawn by the sound of the ice breaking, we would have never found you," he later explained.

Sedna remained in his arms for the entire trip home. Her mother was frantic with worry upon seeing her and in tears when she asked where she had gone. As the entire family sat down in a circle, Sedna explained how she had snuck out and become lost in the storm, before meeting and tricking the Inupasugjuk. Her family clung to her every word. When she was done, her mother asked her to promise to never sneak away again. With a smile Sedna promised; her endless curiosity had finally been satisfied.

An Obscure Wanderer

a short story by Justin Pelan

In early 2010, before University, I worked as an apprentice carpenter on a large commercial project, and spent lunch on the sidewalks of downtown Victoria, BC, in the company of my carpenter comrades, riddling ourselves with pointless obscenities, “Would you rather...” kind of questions. Being masters of our surroundings as carpenters, it’s easy to fall prey to a false confidence—such happens while people-watching anyway. A palpable shame can be seen on a given passer-by’s face as we snickered in contempt. Some folks just naturally project a humiliated expression, and we capitalized on it.

Balance is sought everywhere, and dispensary justice will sometimes occur whether or not anyone notices. Such notice happened one day by chance, by the slight glance of my attention, as if it were my duty to recognize the misconduct of our daily scorn. Some unknown cue raised my head with urgency. An old man looking straight ahead approached and immediately I noticed his unusually powerful gait plowing ahead gracefully on some considerable life’s mission. Then, my already curious expression became awe as I noticed his orderly white goatee, priding his ancient wisdom. This mystic marvel wandered easily into his seventies with no signs of physical malady or mental impairment. Swiftly moving legs pummeled the sidewalk, with thighs like tree trunks dressed in army green khakis, and smart looking boots – well trodden. Though, not a hippy, as many still are on Vancouver Island.

I remember a flash of panic as the first few seconds elapsed, thinking the boys must be seeing this, and then his kind contented face comfortably met mine as I peered into his youthful eyes that emanated peace. Whatever went through his mind I do not know, but I know this for sure. He was not subject to our contempt, and my heart sank, humiliated as I realized our own fault and I reckoned something awful just then. The same trashing we mocked our usual fare with is the very kind of unenlightened mobbing responsible for the worst kind of awful acts on humanity; witch hunts, forced religion, racism – all self-righteous groupings of like-minded fools.

Just who this obscure wanderer was, we’ll never know. I recognized many pedestrians on that busy sidewalk, but never saw him again. I don’t know if I will ever lunch with those colleagues again; no more thrill of scorning passer-by’s, Italian pasta specials, or unimaginably strong Victorian coffee... But, like our obscure wanderer, I made my own fearless footprints toward new lands, with many more years of that to come.

The Magic of the Season

a short story by Alyssa Coté

When I was about five or six, I swore I heard reindeer on the roof of my house Christmas Eve. I knew Santa Claus had just arrived, and it took all the will-power I had to stay in bed and wait for the Christmas morning surprise. When it was at least past six o'clock, my sister and I got up and woke up the rest of the house.

Our family had a very routine Christmas. Stockings, breakfast, presents, visiting, supper, more visiting. Christmas has been one of my favourite holidays for many years, and whenever I start to hear seasonal music playing in the malls or on the radio, I'm brought back to all those exciting Christmas years as a child.

As a child, I used to wonder how Santa had gotten into our house. We didn't have a chimney, and when I asked my parents, they said he came in through the front door. I suppose that made sense; Santa Claus was a friend to everyone! I accepted this theory with blind trust, and anxiously counted down the days via my chocolate calendar until the big day.

Christmas Eve arrived and once the family had gone to bed, my sister and I stayed awake and at midnight we crept silently out into the hallway. We had a plan.

The milk and cookies and carrots (for the reindeer) were placed neatly on the kitchen table. I wondered absently if the milk would get too warm by the time Santa got there. Sitting on the couch, we clutched our stuffed toys to our bodies as we waited for the time when dear old Saint Nick arrived.

My sister was falling asleep against my shoulder, and as much as I wanted to stay awake, my eyes grew heavy, and we both fell asleep.

I don't think I slept for long, but as my eyes fluttered open, still weary with sleep, I noticed something different about the living room. I nudged my sister awake and we stared in awe as the room glowed brighter and brighter. Then, with a sudden silent burst of energy and magic, the jolly Christmas man himself appeared in front of our Christmas tree.

"I knew he didn't come in through the door," Katie whispered to me softly. I giggled.

Santa Claus turned around slowly, meeting our childish and eager gaze.

"You two are supposed to be sleeping," he said, his voice soft and merry.

"I know," I replied, "but we wanted to see how you got into our house! Dad says you use the front door, but I guess he was wrong."

He laughed and winked. "What will I do with you now, though? I don't think you'll fall back asleep tonight." He waved his hand and a dozen presents appeared under the tree.

"Show off," Katie murmured, causing me to

laugh again. Santa Claus smiled, his cheeks rosy, and kneeled in front of us.

"Did you two want to see some Christmas magic?" he asked us.

We nodded and with another burst of magic, we were outside on the roof. All nine reindeer were waiting patiently, looking at us oddly. I shivered; I was only dressed in my pajamas! Santa waved his hand again and my sister and I were clothed in warm winter clothes. We climbed into the sleigh and in an instant we were dashing from house to house. My sister and I waited with the reindeer while Santa delivered presents. Rudolph's nose really glowed and all of the animals were really nice.

I realized that time was standing still. My Disney princess watch had stopped moving and I knew it wasn't broken. We travelled all across the world. I saw the Berlin Wall, the Great Wall of China, the Eiffel Tower...

When we finally returned home, I was exhausted. Traveling through time was very tiring and I knew it was time for me to go to sleep. Katie yawned beside me. Santa waved his hand a final time and we were tucked safely into bed.

That's when I woke up.

I should've known that it was a dream! Too magical, too fantastic, the experience was. I looked across the room and saw Katie sleeping soundly, snoring lightly.

I frowned in disappointment. I looked at my watch. It was 12:30. I went to the kitchen. The milk and cookies were gone from the table. Presents were under the tree in the living room.

I sighed and went back to bed. Santa Claus didn't show himself to others. He was a very mysterious man.

In the morning, I put the dream out of my mind. Christmas went on as usual. We opened presents and ate big meals. We visited with family and shared the beauty and magic of the season. When the day had finally finished, I told Katie about the dream I had. She laughed at me.

"Santa isn't so obvious. It sounds like a pretty neat dream though. Goodnight."

I went to sleep that night and dreamed once more about Christmas.

I've realized Christmas is for everyone. It's a holiday that can be celebrated by all ages. Christmas is family time and a time for giving. It's for love and happiness and laughter. It's also about magic, and believing in the impossible.

Merry Christmas!

Friars Break t h e F a s t

The medium with which it has been produced is conte pastel on maidstone paper and is entitled, "When Friars Break the Fast". The use of warm tones and softened handling of the medium intend to communicate a feeling of sensual happiness and bright enthusiasm which, when coupled with a harmonious rendering of cooler, complementary tones, highlights the subject matter in a gentle way.

Within this piece I try to portray the shared feeling of bliss one gets when one comes upon the watershed moment of experiencing love, be it on either the physical or spiritual plane.



The focus of the organic subject centred amidst the aesthetically crafted pieces suggests that Divine love is present and penetrates all facades of what may seem to be conveyed as the natural feeling. Upon finding the answer, one 'breaks the fast' and delves in to the immense pleasures of a keener awareness, and ceases to derive nourishment from the empty ventures that beget material gain. Approaching each person in a warm and delicate way, Divine love is the nourisher of the Animus, as well as the nourisher of the Sacred Self.

Colleen A.J. Smith



The Importance of SAFE Education

By Erica Lee

On October 5, 6, and 7, the local organization SAFE (Social Justice and Anti-racist, anti-oppressive Forum on Education) held a series of workshops geared toward Education students at the University of Saskatchewan. These workshops featured 25 presentations from speakers in various fields of education and social justice, including many professors from the U of S.

Lectures included “Integrating Aboriginal Literature in Saskatchewan Classrooms” by Dr. Geraldine Balzer, “Interconnecting Isms: Race, Gender and Homophobia in Education” by Dr. Alex Wilson, “Que(e)rying Church” by Dawn Rolke, “The History of Racial Discourses in North

America” by Dr. Paul Orłowski, “Racialized peoples, Spaces, Discourses” by Susana Deranger M.Ed., and the keynote presenta-

tion by Dr. Verna St. Denis, “Does Talking About Racism Make Matters Worse?” The answer, of course, Dr. Denis concludes is that the only way to eliminate racism and hatred in the classroom is to consciously work towards it, not ignore it.

The significance behind anti-racist and anti-oppressive education is simple and deeply impactful. In the student’s learning experience, the curriculum, methods, and setting all play a part. If one or more of these elements are harmful or exclusionary to any student, the student cannot reach their full potential, or will simply stop attending school altogether. Negative ex-

periences can range from the reinforcement of historical stereotypes in classroom textbooks, to standardized tests skewed to favor native English speakers, to assumptions made of a student’s ability based on their appearance. SAFE exists to stop these problems where they begin, in the classroom, re-educating teachers throughout elementary, high school, and university levels. Anti-Oppressive education is gaining support in academic circles throughout the world, headed largely by Dr. Kevin Kumashiro of the University of Illinois at Chicago, founder of the Center for Anti-Oppressive Education. The mission statement of CAOE asks teachers to “recognize that the quality of education

cannot improve unless we commit to challenging the racism, classism, sexism, and other oppressions that permeate our schools and societies”.

“I watched as every student in my senior high school class was called into the counselor to discuss university registration and future goals. Every student but me. As the only Aboriginal girl in my graduating class, I wasn’t expected to have goals. – Verna St. Denis

Attendance at this first conference surpassed all organizer expectations, and another conference will take place before the end of the 2011 school year.

For more information on SAFE, contact Sheelah Mclean at mcleanshe@hotmail.com, or visit <http://members.shaw.ca/safe21/>.

I Am Whatever You Say I Am: The Necessity of Narrative-Building in Catholic Higher Education

by Reagan Reese Seidler

What's in an Engineer? It is not graphing paper, nor unseemly red jacket, nor undeserved sense of accomplishment, nor any other part belonging to the person.

Still, we understand what they are. And, more importantly, so do they.

At the U of S, being an engineering student means something in particular. It is an identity which they own, composed of symbols, characteristics, personality clichés, behavioural assumptions, and rituals which together perpetuate the legend of what it means to be an engineer. It is a self-consciousness which permeates their educational process, affecting everything from their approach to formal schooling to their off-campus relationships. They know what they “are” and what they “are not”. They are not, for instance, indolent Arts students whose classes require little effort, or uncivilised Agriculture students. The consistency of these opinions suggests the engineering narrative is perpetuated systematically. It is surely not the result of objective personal experiences; were this the case, engineers would recognise they are equally as uncivilised as the agriculture students. Instead, it spreads socially, like other cultural myths. In many ways, it is a college-level form of nationalism.

The benefits of these myths are numerous. A college can develop a society of students in solidarity with one another. Individuals can buy into the college myth and engage in the romance of being one in that community. It is this very “romance of being a student” universities use to sell education as a life choice.

This concept should be important to administrators. These narratives are often the dominant source of

information students have when choosing paths for enrolment. Furthermore, given the importance of alumni in fundraising, how could one overstate the advantage of having graduates with meaningful ties to a college?

Think then, for a moment, about what type of narrative surrounds STM. If existent, it likely centers on two assumptions: one, that students are pursuing an idealistic but useless degree; and two, that the college is full of religious fundamentalists with a secret agenda for Catholic indoctrination. Both, as STM students know, are patently untrue. The liberal arts are fundamental to understanding the human condition – and the Catholic intellectual tradition, whose successes include the creation of the Scientific Method, is a well-established and respected pathway to finding these truths of human nature.

It is time, then, that STM take this issue seriously. Our college offers one of the most holistically enriching educational experiences in Canada, one free of common academic prejudices against diverse forms of learning. While STM has always sought to cultivate a sense of “inclusivity”, this should not deter the college from developing its own character. After all, we’ve built an entire country around a narrative of inclusivity.

So, starting now, let’s embrace our STM identity, and explore that dear perfection which we own as a part of that title.

Reagan Reese Seidler is the President of the STM Students’ Union, as well as a member of the STM Board of Governors, Corporation, Faculty Council, and Board of College Presidents.

Pride and Prejudice



The *In Medias Res* editorial board had good reason to venture out in the midst of a Saskatchewan blizzard: The Newman Players rendition of *Pride & Prejudice*. *In Medias Res* quickly found themselves warm and cozy inside the St. Thomas More auditorium enjoying the classic tale of marriage, integrity and 19th century living. Although many of our readers likely studied the Jane Austen novel in high-school, *In Medias Res* believes the Newman Players live presentation of *Pride and Prejudice* would still entertain and pleasantly surprise its audience.

So, swallow your pride and read onward to see what we had to say about it!

A: That was great! It's hard to pick a particular scene as my favourite. I think what did it for me was Mr. Collins' character. What did the rest of you like the most?

V: I liked how much humour was used. It really kept my attention through the whole performance.

S: Yeah I didn't expect this type of humour from a Jane Austen plot. There was a lot of quick wit. I liked the continuous alcoholic drink in the father's hand.

W: I agree. The parts of the book that I thought would have dragged in an on-stage version were kept interesting with little hints at humour. By the Mrs. Bennett character especially.

V: I really liked both of the Bennett parents. Mr. Bennett was calm and witty which was set nicely against Mrs. Bennett's high strung, dramatic attitude.

T: Mr. and Mrs. Bennett were hilarious. Very entertaining, though the characters still had interest and depth to their personality.

A: My favourite character is still their daughter, Elizabeth. Her acting was so crisp and captivating.

T: I can't believe how many lines she had to memorize!

S: Speaking of actors, this was a big cast! I was impressed by how well each of them worked with their accents. I wasn't brought out of the story it by ridiculous accent problems, not once.

W: Yeah, that was good. The only time they lost me was with their props in the second half. The cardboard wagon and imaginary horse combination was a bit too ridiculous for my imagination.

V: That was a bit cheesy. But prop use elsewhere was pretty smooth. I liked that the actors set the stage themselves rather than having extras. And the costumes were really appropriate; simple enough to be functional, and nice enough that it was believable. The costumes fit the time period and were simple enough that they weren't distracting.

A: Those costumes were impressive. And I thought the actors managed the stage well.

T: Really, you guys didn't like the wagon? Intended or not, I thought it was pleasant comical relief.

V: Did the rest of you think that this stage adaptation did the book justice? It obviously had to be changed quite a bit to fit into a two hour play.

A: I'd say this format didn't allow for the same kind of character development as the book.

V: Yeah I'd have to agree. I didn't feel as attached to the characters this way, and the development of romance between Elizabeth and Darcy wasn't as obvious as I could have hoped for.

T: Although, Elizabeth and Darcy's make-out session at the very end was pretty steamy...

A: Overall, I think this stage version stayed true to the essence of the book. I'd definitely see it again.

T: Definitely. The Newman Players did a great job of working with what they had in terms of plot and props. The story and themes of the original *Pride and Prejudice* were clearly preserved.

V: Yeah, I think someone who is a big Austen fan would like this. Unfortunately, I'd have to agree with those who call it "Arrogance and Bigotry": as a feminist, I wasn't a fan of the plot. I was holding onto the hope that Elizabeth wouldn't be like 'every other girl', but she failed me with her eventual giving in.

W: Yeah, the philosophy behind the plot isn't the greatest... Elizabeth's ambitious, independent and head-strong

nature is dangled in front of us and then she gets married because the guy turns out not to be as bad as she thought. Not the most satisfying ending.

S: She did seem much more like a matriarch than a housewife. I guess that's the 19th century for you.

T: I disagree. It is most definitely relevant to this day and age. I consider the story a classic, just as many others do. I think Elizabeth's decision is more romantic than patriarchal. I found her inquiry into Mr. Darcy's character revealed her character's patience and true desire to find a righteous partner. In fact, I think more men and women should scrutinize a potential partner's character before giving into whims and emotion. Just because she decided to be with the guy doesn't make her passive, never mind patriarchal.

S: So, I take it you guys don't find this play to be relevant to our modern age?

V: I hope it's not!

A : Not really.

T: I feel like the devils advocate, but again, I disagree. *Pride and Prejudice* is a classic. The outfits and language may be dated, but the themes and story are timeless.



**NEWMAN PLAYERS'
NEXT PRODUCTION,
WYRD SISTERS,
WILL TAKE PLACE IN
MARCH 2011 SO BE
ON THE LOOKOUT
FOR TICKETS!**

Photo of the cast of *Pride and Prejudice* taken by Shannon Kirk.

“Untitled”

Let's last a day,
and welcome the sun again
growing, bursting, dying
smouldering orange and iodine yellow
the bubble presses us into walls
the cardboard houses
bend under the heat—
uncontrollable beat
beat
pitter patter thud
it's better uttered
because I'll stay outside
away from the sun-bent houses—
the oily, bubbling cardboard.

Let's last a day
and wait for night
the fit's too tight.

Cassandra Stark

The Giver of Life

This land is as idealistic as can be
Look around you! Can't you see?
So flat with grasses so green
Winter's fury—why are you so mean?

Skies so vast allow the clouds to roam free,
People so diverse in this land of democracy.
Home to Tommy and the vision of Medicare,
This land is so rare, none can compare.

The wind whispers in our ears,
The skies cry, sprinkling tears.
When she's mad, she rumbles and roars,
Scared children forced to run indoors.

Robins sing an early morning tune,
Late nights, like a God, stands the moon.
From Nistowiak Falls to evergreen trees,
Thousands of lakes ruffle in the breeze.

September's wheat turns crispy gold
Weather so extreme makes us brave and bold
She is so wicked, but what a sight!
The Giver of Life, Saskatchewan's just right!

Nick Y. Chandna

Pro et Contra: *Should Canada sever its ties with the Crown?*

PRO:

Canada should sever its ties with the Crown because it holds little to no meaning for Canadians, is costly, hinders true Canadian independence, and is anti-democratic.

When the Fathers of Confederation created the Canadian Constitution in 1867 they held different values than the people of Canada do today and there was quite a bit of external pressure from overseas limiting the development of a truly Canadian identity. The uniting of the British colonies was not meant to create a benefiting independent nation so much as it was a way to cement Britain's foothold in North America and the Crown simply provided the means to maintain that grip. Thus, Canada should sever its ties to the Crown to establish its long-awaited true independence and identity. As long as Canada remains obedient to the Crown, Canadians will remain under its colonizing thumb and be unable to move forward.

Queen Elizabeth II's visit to Canada in summer 2010 cost taxpayers almost five million dollars; five million dollars which could have been much better spent in other areas such as health care and education. The roles of the Governor General and the Lieutenant Governors, who are all representatives of the Crown, contribute to the ever-growing expense of maintaining the Queen's presence in Canada. And, although, constitutionally, the Governor General holds a lot of power, it is never really exercised and just goes to waste.

After a century of British reign over Canada, it is about time that Canada officially declares its independence from Britain. Abolishing our nation's ties to the Crown would improve Canada's national unity because we would no longer be subservient to Britain and we would be able to bear more pride as Canadians. Canada would also no longer need to waste time continually consulting with a different nation that does not necessarily have Canada's best interests in mind or share in Canadian values.

Canada prides itself on being a democratic nation, but by upholding our ties to the Crown we are implicitly condoning a monarchical and autocratic form of government. The Monarchy is decided by bloodline and not through election, and so, upholding the Crown degrades democracy in Canada.

The Crown therefore has overstayed its welcome in Canada as a heavy financial burden and an ineffective force.

Deelynn Quint

CONTRA:

Canada should keep its ties to the Crown because it is a truly Canadian symbol, it eases the pressure on our elected government, and it helps further our presence on the world stage.

At the time of confederation, Canada was tied to the Crown to secure it as a new and independent nation. It was a country made up of people who had distinctly chosen not to be Americans, and it is this constitutional monarchy that sets us apart from the United States. When Canada struggles to define its national identity, this important distinction serves as a reminder of what it means to be Canadian.

If we did not have the Governor General as a representative of the Crown then we would need to create another executive position. In the United States, the President is the head of government and the head of state. Dividing the head of state and head of government provides a better balance of power in Canada. For, although the elected government represents Canadians formally, the Crown serves to champion the rights and freedoms of Canadians without partisanship. As the Head of State, the Queen remains out of political debate, and only steps in when necessary through the Governor General.

The Crown displays values of peace and equality through her work as patron of over 30 charities in Canada. The Queen's presence is noticeable in Canada with her frequent visits to our nation, and is always greeted by record numbers of Canadians who take pride in the royal tradition. Costs associated with keeping the ties to the Crown are minimal. Canadians do not pay any money or taxes to the Queen, except during her travel in Canada on official business or when she is representing Canada abroad.

The Crown is a useful institution both functionally and symbolically for Canadians. Many view the Crown as Canada's true source of power, protection and loyalty; it holds a long history that cannot be dismissed at will. Canada's tie to Great Britain also honours allegiance to the 53 other Commonwealth nations, and cutting ties with the Crown could also damage these relationships. Further, democratic rule is always present in our government. The Crown simply has the power to oversee the democratic procedure.

The Crown is thus an important and effective force that helps to maintain Canada's proper identity.

Joe King



Faculty Files

Dr. Tom Deutscher

Professor of History

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

I became interested in History, in particular European History, in high school at St. Peter's College in Muenster. Having edited the College newsmagazine, I went to St. Thomas More College thinking that I would pursue a career in journalism, but I found my History classes to be so interesting that I turned to an academic career instead. Because of my Catholic background I was attracted to Medieval, Renaissance, and Reformation History. The fact that I had studied Latin and French for four years at St. Peter's contributed to my choice.

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

A Liberal Arts education involves taking courses in a variety of disciplines. Although my own studies in History took eleven years from beginning to end, it is important to be open to changing direction and goals. A Liberal Arts education should help you prepare for those sorts of changes.

2. What are your current projects and research interests?

I am completing a book on the bishop's tribunal of

the northern Italian diocese of Novara during the period of the Catholic or Counter-Reformation. In the book I compare the activity of the tribunal in two key periods of time: the decades following the closure of the Council of Trent in 1563 and the half century before the Napoleonic invasions of Italy in the 1790s. When this project is completed I plan to study the religious ideas of the eighteenth century priest, archivist, and historian Ludovico Antonio Muratori.

3. Outside of being a History professor, what are your hobbies and interests?

I have six children, who have lived in areas as remote as South Korea, Norway, England, and Massachusetts. Some of them are still living abroad. I enjoy visiting them and their families, and I enjoy having them come home for holidays. As hobbies I make wine and cook Italian and other dishes. I am also obsessed with the Roughriders, being a fan since the early '60s.

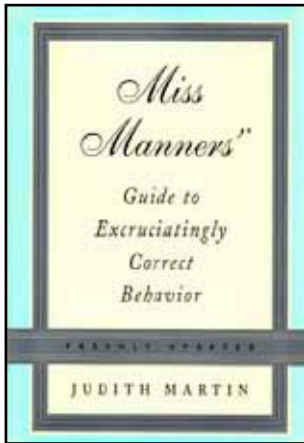
4. If you were to teach outside of your discipline, what area would you choose to teach and why?

Political Studies because it is History in the making.

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

I enjoy many movies, but if I can only name five they would be High Noon (1952), A Man for All Seasons (1966), Lord of the Rings Trilogy (2001-2003), Memphis Belle (1990), and Saving Private Ryan (1998). I like this group of movies because of their common themes of individuals and small groups who resist evil when all seems lost. I also appreciate their production values, visual impact and, and musical scores. With the exception of A Man for All Seasons, they are action movies and I can relax as I watch them.

BOOK REVIEWS



Miss Manners' Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Behaviour

by Judith Martin

Reviewed by Whitney Lilly

Miss Manners' Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Behaviour is a witty, modern day look at the philosophy of etiquette and etiquette problems. Author Judith Martin shows the reader that etiquette is something very different than the elitism and genteelism that

many believe it to be. Martin demonstrates etiquette's relevance and importance through the discussion of topics such as grief, marriage, infidelity, child rearing, business life, taking vacations, throwing parties and giving advice in a North American social context.

Martin begins with a brief explanation of the reasons for bothering with etiquette at all. Here she introduces the idea that hypocrisy is a social virtue. According to Martin, the artificiality of etiquette is not a downside at all. Rather, etiquette's virtue is that it provides a buffer between what people really think of each other and how they actually deal with the people around them. Thanks to etiquette, the child who would

like to talk through class and smear paint on its classmates sits quietly and learns from its teacher.

She warns against the glorification of honesty in society, writing that the ability to insult others to their faces does not help society to run more smoothly or people to flourish more fully as many seem to assume it to do.

Martin demonstrates the link between etiquette and morality through the idea of manners, the general, grounding concepts on which etiquette is built such as consideration for others, cooperation, loyalty, and respect. Etiquette is not arbitrary stuffiness; rather it is an arbitrarily designated signification system for manners. Etiquette systems vary from country to country, but manners stay the same.

Once you're convinced, you will find yourself flying through the pages faster than you ever have before. Much of the book is written in a question and answer format, just like Miss Manners' column in the Washington Post. For that reason, it is a very easy read. Martin's writing style draws the reader in and her ideas captivate until all 850 pages have sadly gone by.

Judith Martin is recognized as an expert in American etiquette and this text as an authoritative source of the history and practice of etiquette. If this book is not already a staple in your household, I would recommend running out to buy one quickly. I would also recommend buying the hard copy so it can sit in nurseries, dens and kitchens for generations to come. ISBN-13: 978-0393058741



No Impact Man

by Colin Beavan

Reviewed by Caitlin Ward

Recently, social interactions have become unnecessarily fraught. I answer the innocent question, "How are you?" with another question: is walking to Extra Foods better than driving across the city to buy organic? Why are you drinking that latte out of a paper cup? Do you know what Nestle

does in the Global South? Should I give up eating meat? I fear by year's end I will have no friends left. When that happens, I'll blame Colin Beavan, author of No Impact Man: The Adventures of a Guilty Liberal Who Attempts to Save the Planet, and the Discoveries He Makes About Himself and Our Way of Life in the Process. I'd like to say he's opened my eyes to environmental issues, but really, he's given me an extended panic attack.

The book is a first-person narrative following Beavan and his family (his wife, their daughter, and their dog) through a yearlong attempt to have zero environmental impact. From their Manhattan apartment,

the family takes incremental steps throughout the year: eradicating non-compostable waste, buying second-hand, eating locally, giving up fossil fuel-reliant transportation, and installing a solar panel on their roof to power their laptops. There are certain things he can't give up — running water, street lights — but he offsets the little impact he does have by taking active steps like picking garbage by the Hudson River.

Beavan's narrative is funny and honest. He begins the project with next to no knowledge of environmentalism, and he readily admits his own weaknesses. Day one, he declares himself an abject failure for blowing his nose on a paper towel before realizing he can blow his nose on a reusable napkin.

Peppered amongst his anecdotes about sustainable nose blowing and the challenge of keeping milk fresh in a heat wave, Beavan explores relevant and sometimes frightening issues. He argues North American culture is not set up for sustainable living, but he sees no reason to give up in the face of that realization. And while the book might yield panic attacks for some, it's an inspiring look into how we can all make better decisions for the environment and ourselves.

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There wasn't anything exceptionally unusual about the day except maybe for the smell of dewy leaves that seemed to upset me more than the uncertainty we faced. We walked the crooked path that led to the big gate surrounded on both sides by mini-forests. I guessed that the chickens had not come to roost because the gates were still shut. We scaled the barbed wire fence to get in. At one end of the yard, was a dead fire with ashes, half-burnt wood and small stools littered about. A bare-chested wine tapper shook his head as he descended from a palm tree that stood at the back of the house. His disappointment wasn't an odd sight when the trees yielded no sap. We trod the red unswept earth into the inner compound through a smaller gate. The odour of goat urine was pungent, but all too familiar - their feces clumped together, lay about in miniature heaps. By the cooking area, in a small calabash on a metal burner was a greenish liquid herb with a film of dust on the surface made visible by the sun. There was an emphatic silence to the place. The kind that lent itself to solemn poetry. "Bianu o!" one of the men called out. Immediately we rushed into the living room of the main house. There he lay, Okadigbo - cold, stiff, dead. I had always known that when it came he would go gracefully but not with one eye open.

By Arinze Umekwe



In Medias Res

St. Thomas More Colege

1437 College Drive

University of Saskatchewan

S7N OW6



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

We all laughed when we heard the childish comment that came out of my brother's mouth. My mother and father thought we should send it into reader's digest, to take a place on the joke page, or become filler in between the magazines articles. We never sent it, just laughed and continued with more important things, but maybe you'll make something of it.

“You're half Chinese,” my mother explains to my brother, correcting the strange misconception of the first grade teacher who told him he was native. Half Chinese, whatever that means. What's the rest? Mennonite I guess. So sometimes we ate rice and sometimes we ate varenyky, and for the rest Canadian? And two grandparents spoke Chinese and two spoke German and my siblings and I spoke English and learned French in school and it didn't matter to us. We were just like other kids, playing childish games, thinking childish thoughts, and saying childish things.

My brother, one day walking with my father, drags his feet in the most annoying manner. My father asks him, “Can't you walk like a normal person?”

My brother replies quite naturally, “But I'm not normal, I'm half Chinese.”

By Sarah Neufeld



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