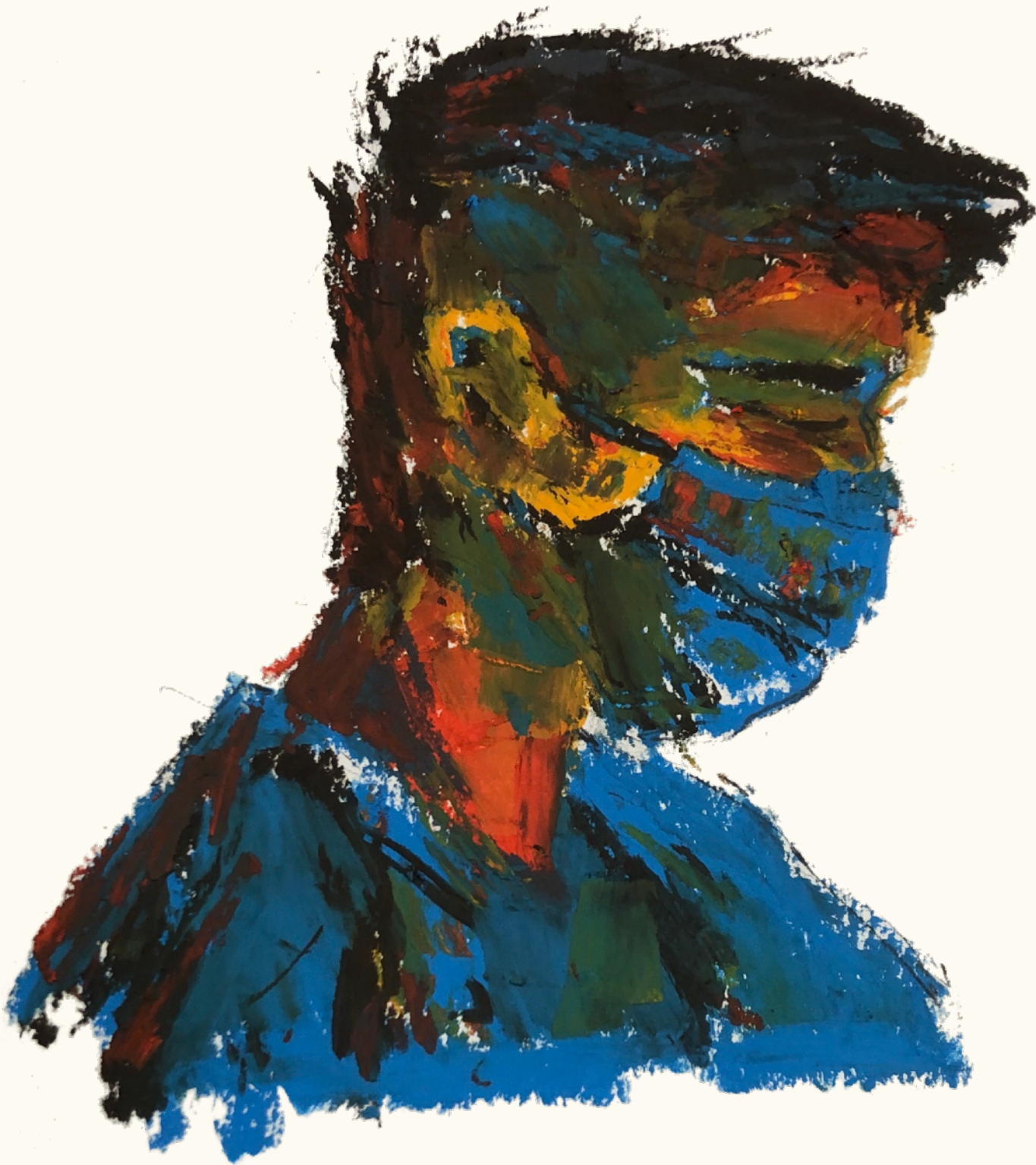


The Cornerstone Review

ISSUE 2 FALL 2021



FICTION • ESSAY • POETRY • ART

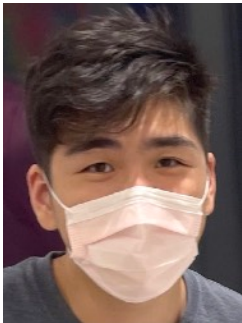
CORNERSTONE

INTEGRATED LIBERAL ARTS

Front Matters

COVER ART

“Masked Student” by Edward Ding



Edward Ding is a Purdue undergraduate student from the College of Science. He was a student in Professor Morganna Lambeth’s SCLA 101 class. His illustration of a masked student received an Honorable Mention in

the Fall 2020 “The Pandemic: Our World Transformed” Cornerstone Contest. “It was drawn in 45 minutes at a club meeting where we just draw whatever we want to,” said Edward. The sentiment that he wished to convey was, “I miss him, I hope he misses me.”

The Cornerstone Review is produced each fall by Purdue University’s Cornerstone Integrated Liberal Arts Program. It is created to celebrate the critical, literary, and artistic accomplishments of Purdue’s undergraduate students who enrolled in Cornerstone’s SCLA courses.

SECOND ISSUE EDITORS

Melinda Zook

Li Wei

WITH SPECIAL ASSISTANCE FROM

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The Cornerstone Review

ISSUE 2 FALL 2021



“Empty Beach” by Jacob Kutcka,
a Purdue undergraduate student majoring in Mechanical Engineering and
a Cornerstone alumnus who enjoys photography and writing fiction.

TO THE READERS

The creativity of our students in Transformative Texts I and II continues to amaze, inspire and gratify our faculty and once again we are able to pull some of the best work of our students from 2020 and 2021 together and offer our readers this showcase of talent. Even with all the difficulties of this past year, the plague and the politics among them, our program continued to grow and prosper and our faculty and students rose of every challenge.

In 2020 and 2021 we witnessed many positive developments for Cornerstone. In August of 2020, the National Endowment for the Humanities and [the Teagle Foundation announced a partnership](#) to revitalize the role of the humanities in general education in college campuses across the country based on our Cornerstone model. To date, 35 colleges and universities are currently replicating our program. I have talked to many of these institutions about our contests and the *Cornerstone Review*. They never fail to be impressed. Cornerstone also received two substantial donations from Purdue alumni. One, from Chris and Michelle White, went toward our new reading room in the HSSE Library which opened in August of 2021. This room provides our students with a quiet space, lined with transformative texts.



[The Michelle and Chris White Cornerstone Reading Room, HSSE Library]

Additionally, we also launched an E-Library of Transformative Texts. We continue to work with Purdue Convocations, Purdue Theatre and Purdue Galleries to enrich our students' experience of the Liberal Arts.

In this edition of the *Cornerstone Review*, readers will find essays, poetry, short stories and artwork by students from a wide array of disciplines including, Pharmacy, Film and Video Studies, Professional Flight, Supply Chain, Information and Analytics, English and a range of Engineering degree programs including biomedical, chemical, aerospace, civil, mechanical and environmental and ecological. The work of these students attests to the power of transformative texts to change lives and see the world anew.

None of this would be possible without the talent and dedication of our marvelous Liberal Arts faculty. They bring the words and images to life for our students. They are what makes this program a success. Finally, allow me to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Li Wei. She graciously, creatively (and, I believe, lovingly) combines this material for us.

Melinda S. Zook
West Lafayette
Fall 2021

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Fiction

“Fiction is the lie through
which we tell the truth.”
—Albert Camus

Fiction

FOLLOWING THE PURPLE FIREFLIES

by
Daniela Alvarez



Daniela Alvarez is a Purdue undergraduate student majoring in Biological Engineering. She wrote this short story to fulfill a writing assignment in Professor Li Wei's SCLA 102 class in Spring 2021. While Daniela wrote this, she kept in mind lingering themes and visuals prompted by the Doors' self-titled album to help visualize the world she created, particularly "The End," "Break on Through (To The Other Side)," and "Light My Fire."

I honestly wanted to stay in on our first night here. The plane trip left me feeling overwhelmingly drowsy and lazy. I felt as though I was missing 5 hours of sleep, but the Paris night scene filled Charlotte with energy. I flopped onto the bed as soon as we got in, but Charlotte only had to bat her eyes a few times and kiss my forehead until I gave in to going out. Her bright blue eyes held a little gleam whenever she talked about Paris. Now, they have never looked so radiant.

Charlotte and I darted through the city as she pointed out all its attractions from the Notre Dame to a perfect handlebar mustache. Personally, I thought the supposed 'City of Light' was trying a little too hard to live up to its name. It's a very touristy destination, so I understand that they need to market it as best they can. It sure did stun Charlotte who was simply glowing with awe, so for that I don't mind Paris's snobbish atmosphere too much.

"Do you hear that?" asked Charlotte. I stopped and listened to hear what sounded like a small crowd of laughter coming from a shadowed corner behind a looming gothic building.

Before I could even respond, Charlotte pulled my hand with hers, and we ran over to the scene.

Behind the corner was a small crowd of people surrounding a lavishly out of place table where quite a mad hatter type sat. He had shaggy black hair and a defined thin face so pale I wasn't sure if he was wearing white makeup. "Darling! You were so close I know you can do better than that. Try your luck once more, dear!" the hatter exclaimed in a rich French accent as he stroked the chin of one of the onlooking women with his spider-like white fingers. "Now, let us go again darling. Are you feeling lucky?" taunted the hatter. His chaotic wide eyes grew wider and wider as his inky, steel, acrylic nails shuffled the playing cards, throwing them in a slithering line over his shoulder, then tossing them to the onlooking woman creating an illusion of a vicious, red-spotted snake. The woman screamed and jerked away, but her feet seemed stuck in place. She fell to the ground and the small crowd dispersed.

"I suppose the doll wasn't ready to play," sneered the hatter. "Are you, dear?" I instinctively squeezed Charlotte's hand in an attempt to tell her that we should leave immediately, but she wouldn't budge. "I'm beyond ready," replied Charlotte. The hatter smirked and shuffled the cards again, keeping the cards within the boundaries of the table as he stared leeringly into her eyes. I tried pulling Charlotte into my chest, but her eyes remained fixated on the hatter as he snickered maliciously. I tried whispering to her that we needed to leave, but she only murmured a monotonous reply. We needed to get out of here immediately.

Suddenly, my skin crawled, and I shivered. My heart raced, and I panicked, feeling as though I was being suffocated. ‘There’s someone behind you,’ thought my instinct. In an instant, instinct took over my body as I whipped around and knifed whatever was about to touch Charlotte.

A shrill screech whirled around us, and I clutched onto Charlotte as tightly as I could. A young thin girl of about 14 ran to the hatter’s side as she held her arm, dripping with blood, to her chest. “Well, bravo, sir. What a fantastical perception you hold. Kitten, thoughts?” The girl simply spat at us and hugged the hatter even tighter. There was an uncomfortable silence for what felt like an eternity until the hatter burst with hysterical laughter, digging his eyes into me.

His feral stare pierced into me as his laughter grew uncontrollably, and the veins in his eyes grew redder and redder. My mind went blank even though every nerve in my body wanted to turn away, get Charlotte to safety, and sleep soundly with her in my arms. “Well...” the hatter pulled back, “You’ll have to excuse kitten. She is a greedy little robber, but you are the victor sir! I have kept a prize just for you. Kitten, fetch the prize.” The girl sauntered over to the darkest corner of the alley, sinking into the gloom. She came out with a stunning black portrait mirror made from onyx.

The mirror was clearly a work of art that was frozen in time. Delicate sculptures of nymphs frolicked and danced in water, framing the dark mirror. At the head of the mirror was the face of a woman with a heavenly crown on her head while directly at the bottom was an old, bearded man.

“Give it, kitten,” commanded the hatter. The girl glared at me with a deadly stare as she walked over and hissed, “Suffer in your hell.” I snatched the mirror from the girl and hurried back to the hotel with Charlotte.

I couldn’t help but analyze the mirror even further that night. While Charlotte showered and settled in, I simply stared at the mesmerizing mirror. My own reflection entranced me as the light bounced off the mirror when for a split second, curious small flashes of purple light hit my eye.

“If you hate it so much, we can sell it if you want. It’s probably too big to fit in the suitcases anyways.” remarked Charlotte. How much time had passed? I looked up from the mirror and felt disoriented, as if I forgot where I was. “I don’t hate it. I was just looking at it...” I uttered.

That night, I placed the mirror on my side of the bed. It almost seemed to make room for itself. Maybe it was the hour and my exhaustion, but I felt the mirror's presence in a similar way I would feel the presence of a person. Its dark edges and gothic figures created ghostly shadows in every which direction, like a throne cushioning her beautiful ridges. I slowly leaned towards her, facing my reflection. The gleams of purple light were back, so I was positive they were not a figment of my imagination. The purple twinkles danced on my face, like soft yet electric kisses. I ran my fingers up my face and felt tiny shocks on my fingers as my face slowly numbed...

Suddenly, blinding white light obstructed the scene, and the gleams fled in an instant. "What did you do?!" I grumbled to Charlotte. Charlotte flinched, and I noticed a twinge of fear in her eyes. "I can't sleep with your lamp on," she claimed. I didn't want to fight her, so I just muttered a 'fine' and slowly lulled to sleep.

I don't usually have vivid dreams. They're just simulations your brain runs while it reloads. Besides that, there is no real meaning behind them. Our minds produce this pure chaos to keep us entertained while we sleep sometimes, so they should never be taken seriously. Of course, human imagination can be quite interesting and produce curious scenes, people, and places within these dreams. Some memories from our dreams may even stick with us because they were so shocking or interesting. This, however, is dangerous because once we start confusing our imagination's perception and memories with reality, we give power to our subconscious. The subconscious is the inherited desire within every human being to follow their animal instincts. It shows up in our dreams most of the time because when we are asleep, our conscious self has little or no control over our thoughts. Therefore, the only things left in dreams are the subconscious and chaos.

Tonight, my subconscious submitted me completely under its will. I woke in a humid jungle filled with chaotic blue and purple striped vines, as if I were in a board game. Peeking through a bush only a few feet from me was a lioness. Her savage eyes stared intently on me, eager to feast on my lifeless limbs. She leaped to me, and, to my shock, I clobbered her with a mallet I held in my hand. She flopped onto the ground next to me, and I ran for my life, pushing past the thick vines consuming my vision. From afar, I heard her roar in pain, but I just kept running while my heart pounded out of my chest.

Finally, the maze of vines dwindled down to reveal a beautiful stone garden next to a blue luminescent lake. The path on which I stood was lighted by a mosaic of fluorescent stones, shifting from greens to blues to purples. My eyes followed the path and found a luminescent blue lake roaring graciously underneath a bridge stemming from the mosaic. I

found it curious that the bridge was built with no railings at all. Suddenly, I felt little electric stings on my fingers, only to realize that radiant purple fireflies were landing on my fingers and fluttering throughout the scene. Lively organ music hummed through the mosaic, as the colors switched to the rhythm of the song. The whole spectacle was fueled by the enchanting organ melody, and I stood in awe.

I followed the purple fireflies down the path and looked down the lake as I stood on the bridge. Butterflies grew in my stomach as I noticed how high the bridge really was. The fireflies suddenly turned, flying down the right shore, where I noticed a beautiful white gazebo where a man and a woman stood. The gazebo was decorated with pink lilies which throbbed with the organ's melody. The woman wore an alluring red dress that immediately caught my eye. I grew with envy to see her with another man who seemed like scum to me. I watched as her dark hair flowed over her shoulders seamlessly as she leaned over the gazebo and met my eyes. She tucked her hair over her ear to reveal a nymph-like pointed ear and gave me a charming little smile as her eyes twinkled.

Without a second thought, I swallowed my butterflies and jumped over the bridge towards her. The water felt cool and fresh on my face as I swam along the current. Once I reached the land next to the gazebo, I climbed up the shore and walked towards the nymph. She was even more bewitching the closer I got to her. The man next to her hissed, revealing a thin and slimy tongue escaping his lips. Fearless, I strode closer to the nymph. Immediately, the man morphed into a malevolent scaly green snake and slithered rapidly towards me. My gut reaction stabbed through the snake with a long stake I found in my hand, impaling, and killing him in an instant. The nymph ran straight into my arms, and I carried her down the shore as the purple fireflies lighted the way.

We strolled for only a few minutes until we encountered the lioness again. She leaped from out of the greenery behind us and limped towards us. She was clearly hurt, but she was enraged this time. I hid the nymph behind me, and my heart pattered uncontrollably through my chest. The lioness growled and roared, and I couldn't remember how to summon a weapon. An overwhelming feeling of rage consumed me, and I charged at her, though it was no use. The lioness evaded me and clawed at the nymph. The nymph clutched to me with a deadly grip, digging her nails into my skin. Luminescent blue tears filled her face as she fell to her knees.

How could this happen? She had done nothing to the lioness, yet she is the one the lioness harms. My heart filled with despair and hate as I turned to the lioness, oozing with the need for revenge. I lunged at the lioness and speared a sword through her heart.

Once the nymph fell to her side, reality came crumbling down. The organ music stopped, the lake dried up, and the fireflies disappeared as scene morphed into the streets of Paris. I turned to the nymph only to see the broken onyx mirror, and I found myself looking into Charlotte's desperate, lifeless eyes.

Writer's Statement

In this story, I imitated Poe's style of writing by incorporating mystery, terror, and the supernatural. The main mystery was behind the functionality of the mirror and the powers it possessed. Terror was an element I used mainly when introducing the hatter to introduce the supernatural elements of the story. The supernatural was always present within the hatter and the mirror, which both had magical powers. Additionally, I incorporated the themes of the subconscious self and human imagination. The narrator, like the narrator in "The Black Cat," is clearly unreliable once he enters the black mirror's realm. Everything he sees and perceives is exactly how his subconscious wants to perceive it, which is exactly what the black mirror does. It shifts the user's reality from being perceived by his or her conscious self to his or her subconscious self. This causes the user to be much more impulsive and respond mostly to their animal instincts. Additionally, the mirror invokes the scenery to be chaotically different, but alluring to the user to trick them into thinking that they are dreaming. For example, the narrator is in what he perceives to be dangerous/life-threatening situations multiple times throughout the story. However, he always saw his opponents as animals who must be killed to be neutralized.

This rationale is the same as the instinctive action of an animal in the wild. The narrator is also seen as impulsive when his animal instincts become envious of the man on the gazebo and lustful for the girl in the red dress, who was a human projection of the mirror. Representing itself as a beautiful woman gave the black mirror power over the narrator and motivated the narrator to protect her at all costs. The purple fireflies represented the narrator's subconscious desires because they pointed him in the direction of these desires.

Fiction

ADD IT TO THE LIST

by
Anthony Botz



Anthony Botz is a Purdue undergraduate student majoring in nuclear engineering. He wrote this short story to fulfill a writing assignment in Professor Li Wei' SCLA 101 class in Fall 2020. This piece was written to highlight the importance of our freedom of speech through a hypothetical scenario where censorship takes precedence over open communication.

Ah shit, here we go again, I thought as my alarm jostled me awake. I went through my morning routine solely through instinct and muscle memory until I was able to clear my mind with the first few sips of my coffee. “I’m making homemade pizza for dinner tonight. Get excited,” My wife said as I unplugged my laptop and shoved it in my work bag. “I’ll be running to the grocery store later for ingredients, is there anything you would like me to grab for you?” “No, I think I’m alright,” I replied as I gathered the last of my things and patted my thighs.

Phone, wallet, keys, check. As I walked into the garage, I turned to my wife and said “Actually, grab some wine at the store. I think we should have our pizza on the couch and watch a movie.” “Great idea, I’ll add it to the list. Have a good day at work, Luis,” replied my wife before she kissed me goodbye.

As my car drove me to work, my thoughts were focused on the dread of beginning an eight hour work day. I was nearing my tenth year working at The Department of Internet Filtration, or as most people called it, The Filter. *Ten years since graduating college. Has it really been that long?* I wondered to myself. *Purdue feels like just yesterday. What year is it? Yes, 2034 minus 2024 really is ten years. Wow. I really am old.* My college days felt like just yesterday. I smiled to myself as I reminisced on how happy and full of energy those days were. There was a certain energy to the entire country then because of the governmental restructuring after the civil rights movements of the early 2020s and the Great Outage of 2022. When the internet shut down for two days in late 2022, it cost the world several trillion dollars in damages, but more importantly exposed major flaws in the infrastructure of the internet and the catastrophic consequences of it being turned off. In the aftermath of the great outage, the government assumed control of the internet to ensure its stability. In 2023, several governmental departments were formed to facilitate this monumental undertaking, and thus, The Filter was born.

The Filter’s main task was to operate and maintain the crown jewel of the government’s new internet: a software that filters out all negative content such as hate speech, radicalization videos, extreme violence, harassment, and information that contradicts science. The software was designed using the most advanced artificial intelligence systems in the world and was praised for its ability to distinguish negative content from safe and positive content. At first, there was concern over violations of freedom of speech, but people were surprised with how the software was able to separate hateful content from civil discourse concerning sensitive issues. As people grew accustomed to the government’s new internet, praise began to pour in for the new filtering system. Parents finally felt like their children could safely surf the internet, people felt more welcome on social media as negativity

seemed to disappear into thin air, concerns over fake news dissipated as the software was able to take in every aspect of the truth, and only let through content that had been fact checked by its own systems. Within a year of its implementation, The Filter and its software was the pride of the country. The civil rights movement was fresh in the minds of those that created The Filter and it resulted in a workplace demographic that actually matched the demographics of the country and even had an all-female upper management. As a minority, I felt welcomed and comfortable at my job, not unlike the rest of the diverse, fresh-out-of-college staff. *That was when there was energy to this job.* I thought as my car turned into the parking lot of the Department of Internet Filtration. The bleak exterior reminded me that the energy that was once there had been replaced with the dull reality that it is still a job - and jobs get old.

In the elevator, I listened to Manny, a top engineer I made friends with when I began at The Filter, complain about the authoritative upper management. *Here he goes again,* I thought. Manny had been working with The Filter since its infancy when he was recruited from the Department of Homeland Security to develop and manage the official set of filters the software revolves around, or “The List,” as most engineers called it. Like all components of the software, the details of The List were highly confidential, but after President Trounce was elected, operations were moved to the tenth floor next to upper management and an extra layer of secrecy was placed over The List. My conversations with Manny were subsequently limited in both frequency and content as most consisted of long rants about upper management.

I exited the elevator on the sixth floor where most of the mid-level software engineers were stationed. I plumped my already tired rear end onto my office chair and plugged my laptop into the monitor to check my notifications. Immediately, a red flag on my monitor caught my attention. *Hello, old friend.* I joked as I clicked on the almost nostalgic icon. As the filtering software grew older, its machine learning algorithms improved its ability to filter content resulting in fewer and fewer hiccups over time. After ten years, there might be one red flag in the department during the average month. As I read the error message, I began to laugh at the uniqueness of the issue: INTERCEPTED MESSAGE CONTAINS GREATER THAN 1000 VIOLATIONS OF FILTRATION POLICY. MANUAL REVIEW REQUIRED. *This better be good,* I thought as I opened the long list of flagged filters indexed in The List. As I scrolled through the list, my laughter shifted to confusion. All I could see were names and places.

Normally, a list of triggered filters is pretty graphic, and most names or places are instantly recognizable because being on The List requires a bit of notoriety. Confusion shifted to curiosity as I opened the message.

Here is everything I could gather in the short amount of time I had. Accessing the internet without filters is extremely dangerous and complex. This will be reflected in your bill. I wish you luck with your project, but do not contact me again. If the autocrats at The Filter crack this encryption it is over for both of us.

Attached to the message was a folder containing hundreds of documents. I suddenly sat up straight and looked over my shoulder and scanned the room. *Good. Nobody is watching*, I thought, suddenly confused as to why I cared. I opened up the first article. It was from a document detailing the murder of a computer scientist critical of The Filter. The next, a weapons deal between President Trounce and a terrorist group. After that, cartels laundering money through governments, deaths of journalist, bombings, assassinations, massive pollution, the list went on. Every event listed had a date no earlier than 2028, the year President Trounce was elected. *What the fuck what the fuck what the fuck*, ran through my head as I ran to the bathroom and vomited.

I awkwardly returned to my desk and attempted to rationalize what was happening. *Whoever sent this has to be clinically insane. This has to be a conspiracy theory. This is worse than believing the earth is flat. I should just delete the message and forget this happened. If these documents are true, how could somebody ever cover this up? Then it hit me. The filter flagged this. Why would the filter flag this?* I began to panic as I realized the gravity of the situation.

Without thinking, I downloaded the contents of the message to my laptop, unplugged it, shoved it in my bag and went for the door. I got in the elevator and mashed the button to the first floor until the door closed. *WHY IS THE ELEVATOR SO SLOW? WHY DID THE FILTER FLAG THIS? WHY IS THE ELEVATOR SO SLOW? WHO DOESN'T WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW ABOUT THIS MESSAGE? WHO IS SLOWING DOWN THE ELEVA-* The opening doors of the elevator caused me to jump. I stepped cautiously out of the elevator as my heart raced faster than my thoughts. I felt paranoia wash over me as I shuffled through the lobby of the building toward the exit. Suddenly, two security guards appeared and were headed in the same direction I was: the door. "Good morning Luis, where are you off to in

such a hurry?” one of the guards asked, standing between me and the door. “The director would like to see you on the tenth floor.”

I stood silently between the two guards for the duration of the elevator ride to the tenth floor. My thoughts too, were silent as sheer panic took a hold of my capacity to think. I was escorted through the tenth floor, past the offices of The List, and directly to the director’s office, but not before I saw Manny. *Why is his face like that? What does he know? What is happening tome?* In an instant everything was clear. The look on Manny’s face said it all. I had discovered something nobody was ever supposed to discover. The Filter that I had spent ten years working on, The Filter that was the pride of the country, The Filter that was trusted by millions of Americans was being used to cover up the crimes of a tyrant. Every crime committed could just be added to The List and instantaneously be hidden from the world. Manny’s face was filled with a putrid mix of horror, grief, and regret that perfectly explained the situation to me. As I stepped into the director’s office, I felt a sharp hotness deep within me.

Lynn Syvrud, the director of the Department of Internet Filtration appointed by President Trounce, invited me to sit with a smile. She began to ask me questions about my work, but I had no answers. My mind was empty. A searing heat that had started in my gut was now coursing through my body as I realized I was fucked. I knew there was no outcome where I end up having homemade pizza on the couch with my wife. After Lynn Syvrud’s round of unanswered questions, I stood up and answered blankly “I understand what happens now.” The two guards escorted me out of the office and towards the elevator. Lynn Syvrud followed behind us, but stopped short of the elevator. As the elevator door opened, I heard her tell the engineers in The List offices to “make sure we filter Luis from now on.” As the doors closed, what I heard in response sent a shock through my spine. The last words my wife spoke to me rang through my head. “I’ll add it to The List.”

Writer’s Statement

For the first time in my literary career, I decided to go with a creative writing prompt. I am usually afraid of creative writing, but decided to go outside of my comfort zone with this one. Writing creatively was a fun and interesting challenge for me. I had a hard time writing descriptively, but enjoyed weaving elements of the real world into the story. I also tried to emphasize the thoughts and feelings of the main character, Luis, by adding the italicized text and attempting to be very descriptive with his emotions. I spent a lot of time work-

ing on the plot and making sure every hole was filled. I really wanted this to feel like it could be real.

The story is meant to follow the style of Charlie Brooker's *The Black Mirror*, a show that begins each episode by introducing a new technology and character in a futuristic setting. The episode begins by showing the benefits of the technology and ends catastrophically for the character as a result of the technology. I centered my story around an advanced filtering software that was on a nationwide scale. I chose this because I am concerned with the censorship that is occurring on social media. Many people like to shut down and censor people who say false, hateful, or derogatory things, but I do not think that removing them from the conversation is the best thing to do. I believe the best way to fix hate speech is with correct, compassionate, and informative speech. Instead of shutting down and ostracizing people, we should sit down with them and have a civil discourse. Daryl Davis, a black musician who gained popularity after convincing over 200 Ku Klux Klan members to drop their robes through educating them was quoted with saying, "keep in mind, when two enemies are talking, they're not fighting. They might be yelling and screaming, but at least they're talking. It's when the talking ceases that the ground becomes fertile for violence."

Fiction

FIX A FAIRYTALE

by
Noah Zoarski



Noah Zoarski is a Purdue undergraduate student majoring in Cybersecurity. He wrote this story and essay to fulfill a writing assignment in Professor Mayes' SCLA 102 class in Spring 2020. The "Fix a Fairytale" assignment asked students to modernize an old fable in any fashion they so pleased. Noah focused his retelling on modern technology, bringing hackers and the concept of operator security to the classic fairy tale of Goldilocks and the Three Bears.

CODENAME : goldilocks

Once upon a time there a hacker - a hacker so feared and so hated, that he had no other choice but to seclude himself and his computer network.

He lived out of his own server room in the middle of the woods, which he would use to send his evil computer virus over the internet.

One day he was running a scan to look for nearby networks, which he could infect with his malicious computer code.

He called the virus goldilocks.

And after a few days of scanning, the hacker came across a public Wi-Fi called “Little House in the Woods.”

He asked to join, and the network connected to him.

Once the hacker had the network’s trust, he deployed his little computer virus to snoop around the network.

Goldilocks spied the system resources.

“I want to mine bitcoin,” she said.

So she looked for the right component to do her evil bidding.

There was RAM, and a whole lot. But that wouldn’t do any good. The memory can only *store* numbers.

And there was a processor, and it could manipulate numbers, but it couldn’t do the math fast enough.

But the graphics processor was just right. And she used it up until there was nothing left.

Then goldilocks made her way to the desktop to check the folders.

“Show me the money!” said goldilocks.

Naturally looking for more money, goldilocks opened the Banking folder

First, she checked the file info.txt.

No credit card number.

Then the virus opened the file receipts.pdf.

Closer, but not quite.

passwords.txt...Just right!

So goldilocks grabbed up all the banking passwords in passwords.txt, and sent them back to the Hacker.

Goldilocks just needed to install one more malware to ensure her and the Hacker could make the most profit from their victims.

She made her way to the applications folder to install some advertisements on the web browser.

Firefox was too secure.

And nobody uses Microsoft Edge.

But Google Chrome was just right.

So goldilocks hijacked Chrome, changed the default search engine, and installed an advertising plugin that can't be deleted.

But it wasn't long until three antivirus detectives arrive on the scene: Mr. Kaspersky, Mr. McAfee, and Mr. Avast. The three just came for routine checkup.

The moment they went take a look around, they knew that someone had been there.

“Humph!” Said Mr. Kaspersky in a heavy Russian accent. “Someone has been mining bitcoin with the graphics processor.” He could tell by the slower speed of the computer.

“And someone has been stealing their passwords!” said Mr. McAfee. He could tell by the file transfer happening between the Little House in the Woods, and some unknown IP address.

“And someone has installed an adware on the browser,” said Mr. Avast. Which was not too hard to spot, because Google Chrome looked brighter than Times Square!

Mr. Kaspersky, Mr. McAfee, and Mr. Avast scanned the computer and found the virus “goldilocks” hiding in the file system. It had clearly been transmitted to the machine from someone nearby. The detectives quickly arrested goldilocks and warned the police of the whereabouts of a nearby hacker.

Later that day, the worlds’ most famous hacker was arrested and sent to jail for the 100,000 computers he infected with his goldilocks virus.

And the world lived happily ever after.

Writer’s Statement

Goldilocks and the Three Bears is a well-established story, so much so that it is practically inseparable from the concept of “too hot, too cold, just right.” For ages, the story has been used by educators to explain the concept of a “happy-medium.” It should come with no surprise that this phenomenon has since been named the “Goldilocks principle” in not just economics, but developmental psychology, biology, astronomy, and even engineering. Goldilocks was first written by Robert Southey in 1837. Many familiar with the tale might say that Goldilocks was blatantly trespassing on the property of the Three Bears, but in William Denslow’s account, he leads off by characterizing the house in the woods as a semi-public space, arguably muddling the burglary somewhere between “finders-keepers” and overt thievery. That being said, there are two integral pillars to the Goldilocks fairytale: the idea of “just right”, and the ethics of thievery. In its current iteration, Goldilocks is unrecognizable without those two facets; the story is not the same without a thief looking to steal exactly what they need.

Knowing I needed to maintain the essence of the fairytale, I had to cleverly fit a topic that could closely mimic the original. In the end, I found that this allowed me a great deal of success. Following the simple plot of Goldilocks and the Three bears, my modification simply swaps beds, chairs, and porridge with banking info, adware, and system resources, in order to teach school children computing concepts such as computer hardware, malware,

and cybersecurity best practices. The result is an engaging story that honors the traditional Goldilocks while effectively familiarizing youths with computer environments.

Initially, Goldilocks is not necessarily a person, but a personified computer virus, sent out by a hacker that lives in the middle of the woods. I found that this was a very convenient assimilation, as it characterizes the hacker as recluse and malicious, while simultaneously explaining how goldilocks--spelled in true hacker form for added realism--found her way onto the victim's computer. Furthermore, the close proximity of the malicious and victim networks allows the hacker to detect a network over the air, or via WiFi. With this description, the behavior of wireless networks has already been described, and a best practice has been introduced: always set up a password on private networks.

The goldilocks computer virus is purposely described to behave just like a malicious computer program, not only by eliciting symptoms of a compromised machine, but by following the control flow of a real-life program. In other words, the malicious actor seems to follow a series of if-else statements--statements which are a very fundamental part of programming. Just as a program should, goldilocks runs a series of checks over some files in order to find the ones that are "just right." One check run by goldilocks, however, was not exemplary of control flow, and was instead sacrificed to explain some fundamental computer components. The virus is a bitcoin-miner, a malware that dedicates system compute power to cracking complicated algorithms that encapsulate tokens. At first, it might seem lofty to expect children to know anything about cryptocurrencies, but with the ever-increasing prevalence of tech in young children's lives, who is to say that they will not be learning about them in their curriculum sometime soon? These sorts of viruses consume lots of system resources, resulting in a very slow computer system. Thus, the analogy also displays symptoms of a computer virus. Finally, the virus had to decide which computer component to use. As goldilocks walks the reader through her options, she describes briefly what each component does. Perhaps the overall idea is too abstract for young readers, but with a brief suspension of the unknown, can effectively explain computer components and qualify symptoms of a computer virus.

The story ends with a simple suggestion for a cybersecurity best practice: use an antivirus. The virus goldilocks gets caught by three antivirus programs, who for the sake of simplicity, are depicted as detectives. Each one offers a quick explanation of how they knew a virus was on the computer, and much like an antivirus would, detains and disposes of the virus. The adapted fairytale could be equally enjoyed by the mature reader and young listener, as I hope it is agreeable that this sort of adaptation can be revolutionary for the ways we introduce the next generations to our modern technologies.

Fiction

NGODUP'S STORY

by

Jean-Paul Pertuit



Jean-Paul Pertuit is a Purdue undergraduate student majoring in Bio-medical Engineering. He wrote this essay/short story to fulfill a writing assignment in Professor Li Wei's SCLA 101 class in Fall 2020.

Long ago, a man named Ngodup from the beautiful Bome village in Tibet was working his job at the local meat shop when he saw a beautiful young woman of about eighteen years. He had never seen a woman more beautiful and could not look away. The young woman walked up to Ngodup and asked what kind of meat he had to offer today. Unable to properly focus, he stumbles over his words and makes a fool of himself. Eventually coming to his senses, Ngodup says, “Sorry, we have chicken, beef, pork, and lamb today. Can I get you any?”

The young woman said, “Yes, I’ll take a pound of beef.” After the woman collected her beef and exited the store, Ngodup could not stop thinking about the young woman’s encompassing beauty.

When Ngodup got off work, he went down to his usual meditation spot on the river and gazed at the snowy mountains beyond. The clouds were low enough to touch. Ngodup would meditate at the same spot on the river bank every day in the summer months, precisely when the sun touched the mountains, and their shadows began blanketing the village below. He enjoyed the silence with only the noises of the water and faint chirping of birds present. His wife had gone on a trip through the mountains to gain a better understanding of herself, so he was living alone for a few days.

His meditation was like any other day’s until Ngodup felt a disturbance that prevented him from focusing. He felt a negative energy within, and he knew not what to do. After trying to continue his meditation to no avail, Ngodup got up and walked back to his house nearby. Just as he opened his door, his long friend Kunchen called his name from the street. Ngodup turned around and said, “Hello friend, what brings you over here?” Kunchen replied, “I am just checking in, something felt off when I was working in the field. I felt it was something to do with you. Are you alright?” Ngodup, shaken by what his friend told him, said “I think I am, something weird happened when I was meditating today: I felt this negative energy coming from within.” Kunchen was instantly worried and asked, “Did you have any visions? Or anything that could have caused it?” Ngodup replied, “No, just this dark feeling.” Ngodup withheld the information about the young woman. Kunchen was very close to his wife and she could not find out about his attraction to another woman upon her return. After exchanging a few more words, Ngodup bided his friend farewell and went into his abode.

After some contemplation and reflection, Ngodup got in bed. Immediately after, he entered the most vibrant, immersive, and disturbing dream state in which he had ever been. The air was hot and dry. He could feel his skin losing its moisture each instant that went by.

His hands began cracking in their dryness like they would in the dry winters of Bome village. Ngodup looked around, noticing he was on a flat terrain, unlike anything he had seen before growing up. The ground was all black rock and had a net of cracks in it, much like a fishing net. The cracks revealed the glowing red inferno that laid just below the surface. He then heard a sudden scream and a woman appeared, running away from something. He realized that the woman was his wife. She stopped near him and exclaimed, “Run away while you still can Ngodup! It is coming.” She then ran as fast as she could, hoping that he would follow. Startled and confused, Ngodup looked behind him where his wife had come from and saw a colossal figure with bright red and rough skin. The monster had three eyes, four horns coming out of its head, and sixteen fingers and toes. It also held a giant axe in its grip and wore black robes with a golden gong around its neck. The gong made an ear-piercing noise every time it bounced on the monster’s chest. When it breathed, the air would get hotter and hotter. Absolutely terrified of the thing that was now flying at full speed towards him, Ngodup turned the way his wife had gone and ran after her. With the monster’s unforgiving speed, before he was able to reach his wife, it caught up with him and chopped him perfectly in half with its massive axe. Ngodup, still conscious, watched as the thing devoured him half by half. Just as Ngodup disappeared into the darkness of the monster’s stomach, he woke up in his bed sweating and panting.

“What did I just see?” Ngodup asked himself, shaking with fear. He knew that there must be a meaning to his nightmare, something that his subconscious was trying to tell him or warn him of. Still deathly afraid of what he had just seen, Ngodup walked to Kunchen’s house not long after the sun went down. He knocked furiously at his friend’s door and Kunchen came quickly, worried about what had happened. When he opened the door and noticed Ngodup standing there shaking, he brought him in, sat him down, and asked what had happened. Ngodup told Kunchen everything that happened in his nightmare down to every detail.

Kunchen, now shaking himself, said, “Do you know of the Ganden Monastery? The monks there will be able to help you. Something is invading your soul is conflicted, they need to train you the ways of Milam to find what is wrong within.”

“Ganden Monastery?” Ngodup exclaimed with much worry, “In Yunnan province?”

“Yes,” said Kunchen solemnly.

“That is over three-hundred and fifty miles west of here.” Stated Ngodup with much worry in his voice and face.

“I know. You may use my horse, Ngodup, this is the only way you will find peace with the internal darkness you are experiencing,” his friend said.

“I have known you a long time Kunchen, and I trust what you say. I will put my trusted coworker in charge of my meat shop and leave at dawn.”

“Very well, I will tie my horse to the post outside my house before you arrive. Treat her well Ngodup. Take breaks and make sure she eats. The trip should take you three days. Be careful my friend, and good luck.”

Ngodup, still shaking, thanked Kunchen and made his way back to his house. On Ngodup’s way back, he spotted the young woman he had seen at the butchery. Overcome by her beauty and ignoring the possibility that the nightmare had something to do with the woman, Ngodup went up to her and asked, “What are you doing out so late? Do you need me to walk you home?”

Looking sad and heartbroken, the young woman said, “I got in a fight with my husband tonight and he drove me out of the house. I did not know where to go. I have been looking for a place to sleep since the moon rose.”

Ngodup, much too excited about the situation presented to him, said, “Please, come to my house. It would be my pleasure to house such a lovely, beautiful young woman such as yourself.”

Delighted, the young woman followed Ngodup to his house. The two married individuals had a deep desire to sleep together and came very close to it that night. Instead they lay sleepless in different beds, letting their imaginations roam.

Just before dawn, Ngodup got out of bed after not being able to sleep and broke the news to the young woman that he must leave and would not be back for a few days. Ngodup told the young woman that he hoped to see her again when he got back, and the woman agreed and left with sorrow and a hint of anger in her eyes. He packed a few robes, five containers of water, and enough food to get him through the trip. He then headed to Kunchen’s house. It was time for Ngodup to embark on a journey that would hopefully help clear this monster from his dreams, thoughts, and soul. He got on the horse and began riding west, into the mountainous landscape. After riding as much as the horse could for a single day, he decided they would take a break for the night under a big tree. He tied the horse to the tree and lay down on the ground. Completely exhausted after a sleepless night and a whole day of travel, Ngodup quickly fell asleep.

Soon after, Ngodup had the same nightmare as he had the night before, only this time the dream was even more realistic, more vivid, and more terrifying. He woke up sweating, shaking, and breathing heavily after being eaten by the bright red monster once again and his heart pumping faster than it ever had before. The nightmare he just experienced was somehow ten times worse than his first experience and, despite his utter exhaustion, Ngodup could not bring himself to sleep again until he got help from the monks at Ganden Monastery. Ngodup shook all night long, looking up at the sky and praying for this monster to leave his body. He could feel the dark energy inside of him growing.

At dawn, Ngodup got back on the horse and kept riding west. The path was more intense and steep this time around, with many jagged rocks and other obstacles in the way. After a second whole day of travel, Ngodup and his friend's horse stopped for another night under another tree. Both were very exhausted, but Ngodup still did not sleep out of fear of the monster within. After a long night of fearful shaking and deathly fear, Ngodup got on the horse at dawn for the last day of travel. He began to see more villages and towns along the path. Colorful prayer flags were hung up between houses and posts. He noticed the sounds of the birds all around him and the movement of the trees as the soft wind blew.

He then finally arrived at the beautiful red, white, and gold monastery for which he had come all the way to Yunnan province. He tied his friend's horse to a post outside of the monastery and went up the tall stairs, stumbling out of fear and anticipation. As he approached it, he heard the ringing of many singing bowls. When he got to the door that led inside the grand, holy building, he knocked. A tall monk in a red robe with a thick figure and no shoes on arrived at the door. The monk said, "Hello there! I am Choden. What brings you to the Ganden Monastery my friend? You look exhausted and you have deep fear in your eyes."

Ngodup replied, "Greetings, I am Ngodup. I have come to learn Milam. I have been having this awful nightmare of a giant monster with bright red skin, three eyes, four horns coming out of its head, and sixteen fingers and toes. It held a giant axe and wore long black robes with a golden gong around its neck that created a horrid loud sound every time it hit the monster's chest. It chased after me, chopped me in half, and ate me. This nightmare has been invading my mind for two nights in a row and has scared me more than anything ever has before. I could not sleep the past two nights on my travels because of the unbearable fear."

“Oh my,” Choden responded, “this is not good. This monster in your dreams is a demon from Japanese Buddhism. They seek wicked people to eat so they can serve the demon lord, Enma. You must have done something very wrong to call this demon to your soul.”

Ngodup thought about the young woman whom he lusts for. He remembered how these dreams only started after his desire began and how they worsened after he almost slept with her. He then remained silent.

“Come with me,” Choden continued after a pause, “I will take you to my wise teacher who will help you achieve lucidity while you are dreaming so that you can be aware that you are dreaming while you are still in these dreams. This will surely direct you to what needs to be done.” The men began to walk, and the Choden went on, “Once you achieve this awareness, you will become able to control your fear within your dream by knowing that the Oni cannot harm you because you are in a dream. When you are able to control that fear, you will be able to ask your subconscious what the Oni you keep seeing represents and hopefully resolve the conflict in your mind and release the darkness that you feel inside.” The men then arrived at a room. Choden knocked on the door and an old monk with a long beard named Tenzin arrived. Choden and Tenzin discussed the situation privately for a moment.

Tenzin then took Ngodup into the room and taught him everything about the sacred, ancient art of dream yoga including how the monks at the monastery used it, a few cautionary tales, and finally, how to do it. After teaching him a technique the monks used, Tenzin said to him, “Now that you know the way, I must tell you what to do once you become lucid in your dream. First thing is first, you must focus on staying in the dream and staying aware that you are in a dream. You may want to ask the dream itself for greater lucidity if you are struggling. Once you have established yourself in the dream and have become lucid, you need to find the Oni that is in your dream. You mentioned to Choden that it chased after you, correct?”

“Yes,” Ngodup replied.

“You must face the Oni and wait for it. Let it come to you no matter your fear. Remember, Ngodup, you are safe in the dream world. The Oni cannot harm your body, only your mind. While the demon is approaching you, ask what the Oni represents out loud, not to the it, but to the sky. A clear answer should be given, and then you can wake yourself up. Does this make sense?”

“It does, but I am worried I will not be able to perform these tasks out of sheer terror of what lays ahead.”

“If you want to learn how to rid yourself of this terror, then you must do what I tell you.”

There was a bed that Tenzin offered Ngodup in his room and told him to lay in it, sleep, and make use of what he had been taught. Ngodup laid himself down and repeated the mantra he was told to himself, “I recognize my dreams with full lucidity. I recognize my dream with full lucidity.” This went on until Ngodup fell asleep. Just then, he found himself standing on the barren rock ground with the cracks leading to what he now concluded must be Naraka. He began to panic more than ever and woke, gasping for air as he sat up in the bed. Tenzin, sitting next to him, said, “Your fear is hindering you. You must relax if you want to achieve lucidity in the dream state and face the demon. Try again.”

Ngodup, once more laid himself down and fell asleep reciting the same mantra, out loud this time. He found himself in the nightmare again and looked at his hands. He saw that they were disfigured and knew that he was dreaming. He looked around and the dream seemed more real than it had ever been. He felt the heat below his feet, he could smell burning flesh coming from all around, smoke came out of the cracks in the ground, and faint screams came from all directions. His wife, once again, ran up to him yelling, “Run away while you still can Ngodup! It is coming.” He then swiftly turns towards the Oni and notices it is two times bigger than it had been in nights past and he noticed oozing gashes on the demon’s skin and noticed that its eyes had turned black like its robes. He noticed an image of Enma, the overseer and ruler Naraka. on the gong as he took a closer look. The dream world began shaking vigorously and he quickly remembered not to fix his eyes on a single thing for a long time, Tenzin had told him this would make the dream unstable. Ngodup was terrified as the demon hurled its body towards him in the air, but he felt like he had a lot more time to think than the last time. His wife, confused but loyal, stood by him as he watched the Oni approach. Ngodup could feel the scorching heat on his skin and now felt his feet burning on the hot ground as he stood motionless, still waiting for the demon to come closer. His wife asked, “What are you doing? We have to run!”

Ngodup, paying no mind to what his wife was saying, shouted to the sky, “Tell me what this Oni represents!”

A voice coming from all directions stated, “This is your lust and unfaithfulness. It is plaguing your mind.”

After it stopped, the Oni made it to Ngodup and his wife. The demon lifted its axe and began swinging it down towards them, much like he had in the previous dreams. Ngodup closed his eyes and prepared to get chopped in half once again. He then heard the axe hit

the rock floor and felt a warm liquid splatter on his body, but he was still intact. Confused and petrified, he opened his eyes to realize that the Oni chopped his wife in half instead of him. Ngodup woke up sobbing. He knew that he had not been faithful. He knew that he had a sexual desire for that young woman back home and he knew he needed to fix it if he wanted to keep his wife by his side. He felt different. He felt changed. Through sorrowful cries, Ngodup thanked Tenzin for everything he had taught him.

Ngodup gathered his belongings and got on his friend's horse and spent another three days traveling back home, reflecting on what he had seen and thinking about what needed to be done. After three sunsets, Ngodup finally made it back to the humble Bome village. He brought the horse back to Kunchen and walked slowly back to his home. Ngodup opened the door and found the young woman from before beside his wife who lay dead with claw marks across her body, exposing her innards. Paralyzed with a combination of fear, pain, and anguish, Ngodup yelled, "What have you done?" The woman then transformed into the demon that he had been seeing in his dream for a moment and then disappeared, leaving nothing but the corpse of his wife. He ran over to her and held her in his arms. He could not believe it; he had no chance to make things right. He sobbed over his wife's body as tears of true regret and suffering fell onto her. As her wounds soaked up the tears, they began to heal. Each gash in her torso shrank until her body was completely healed and she began to breathe once more. Ngodup's eyes widened in amazement and disbelief at what had just occurred. Once he got over the shock, he said, "This is all my fault, I am sorry for putting you through this." But his wife just laid there and smiled as a tear rolled down her face.

Writer's Statement

In this story, I incorporated several aspects I found integral to tales by Zhuangzi, the "Tales of the Marvelous" from the Tang Dynasty, and Pu Songling's "The Painted Skin." One approach I mirrored was the use of names that have a meaning significant to the character's role in the story. For example, in my story, the old man that taught Ngodup to lucid dream was named Tenzin, which means "holder of the teachings." This same technique is used by Zhuangzi in his tale about two emperors making holes in a man named Hundun's body to make him like all other men out of appreciation of his generosity. The two men were named Shu, which means brief, and Hu, which means sudden. I also made use of the common theme of faithfulness in many of the tales. For example, three plot points of my story emulated "The Painted Skin." Firstly, in my story, Ngodup takes the young woman

into his house seemingly out of pity and sympathy, but it is truly for her beauty alone much like the beginning of the original text. Second, the revelation that the woman was a demon imitates the demon in the original text. And thirdly, my story and “The Painted Skin” both end with character’s being brought back to life because of other character’s faithfulness, new or old. In addition, like many of the men in the texts we read in class, Ngodup fell victim to sexual attraction. I also got inspiration from the cultural and historical references in many of the tales and short stories we read in class and added many connections to Tibetan Buddhism due to the setting of the story. These connections included the meditation, the prayer flags, the Ganden Monastery (one of the oldest Buddhist monasteries in Tibet), the attire of the monks, the use of dream yoga, and, of course, the demon. In all, I tried to encapsulate many aspects from the original texts into my story including meaningful names, themes of faithfulness, attraction that determines the actions of men, and historical, geographical, and cultural relevance, while also bringing in my own interest of lucid dreaming to make the story my own.

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Fiction

ABIGAIL'S SECRET

by
Kellie Schaffner



Kellie Schaffner is a Purdue undergraduate student majoring in Film and Video Production. She wrote this short story to fulfill a writing assignment in Professor Li Wei's SCLA 101 class in Spring 2021.

It was the year 1692 and just by the northern creek lived a young woman, no older than twenty-five. She was all alone in her cabin living with only the spiders in their dusty cobwebs hanging from the corners of the house and the rodents that scurried across the floors at night in search of any crumbs that might have been left on the ground. The only other being who knew of her location was her sister, who lived about a mile North in a similar home. It was possible that they live together, but they chose to remain separated for two reasons. First, they both preferred the serenity of living all alone. Many would find it lonely, but it was a satisfying life for them to have their privacy and freedom that comes with independent living. Secondly, if by some horrible luck, one of the houses was discovered and their safety was threatened, it would be of ease to move to the other house. Being caught after all was quite dangerous for two witches in the late Seventeenth Century.

The young woman, Abigail, promised to herself that she would never cast a spell on a human being. By performing a spell, she felt that she would become manipulative and evil as many people in her time believed witches to be. She used magic and spices to make all that she needed but would never influence a human with a spell.

Early in November just as cold breezes were beginning to arrive, Abigail's door broke at the top hinge, so she decided to fix it with magic. Following the instructions of an old book, she mixed some spices and placed it under the door.

While making dinner that night, Abigail heard a noise from the woods - her sister, Katherine.

"You need to get this door fixed," Katherine said.

"Yes, I'm working on it," Abigail responded pointing at her pile of spices.

"Oh, I see. That takes one whole night doesn't it?" remarked her sister.

"That's right. Would you like some food?" The two sisters sat down to feast on a meal created merely by magical recipes. Katherine left shortly after and Abigail went to bed.

When she arose in the morning, she ran to the door to see if it was as good as new, but if anything, it was worse. So, she checked her book up in the attic once again and found that she forgot to add one strand of her own hair. Her face grew saddened as she realized she would have to wait one more day for the door to be fixed. Suddenly, a loud bang shook the entire house. Abigail jumped and quickly climbed back down to discover the cause of all the ruckus. The door lay on the ground just outside of the entrance and had completely fallen

off both hinges. A man stepped from around the corner and looked at the door and a few seconds later, in the house.

Abigail, frozen in fear, stared at him with disbelief. He was well dressed in reds and golds and even had white gloves perfectly fitting his hands. His hair was shiny and clean, and he stood up straight and tall. "Oh, I'm so sorry" he said kindly in a deep but gentle voice, "I didn't realize anybody lived here." Thinking she was angry, the man continued, "I was out West exploring new land and I came across your house. I noticed the door was left ajar and when I went to knock on it, the whole thing collapsed. I most certainly will fix your door." Abigail had no idea how to act, so she didn't act at all. She just stayed there, paralyzed. He apologized once more and went on for several minutes explaining how his family was one of the highest ranked families in England and how he was of descent of leaders from the most vicious wars and that he and his brother were sent to explore the new land in America. "I can get you a gift as an apology," he offered. "No, that won't be necessary. And you don't need to fix it either," she said, not wanting others to discover her location. He insisted on helping her, but she refused.

The next day, Abigail fixed the door. Robert, the man at the door, kept thinking of the beautiful young lady. She had the brightest green eyes he had ever seen, rosy cheeks, and hair the color of a raven. Something about her seemed so unique.

The morning after she repaired the door, he decided to return to her house on his horse with the finest food from the center of town carried in a basket. Abigail heard him calling from the window. She quickly ran outside and asked for his reason for returning. He explained that he brought breakfast for them and suggested that they eat together. Concerned, she politely nudged him to leave insisting she was too busy and felt that she didn't deserve such a great gift. Robert, not used to a woman refusing his gifts and company, pushed his way into her house. He sat at her table and opened the cloth filled with pastries. She anxiously sat down next to him; afraid he would start asking her questions. And that he did.

"Where do you get your food from? I don't see any neighbors to trade with and you're so far away from the closest town."

"My sister lives a couple of miles away and I use her horse to get there," she lied, but instantly regretted mentioning her sister. He looked at the door.

“How did you fix the door so quickly all alone?” Then he looked down at a pile of dust at the bottom of the door. She could tell he spotted her magic formula that fixed the door. “What is...”

“Where is it you are from again?” She quickly interrupted.

“What is that?” Then he froze. “You're a witch. That's how you repaired the door.” Yes, it explains everything. Her food, those bright green eyes. How could I be such a fool? he thought to himself. He backed away from her and reached for the door.

“No, please, I'm not a bad witch. Don't tell anyone,” she begged. He continued to keep his eyes on her to make sure she didn't move. He found the doorknob with his right hand and as he twisted the door open, she knew she only had one choice, or he would bring an army of his guards to search for her and kill her. She looked right at him, and her eyes began to glow for a few seconds. When they stopped glowing, she whispered, “Don't leave me.” Abigail felt deeply ashamed. She broke the one promise she made to herself and used the only spell she could remember. She made him fall in love with her.

He sat down across from her and grabbed her hands. Smiling, he said, “Your eyes are so beautiful. I wanted to tell you that when I came here. But suddenly now, they seem 100 times more beautiful than before.” Realizing what she had done, she looked down and frowned. “Why are you sad?” he asked with deep concern.

“Because I am a witch,” she said.

“Yes. You're a witch, but that's no reason to be sad. I'll make sure no one discovers you.”

Abigail informed Katherine of Robert a week later. She scolded her for letting anyone know of her identity and location and was also shocked that she had broken her promise she made to herself to never cast a spell.

“So, what's going to happen now?” asked Katherine. “He'll go back eventually. He has guards and servants and is missing out on a life filled with everything anyone could ever want. There is no need to be concerned about my secret escaping, though. The spell made him love me so greatly, that he wouldn't think of doing anything to hurt me,” Abigail assured her.

She waited longer, but he didn't leave for even just a few days to return to town. When she asked him about it, he questioned how he could ever walk away from her. He stayed

there for about two months when Abigail began catching herself staring at him and taking joy in his company. As much as she tried to control her feelings, she truly was in love with Robert. Abigail invited her sister over to tell her about her feelings while Robert was out caring for his horse. She explained how she knew the only reason he said such nice things to her was because of her spell. He didn't really care about her. The real Robert wanted to have her killed for being a witch. But for some reason, hearing him say such wonderful things about her, and helping her in any way possible, made her fall in love with him. It was like in a way, he cast a spell on her too, and she could not escape it no matter how hard she tried.

A few months passed and concerned for him, she urged him this time to check on his family and return to town to see his friends and cousins.

"I couldn't do that," he said.

"But you're missing out on so much!"

"Oh, it's all nothing compared to you. I could have asked for any dish I wanted. I could've had a horse brought to me at any time or lived anywhere I wanted. I've traveled all over the world and have gold and diamonds and could've been the world's next great leader, but I'd give all of it up to be with you forever," he said looking at her with admiration.

"But I'm sure your family is worried sick!" she exclaimed.

"I'll be worried about you if I leave. What if someone finds you?" he asked.

A few more months passed, and it was November once again. Her guilt grew each day. At night she thought about his family and the life he was leaving behind all because of her. "I tricked him, just as a bad witch would. Those are the witches that everyone in town is so terrified of," she said to Katherine. "I love him very much. I can no longer live lying to him every day and taking him away from the life he belongs to. Maybe he will want to turn me in as a witch, but maybe not. I'll leave that up to fate to decide if I deserve my punishment. I hurt a human being and took away a year of his life by using my magic for my own good. I've become the manipulative, horrible witch I promised I would never become." Abigail was almost in tears, when Katherine responded, "Abigail, you are so blinded by love that you are no longer aware that using your spell was your only choice. You must remember what he would've done if you had not used your magic on him."

That next morning, Abigail found the anti-spell which required a soup with certain ingredients that would remove the magic from his mind. Although he would remember the

past year, he would no longer love her. That night she prepared the soup for him. When he ate the first spoonful, she watched his face grow confused and concerned.

“What have I done?” he asked. “I spent a whole year and missed all my- it was a spell wasn’t it? You made me stay, you made me fall in love with you! Do you know how much this costs me?” he hollered at her.

“I tried to tell you to go back, just for a few days at least. I didn’t know how strong it would be. I’m so sorry. That soup - it took the spell off. I felt too guilty. If you turn me in, I understand. I don’t like what I’ve become.” Abigail could not even look him in the eyes.

“The punishment is death.”

“I know,” responded Abigail quietly as she stared at her feet. He sat for a moment and thought.

“I’m going to go back to town. I’m sure everyone thinks something terrible has happened to me.” He was about to step outside when, still facing away from her, he coldly added, “I won’t tell anyone about you. I’m not sure what I’ll say, but I’ll come up with something else.” Then he slammed the door and mounted his horse. She fell onto the floor all curled up and began to cry. Her heart was cluttered with the guilt of tricking him, the sadness of him leaving, and the terror that he might have lied and would be back with guards to arrest her for her witchcraft.

That night she told Katherine what happened. Katherine asked if she wanted to go to her house since Robert had never been there, but Abigail refused as she feared putting her in any danger. As much as it scared her, she also did not want to run from a punishment that she felt was fit for her actions. So, for the next few days she was anxious that someone would knock on the door and bring her to her death. Only five days later she heard the knocking. Her chest felt like it dropped through the floor because she knew the noise could only be one thing. She lay in her bed, waiting for them to take her away.

“Abigail!” yelled a familiar voice. It was Robert. She figured he must have come with the guards to direct them to her house. She lay there squeezing her eyes shut telling herself it was only a dream. The shouting got closer and closer as he made his way to her room. “Abigail!” he said softly and excitedly when he saw her in her bed, “I couldn’t find you. I was worried.” “Well, here I am. Take me away to be killed,” she said. “What?” he asked, “No. Your only choice was to put me under that spell. I’ve come back to tell you that while I was at my house here in America, something felt missing. It was you. I missed living with you.

Perhaps you put me under another spell, but I think I love you. It is different from before though. I loved you because of your beauty before, but now I love you because I was so honored that you were willing to die to set me free. I don't know if I'd ever be able to find anyone like that again." Abigail was speechless and still could not believe that he was not with anyone else ready to take her away. She suspected he was tricking her back.

He wanted her to live with him and promised he would not reveal her identity. Abigail did not accept this, so he offered to stay with her and venture back from time to time to his house, even if this meant he could not become a great leader like his ancestors. For two years they lived together in her cabin and then one day Abigail finally agreed to live at his house in America, several miles away with Katherine as well. For the rest of time, only the three of them knew of Abigail's secret.

In this story, Robert was clearly undeserving of the sacrifice that Abigail gave for him to return to his life but recognizing the risk she took made him truly love her. Abigail felt guilty for breaking her promise and decided to leave her punishment up to fate. However, she was not punished proving that she was not a bad witch and that her actions were justified. In "Abigail's Secret", it can be concluded that people are not always as society may make them seem. It was believed that the witches were horrible beings and even Abigail felt guilty for her manipulative actions as a witch, yet the irony is that Robert was the only one inflicting harm or planning to inflict harm upon anyone. Real love involves self-sacrifice. Abigail was the one who took a risk for someone she loved and with that, she also made Robert a better person.

Writer's Statement

"Abigail's Secret" has a similar structure and style as the Tang love stories that we read in class. Just like all the Tang stories, this story involves a beautiful, magical woman who attracts a man. I think that this is most similar to "Ren's story" because just like Ren, Abigail is a good, non-human creature with a reputation for being dangerous. Both Ren and Abigail end up making a sacrifice for the man they love only Abigail survives and the story ends happily. "Abigail's Secret" is also similar to "The Painted Skin" because in both, a woman's act of sacrifice results in happiness, even though the man did nothing to deserve the woman's sacrifice. I wanted to incorporate the idea that love requires sacrifice because I think that is very true. Not only did Abigail risk her life for him, but at the very end, Robert was willing to stay with her at the cabin before eventually moving to his house, even though it was not nearly as nice as it was back at his home. The Tang stories begin with an intro-

duction to the main character and the time that it takes place, just as I began my story. Although I usually add a lot of visual description with the setting and character's observations, I tried to limit these descriptions as they are not relevant to the love story and in the Tang stories, the descriptions were mostly there for the emotions of the characters. I also noticed that because these are only short stories, they tend to quickly skip over months or years if nothing very important happened which is what I did when writing my story as well. I ended my story by talking about my thoughts in first person, similar to what was included at the end of the Tang stories.

Essay

“How do I know what I think
until I see what I say?”

—E.M. Forster

Essay

Discrimination Towards Minorities Amongst the Outbreak of Disease

by
Catie Fleming



Catie Fleming is a Purdue undergraduate student majoring in Environmental and Ecological Engineering. She wrote this essay to fulfill a writing assignment in Professor Brian Johnson's SCLA 101 class in Spring 2021.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus, more commonly known as HIV, is a virus that attacks the immune system. If left untreated, HIV can lead to Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, or AIDS. When the first cases of HIV/AIDS in the United States were recognized in the early 1980s, much confusion surrounded the virus. With so many unknowns about the virus, central health agencies stated that those most at risk were gay men and intravenous drug users. While the causes of the disease were not well known, ways to treat it were even less known. The first outbreaks of the disease were met with little acknowledgement from any central health agency. Additionally, even the funding for research and coverage for treatment was slow to come in. Because many Americans considered the groups most affected as immoral, politicians were slow to provide funding and relief to these groups. While over time, medical professionals became more experienced and knowledgeable with HIV/AIDS, politicians were slow to take their advice due to the stigma surrounding the disease. Like many other diseases throughout history, those most affected by the disease were discriminated against due to a similar stigma. This is similar to many other pandemics throughout history, where those often most affected by the disease are minorities. These minorities occasionally even face discrimination due to their proximity to the outbreak of disease. The public and political response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the United States proves how, throughout history, disease has led to discrimination towards different minorities.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus is the infectious agent that causes AIDS. HIV is a virus that attacks the host's immune system (specifically the body's T-cells) and is primarily spread via sexual contact, blood, and sharing of infected needles. In the United States, AIDS was first identified in 1980, and HIV was identified as the infectious agent about 4 years later (Thier 112). At first many thought that only gay men and intravenous drug abusers were the only people affected by HIV/AIDS. There were many theories regarding how the disease was isolated to gay men due to "lifestyle choices". However, it is now known that the virus can be spread to anyone if they are exposed to the virus through specific bodily fluids. The lack of understanding surrounding HIV/AIDS caused many to not know they were at risk for the disease. For example, individuals with sexual partners who use intravenous drugs were a large group left unaddressed. IV drug users were at-risk because of the common practice of sharing needles and could then expose their partners during sex. Because the disease was primarily found in gay men and IV drug abusers at first, a stigma surrounded the disease that led to isolation of those with the disease and the stigmatization of communities affected. Ultimately, this hindered public and political response to the disease because many felt antipathetic towards helping as they viewed those affected as immoral.

Because of the stigma that surrounded HIV/AIDS, those with the disease and communities most affected by it faced discrimination. The stigma that surrounded HIV/AIDS permeated all aspects of life. “With AIDS, discrimination all too often took the form of loss of form, employment, and insurance. Stigmatization allowed all too many to view those with AIDS as undeserving of care, and it seriously impaired later attempts to develop sound public health policy” (Their 112). HIV/AIDS was used as an excuse to discriminate against different people, as employers, landlords, and insurance agents could claim they were worried someone with AIDS could cause harm to their business. Employers could claim that AIDS is a dangerous health hazard to other employees or customers. Landlords could claim similar dangers to the health of the other tenants, or that the person with AIDS could face health problems that would make it difficult to pay rent. Even healthcare was not promised to those with HIV/AIDS as “some healthcare workers refuse to care for AIDS patients, even patients from high-risk groups who don’t have AIDS” (Colby 113). While medical professionals may have been trying to protect themselves, they were worsening the health of those they were denying access to. Additionally, this proves how groups considered at-risk for HIV/AIDS can be discriminated against whether they have the disease or not. Overall, the outbreak of disease can cause increased negative sentiment towards those groups considered most at-risk.

Because of the fear of a particular disease, people may avoid, discriminate against, or blame groups most affected. While they think they are protecting themselves by getting distance from the disease, these connections can spread false information and harm those vulnerable populations. For example, groups considered at-risk for HIV/AIDS may be discriminated against regardless of their HIV status. Almost 20% of gay men report experiencing discrimination “specifically because of AIDS” (Stulberg and Smith 279). With such a high percent of those affected by AIDS or at-risk for AIDS facing direct incidents of discrimination, high amounts of stress can occur; however, not all discrimination is direct. While some may hold homophobic sentiments, they may not perform acts of discrimination towards gay people. Even with this, the effect on public attitude and acceptance of gay people can be felt. During the same period, “90.1% [of gay men surveyed] agreed with the statement ‘I feel there is an increase in homophobia due to AIDS’” (Stulberg and Smith 279). Even though many gay people did not have HIV/AIDS, the disease gave people an excuse to discriminate against them. This was true for all groups associated with the disease, and they were the victims of both indirect and direct acts of discrimination.

Because religious and moral beliefs against groups most affected by AIDS, political policy was also affected and discriminatory. Generally, most forms of discrimination are considered unconstitutional, however, this opinion can change based on who is being dis-

criminated against. For example, because of religious sentiment towards gay people and the belief that homosexuality is a choice, many political leaders pass discriminatory policies in the name of upholding moral standards. Or, in the case of AIDS, politicians can lean towards inaction by ignoring the issue or by claiming budget concerns. Many states eventually enacted plans to combat the AIDS crisis, but the extent of their response varied by many different factors. There are obvious factors, such as number of cases and the state's budget that affect the budgeting for AIDS prevention and treatment programs. States with more cases and greater budget and income level are more likely to spend more on patients overall. However, this budget is also affected by moral and religious beliefs. For example, states with more conservative political cultures or states with greater party competition allocate less money towards HIV/AIDS-related programs (Colby 127). Because these states have more people who are financially conservative or even socially conservative, these states are less likely to spend money on more liberal programs. This includes better public health coverage, and social programs that include inclusive sex education or needle exchange programs. Additionally, Colby finds that "many of the lower expenditure states also have concentrations of religious groups which are uncomfortable with the pursuit of aggressive AIDS education policies" (Colby 121). These states with high concentrations of religious groups overlap with states with more conservative political scenes. These religious groups hold strong political power because as a singular unit, they are willing to lobby for or against policies to align with their mission statements. While certain methods may be proven to reduce the number of cases of a disease, science may be overlooked due to social, political, or religious beliefs.

Many mechanisms and patterns of discrimination witnessed during the HIV/AIDS epidemic were present in other epidemics and disease outbreaks throughout history. One prominent aspect to note is that those making legislation regarding funding or those treating people with HIV/AIDS are often very removed from communities affected. Because HIV/AIDS affected gay men or people of color more often, politicians were rarely, if ever, personally affected. Those in poverty were also more affected because they lacked proper sex education or had higher prevalence of intravenous drug use in their communities. This contrasts what groups at the time had access to enough money and resources to pursue a career in politics or medicine. Like many issues throughout history, "The well-to-do and powerful frequently lived at a distance from the source and centers of infection and therefore were often spared, reinforcing the view of their superiority" (Their 110). This is like other disease outbreaks where wealthier or more politically powerful people lived further from densely populated areas of impoverished people, where diseases were more likely to spread due to proximity and lack of hygiene.

The patterns that appeared during the HIV/AIDS epidemic were not isolated. Many of the patterns of interactions between classes and minorities versus majorities can be observed throughout history during other outbreaks of disease. Much of this conflict can be traced back to lack of understanding or lack of medical knowledge. In Ancient Rome, disease was not well understood. There are very little records mentioning the words like “plague,” “disease,” or “epidemic” because the society had little understanding of disease, be it caused by virus or germ. Because there was no common understanding of communicable disease, many other causes were claimed for outbreaks of death. Poison, for example was recorded to be a common cause of illness and death. One example of this is around 90 A.D. in Rome, a series of deaths were claimed to be “instigated by criminals using poisoned needles” (Cohn 548), and officials went as so far as to prosecute people accused. Additionally, in 329 B.C., there was a series of deaths in the Roman ruling class, and were ultimately “pinned on wealthy Roman matrons, who were eventually accused, tried and convicted of poisoning” (Cohn 548). Because the Romans did not have an understanding of disease at the time, they had to make sense of the situation. The culture at the time had a deep distrust of women, so they thought it was plausible that matrons would betray the family for personal gain. Alternatively, there was the conspiracy that criminals would stab people with poison-laced needles. Rather than put in the effort to understand how disease spread, it was much easier to lead with this idea because the public understood poisons and that criminals were malicious. Overall, the simpler explanation was favored by the public.

Other times, groups of people were blamed because their practices were not well understood. During the Black Plague, for example, many minority groups and disenfranchised groups were blamed for the disease outbreaks. Groups such as “Jews, Catalans, foreign beggars or simply the poor ... served as scapegoats” (Cohn 9) and were blamed for poisoning wells and causing disease. During the Black Plague, the Jewish people were especially targeted because of their cultural practices. For example, Jewish people would have better hygiene practices, especially near temple. Additionally, they were a more contained community than others due to discrimination towards their practices, which ultimately lead to more skepticism. The Jewish people were often ordered to be killed, burned, or chased out of homes. Right before the Black Death, there were an estimated “363 cities with Jewish communities across Europe. During the plague pandemic, half of these communities were either killed or expelled from their homes” (Jedwab et al.) . Later, Jewish people were once again attacked during outbreaks of typhus in Europe from the late nineteenth century up to the Holocaust. German governments during this time started with the “development of new chemicals and gases to cleanse bodies and defend borders, and then with the Nazis to exterminate the supposed human carriers along with the rodents and lice: notions of public

hygiene cross-fertilized with residual hatred of Jews” (Cohn 552). The residual hate towards Jewish people that was embedded in European culture led to the Jewish people being an easy scapegoat for outbreaks of typhus. Antisemitic sentiments lead to the widespread myth that Jewish people were somehow dirty or manipulative. When typhus began to escalate, the already-present antisemitism combined with the unfortunate circumstances of other Jewish prosecution and outbreaks of typhus to lead to a mass blaming of Jewish people. Once again, a disenfranchised group is blamed for a disease because of pre-existing hate towards the group combined with the outbreak of a disease.

Later, other groups of immigrants or migrant populations would continue to face blame for diseases. For example, in New York City, “Italians were blamed for the polio epidemics of 1907 and 1916” (Cohn 552). Even though polio was a disease that affected all different groups of people, not discriminating against any one class or background, immigrants still managed to get blamed. The negative stereotype that those who lived in cities were dirty due to poor housing regulations at the time was applied to immigrants because they often moved to dense cities with people from their home country. Despite being much later, and a much lower fatality rate, an outbreak of cholera in Peru caused similar disdain between social groups. In 1991, the seventh wave of cholera hit Peru and class tensions were amplified. The government saw that more poor people were affected (most likely due to the fact they faced higher population density) and they “attacked the poor, their official propaganda labelling them ‘pigs’ and accusing them of spreading the disease by filthy ‘pig-like’ habits” (Cohn 547). Once again, poor people are blamed for disease outbreaks and the social and physical distance between the poor and the rich provides the rich enough sense of cultural and physical separation to blame the poor. When one group does not understand another group and there is some separation between the groups, one group can dehumanize the “other” the remaining group.

The public and political response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the United States proves how, throughout history, disease has led to discrimination towards different minorities. When the first cases of HIV/AIDS in the United States were recognized in the early 1980s, much confusion surrounded the virus. With so many unknowns about the virus, central health agencies stated that those most at risk were gay men and intravenous drug users. The first outbreaks of the disease were met with little acknowledgement from any central health agency. Because many Americans considered the groups most affected as immoral, politicians were slow to provide funding and relief to these groups. Like many other diseases throughout history, those most affected by the disease were discriminated against due to the stigma surrounding the disease. Many groups affected by HIV/AIDS faced discrimination and difficulties outside of the disease.

Discrimination came in the form of denying access to healthcare, housing, or employment. Some even faced attacks because of their identities. Historically, many outbreaks of disease have had similar affects on minorities. Whether it be Romans claiming disease outbreaks were caused by group of individuals poisoning people, Jewish people facing blame and serving as a scapegoat for diseases such as the Black Death or typhus, immigrants in New York being blamed for polio, or impoverished people in Peru being blamed by government officials, those in power tend to find some sense of disease by blaming minorities or disenfranchised groups. These are examples of how the primary response to disease is fear. This fear clouds judgement and can cause people to ignore science or rational thinking. While the intention to protect oneself from disease is reasonable, this unguided response can lead to the spread of misinformation and stigmatization of groups of people. Incorrect information is spread, and effective action towards treating and preventing disease is overshadowed by unproven hearsay. Humanity needs to address the knee-jerk reaction of strong emotions and figure out a way to address crises with logic and reasoning provided by experts.

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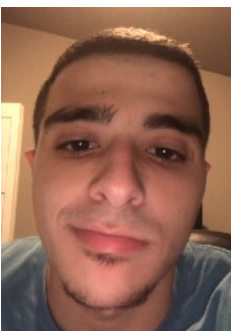
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Essay

The Candors, Humanity's Hope for Honest

by
Helal Issa



Helal Issa is a Purdue undergraduate student majoring in Supply Chain Information and Analytics. He wrote this essay to fulfill a writing assignment in Professor Samuel Bennett's SCLA 101 class in Spring 2021.

It seems the market for mystical items has finally begun to take off and see slight success in the general public. Given the nature of the artifacts that fall under this market, it is no surprise that the public has responded the way it has to these items with almost supernatural abilities. The mixed reviews have come with some people accusing the products of being developed through the means of black magic, or magic that is used for evil purposes. This narrative is sure to change with the development of a product called the “Candors”: a pair of glasses that allow anyone to see all things in reality with no limitations at all. Inspired by the theme of justice present in the story of the Ring of Gyges in Plato’s *Republic*, as well as Descartes’ deception-centered meditations in his *Meditations on First Philosophy*, the Candors can be clearly seen to have no evil agenda as some are led to believe. Rather this product can be seen as an advancement in technology in a way that would truly make the world a better place, just as phones once made life much more convenient, a couple decades ago. However, just as phones were once in the beginning stages of development where they needed public belief in the product, as well as investments from the outside for them to truly explode in their production, the same can be said of the Candors. Investing in the Candors would make sense for all parties involved, whether the motive behind it being subjective or objective, as by investing in this product one would either be satisfied with the personal gain that would come with investing in a highly successful product in its early stages, or they would just be thrilled with the change they contributed to the world. This product is sure to alter the way of the world today, as by taking inspiration and addressing Plato and Descartes’ views, in their respective texts mentioned above, of a deceptive world filled with injustice, the Candors are just a small investment away from being the next great technological advancement that just as its name would indicate, bring openness and honesty throughout all of the lands.

Before one can understand how and why the Candors came about, it is best to understand what they exactly are. The Candors are a pair of glasses that allow anyone who wears them to see all things in their true reality. Despite their great power, they look like a typical pair of reading glasses with normal size, and two-color options, black and a dark navy blue. The power of the glasses derives from the inside, allowing them to be indistinguishable from a regular pair of glasses when viewing them from the outside. This is more of a fashion statement as the intention lying behind the creation of these glasses is not deception, but as the name would indicate, honesty and sincerity.

The Candors have taken inspiration from many great events and concepts throughout the history of the world. However, the idea and purpose of the glasses was originally brought to life from the story of the Ring of Gyges. This story told by Plato in Book II of his novel, the *Republic*, can be summarized as the story of a man who receives a ring that would

make him invisible, and therefore free from the consequences of any of his actions. In the novel, Glaucon, a man participating in the regular dialogue throughout the book, comes to the conclusion that any man would follow the path of injustice in this case, stating, “Rather his actions would be in no way different from those of an unjust person” (Plato, 1992, 360c2-3). This creates the belief that man is indeed unjust and would deceive others if it were not for the consequences that could affect them personally. The view that this story and its lessons are still applicable today is supported by a 2018 Journal of European Studies where it is stated that, “The ring which Plato refers to can also be attributed with money in modern times...People with money often get away with almost anything,” (Noorani & Akhtar, 2018). This creates the idea that injustice is indeed prevalent today and it can be seen clearly when looking at those with large sums of money as they are quite able to avoid all personal consequences due to their wealth, and therefore, do whatever they want. The Ring of Gyges not only inspired the Candors in regards of them being an accessory that grants humans great power, but rather the greater inspiration came from it being an opposition towards the justice that the Candors are supposed to represent. Just as the Ring takes away one’s obligation towards justice due to the lack of consequences that stems from no one being able to see the unjust acts being committed when wearing the ring, the Candors create a constant obligation to do the right thing as if you try to lie or deceive someone, a person with the Candors equipped will be able to see this injustice, and therefore allocate the consequences and reputation that one earns when partaking in these acts.

Plato’s inspiration on the Candors does not stop at the concept that the fear of consequences will prevent further injustices. Whereas it is believed that this fear of being punished or labeled as a liar is enough to stop injustices, one can see other proofs of the Candor’s potential abilities in Book IV of Plato’s *Republic*. This can be clearly seen in an exchange between Socrates and Glaucon where Glaucon asks, “Does it (justice) seem to be something different from what we found in the city?” and Socrates responds, “It doesn’t seem so to me”(Plato, 1992, 442d8-9). This response by Socrates is an attempt by Plato to reveal that individual justice will ultimately be a reflection of justice in a city. This is confirmed by the fact that Socrates, in his response, claims there to be no difference in the justice of a city and the justice of a person. The Candors took inspiration from this as this shows that if the Candors are able to make just a few people act in a just manner, then it will ultimately lead to the city being just. It could then be inferred that through this process, the world would follow soon after.

When it comes to the ability of the Candors in regard to the true reality a person sees when wearing the glasses, it can be seen they have no limits. In order to fully comprehend this feature of the glasses one must come to understand all the different circumstances in

which one can be placed in a false reality. It is on the account of Descartes in the writing of his *Meditations on First Philosophy* that these circumstances were given awareness. The first of these being when Descartes make the statement, “I see so plainly that there are no definitive signs by which to distinguish being awake from being asleep”(Descartes, 1998, 60). It is in this statement that Descartes reveals the possibility of one being deceived by his dreams. He explains that since there are no signs that differ in regard to one being in a dream and one being awake, then one may never know if he is truly awake. This area of concern is addressed within the Candors when one first puts them on, as the user immediately experiences a “reality shock” as soon as the glasses touch their face in order to confirm they are not in a sleeping state. This “reality shock” hits the body with a unique shock that could never be replicated each time the glasses are used. It is through this feature that if a dreamer were to ever feel the same shock twice, they could infer that they are just dreaming of using the item.

The second circumstance in which Descartes explains one can be in a false reality is when they are being deceived by their senses. Descartes makes the claim that he has noticed “the senses are sometimes deceptive” (Descartes, 1998, 60). An elaboration on Descartes’s claim that the senses can be deceptive is made in a 2015 Cambridge University article where the writer claims “His ‘dream argument’ takes a step further by demonstrating that our world of perceptions does not necessarily correspond to reality” (Cambridge, 2015). It is through this statement that the inference is made that one is only fooled and unable to tell that he is in a dream because of the senses. This proves to be a valid assumption as if one were able to notice any distinct differences among their senses when they were dreaming, then they would just perceive the dream and become aware that they are not in a state of wakefulness. However, it is also known that the deception of the senses is also possible while one is awake. For example, when a spoon is in a glass of water and it looks as if it were bent due to the light. These occurrences are dealt with by the main ability of the Candors. Which is when one puts them on, after the reality shock has taken place, they are able to stare at a product/person for five seconds, locking in a specific target for the glasses to analyze. After the five seconds have passed and the subject has been identified, the glasses will label this person or object with the letter “R” for “Real” or “D” for “Deception.” As it pertains to the objects, the glasses will also display them in their true form. For example, the spoon mentioned earlier will be shown as not being bent in the water. As for humans, it is believed this is where the Candors hold their greatest value.

The Candors being able to notify someone when they are being deceived is what is considered the great characteristic of the glasses that will change the world. This is because not only will these glasses save certain individuals in certain situations, but if the Candors

spread around the world as they are expected to, then no one can be deceived. This is attributable to the same concept that was seen present in the story of the Ring of Gyges. If one only truly acts on justice due to what they believe others would say and think of them, then in the case of a world filled with Candors, they would have no choice but to be just as the whole world would be able to tell if they were a person of trickery. This would truly create an ideal world of justice and honesty.

One may be concerned with the fact that the Candors will likely be considered a part of the market of mystical items. This is because while some view this market as having enormous potential, others are bothered by the so called “magic” that is used to produce these products. Whether this is due to religious beliefs or just a dislike of magic in general, there is no reason to feel this way about the Candors and the rest of the items in this market for it is truly just advanced technology that is used in their production. Arthur Clark, a science writer and inventor, once made the claim that, “any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic” (Clarke, 1984). The wisdom behind this statement comes in that it is especially true if one were to take today’s technologies such as a phone or computer and placed it in a time period hundreds of years ago, then everyone would believe it was magic. Some were even under the speculation that phones were the products of magic just a couple decades ago. Therefore, it can be seen that this is just all silly rumor and speculation that has been magnified due to the time of social media we live in today. Rather than viewing the accusations of using magic as a negative thing, one should be thrilled that the product is receiving such high praise. This is truly proof that a majority of the Earth will one day possess these glasses in the same way that the majority owns a phone, as the telephone was once given these same accusations when it was first introduced to the public. The fact of the matter is that Candors are to be seen as the next big thing, entering the rising market of mystical items, just as the telephone entered and catapulted the booming technology industry.

When it comes to the production of this product, it has proven to be quite costly. With that being said, this provides both sides with a tremendous opportunity for investments. It is a once and a life-time opportunity and can provide growth to anyone who makes an early investment. According to Michael Schlachter in his book *Invest Like an Institution*, one should always mix up their portfolio. When specifically describing growth investors and their tendency to always be looking for the big play, he claims, “They are not buying stocks based just on the price today...but rather the potential value of those assets (Schlachter, 2013, 51). He goes on to explain that those high growth stocks are bought for when “the company’s brilliant new invention has hit big”. This is great evidence that Candors should not be invested in for what one believes they can do now, but for what it is known they can

do in the future. It is by exercising patience and speaking to those with knowledge that one will truly see all the gains necessary to make a man rich from his investments. It seems that investing in a product like the Candors right now would be like putting a \$100 into Amazon when it first started. However, with all that being said regarding the profitability of Candors, the true benefit of making an investment in this company would be in jump-starting the cure for humanity. The true reward would come in knowing that one did good for the world simply by just having faith in a vision.

In a growing industry, the Candors seem to be the next revolutionary item that will change the world for the better. By eliminating deception, all things will be dealt with in a just manner, and no man or woman will ever be tricked again. It should be known that with just the right people believing in this product, the investments will come naturally, and with those investments it can be confidently assumed that the product with limitless ability, and inspiration from the greats (Descartes and Plato) will truly bring openness and honesty throughout all the lands.

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Essay

The American Office: A 21st Century Iliad

by
Derrick Perillo



Derrick Perillo is a Purdue undergraduate student majoring in Mechanical Engineering. Derrick wrote this essay to fulfill a writing assignment in Professor Samuel Bennett's SCLA 101 class in Spring 2021. Derrick wanted to put a modern spin on the classic story of *The Iliad* and was inspired to write the following piece after a long day of lectures and homework.

A common piece of advice given to young adults entering the workforce for the first time is to “work to live” rather than “live to work,” and for good reason. Considering that on any given workday the average American is spending on 8.5 hours working their job and even more time working around the house, it can be easy for people to fall into the trap of making work their entire life’s mission (United States, 2019). America’s obsession with work ties back to the “significant” influence that Christianity has on the “public ethics” of U.S., as the concept of work in many Christian circles is one that is “simply good” (Malesic, 2017). The perceived “goodness” of work leads many individuals to seek it excessively, resulting in a lack of free time for many. Although people often fail to give themselves an adequate amount of leisure time, they usually spend whatever time they do have watching television, the number one pastime of the country (United States, 2019). Since so many regular folks are watching television on any given day, there lies a great opportunity to create something with a message for the average American to get behind: a message about the absurdity of working expectations.

In order to get the message out, the creation must be something that can hook an audience and keep them interested. One such story that has successfully managed to retain relevancy for thousands of years is Homer’s epic poem *The Iliad*. Set during the Trojan war, the trials and tribulations of the Achaean and Trojan heroes has caused names such as Achilles, Hector, Menelaus and Diomedes to live on throughout history. A “common theme of Homer’s epics,” the importance of *kleos* or “glory” appears to be only relevant to the soldiers of Troy, but there also lie modern day applications (Grech, 2018). The typical Achaean or Trojan soldier was not special by any means and is often seen being called a coward like a “defenseless boy or widowed woman” rather than brave like how modern society envisions them (Homer, 1998, 2.338). In ancient Greece, becoming a soldier was commonplace and “unquestionably accepted as a normal part of male life,” while today the “normal” route for a middle-class male is to go to university and get a white-collar job (Runciman, 1998). Even though battlefields and Excel spreadsheets are quite different in terms of severity, a Greek soldier and an office worker share a common similarity in that both examples are men sticking to the status quo of their respective societies. The extent that soldiers chased *kleos* seems ridiculous today, so it stands to reason that there would be some resemblance of this lunacy in the modern world. It is this parallel that serves as the inspiration behind America’s next must-watch television series, *Employee of the Month*. Introduced during a coveted Super Bowl commercial slot, the seven-part mini-series revolving around the lives of Achilles and Hector from *The Iliad* as 21st century white-collar “desk warriors” shows the pair competing for “employee of the month” plaques in order to highlight the absurdity of the American work week to every adult that participates in it.

Audiences will get their first taste of these characters through a big advertising push that will center around the Super Bowl, television's biggest event of the year (Spotts et al., 2014). While the Football game is the big draw, many viewers "do not just tolerate" the commercials in-between the big game, but in fact "seek them out" (Spotts et al., 2014). The Super Bowl provides a huge platform to spur interest in the show on social media and using humor in the commercial is one of the best ways to get people talking (Spotts et al., 2014). The commercial will be a montage of office workers from the show describing Achilles and Hector, using the same language used in *The Iliad*. For example, John from accounting will be sitting in front of camera talking about how Achilles is "worth an entire army," while the camera switches to show Achilles furiously typing up reports and aggressively sharpening pencils (Homer, 1998, 9.140). Jane from finance will be describing how people "shake with dread in the face of might Hector" while showing a concerned businessman watching Hector give a riveting sales pitch (Homer, 1998, 15.757). Scenes like this will continue, eventually revealing the name of the show, a hashtag, and its air date, which will be right after the game. This comedic commercial will hopefully get people interested in the program on social media and will likely help garner a large number of viewers for at least the first episode, where they will hopefully be interested enough to watch more. The viewers may be slightly confused about the direction that the show is heading in from the commercial, but the first episode will have no issue clearing things up.

The premise may seem difficult to grasp at first, but one needs to look no further than the opening sequence to understand the method behind the madness. The series opens with an epic shot of the city of Troy, with the Achaean troops closing in. Despite the ongoing carnage, the audience sees Hector and his "brave heart" standing at the gates of Troy, giving "no ground" to the oncoming Achilles (Homer, 1998, 22.115, 117). Coupled with the blockbuster soundtrack in the background, Hector appears to be an exemplar of bravery until his inner thoughts are exposed. In a comedic fashion, Hector reveals his nerves and how the "shame" that he would "die of" if he had to face his troops keeps him outside the gates (Homer, 1998, 22.125). The viewer gets their first glimpse of the absurdity of his principles, but things quickly switch to Achilles' perspective, with the epic music back in full swing. Achilles appears as a one-dimensional character, with the bulk of his thoughts focused on killing Hector as revenge for the death of his friend, Patroclus. Achilles chases Hector "non-stop as a hound" around the city of Troy, until the Hector eventually stops running and turns to fight (Homer, 1998, 22.224-225). All of these dramatic scenes from the original text lead the audience to expect the legendary duel, but before "the great clash of arms" can occur, a large portal opens and swallows the two soldiers, leaving baffled Trojans and Achaeans (Homer, 1998, 22.361). After a "wormhole" scene Hector and Achilles find them-

selves still faced off, except their armor has been exchanged for business casual attire and their spears have turned to pencils. A manager comes over and yells at them to stop playing around and get back to work. From here, the title card plays, and the show begins. The rest of the series shows the men adapting to life in the modern world, while competing against each other in order to earn ‘Employee of the Month’, just like how they strove to best each other in *The Iliad*. The two will have a great variety of misadventures and laughs, but beneath the surface the viewers will see that excessive pursuit of honor will lead to their eventual demises, just like in the original text.

The first character who will face the consequences of excessive honor chasing is Hector. From the original texts, it is clear that Hector is a man who places a great deal of importance on his image. An example of this can be seen through the interaction between him and his wife inside the walls of Troy. “Weeping freely,” Andromache approaches her husband begging him to “pity” their “helpless son” and herself as there is “nothing but torment” for her as a widow if he dies (Homer, 1998, 6.481,484,490). Despite her heartbreaking pleas, Hector simply “nods” and informs his sobbing wife that he “would die of shame to face the men of Troy” if he did not return to battle (Homer, 1998, 60.521,523). Hector essentially dismisses her feelings, thinking that the glory that he would earn would be passed down to his family makes the whole situation fine. This “deeply revealing” passage speaks volumes about the “shame culture” that existed in ancient Greece, as it would be “socially unbearable” for Hector to be caught prioritizing the wellbeing of his family over war (Smith, 2016). Hector’s decision in the context of *The Iliad* seems like an incredibly selfish and ridiculous one to make to the modern reader, and it is this exact feeling that will be recreated in the show. Hector will have a romantic partner that will express similar feelings to those of Andromache, being concerned with the lack of time Hector spends with his family and his young child. It has been known for a long time that the involvement of parents in a young child’s life is extremely important to their emotional maturity and wellbeing, and Hector cannot take part in that for his own child if he is always off at work (Meuwissen & Englund, 2016). Despite his wife’s pleas, Hector will state similar sentiments about shame, making it clear that he has put his performance in the office over his family in an overly dramatic fashion. The concept of neglecting family for work is not a new one, however the audience may see how absurd the choice is by taking Hector’s choice and seeing how that applies in their own life with a job that they are nowhere nearly as passionate about. The consequences of the choices in this scene will be devastating for Hector and his family, leaving everyone damaged in some way by the show’s conclusion.

While the character of Hector mainly serves to highlight the damage caused by neglecting family, the character of Achilles will primarily serve to represent the physical and

mental complications of overworking. In *The Iliad* Achilles is not only the strongest Achaean soldier, but he also has the distinct privilege of getting to know “the two fates” possible for him on his “day of death” (Homer, 1998, 9.499). On one hand, he can leave Troy and “the life that’s left” will be long, or he can rejoin the Achaean forces and fight until he is killed, giving him “glory [that] never dies” (Homer, 1998, 9.501-503). Achilles ultimately makes his choice after the death of his friend Patroclus, vowing to “never stop till [he] drives the Trojans to their bloody fill of war” even if it he is to die “far away” from home for it (Homer, 1998, 19.499-501). In making this choice, Achilles proclaims that achieving glory is even more important than life itself, leading him to make the ultimate sacrifice for it. Achilles, in his proclamations of revenge, appears to be somewhat of a fool when examined under a modern lens that views honor as an “ideological leftover in the consciousness of obsolete classes,” or an outdated tradition (Berger, 1970). Since the audience is able to find Achille’s thirst for honor laughable, they hopefully will be able to notice the same thing when it comes to his thirst for work. One of the major plot points for the character of Achilles will be his failing of his physical and mental health due to work. During the series, Achilles will be so devoted to his work that he will try to take on too many different tasks, resulting in him becoming increasingly stressed. Everyone knows the effects that stress can have on one’s mental health, but chronic stress can also lead to a weakened immune system and even a buildup of plaque in the arteries that can cause heart attacks or strokes (Salleh, 2008). Even though Achilles’ dedication to work will be presented in a comical way during the series, eventually things will change when the buildup leads to a complete mental and physical breakdown that will cost him his life, the series’ climax. The audience will realize that gravity of overworking and consistently stressed and will hopefully cause a change in some members who may see a little bit of themselves in the hardworking Achilles.

From the hilarious comedic pieces to the devastating talks of desertion and death, the series is sure to have a little bit of everything for everyone. The intended audience may be working adults, but any age group will be able to understand the messages presented by the show despite the subtleties. Ultimately, media has the power to “make people aware of something that they had not been aware of before,” and that is exactly what the series sets out to do (Stempel, 2001). Everyone who works a job likely thinks that they do too much work but exaggerating that by treating work in the same light as honor in *The Iliad* will hopefully lead viewers to realize that the amount of work that they consider “normal” may be anything but that. Achilles and Hector may suffer the consequences of overworking and pursuing “office glory” too hard, but hopefully their example can cause one less person in the real world to make to the same mistakes.

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Essay

The Challenges Women Face In the Field of Engineering

by

Haley Rickey, Meredith Hedtke & Emma Risk



Haley Rickey (left) and Meredith Hedtke (center) are both Purdue undergraduate students majoring in Biomedical Engineering. Emma Risk (left) majors in Civil Engineering. They co-authored this essay to fulfill a writing assignment in Professor Robin Clair's SCLA 101 class in Fall 2020.

Throughout the past decade, the field of engineering has been gradually penetrated by women with interests in STEM. From 2012 to 2017, there was a 58% increase in engineering and computer science degrees earned by women (Rincon, 2019). Many universities are taking initiatives to both inspire and adjust to this change, as evident by many women in engineering programs and curriculum appropriate for any gender. However, many other factors still contribute to the hesitancy of some young women to pursue this rigorous field and even the commitment they have to the field of STEM. According to Society of Women Engineers (SWE) Research, around 30% of women who begin pursuing a degree in this field switch to a different direction while still in school and only about the same percent of those who begin work in the field of engineering remain after 20 years. This makes one wonder, how does being a woman in engineering make it more difficult to succeed? Unbeknownst to some, women in engineering undergo situations of double standards within teams, sexual harassment, and even greater challenges finding jobs and internships, overall putting them at a disadvantage from the perspective of gender roles.

There is a heavy focus on how women are treated in their careers within the field of engineering. However, there is the same amount of discrimination on women before they even attain a job in their career. There is an advantage to landing a job right after graduation that is both well deserved and aligned to their future career goals, yet women are largely deprived of this advantage. A study done by Jasko, Pyrkosz-Pacyna, Czarnek, Dukala, & Szastok (2020) found that the injustice on women influenced their job outcome by affecting: salary, time spent searching for a job, number of job offers, and how consistent the job was in relation to their education. There is a pay gap between genders, and focusing on engineering specifically, this is a serious problem. “Female engineers still receive about 90 cents per dollar earned by their male counterparts” (Rincón, 2018). This may not seem like a significant gap, but this is unfair treatment when women are holding the same position as their male coworkers and still receiving less pay. According to the study by Jasko et al. (2020), there is a visible difference in starting salaries between genders. Men are more likely to attain higher paid starting jobs, and more women were in the bottom tier for their starting salaries. As women freshly in the job industry experience this, it can be disheartening and frustrating as your fellow colleagues are being treated fairly in terms of salary. This is just an addition to the journey women take to find a job. According to Jasko et al. (2020), women are less likely to be offered a job without having to search for it. Even the search process extends longer than it would for men. In addition, this same study found that, “women had a 47% chance of getting more than one job offer, while more than half of male graduates reported receiving multiple job offers” (Jasko et al., 2020). Both of these factors allow men to have an advantage when choosing a job and obtaining more success later in

their career. Women may not feel satisfied in their job or the process of getting one; however, there is a great possibility women will receive a job that does not directly relate to their major. “Specifically, in comparison to men, women were less likely to perceive their job as being consistent with their qualifications and more likely to have a job that was only partially or not at all consistent with their educational background” (Jasko et al., 2020). This can be difficult when women were passionate about a specific field of study and were not able to get a job within that field due to the discrimination the engineering field exhibits. When these situations occur it can cause women to feel the effects of being in a predominately male career on a higher scale. This even drives women out of their specific field or engineering as a whole.

Women are still given less encouragement to enter STEM related fields than men, even though it has improved recently. The women that choose to enter this field, even through the hardship, may never feel satisfied, as they are faced with discrimination and factors that never allow them to reach their full potential. There is a “relatively greater exit rate from engineering of women dissatisfied with pay and promotion opportunities. Family-related constraints and dissatisfaction with working conditions are found to be only secondary factors” (Hunt, 2016). This may be surprising to some as there is a strong focus on working conditions, when there is a greater problem with the opportunities that women are given compared to men. Obviously, there is not only a problem socially within the jobs of women engineers, but there is an issue with the system that may even be more important in women’s perspectives. Having these obvious disadvantages not only hurts women, but it can cause men to feel power that may cause more or even worse problems for women in engineering.

Engineers commonly work in teams in order to explore varying angles of problems. The idea of having multiple perspectives in order to cover all aspects of the problems is crucial, all the more important to have people of all genders, cultures, and backgrounds on the same team. Historically, being a field dominated by male problem solvers, women in engineering are the minority. Because of this, teams are also composed primarily of male members, in some cases with only a single woman in a group. Society has a long track record of holding the field of engineering to a prejudiced stereotype of one only eligible for strong, achievement-oriented male workers; therefore, it takes a lot to undo. Even with the push and acceptance in the past decade for women to join the field, in some cases it is a subconscious mindset that can really affect a woman’s ability to succeed in the engineering workplace. This is the idea of attributional rationalization, or “negative stereotype-based expectations,” as discussed by Heilman and Haynes (2005). These authors strove to test the extent to which this existed when measuring one’s successes in the workplace, hypothesizing

that it affected women more than men, especially in a field such as engineering with its long legacy of male dominance. In their first study, participants rated the engineers, one male and one female, in different areas based on descriptions of their roles and responsibilities for a team project. The results showed that when taken into account as simply a collective team outcome, the woman was rated significantly lower comparatively in areas such as “influence” and “leadership,” as though they figured the male to have done more in those areas. However, when taken into account separately, the female scored higher for all three areas of competence, influence, and leadership (Heilman & Haynes, 2005). This shows that even as qualified as a female may be for the tasks at hand, the generalization is that men can do the tasks just faintly better. Throughout the course of two other similar studies, this theme persists. As further discussed in Study 3, the deserved qualification ratings of women come most times only when the successes and achievements are outlined explicitly (Heilman & Haynes, 2005). This continues to showcase that women must work harder to prove themselves as qualified and capable of the challenges that come with working as an engineer. Not only working to prove their capabilities, women in the field of engineering must fight against the double standards held against them on a daily basis. There is the constant battle between being themselves and acting in a certain way to adhere to the likeliness of others. According to numerous research studies, “women who seek entry into male-dominated cultures either have to act like men in order to be successful, leave if they are not adaptable to the culture, or remain in the industry without behaving like men but maintaining unimportant positions” (Powell, Bagilhole & Dainty, 2009).

Even after obtaining a leadership role through years of hard work, the stakes are much higher for women than their counterparts. As explained in *How Women Engineers Do and Undo Gender*, “if the woman is an efficient, competent manager she is likely to be judged unfeminine, but if she demonstrates the supposedly female qualities of care and sensitivity she is likely to be assessed either as an inappropriate and inefficient manager or as a good female manager” (Powell, Bagilhole & Dainty, 2009).

These unreasonable expectations of women make teaming experiences extremely hard for women to thrive. There lies a fine line they must adhere to for overall success. The balancing act is not easy. Women engineers experience many subtle stressors both stemming from the gendering of roles within engineering as well as the way female engineers perceive that their work is devalued within the profession (Cardador & Caza, 2018). All of this unfortunately culminates into an overall feeling from women engineers of not belonging in the field and contributes to their declining retention rate (Cardador & Caza, 2018).

Women in the science, engineering, and medical fields have quite a few challenges stacked against them. Sexual harassment happens at almost every job in every field, whether it flies under the radar or the victim decides to accuse the harasser. It seems pretty often that we hear about sexual harassment in the workplace. Working in a predominantly male field only amplifies the issue at hand. Sexual harassment is more of an umbrella term that encompasses a lot more than just physical touching or verbal comments. According to Northfield (2018), sexual harassment can be unwanted physical contact, verbal comments, and anything with the intention of degrading a person. Northfield adds that one can be sexually harassed by any gender, and it can even happen without the offender meaning for it to happen. A possible reason sexual harassment occurs so often is people not considering their behavior to fall into that category. The incident could be completely accidental, and they could be completely unaware that they have created a hostile environment. Sexual harassment does not need to be directed at a person, either (Johnson et al., 2018). With all this said, just because an offender thinks it did not happen does not mean the person was not sexually harassed. Not only is sexual harassment happening in the workplace, it is also happening at universities. Although there is a drive to attract more women to STEM fields, women are being driven away by the sizable possibility that they could become a sexual harassment victim. According to a study done by the University of Texas System, about 25 percent of female engineering students were sexually harassed by faculty or staff (Johnson et al., 2018). As companies are attempting to hire more women to increase diversity, they have some issues that could potentially be happening in secret, as some women prefer to not confront their abusers.

After being sexually harassed, women have a difficult decision to make. They need to decide when and if they want to report it and possibly put their career on the line. Also some women who have been sexually harassed are afraid to report sexual harassment, as it could affect their status within their workplace (Lindquist & McKay, 2018). Specifically, these women were afraid they would be called liars and it would diminish their professional credibility (Lindquist & McKay, 2018). Unfortunately, people do not always believe women when they do report it. When the women did choose to report the incident or incidents, they said that they felt dismissed by the company, according to the study. When someone who has been sexually harassed reports the incident, they feel they are diminishing both their reputation and career.

Sexual harassment has more consequences than just in the workplace, though. Being sexually harassed can cause a variety of issues including your emotional well-being, work performance, and professional relationships with colleagues, according to the study done by Lindquist and McKay (2018). The authors found that being sexually harassed could lead the

victims to show signs of different mental illnesses, reduced self-esteem, and several other negative emotional responses. Being sexually harassed not only takes a toll on your mental well-being, it also affects one's work performance. The study done by Lindquist and McKay (2018) found that women who were sexually harassed dedicated some of their energy to deal with the consequences and avoid another encounter with the offender. With less energy going into their work, their level of performance deteriorated. Along with adverse effects on mental health and workplace performance, sexual harassment interferes with professional relationships within the workplace. In addition to hurting the women, this can be negative for the company, because a good team needs to be able to communicate effectively. If a woman has been sexually harassed by a boss or coworker, she is more likely to avoid situations where the perpetrator could possibly harass her again (Lindquist & McKay, 2018). This could include a variety of things such as taking an alternate route within the workplace to avoid an encounter with the offender or withdrawing interpersonally from anything to do with her workplace.

Women entering the field of engineering face challenges. Affecting both mental health and career success of these women, there is no surprise that numerous female engineers decide the field is not a good fit for them. With society growing in knowledge and tackling new problems each day, the field needs to evolve to accommodate others. This involves breaking the barriers and long-lived stereotypes of women in the field of STEM and instead empower young women to pursue their scientific passions to move toward a more fulfilling future for all.

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Essay

Grete's Change in Kafka's Metamorphosis

by
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Colin Sweeney is a Purdue undergraduate student majoring in Chemical Engineering. He wrote this essay to fulfill a writing assignment in Professor Elise Frketich's SCLA 101 class in Spring 2021. His other essay analyzing factions in American politics, which he wrote to fulfill a writing assignment in Professor William White's SCLA 102 class in Fall 2020 was also nominated.

Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* begins with his main character, Gregor Samsa, turning into an enormous insect. While many stories feature exciting introductions similar to this, Kafka's opening statement offers up a unique twist before the end of the first sentence, and sets the tone of the story as an exploration of the consequences of Gregor's transformation through the perspectives of him and his family. While his transformation is certainly the defining event of the story, Grete, who is introduced as his sister, undergoes an internal metamorphosis of her own, one that begins with Gregor's story and predicament, continues through her care for Gregor, and culminates in her and her parents' decision to escape their current situation without the transformed Gregor, who meets his eventual demise in the conclusion of the book. While critics of Grete's personal journey could make the argument that Grete's change is unrealistic, I hope to prove through a thorough review of Grete's role in *Metamorphosis* that this is not the case, as her response to the events of the story relate to psychological concepts common in the development of a young adult. Through the course of *Metamorphosis*, Grete undergoes a character change as a result of Gregor's new physical appearance, one that is not only realistic, but also normal by psychological standards.

At the beginning of the story, Grete's introduction is presented in the background of Gregor's initial transformation. The first mention of her comes from Gregor's own senses, as he hears her in the next room: "At the other side door his sister came plaintively: 'Gregor? Aren't you well? Do you need anything?' ... His father went back to his breakfast, but his sister whispered: 'Gregor, open the door, I beg of you'" (Kafka, 3). From her present actions, readers can assume that Grete is a sensitive girl, and likely a doting sister to Gregor, as expressed through her desire to assist him. This introduction, while not as complete as Gregor's, establishes that Grete's initial character is that of an innocent and loving sister, but as Gregor's perspective shifts to his work, it can be argued that Gregor does not reciprocate the affection that his sister gives to him. As an example, he thinks that Grete can use her beauty to diffuse the tense situation between the newly-transformed Gregor and the chief clerk, who has arrived to check on Gregor as the result of his absence. In Gregor's mind, Grete is better suited to target the clerk's weakness: "And the chief clerk was a lover of women, surely she could persuade him; she would close the front door in the entrance hall and talk him out of his shocked state. But his sister was not there, Gregor would have to do the job himself" (Kafka, 7). From this quote, it becomes apparent that Gregor sees his sister as a means to an end. While Gregor compliments Grete as being clever in the preceding quote, he asserts an air of superiority over her, and considers himself able to relax the clerk, even without Grete's advantage as a woman. He also seems to take personal offense at Grete's feelings and concern: "And why was she crying? Was it because he had not got up, and had not let the chief clerk in, because he was in danger of losing his job and if that happened his

boss would once more pursue their parents with the same demands as before? There was no need to worry about things like that yet. Gregor was still there and had not the slightest intention of abandoning his family” (Kafka, 5). While it could be interpreted that Gregor is attempting to console his sister, it seems more likely, based on the vocabulary that he uses, that he has come to view Grete’s crying as an annoyance, as well as an indictment of his inability to support the family. Over the course of this morning, Gregor’s own account has demonstrated that, while Grete is a supportive, emotional member of his family, Gregor is less than supportive, and even dismissive of Grete’s abilities and emotions, which is something that will ultimately create problems for Gregor later in the story.

After Gregor’s transformation, it becomes apparent that Grete becomes responsible for his continued health and safety. Part of these responsibilities, and arguably the most visible example, involves finding food suitable for Gregor and carrying it into his room. Through her efforts, Gregor, as well as the audience, can see how deeply that Grete cares for his brother, even in his new insect body: “Gregor was extremely curious as to what she would bring in its [dish of milk] place, imagining the wildest possibilities, but he never could have guessed what his sister, in her goodness, actually did bring. In order to test his taste, she brought him a whole selection of things, all spread out on an old newspaper” (Kafka, 10). From this passage, two things are apparent. The first of these things is Gregor’s expectations regarding his care, which are still high, suggesting that he still expects his sister to be extravagant in her care for him. The second observation that comes from this passage is that, despite Gregor’s high expectations, Grete’s caring demeanor has once again benefited him, and serves as an example that Grete still cares for her brother, likely more than Gregor is known to reciprocate. Over time, however, Grete’s opinion towards Gregor seems to change, as the family falls on hard times. Gregor notes her previous lifestyle as a standard of comparison: “She was still a child of seventeen, her life up till then had been very enviable, consisting of wearing nice clothes, sleeping late, helping out in the business, joining in with a few modest pleasures and most of all playing the violin” (Kafka, 12). As provided in Gregor’s sentiments above, Grete is still her own individual, with hobbies and aspirations beyond caring for her transformed brother. As her care for him continues, Gregor notes that the change in the family situation may have soured her opinion of Gregor’s new condition, even avoiding interaction with him if at all possible: “Long after he had finished eating and lay lethargic in the same place, his sister slowly turned the key in the lock as a sign to him that he should withdraw” (Kafka, 10). Gregor, who is willing to adhere to his sister’s wishes, is acting as the audience in this case, as Grete’s transformation begins to change her from a loving sister into someone else entirely.

As the story continues, Grete's metamorphosis moves toward a conclusion. As Gregor notes, Grete begins to become frustrated with the new assortment of duties that she must perform to take adequate care of Gregor: "As nobody could understand him, nobody, not even his sister, thought that he could understand them, so he had to be content to hear his sister's sighs and appeals to the saints as she moved about his room" (Kafka, 10). As Grete's exasperated prayers seem to suggest, her role as the affectionate sister is beginning to change, as the responsibility of caring for the insect-like Gregor is ultimately more than a single individual, especially one as young as Grete, can bear. However, this does not mean that Grete does not take her new role seriously; on the contrary, she takes her new duties to heart when discussing it with her parents. Gregor soon notes this: "His sister, unfortunately, did not agree; she had become used to the idea, not without reason, that she was Gregor's spokesman to his parents about the things that concerned him... It was more than childish perversity, of course, or the unexpected confidence she had recently acquired, that made her insist; she had indeed noticed that Gregor needed a lot of room to crawl about in, whereas the furniture, as far as anyone could see, was of no use to him at all" (Kafka, 14). This quote is describing the newfound confidence that Grete has, and how she wields it to make decisions on Gregor's behalf. However, her intentions differ from Gregor's, which leads to an interesting turn of events. As Gregor learns how to crawl up the walls, Grete decides to remove the furniture, making this activity easier for him. However, when their mother faints at the sight of him crawling up the walls, her opinion of the activity changes, and her opinion about Gregor is changed as a result: "'Gregor!' shouted his sister, glowering at him and shaking her fist. That was the first word she had spoken to him directly since his transformation. She ran into the other room to fetch some kind of smelling salts to bring her mother out of her faint" (Kafka, 15). As demonstrated through this scene, Grete has made her feelings clear about the relationship between Gregor and the rest of her family. Grete no longer communicates with her brother, and rather than fulfilling a doting caregiver role for Gregor, she now acts as a buffer between him and the outside world. Her responsibilities reflect this, as she is confirmed within the story to have the authority to decide how Gregor's room is decorated, what kind of food he is offered, and even who can visit him in his room. With this, Grete's character has changed drastically from her initial role, as she develops from a naïve, sensitive younger sister to the reluctant organizer and controller of Gregor's lifestyle.

While the transformation of Grete's character is gradual throughout her care for Gregor, the most striking example of her change is the disparity between her attitude and behavior at the end of the story, especially when compared to her character as it was introduced in the opening pages of *Metamorphosis*. At the conclusion of the story, Grete takes

her responsibility to separate Gregor and her parents seriously, especially as it pertains to her mother: “Gregor's sister screamed at her that she was never to clean Gregor's room again; while his mother tried to draw his father, who was beside himself with anger, into the bedroom; his sister, quaking with tears, thumped on the table with her small fists; and Gregor hissed in anger that no-one had even thought of closing the door to save him the sight of this and all its noise” (Kafka, 18). With this quote, Grete demonstrates that her extreme shift from Gregor's sister to his jailer, or zookeeper if readers consider Gregor more animalistic as a result of his transformation. In contrast, Gregor's selfish viewpoint is also explored, which reveals that he has undergone little internal change as a result of the story. Grete's character, now firmly set against Gregor, later confronts her parents about leaving him behind entirely: “‘Father, Mother’, said his sister, hitting the table with her hand as introduction, ‘we can't carry on like this. Maybe you can't see it, but I can. I don't want to call this monster my brother, all I can say is: we have to try and get rid of it. We've done all that's humanly possible to look after it and be patient, I don't think anyone could accuse us of doing anything wrong’” (Kafka, 20-21). With this final discussion of Gregor, Grete dehumanizes him entirely, believing that the insect-like Gregor is no longer her brother, and her argument towards leaving him behind leads readers to believe that Grete now only sees Gregor as a burden to be removed from their lives, which occurs at the event of his death. Rather than a period of outright mourning, the Samsa family begins to relax, and they board a tram for the countryside around their hometown. Grete's change is now front and center: “All the time, Grete was becoming livelier. With all the worry they had been having of late her cheeks had become pale, but, while they were talking, Mr. and Mrs. Samsa were struck, almost simultaneously, with the thought of how their daughter was blossoming into a well built and beautiful young lady” (Kafka, 24). Grete, originally a background character in her brother's horror story, is now the main protagonist of her own life, and Gregor's death is not portrayed as saddening, but as a form of escape.

With Grete's full character transformation in mind, there are several different methods by which the full range of her character can be interpreted. In order to make sense of the timeline of Grete's metamorphosis, it may help to remember the manner of character arc that she experiences. Writer K. M. Weiland summarizes five heroic arcs, each one pertaining to a lie and truth, where one is rejected or cast aside in favor of the other. Based on the actions of Grete throughout the story, I believe that her changes mirror what Weiland calls the Corruption Arc. This character development, which begins with the truth initially in place, features the protagonist declining the sacrifice that the truth requires in favor of a lie, and often experiencing consequences as a result (Weiland). In the case of Grete, her initial belief that Gregor retained his identity after his transformation, which is the truth, became

slowly worn down by the hard work that came from taking care of her brother, and led her to reject Gregor's humanity in an effort to make a better life for herself and her parents. However, in this case, the lie comes with little consequence, and Grete and her parents enjoy their new freedom after Gregor's death with no limitations. Another reason for her change is psychological, as there are numerous examples of changes similar to Grete, both in the relationships between siblings and the relationships between parents and children. The first example comes from a research article on sibling relationships, which notes that when one sibling is praised over another, the other sibling can develop feelings of isolation and loneliness that can manifest as a change in their identity (Hart). This could apply to Grete's situation, as Gregor notes their parent's disdain for her prior to his transformation: "He would often hear them say how they appreciated all the new work his sister was doing even though, before, they had seen her as a girl who was somewhat useless and frequently been annoyed with her" (Kafka, 13). While this quote, it is reasonable to assume that, given the new duties she would have to perform for Gregor, she would be forced to adopt a sense of self that may differ greatly from the character that the other members of the family have established for her. Other cases for Grete's transformation arise from her relationship with Gregor as his caregiver. A study into caregivers treating Alzheimer's patients notes that caregivers, 73% of which are female, are exposed to a high degree of stress, which can in turn lead to burnout, which is often defined as physical or mental collapse as a result of consistent stress (Campione & Zebrak). As a younger female charged with the care of an older male, Grete's decision to dehumanize Gregor at the end of the story could be construed as an expression of her pent-up stress and burnout. From another point of view, her reference to Gregor as a creature may also reflect her own guilt at the belief that she has failed to provide adequate care for Gregor in his new body, which would be similar to how parents refer to their children as animals or monsters (Hunt, 186). With these various examples, it is fair to say that Grete's own metamorphosis was not only realistic, but also a logical conclusion of the effect that caring for Gregor and an increase of responsibility would have on her identity and sense of self.

However, there may be those who argue that the assertions made above are incorrect, for a number of reasons. The first argument that can be raised is that Grete does not change as drastically as I have described. Grete's last look at Gregor could serve as evidence of this: "Grete, who had not taken her eyes from the corpse, said: 'Just look how thin he was. He didn't eat anything for so long. The food came out again just the same as when it went in'. Gregor's body was indeed completely dried up and flat, they had not seen it until then, but now he was not lifted up on his little legs, nor did he do anything to make them look away" (Kafka, 22). Grete, through her concern for the now-dead Gregor, seems to demon-

strate her kind nature. However, the key flaw in this argument comes from a similar quote from Grete on that same page: “It was his sister who had been in so much of a rush. She had been standing there waiting and sprung forward lightly, Gregor had not heard her coming at all, and as she turned the key in the lock she said loudly to her parents ‘At last!’” (Kafka, 22). Because Grete had such a relieved reaction to the discovery of Gregor’s dying body, the earlier quote can be viewed in a different light. Instead of sympathy for her brother’s suffering, Grete is more likely intrigued by Gregor’s starvation, which serves as an additional piece of evidence towards her change from caring to desensitized. A second argument that could be raised is that, because the story is told largely from Gregor’s perspective, it’s entirely possible that Grete’s worsening attitude towards Gregor is the result of him projecting his own insecurities about the transformation onto his sister, who would be the only person he continually interacts with. However, there is a problem with this reasoning. Gregor’s cause of death is not openly stated, but there is a clear implication expressed in the text: “It is true that his entire body was aching, but the pain seemed to be slowly getting weaker and weaker and would finally disappear altogether. He could already hardly feel the decayed apple in his back or the inflamed area around it, which was entirely covered in white dust” (Kafka, 22). From this quote, two different conclusions can be drawn, which refute the previous argument. The first of these conclusions is that Gregor has interacted with other people, and those other people, his father specifically, were repulsed enough to maim him, which would not happen if Gregor were simply projecting his own repulsion. The other counterargument is the fact that no one, Grete included, had removed the apple. Even if Grete was not as dehumanizing as Gregor believes in the end, the apple lodged in his back, as well as Grete’s silent refusal to remove it, demonstrates a deadly apathy that she possesses, indicating a substantial change in her character. In summary, Grete’s change is neither overstated or a figment of Gregor’s imagination, as Grete’s change is notably displayed through the circumstances and cause of Gregor’s death.

While Gregor’s transformation was the headlining event of *Metamorphosis*, Grete’s own metamorphosis was just as noteworthy, albeit subtler than her brother’s. At the beginning of the story, Grete is demure, innocent, and affectionate towards her older brother, who seems to take advantage of this. Later, Grete volunteers to feed Gregor and ensure that his needs are met, which prompts her to embrace new responsibilities in the family. Soon, Grete removes Gregor’s agency, as well as his furniture, and eventually serves as a barrier between him and the outside world, the rest of the family included. Finally, Grete convinces her family that Gregor is no longer the human they knew, and his death frees them from their obligation to him. Through this chain of events, it can be shown that Grete’s progression follows a traditional character arc, the Corruption Arc specifically. Moreover, while

parts of this story are understandably far-fetched, the titular metamorphosis as an example, the rationale behind Grete's own change is sound, as it pertains to both sibling and caregiver relationships. Furthermore, while detractors of this argument may assert that Grete's character development was overstated or the result of Gregor's exaggeration, readers only need to review the death of Gregor to verify that these claims are false. In conclusion, while the circumstances surrounding Grete are science fiction, her own change is realistic from both a literary and psychological approach, and strikingly similar to the development of siblings and caregivers in the world today.

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Essay

Crisis of Individuality:

Examining Society's Role in Our Journey Towards Happiness

by

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Luke van Reijendam is a Purdue undergraduate student majoring in Professional Flight and Political Science. He wrote this essay to fulfill a writing assignment in Professor Zachary Goldsmith's SCLA 102 class in Spring 2021. Luke aspires to be a commercial airline captain.

Don't we all want to be happy? Everywhere we look from smiley faces to self-help books are messages which tell us to be happy and provide insights that are supposed to lead us there. In a country as rich and developed as the United States, it seems reasonable to expect most people to be happy. Yet the amount of people describing themselves as happy has remained flat over the past fifty years, challenging the premise that increased affluence and personal well-being create the conditions needed for happiness. Today, our current period of coronavirus induced isolation has brought to the forefront questions about the role of social interactions in our happiness. But even before the acceleration of globalization in the past century and the global pandemic in the past months, two authors explored the role society has in our happiness. Herman Hesse in his novel *Siddhartha*, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau in *Reveries of a Solitary Walker* discuss what happiness is, how to find it, and what society's role in that is. Both Rousseau and Hesse are critical of society's influence and propose alternative ways to have a fulfilling and happy life. The experiences of Siddhartha and Rousseau reveal that while society's two-pronged approach of enforcing conformity and manipulating values to suit its own needs prevents one's attainment of happiness, relationships with other individuals do have the power to help one find happiness.

Siddhartha and Rousseau both experience society's pressure to conform, stripping them of their individuality and halting their quest for happiness. Siddhartha spends over half of his life as a businessman, becoming incredibly rich and successful. But despite this he comes to the sudden realization that "he had been living his life in a worthless way, worthless and pointless; nothing alive, nothing in the least way valuable or worth keeping, had remained in his hands" (Hesse 44). By becoming a member of society, Siddhartha gives up part of himself: his goals, his dreams, and his identity. He feels worthless because he has lost his real self to society. His originality and individuality are replaced by societal norms, explaining his shift towards business and debauchery. Rousseau is also caught in conflict with society. As the author of oftentimes controversial work, he receives extreme criticism for his ideas. "They have sought in the refinements of their malice to find out that torment which could most afflict my tender heart; they have violently broken every tie which held me to them" (Rousseau 146). Despite the extreme reaction described, Rousseau refuses to conform to the society's list of acceptable ideas, and for that act of defiance he is banished and forced to live out the remainder of his life in solitude. His statement reveals that the pressures and animosity of society have not only failed to make Rousseau happy, but it also has in fact become an anathema to happiness. This reinforces Siddhartha's experience because it demonstrates that by stripping the individual of their sense of self and introducing conformity, society also prevents the individual from achieving happiness. These experiences

cultivate the idea that society's role of enforcing conformity vanquishes individuality, preventing one from pursuing their personal journey towards happiness.

Society not only promotes conformity, but it also twists the goals and values of the individual to prioritize its own needs, while simultaneously distracting from the individual's original goals and values, preventing the attainment of happiness. After admitting to himself the damage he has done by pursuing a life in society, Siddhartha evaluates the toxicity of the norms and behaviors he has internalized. Likening himself to a vomiting drunk Siddhartha "wish[es] he could rid himself of these pleasures, of these habits, of this whole pointless life, and of himself, in one enormous nausea" (Hesse 44). Siddhartha feels so empty because his habits of society do not actually bring happiness. Siddhartha has subjected himself to drinking, partying, gambling, and pleasure because those are the activities of success and happiness according to society. But Siddhartha realizes these habits not only failed to bring him any happiness, they brought him even farther away from his goal of enlightenment. Reflecting on who he was before he settled down in society, Siddhartha wonders "how long it was now since he had heard that voice, how long since he had scaled any heights; how evenly and monotonously his journey had gone on ... contented with petty pleasures and yet never satisfied!" (Hesse 45) Siddhartha, once a man singularly devoted to finding enlightenment, now realizes society has stripped him of his greatest pursuit. His goals were twisted from personal fulfillment to societal profit, from individual happiness to boisterous pleasure. The whole time he believed he was pursuing a noble goal in becoming rich, but he now is awakened to the deceitful way society manipulated his values and desires. Rousseau more directly discusses the deceitfulness of society, noting "that every propensity of nature, kindness itself not excepted, carried or followed in society without prudence or choice, changes its nature and often becomes as troublesome as it was useful in its first direction" (Rousseau 228). All behavioral norms cease to be a no strings attached act, and become societal tools, used to promote societal prosperity over individual discovery. Essentially, Rousseau realizes that society is fake, a mirage. Nothing is really as it seems, and everything has an ulterior motive. By manipulating the true values of the individual, society works to benefit itself, even though it comes at the expense of the individual. Ultimately, the experiences of Siddhartha and Rousseau reveal that interaction with society not only fails to bring happiness, but actively works against the pursuit of it.

While Rousseau and Siddhartha find no happiness in society, their experiences with other people does, affirming the power of human connection. In the last walk of his text, Rousseau writes of the happiest time of his life, when he was in a relationship with a wealthy woman named Madame de Warrens. Rousseau describes how he "lived but in her and for her" (Rousseau 293). Rousseau's relationship with de Warrens gives his life mean-

ing. Being able to cultivate an intense human connection allows him to explore himself more fully, giving him the space to find happiness. Siddhartha also has a period of profound human connection when, in the final stage of his life's journey, he becomes close companions with a wise boatman, Vasudeva. Both search for enlightenment and Siddhartha often discusses his struggles with Vasudeva. "Siddhartha realized what a great good fortune it is to confess oneself to a listener like that, to confide one's own life to his heart, one's own questing, one's own suffering" (Hesse 56). Siddhartha discovers the therapeutic activity of divulging one's feelings. By sharing his suffering with Vasudeva, Siddhartha can more clearly focus on his vulnerabilities and is better able to find enlightenment. As they live spend more time together, they form a connection that requires almost no words. "And it occurred at time that, when hearing the river... they would look at each other simultaneously, both thinking exactly the same thing, both made happy by the identical answer to the identical question" (Hesse 58-59). Deep relationships like the one between Siddhartha and Vasudeva are a form of security and stability. Because the pair know each other so well, just the knowledge that they both have the same thought brings them happiness. Both are more self-assured and confident because of the presence of the other. This confidence is part of what allows them to search for and ultimately succeed in becoming enlightened. A connection like the one's experience by Siddhartha and Rousseau are critical because they foster self-confidence. By cultivating mutual trust with another, the individual does not have to undertake the path to happiness alone. These examples demonstrate the plethora of ways that relationships with others facilitate happiness and fulfillment, in stark contrast to the exploitative practices society imposes on the individual.

Happiness remains an elusive, oftentimes mysterious thing. Both Hesse and Rousseau layout different blueprints for the pursuits of it, yet both also share important similarities regarding the role of society and others in one's attainment of happiness. Both describe two manipulative tactics society uses to suppress the power of the individual. Firstly, conformity is used to suppress individuality and promote accepted norms, habits and values. Secondly, society coerces the individual into changing their goals and values to suit society's needs. As a result of these practices, both Siddhartha and Rousseau find their lives to be meaningless, worthless, and lacking in happiness. The two texts also strongly promote to power of human connection. Through Rousseau's relationship with de Warrens and Siddhartha's relationships with Vasudeva, both protagonists are able to experience happiness and fulfillment. These texts support the idea that while interaction with society greatly inhibits one's ability to find happiness, developing relationships with other individuals can support the pursuit of happiness. In our current world, the messages of these authors remain relevant. Our interactions online with social media do not reflect true human nature and values, and therefore

cannot bring us any closer to happiness. Only through our in-person interactions can humanity, in all its nuance, flaws, and good, be fully expressed. And only through these interactions can we hope to get a little closer to our personal enlightenment.

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Essay

Can One Be Happy Despite Significant Hardships?

by
Zachary Neel



Zachary Neel is a Purdue undergraduate student majoring in Computer Engineering. He wrote this essay to fulfill a writing assignment in Professor Zachary Goldsmith's SCLA 102 class in Spring 2021. This essay examines several classic works of literature, namely *Siddhartha* and *Indignation*, to better understand the nature of happiness as well as how to live a good life. He would also like to thank Professor Goldsmith for introducing these works of literature to him; the ideas promoted in these books have been extremely influential in his life.

Throughout human history, there have been few questions which are so influential and yet so controversial as what is happiness. It is axiomatically assumed that all of man's actions aim towards happiness. It is the reason some pursue fame and fortune, while others pursue contentment and personal relationships. All these actions are an attempt to find some form of lasting happiness. One key aspect in this discussion is the role fortune plays in happiness; can one be happy despite facing significant hardships? A constant throughout human history is that nothing is protected against the whims of fortune. Perhaps no story better illustrates this than the story of Solon and Croesus, written by Herodotus. Croesus, a mighty king with immeasurable wealth, believed that he was the happiest man in the world, only to have his son and only heir killed by a stroke of bad fortune. This makes one wonder: how can anyone find lasting happiness when bad fortune could take all that one has in an instant? However, many works of literature, including the books *Indignation* and *Siddhartha*, seem to push back against the notion that one's happiness is tied to their fortune. I believe that both *Indignation* and *Siddhartha* demonstrate that one's happiness is not dependent on their fortune, but it is instead dependent on how one internalizes and reacts to their misfortunes.

At first glance, *Indignation*, by Philip Roth, appears to play out much like a Greek tragedy. The book follows the life of Marcus Messner, a young Jewish college student from Newark New Jersey. Marcus decides to leave his childhood home in Newark to attend college at the conservative, Midwest, Winesburg College due to his father's increased paranoia over his future. Throughout the book, Marcus is faced with an existential fear of being drafted and having to serve in The Korean war. This fear drives Marcus to work hard in school and make many sacrifices. He is convinced that if he does not graduate top of his class, he will end up fighting in Korea. However, even though he forgoes meaningful relationships, hobbies, and his social life, to pursue good grades to be exempt from the draft, in the end, he still gets drafted, and dies in Korea. All of Marcus's best efforts prove futile, his father's worst fears become reality and soon thereafter dies of grief, and his mother is forced to live on longing for her son who died. The book ends with the line "one's most banal, incidental, even comical choices achieve the most disproportionate result." (Roth, 2008, p. 231) How can anyone find happiness when fortune has dealt them as bad a hand as this?

However, I believe that this was not the message Philip Roth meant to convey about fortune in *Indignation*; Roth's true message is that it was not fate which prevented Marcus from finding happiness, but his indignation and fear of misfortune. Roth is warning readers that they cannot find happiness if they live full of indignation and fearful of potential misfortunes. However, to uncover this message in Roth's work, one must dig deeper into the text. One theme which runs throughout *Indignation* is that Marcus is making all his deci-

sions in order to avoid getting drafted. Like his father, he begins to believe that any one small mistake could irreversibly ruin his life. Marcus begins to isolate from society, lose all of his passions in life, and becomes single-mindedly focused on his academic performance. Additionally, he becomes increasingly indignant towards everyone around him, feeling that he can either never live up to their standards, or thinking that they are getting in the way of his academic success. Philip Roth frequently contrasts Marcus's life at Winesburg with his life at Robert Treat, a small community college he attends in Newark before he transfers to Winesburg. While he is at Robert Treat, Marcus is far more intellectually engaged with his professors, and he is an active member of the campus community. Marcus is happier at Robert Treat because he is not living his life consumed by fear and indignation. Of course, Marcus might have still ended up in Korea if he remained at Robert Treat, or if he wasn't consumed by indignation; if there is one thing this book definitively states, it is that there is no way to safeguard yourself against fate. However, Marcus could have lived a far more fulfilling, happy life, if he was not consumed by indignation and fear of fortune.

Similarly, the book *Siddhartha*, by Hermann Hesse, expresses the idea that it is often impossible to overcome fate, so one must find contentment with their lot in life. *Siddhartha* is the story of a young Indian boy, Siddhartha, on a lifelong search for enlightenment. Throughout his life, Siddhartha meets many different people, and lives many different lifestyles as he searches for a lasting happiness. During one of the later chapters in Siddhartha's life, Siddhartha is grief-stricken because his son ran away from him to pursue a life of comfort and pleasure (Hesse, 1922, ch. 11 par. 2). Whenever Siddhartha sees a traveler with a son or daughter, he wonders how he could find peace when fortune had taken his own son away from him. Even the worst of criminals could be afforded this happiness, which he was not meant to have. However, after confiding his concerns in his friend, and contemplating fate while listening to the river for its wisdom, he began to grasp how he should understand fate. Siddhartha also had left his father in search of happiness, just as his son did to him. Should he not expect the same fate for himself? He began to realize that he had no control over fate, he must stop fighting it and stop allowing it to dictate his happiness. It was at this moment in the book that Siddhartha truly achieved enlightenment.

Siddhartha found enlightenment at this moment because he finally began to understand how he should view fate. He could not force his son to come back; if he did, he could not force his son to be happy with him. There was no way Siddhartha could bring his son back, and yet he was constantly grieving and ruminating over a situation he had no control over. However, when the river sounds like it is laughing at his misery (Hesse, 1922, ch. 11 par. 5), he began to understand the foolishness of fighting against his fate and nature's plans. As he continued to listen, and began to understand that one often cannot overcome

the difficulties of misfortune, but if one can be content with their current situation and find value in other things, then they can find lasting happiness.

These two stories demonstrate that it is not one's fortune which dictates their happiness, but rather how one responds to, and deals with their fortune that dictates their happiness. Siddhartha did not find enlightenment until he learned to prevent fortune from dictating his life. Marcus Messner was unable to find happiness because his life was controlled by his fear of being sent to die in Korea. Neither of these stories suggest one can conquer fate; it is clear that many things are out of our control. However, both of these stories imply that one cannot rely on fortune for their happiness. Doing so will make one full of indignation, as Marcus was, or jealous and miserable, as Siddhartha was. These stories show us that one should be grateful for good fortune, but one must not become so attached to this gift that they become fearful of losing it.

In conclusion, *Siddhartha*, and *Indignation* demonstrate that how one should understand the relationship between fortune and happiness. Both of these books show just how much influence fortune can have on one's life, and yet both books suggest that rather than constantly worrying about the inevitability of misfortune, one should make the best of their current situation, and be grateful for what they do have. It is only by doing this, that one can live a life of contented happiness. In the words of Viktor Frankl, a famed psychologist, Holocaust survivor, and author of *A Man's Search for Meaning*, "The way in which a man accepts his fate and all the suffering it entails, the way in which he takes up his cross, gives him ample opportunity—even under the most difficult circumstances—to add to a meaningful life." (Frankl, 1984, p. 67).

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Essay

Purgatory on Display

by
Dorothy Tobe



Dorothy Tobe is a Purdue undergraduate student majoring in Anthropology and Art History. They wrote this essay to fulfill a writing assignment in Professor Samuel Bennett's SCLA 101 class in Fall 2020. Dorothy is passionate about archaeology, art, and increasing public outreach and accessibility about these two topics.

Field trips to nearby museums are a staple of early education in many United States school systems. Museums provide students and adults alike an opportunity to explore, learn, and experience the arts, history, or sciences. Many students also become familiar with Dante Alighieri's works throughout their education, his *Divine Comedy* in particular. The second cantica of this collection, *Purgatorio*, focuses on Dante the pilgrim as he is guided by the poet Virgil through the mount of the Christian afterlife where saved souls must purge their sins in order to ascend to heaven.

A museum exhibition that guides visitors through parts of Dante's journey in purgatory, whether they are acquainted with the text or not, would allow the public to not only learn about this famous text but to also experience it as the poet himself describes it. A mix of artistic media, including sculpture, performance art, and music, would allow curators and artists to reconstruct Dante's writings in such a way that simply reading the poem cannot do for the reader. This display could also help foster the art scene in the chosen community as it would give aspiring artists and creators the opportunity to create something educational, spiritual, and beautiful for others and have their work exposed to a large crowd.

In the age of COVID-19 and the Internet, the biggest challenge this idea faces is drawing an audience and receiving funding. Anne Ayer Verplanck, a curator and professor of museum studies, states that after the 2008 economic recession, "museums had fewer staff members, smaller budgets, and more limited outside funds," causing them to be "much more conservative in terms of spending" (Verplanck, 2015, para. 7). This means that COVID-19 and its effects on the American economy have likely worsened these situations, as many nonessential workers have lost their jobs as a result of their workplaces losing funds. Because of this, this project would likely need to rely on community engagement and donation, either through cash or volunteer work. Commissioning or loaning pieces from professional artists can be costly, and so local artists and students studying Dante's work should be reached out to for help constructing pieces, performing roles, and recording songs. This would also help garner interest and passion for the project within the community. A fee for entrance to the exhibit is often expected at museums in order to make up for lost revenue paying for a special display, and this would likely be needed here. However, this cost should be kept low enough that the exhibition is still accessible to the general public, especially during the current economic crisis.

Cost is not the only factor that should be considered when examining how to draw an audience to this event. Safety is also greatly impacting museum attendance recently, particularly in an age where many events and even everyday tasks like work and school have been moved online. All participants will be required to wear masks, including any performance

artists present, and groups should be small and only be brought through one or two at a time. With enough funds, an online video tour of the exhibition should be created and posted online for those who cannot attend in person. This video may also work to entice viewers to come in to explore the display personally; however, the emphasis should remain on the actual exhibit as its goal is to fully immerse guests in Dante's vision of purgatory.

However, while the Internet may be a great resource for advertising, it is also one of museums' biggest competitors. The digital age has allowed people to request and immediately receive nearly any form of entertainment with a few taps or clicks. Phones, tablets, laptops, and other devices give common people a break when they do not think they possess the time, interest, or confidence to venture out of their homes and explore a museum (Verplanck, 2015, para. 8). However, this obsession may be used to funnel people to the exhibit as many social media users are always looking for a fun opportunity to take aesthetically pleasing photos of themselves in places they visit to share on their profiles. While current Internet trends should not be used in the production of the display and possibly warp Dante's and the artists' intent, the display and its components should be made with as much quality and care as possible. One excellent subject that could attract viewers with its beauty is the carvings found on the terrace of pride, which are "of white marble carved with so much art/that Polycletus and Nature's very self/would there be put to shame" (Alighieri, 2004, X.31-33). Though the poet emphasizes that no human could ever create pieces as beautiful and lifelike as these carvings crafted by God, skilled remakes would surely be impressive, mysterious, and beautiful enough to draw eyes whether they are being viewed in person or on social media.

Before viewers saw these carvings, however, the display should begin with the gate into purgatory itself, its three steps, and its guardian angel. This piece in particular should be included because of its importance as the beginning of one's journey to heaven and the meaning the stairs hold in the scholarly realm. Most commentators believe that the tricolored stairs represent the process of the Sacrament of Penance in which sinners cleanse themselves of their vices through confession, contrition, and satisfaction, the first two steps being reversed as compared to their usual order found in traditional Catholic doctrines.

One such author that placed contrition before confession and that was likely Alighieri's source on the steps of the Sacrament was Thomas Aquinas. The stairs are an important addition to the display as through them, "Aquinas is stating the doctrine as a theologian, Dante as a penitent in the act of submitting himself to the discipline of the Church" (Carroll, *Purg.*, IX.94-102). While many viewers may be more familiar with the traditional order of the Sacrament from their own interactions with religion and repen-

tance, the gate and its stairs exemplify how Dante himself experienced his penance. This order shapes his views of how purgation works in the afterlife, the central idea of *Purgatorio*, and underlines the fact that the poem is about how he is experiencing the afterlife and repentance in an untraditional way. To Dante, penance is a process in which a person confesses to a sin, therefore allowing he or she to realize their wrongdoings; comes to hate the sin because his or her realization; and finally completely wipes this sin from his or her soul and turns instead to doing good and being virtuous. These concepts of the Sacrament of Penance, along with the emphasis of the work being on Dante's unconventional journey through it, can be seen within the tricolored stairs, and therefore would be an important addition to the display.

Moving on, viewers would hear "Te Deum laudamus" sung as described by the poet via speakers as they step through the gate and then come to the carved exemplars as mentioned above since pride is the first terrace the poet and his guide enter. These carvings serve as a perfect example of the pattern of exemplars of a virtue and exemplars of its opposite (or vice) that is seen on every level of purgatory as their meanings are clear, they are interesting, and they are easier to recreate than visions or voices in the guests' minds. However, a docent or guide will help to explain these works, their stories, and why they are being shown to penitents much like Virgil did for Dante. Speakers quietly playing sounds could help increase the realism of these carvings as Dante often swore he could almost hear them speaking and singing (Alighieri, X.40, 59-60).

Next, guests would be led to a sculpture or work showing the two trees found on the terrace of gluttony and avarice. Along the way, they may see actors dressed in gray clothing and performing different tasks that the souls are seen carrying out as penance, such as carrying large stones on their backs or helping one another along with eyes that appear to be sewn shut (achieved through using special effects makeup). Once they come to the trees, however, the visitors should directly meet the gluttonous penitents whose appearances should also be changed so that their eyes appear "dark and sunken, / their faces pale, their flesh so wasted / that the skin took all its shape from bones" (Alighieri, XXIII.22-24). Visitors should be encouraged to ask these souls questions, while the actors themselves should have backstories and scripts memorized so that they can act as both common people and relevant dead figures that the general public of this time would recognize like Dante did with many famous Italians of his time.

The sculptures of the trees themselves also serve a purpose here as they remind viewers of the Christian foundation of Dante's *Divine Comedy* and, therefore, the exhibit. As commentator Robert Hollander argues, the first tree is a shoot from the Tree of Life and the

second is a shoot from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, the latter of the two being the one that Adam and Eve ate from in Eden and therefore caused humanity's fall from grace (Hollander, *Purg.*, XXII.130-135 & XXIII.72-75). These trees remind viewers that while they may be traveling through a holy place, they are still humans and sinners, which is why they are capable of being in purgatory in the first place. Once again, speakers will be used to imitate the disembodied voices that call out the exemplars from the trees, as will fans and scents to tantalize guests to further understand the hunger of the penitent souls.

Finally, to end their journey, the group will be led to the exit out of purgatory with the angel of charity and the flames. Like at the entrance, they will be met by an actor playing this angel and be asked to cross through. Ideally, a makeshift hallway or tunnel would be constructed to funnel visitors out of the gallery and back into the main lobby or another part of the museum. Within this tunnel, paintings or light projections could be used to create a vision of fire, along with a heater that can pump warm air into it to give the sense that the visitors can actually feel the flames.

The main challenge of this entire exhibition is finding and accessing the right space for it. According to curator Nanette Snoep, "the place in which I have to curate an exhibition has a profound influence on how I conceive an exhibition" (Snoep, 2020, 326). While Dante's *Purgatorio* may take place on a mountain, it is not feasible to actually hold this display on one or to even have it completely outside. Despite this, the natural setting of the poet's vision of purgatory greatly influences how it and the display are perceived. Therefore, the best space in which to construct this exhibit would most likely be a gallery with one wall that is entirely glass or allows a substantial amount of natural sunlight to come in and light the space. Groups should therefore be forced to travel with one side always against a wall to get the feeling that they are walking along an edge with no wall on the other side. Ideally, the structures and works could be set up in such a way that guests feel as though they are taking a circular route rather than simply walking along a straight path, giving the illusion that they are actually circling some sort of natural formation.

Though museums and their exhibits may not be the most popular form of entertainment currently, especially during a pandemic, exhibitions are a wonderful way to fully immerse viewers in settings in a way that words on a page cannot accomplish. They also provide a possibly more accessible or interesting way to learn about an important topic or famous work like Dante Alighieri's *Purgatorio* and provide a setting for the community to engage with and discuss other members' art. Extracting key moments from this poem and turning them into a display for a museum or learning institution would be a fresh take on the classic work from which all could learn and enjoy.

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Essay

Changing the Way We Play

by
Eric Cobos



Eric Cobos is a Purdue undergraduate student majoring in Mechanical Engineering. He wrote this essay proposing an ideal educational system to fulfill a writing assignment in Professor Melinda Zook's SCLA 101 class in Spring 2021.

It is my belief that the ideal educational system would have a fluid and meaningful integration of technology using videogames to teach its students in compelling and effective ways. Many videogames tell a story and allow the player to contribute to it. They combine stunning visuals with meaningful dialogue and music to create emotional and pensive experiences for the players. The use of videogames as wholly interactable stories would make online humanities, communications, and transformative texts courses more intriguing, memorable, and easy to understand. Moreover, this methodology would be best to use on the adolescents, grades K-12. The reason for this is because online education is least effective to that group. Children and teenagers under the age of eighteen require structure and individualized attention to help them best learn. According to *USA Today*, researchers from Stanford University reported that “the average (elementary through high school) student had lost a third of a year to a full year’s worth of learning in reading since schools closed in March” (Richards). Erin Richards goes on to describe the struggle students have learning the lessons because the lessons are boring, and the students are disengaged.

These problems are not as present among university students. The *World Economic Forum* suggested that this is due to university students’ ability to create their own schedule and learn relatively at their own pace, which is something that adolescents and young children struggle to create and enforce (Li). Since it is evident that teenagers and adolescents need more effective and interactive ways to learn, I propose the development of a videogame that presents transformative texts as stories with interactable choices for a player to delve into and explore. I propose the development of a videogame version of Dante Alighieri’s *The Inferno* (1320), the Gawain Poet’s *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (1400), Voltaire’s *Candide* (1759), Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* (1606), Hermann Hesse’s *Siddhartha* (1921), and Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road* (2006) to effectively educate young adults and adolescents though living vicariously through the characters of the story.

The forced exodus to online learning in March 2020 was necessary due to the pandemic, but it also revealed the weaknesses of the current methods of online learning. Among the most significant was the inability to pay attention and the lack of motivation. According to an article by *Agility PR Solutions*, the attention span of millennials is “evolving to be more selective,” citing a 2018 *State of Attention* report that claims the key to resonate and have engaging content with all generations is to have “a compelling narrative combined with stimulating visuals and dialogue” (Carufel). There are only a few mediums that have both of those elements: movies and videogames. Of the two, only videogames are entirely interactable.

In addition to a short attention span, the hurdle of gaining motivation needs to be overcome. According to the *National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators*, a survey from the Student Experience in Research University found that 76% of undergraduates surveyed found the lack of motivation was the most significant obstacle for learning online (Daugherty). Furthermore, according to *Granite Bay Today*, the absence of a designated study area for students, and the lack of proper equipment, contributes greatly to a lack of motivation (Turner). Although this is a survey of undergraduate students, this has major implications on the youth population who are likely not mature enough, nor disciplined enough, to see the value in the material that they are covering. Often it is the parents who have noticed this the most. Dionne Howell, a mother of two in Tennessee, is reported by *USA Today* as saying, “I know my children have not progressed as much as they should have.” Another mother, Barbara Murphy, describe the online educational experience as “it’s been like summer break all year” (Richards). This is a good indication that perhaps one of the most important obstacles to overcome for effective online learning is a lack of motivation. To be effective, online education must generate motivation and hold the attention of the student. As it turns out, videogames have already solved these problems.

Videogames are inherently good at teaching people skills, such as how to play, in a short amount of time and maintaining attention. After all, when a person first plays a game, it is required that the game teaches the player how to play. This takes time, practice, and plenty of failure. Therefore, videogame makers have had to figure out processes to ensure that despite the difficulty and failure at the game, the player will want to continue to play. According to *EdSurge*, videogames approach the problems of teaching their players and maintaining their motivation despite the player’s failures through prominent learning theories. These include constructivism, which is learning by doing, and flow, which is learning by being immersed and focused on the activity (Noonoo). Videogames provide a safe place for failure and have been designed to motivate the player to try harder when faced with adversity. Noonoo states that “games are adaptive—that is, they get harder as we progress—and they engage our curiosity...Often, they feed on our competitive side and when we do well, they provide some sort of reward” (Noonoo). Videogames enable people to fail and still desire to play, it is an excellent idea to integrate the world of education with the world of entertainment through strategically made videogames.

To some extent, this is already a practice used by some online educational websites, including Khan Academy, which entices students to make progress by rewarding them with points. However, Khan Academy is no closer to resembling a video game than the current online educational experience most students in the United States are experiencing now, making our current methods of integration more ineffective than is desirable. Furthermore,

online learning websites revolve mostly around STEM subjects and do not significantly delve into the areas of reading and creative thinking, which is extremely important for children and young adults. According to *Idaho Ed News*, literature helps students develop critical thinking abilities (Maxer). Similar to how literature encourages critical thinking, Lecturer Matthew Barr, a lecturer of computer science at the University of Glasgow, suggests that videogames promote “critical thinking and reflective learning” (BBC). However, not only do videogames exercise and promote critical thinking, videogames also contribute to the moral development of adolescents and young adults aged between 11-18. In a survey conducted by *The Conversation*, secondary students that played videogames were found to have a more developed moral reasoning (Daley). The article states that “the moral dimension of videogames is far more complex than just their representation of violence, as they often require players to make a range of moral choices,” and in this way, allow the players to live vicariously and endure the moral decisions. Daley argues that “a player with more mature moral reasoning may consider the wider social implications and consequences of [their] choice rather than just the punishment or rewards meted out by the game” (Daley). The summation of this evidence clearly shows that videogames have the potential to foster effective learning environments, and that videogames have the capacity to teach young adults and adolescents valuable skills obtained from reading and analyzing in an online school setting. Videogames solve the major grievances of demotivation and grasping the attention of wandering eyes or hyperactive children. In this way, the most intelligent direction for online learning, especially in the realms of literature where online educational resources are scant, is educational videogames.

Now that I have proven that videogames have the potential to make suitable educational devices, I will expand upon the specific usefulness of a videogame devoted to the books of the transformative texts studied in Purdue University’s SCLA 101, Transformative Texts: Critical Thinking and Communication class, a national leader for their Transformative Text concept, including: *The Inferno*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Candide*, *Macbeth*, *Siddhartha*, and *The Road*. These books have moral lessons and philosophies that exercise critical thinking and moral development, as well as are classical and prominent literatures in their respective genre. Dante’s *The Inferno*, for example, takes a pilgrim through the nine circles of hell and tackles moral questions of righteousness and evil. My videogame development for *The Inferno* would therefore place the player within Dante the pilgrim’s shoes as he explores the world of the damned. For example, when Dante meets the unnamed souls, one of which is Pontius Pilot, and sees the torment of chasing a banner and being stung by wasps and flies, the reader would have to consider the torment and make decisions about the morality or explain perhaps why these imprisoned souls would be

matched with their punishment. I understand that the imagery the imagination can conjure from text is often far greater or different than what a designer conjures from the same text. For this reason, the videogame would include excerpts, if not even the entire chapter (or in the case of *The Inferno*, Canto) for the player to read and interpret. The excerpt that would be included for the aforementioned scene with Pontius Pilot would be:

After I had recognized several, I saw and knew the shade of [Pontius Pilot] who in his cowardice made the great refusal. Immediately I understood and was certain that this was the sec of cowards, displeasing both to God and to his enemies. These wretches, who were never alive, were naked and much tormented by large flies and wasps that were there. These streaked their faces with blood which, mixed with tears, at their feet was gathered up by disgusting worms (Canto III, 58-70).

The visualization and additions to the game would simply help the player better understand the text, as *The Inferno* is not the easiest to interpret or know which characters are speaking. The most important aspects of the story would be direct quotes, but the questions and tasks that the player is asked to endure would ensure that the player has a good understanding of the literature.

Voltaire's *Candide* is another transformative text that is extremely respected within its genre of philosophical and satirical fiction. My videogame development for *Candide* would take the point of view of Candide and allow the player to experience his world. The player would be faced with the same dilemmas as Candide and would be asked the same questions. The player would have to think critically about the characters' thought processes to answer questions like "Do you think that men have always massacred one another, as they do today?" (p. 59) And another, "Ah, what would Maitre Pangloss say now, if he could see how men live in a state of nature?" (p. 41) These questions require that the player think considerably about the nature of humans, as well as require the players to think about Pangloss' philosophy. In addition to answering the questions, the player would also encounter the major philosophies in the book, including the old woman's views on Optimism, Candide's realization about Optimism, and Candide's conclusion about life. The player would have to compare and contrast the old woman's experience and Candide's realization with the following excerpts:

I have grown old in poverty and shame, having only one buttock, but always mindful that I was the daughter of a pope. A hundred times I have wanted to kill myself, but I was still in love with life (p. 31).

And,

“Oh Pangloss!” cried Candide. “This is one abomination you could not have anticipated, and I fear it has finally done for me: I am giving up on your Optimism after all.” – “What is Optimism?” asked Cacambo – “Alas!” said Candide, “it is the mania of insisting that all is well when all is by no means well” (p.52).

The presentation of these philosophies with meaningful visuals and interactions would provide the player more opportunity to empathize with the characters in the story. The player would live vicariously through Candide and potentially better understand his ideologies, or at least where they developed. Again, the most significant parts of the story would be direct excerpts that exercise the student’s critical thinking abilities and enhance the player’s understanding of the book.

As Hermann Hesse put so eloquently through Siddhartha and his conversation with the Buddha in *Siddhartha*, “no one will achieve salvation through teachings...you will not be able to inform and tell a single person in words what happened to you in the hour of your enlightenment” (p. 19). In other words, perhaps the best way to learn is through experience as opposed to being told. Videogames are most likely the only medium by which a person can live vicariously through anyone. As of current, videogames are not widely used within the area of education, especially in the areas of English and literature. Even the reputable online educational website Khan Academy has a beta version of literature education for grades one through nine, but not a full course. These videogames are currently unheard of, and I believe they will be revolutionary in the educational market.

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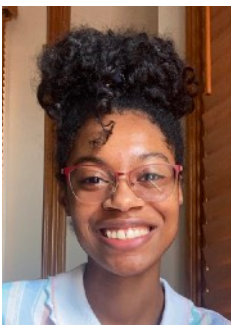
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Essay

Can Happiness Be Learned?

by
Kaniese Mack



Kaniese Mack is a Purdue undergraduate student majoring in Biomedical Engineering. She wrote this essay to fulfill a writing assignment in Professor Zachary Goldsmith's SCLA 102 class in Spring 2021. Her essay inspires the reader to explore far outside comfort's reach and seek their own unique meaning of true happiness.

Happiness may arguably be the single most invaluable end goal in life, and the most difficult to achieve. There exist countless definitions for the word “happiness,” adding further complexity to the decision of which meaning we will accept and pursue ourselves. Aldous Huxley, in his novel *Brave New World*, creates a caricature where society is satisfied with absentminded pleasures and fleeting distractions. This then draws upon the inward-facing question of how do we ascend to a more fulfilling level of happiness? One answer is a lifelong journey of self-discovery and truth and enlightenment. Herman Hesse explores through *Siddhartha* how to look past the illusions of superficial contentment and instead seek out a true happiness and deeper wisdom that can enrich our life’s experiences. I argue true happiness cannot be taught to us, but we can seek and learn for ourselves.

The beginning step to pursuing happiness is to first recognize that something is currently missing, that there is more out there to experience. If one is living a life unknowingly trapped in one place, then they will never venture outside of their immediate comfort zone because there is nothing for them that they do not already have access to. This is the kind of lifestyle I imagine to be stagnant and unfulfilling and is the kind of society that Huxley illustrates in *Brave New World*. The citizens are conditioned to be content with their predetermined preferences and careers set in a hierarchy, never to question if their lives should be filled with more than work followed by easy and mindless enjoyment. In the very first chapter, the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning shares the secret to happiness and virtue as “liking what you've got to do. All conditioning aims at that: making people like their unescapable social destiny.” These citizens are wrongfully taught that happiness equates to conformity, to a lack of choice, to a lack of identity. The preparations and conditioning of each person are already ingrained as an embryo, making it increasingly difficult to overcome, but also difficult to even notice. The citizens of the strategic hierarchy system have no desire to move up and do extra work and are equally glad they are above the lower classes. They may never notice that they have been brainwashed into this thought pattern of being satisfied with the life they did not choose, never notice that they are living without a deeper purpose or value, never notice that they have not yet experienced meaningful happiness. The citizens of World State are oblivious to the fact even the pursuit of happiness has been stolen from them, traded in for societal stability.

Halfway through the novel, a juxtaposing protagonist named John is introduced. His mother is from the World State, but John was born and raised in the Savage Reservation yet was never fully accepted in the savage community. He experiences loneliness, isolation, anger, all these emotions he does not truly know the names of. When John receives the book *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, he finds beauty, empathy, and language. After reading from a random page in the book, Huxley paints how “The strange

words rolled through [John's] mind; rumbled, like the drums at the summer dances... like the men singing the Corn Song, beautiful, beautiful, so that you cried" (p131). The description carries on with more examples of beauty, of connections formed, of meanings uncovered. Shakespeare had become an anchor for John in an environment he did not belong to, and a rich resource for him to learn what happiness is. He could finally utilize language to conceptualize his thoughts, better express himself, and understand his emotions. Already John was unraveling what it means to be a human being by analyzing why Shakespeare's literature and poetry feels so beautiful to him. The deep qualities that make us universally human, the kind of characteristics that the World State neglects and suppresses, are exactly what John finds beautiful, exactly what creates happiness.

Another contrast from the conditioned new society is that John must learn how to undergo laborious yet stimulating work. He is not predetermined to like the career he was destined to have; he is simply learning from the natives how to contribute to their craft. With practice and time, John improved. He could "feel his fingers gaining in skill and power—this gave him an extraordinary pleasure" (p134). Using his own two hands to create something from start to finish proves to be equally satisfying and fulfilling. It is not mindlessly assigned work like in the World State; it involves technique and patience and creativity. Singing to himself as he worked, "all day he was filled with an intense, absorbing happiness" (p134). No one instructed John that the process of creating would make him happy, this kind of direct lecturing does not apply to something as abstract as the meaning of happiness. John needed to use his own hands to find enjoyment in creating, just like how he needed to read Shakespeare to discover the beauty of humanities.

Like John's self-growth and development, Herman Hesse creates a Buddha like figure named Siddhartha who spends most of his life on a journey of self-discovery. As an exceptional young boy belonging to the well-established religious caste of Brahmins, he still finds himself being a 'seeker.' He analyzes the familiar "sacrificing to the gods and invoking them excellence," and questions, "but was this all" (p7). Siddhartha is expanding his perspective to ask if there is more truth and happiness than only what he has been taught as a Brahmin. He is searching for the uniting connection between one's own 'I' and the outside world and gods. He is searching for enlightenment. Siddhartha realizes that none of the wisest elder Brahmins, including his father, the chief leader, has truly achieved internal bliss, salvation, or quenched their eternal thirst for the truth. I admire Siddhartha for gathering the courage and strength to leave behind his home and past life to set out for the world. To stay on the old track would have resulted in nothing but unwavering unhappiness, it would have been no different than the citizens of the World State who are trapped within their comfort zone.

The next stage of Siddhartha's life is practicing extreme denial of the physical body and the world around him in order to transcend outside of himself. Once all externals have been stripped away including joy and pain, "when every passion, every drive in the heart was still, then the ultimate had to awaken" (p13). This is the ideology of the ascetics, a group of shramanas who have accepted Siddhartha as a young companion. The ascetics believe that enlightenment is stored within our innermost cores, and once unlocked, then an inner happiness will unfold. They reject society, the world, the pleasures of life, the body, and all manifest things as being a lie, "it was all unavowed putrefaction" (p13). Siddhartha's experiences with the shramanas taught him how to transcend his body "to walk many paths away from the I," but this proved to be only a temporary escape from self-suffering, and he was always forced to return back to "the torment of the obligatory cycle" (p15). Siddhartha realizes that the deeper meaning of life he has been seeking, "the essential, the path of paths," cannot be taught to him by even the eldest members of the shramanas (p17). I argue Siddhartha is far from having wasted his time. He still learned and gained new knowledge that he can apply moving forward, he just did not achieve the shramanas' definition of happiness. It is now Siddhartha's choice to interpret his experiences and to adapt the lessons learned to fit his own truth, to fit his own meaning of what happiness he should pursue. And so, the next stage for Siddhartha is to leave behind the life of a shramana to experience the opposite extreme of worldly pleasure, to follow a path that ridiculously "loops around, it may even go in circles," yet he will go wherever it leads (p76).

Towards the end of their journeys, both John and Siddhartha achieve an awakening where they understand the truth of happiness for themselves but are unable to translate the expansive concept to those around them. John finds that there exists better truths and more authentic humanities that are more beautiful or more fulfilling than others; but he cannot convince the citizens or the World Controller to exchange out their lives of comfort and stability. John shifts into an extremist viewpoint when he "claims the right to be unhappy" by defiantly telling the World Controller, "I don't want comfort. I want God, I want poverty, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin" (p240). A major contrast between Siddhartha and John lies in the way Siddhartha traversed through the extremes of life but did not settle until he achieved the highest state of enlightenment. John, however, is unable to find an enlightened state of balance between extremes and becomes "poisoned" by both civilization and his own "wickedness" (p241). In the end, John turns his back on trying to change the World State society and enters a life of isolation and repentance.

Both authors seem to claim teachers are incapable of fully explaining happiness to their students, happiness is instead something we must find for ourselves. Siddhartha still believes that with time and patience, he can guide his son along the same teachings and that

one day his son will also reach enlightenment. In reality, Siddhartha is attempting to mold his son into another version of himself so that he does not “repeat all of his father’s mistakes,” and is saved from the hardships of life (p95). Siddhartha has the best intentions of shielding his son; however, it is inevitable that we experience pain and adversity and joy on our own, that we discover our own paths to lead us. And thus, Siddhartha is forced to let his son go.

In conclusion, happiness can be learned if we are our own teacher, a seeker of our own truth. The first step to true happiness is to recognize a deeper meaning is missing from life, then actively pursue this goal while being willing to grow from life’s experiences. It is crucial that we learn the qualities that make us universally human, that we are open to traversing outside our comfort zones. If we approach life in stages, with each stage being a stepping-stone that grants us new knowledge and wisdom, then our time spent pursuing true happiness will never be deemed a waste. The best we can do for others is to encourage them to follow their hearts and allow it to lead them down their unique path. This essay uses phrases like ‘we can’ and ‘I argue’ but there is also a ‘you will.’ You will continue seeking, learning, traveling down a path that loops in circles and extends far outside comfort’s reach. One day, or multiple days, or countless brief moments, you will achieve your definition of true happiness. You will.

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3

Poetry

“We make out of the quarrel
with others, rhetoric, but of
the quarrel with ourselves,
poetry.”

—William Butler Yeats

Poetry

Per Chance I Should Meet...

Co-authored by Professor Robin Clair's Fall 2021 SCLA 101 class



Understanding and appreciating epic poetry of the past inspired Professor Clair to teach her students dactylic hexameter, a complicated rhythmic, metric, syllabic, and phonetic scheme incorporated by epic poets like Homer. They compared dactylic hexameter to Shakespeare's favorite--iambic pentameter. And the class discussed free form presentation in poetry. The students read *Gilgamesh*, *Antigone*, *Allegory of the Cave*, *The Ring Gyges*, and examples of Sappho's poetry before engaging the Cornerstone prompt, "Per chance I should meet..." The following are their co-authored lines of poetry.

GILGAMESH, KING OF URUK

Oh great King, I seek Uruk to become your vassal, my Lord.
I've traveled great distance, seen wonders to witness your kingdom, your might.
For whose domain could measure your riches, vast and divine, Lord?

--Josh Chambers and Paul Greenberg (Mechanical Engineering)

ENKIDU, THE WILD ONE BECOMES CIVILIZED

He who is Enkidu, to whom do I owe this honor?
I have to ask about your transformation from beast to being--
Do you feel lost, feel worried, do you beckon back to the old days?

--Adam Bueher (Engineering), Andrew Cmelo (Aviation Management),
Johnny Gonsalez (Aviation Management), Shaan Rashid (Professional Flight)

CREON VERSUS ANTIGONE

Chance I came to see, Creon King of Thebes, judge and jury, absolute chief
Dare defy him, dare suffer Creon's wrath, bear witness, be afraid, fear gloom.
Oh my dear Antigone, sweet sins of hope deferred; pure saint.

---Thomas Blodgett (Civil Engineering), Yizhang Cao (Law & Society), Maria
Castano (Engineering), Zach Dyer, Michael Whitfield

BRAVE ANTIGONE

If we were to meet such brave soul as her,
Antigone, the fearless one,
Why would they be upset at you for
Standing up for what you believe?

--Braden Denny (General Management), Dominic Gac (Accounting), Xumo
(Louis) Li, Conner McVay (Professional Flight)

MIGHTY GILGAMESH

Oh mighty Gilgamesh, to see your
Stunning abilities, shine
As mighty as the cedar monster was
With your godly strength, you managed to
Slay such a beast.

--Jawad Alkhangi (Industrial Engineering), Jessica Butler (General Manage-
ment), Poonyapat Sinpanyalert (Computer Science), David Webb

ADVENTURES OF GILGAMESH AND ENKIDU

He was exploring the Cedar

He was exploring the forest of Cedar with Thee

Great Superior.

Coming upon a settlement,

Hambaba vanquished

Over the water and through the mountains.

--Blake Bailey (Sales & Marketing), Collin Holzmeyer (Law & Society), Miles
Snowdon (Professional Flight), Evan Townsend (Construction Management
Technology)

ALLEGORY OF THE CAVE: A WAY TO SEE

Blind man becomes enlightened through above world.

Come awakened one! To answer questions, mine.

--Grant Moritz (Professional Flight), Anthony Stagnito (Airline
Management), Louis-Gustave Theulier (Aerospace Engineering), Paul Walter
(Accounting)

Cornerstone Contest: “The Book”

MY GUIDE

by

Isabella Tobin



Isabella Tobin is a Purdue undergraduate student majoring in Pre-pharmacy with a minor in Radiological Health Sciences. She was a student in Professor Amanda Mayes’s SCLA 101 in Spring 2021. Her poem reminds us that books are unique and indispensable guides, able to heal, comfort, and provide hope and inspiration. She was the second-place winner of the Cornerstone Spring 2021 Contest.

My Guide

I am your guide,
beckoning you with a
fingerless hand.
I will lead you to a place
free from these earthly cares,
far from expectation.
Trust Me,
though I have given
no true reason.
I only desire
to save you from this world
and deliver you anew.
I promise
I will show you Yourself
your Scars
your Wounds
your Bad Memories.
All will be Revealed.
You may feel
Naked, Exposed,
Laid out like Words on a page,
your life spilled before many,
etched in black ink.
But do not fret,
for others are like you,
hidden within me,
your Mirrored Secrets.
You are not alone in
your Scars
your Wounds
your Bad Memories.
Yours is theirs,
their Triumph and their Success,
their Hopes and their Dreams.

With them,
With me,
you shall find the Home
you misplaced,
like a favorite story
lost under the bed.
So keep Me
up high, safe
on your shelf.
Do not lose me.
I shall watch over you,
through fitful slumber and
restful sleep.
Call upon me, for
I shall protect You.
I am your guide.

Cornerstone Contest: “The Book”

Paper Cape

by

Sophie Mernitz



Sophie Mernitz is a Purdue undergraduate student majoring in Aerospace Engineering. She was a student in Professor Jody Watkins’ SCLA 101 class in Spring 2021. Her poem “Paper Cape” conveys the powerful, transformative nature of books resulting in escapism. This poem received an Honorable Mention in the Cornerstone Spring 2021 Contest.

Paper Cape

Inspired by the captivating nature of books

A world of disarray
Left you astray

So you began to escape
By putting on your paper cape

You quickly forgot
The emptiness inside
As your paper cape shielded your mind

A world of fascination engulfed behind
A tormented and anxious mind

That paper cape softens your mind
And you begin to feel in your prime

As you soar through beautiful and colorful times
Infused with meaning and sunshine

You become lost in the paper cape
And you learn to escape.

Cornerstone Contest: “The Book”

The Age of Darkness

by
Eric Cobos



Eric Cobos is a Purdue undergraduate student majoring in mechanical engineering. He was a student in Professor Melinda Zook’s SCLA 101 class in Spring 2021. His series of poems “The Age of Darkness” received an Honorable Mention in the Cornerstone Spring 2021 Contest.

I. The Ancient Enlightenment

Pay homage to the graves that pave the path that brought you here,
Where a hundred thousand martyrs fell to their Achilles' heel;
And may be sainted someday but 'til now have died in vain,
Lest you can find the strength to go and end the modern age.

Us scholars, Doctors of this Dream, have studied the first flame,
Enlightened with our Insight to arise the highest plane,
And evolve man individually, to have Consciousness— like god—

Man must surpass Subconscious thought which in itself is flawed.

You have been resurrected chosen and condemned by fate,
To fix the sins of scholars and ascend Subconscious states;
But being you are born of blood and might just set us free,
I will grant you entrance and then cure you when you leave.

Life, it is a somber thing: an optimistic dream.
Made beautiful through ignorance, not an Enlightened gleam;
So Insight is condemning, and genius is our flaw.
The wise men wish they never dared learn of the Dream at all.

The Subconscious is our captor, we're all trapped in the Dream!
True wisdom is ascending life, which is not what it seems.
For we have looked at trauma and have asked "who bears the blame?"
And we have long surpassed the peak of the once sustaining flame.

So Unkindled One, we beg of you, to rise from the Subconscious;
End this awful age of flame and thou will die colossus.

II. The Dream

Pilgrim, I don't know of thee,
Nor of your foreign cloak-
I recognize the crest you wear

Of a long-abandoned hope,
That existed in a world, I hear,
Before this modern age;
When Man rose from the animal—
Praise the first flame!

This Dream is but the conjuring
Of scholars that know well,
And promised an enlightenment
But produced this wretched hell,
But there will be a saving grace
As ancient times proclaim;
Who will cast us in the darkness—
Praise he who kills the flame!

The light flickers and is fading,
And the Dream has grown so cold!
It kills the tender flesh of hands
That of the Earth, behold-
And freezes up their fingers
Where they find themselves distraught,
And decays away the life we made
So we're consumed by rot!

The age of flame is dying,
Enlightenment is gone,
But we as a community
Are all but not moved on!
The flame is weak and fading,
And I see the moonlight's gleam,
Please free us from this Nightmare
And awake us from the Dream.

Yes, good Pilgrim, burn this place,
Praise he who kills the flame!
To bring an age of dark and then
Will burn this rot away.

III. The Age of Darkness

I am so imperfect, I am not fit for existence,
I don't think I could justify my undying persistence—
But though I fell a thousand times and will fall a million more,
A million a thousand and one times, I'll pick myself up off the floor.

I have borne a wretched pain, fueled by my raging heart,
Sustained by blood in the Dream I wished not to take part—
But no one does— and that's beautiful,
But sad in the same way.
So I was chosen and am here
To end this awful age.
So I shall grant thee mercy and will wake thee from thy sleep,
And free thee from thy torment of the everlasting Dream;
So thou mayst wake with morning and with ignorance to keep,
And be free from the living with this blood ridden disease!

I have come with warning and my presence is foretold,
I will pave the way for heat after a bitter cold!
And of this awful curse I bear of curiosity,
An honest death will cure me now and set the captured free.

I shall end the age of light and rise from my Subconscious.
Like Hector, killed by a god among men,
I will die colossus.

Poetry Compilation

by
Eric Cobos

Eric also submitted the following poetry compilation to Professor Zook in Spring 2021. He said his love for poetry was solidified in the 7th grade and he has written ever since.

Autumn Night

The sun sets heavily upon
This little world of ours,
To join our dance of circumstance
Under the light of stars,
And dreams once dreamt and safely kept
Above an autumn glen;
Dreamt once, for months discussing,
To never discuss again.

But Autumn seeks to live her life
And find a lively thrill,
To make the beating of her heart
Stand for a moment, still.
And Autumn dances blindly
So that she could shun the fright,
Since life lives not forever
But forever comes tonight.

So she dances like the summer
And splits the heavens overhead!
Reflected in the depths of love
Of utter autumn red.
And draws attention from us all
But seeks the help of none,
Yet opens up her eyes to take
The open hand of one.

She loves to dance, draw some to trance,
And throw sorrow away!
So this is what it's like to live
A lifetime in a day.
And I won't be there to see the line
Of a million waiting men,
For I'll be with the Autumn Night
Till light comes forth again!

Atlas

I saw a sculpture of a man before –
The world upon his back,
A mystery inside his mind
And irony attached,
That he would be so lonely
When the world was truly his;
That it should be a burden –
That it be no way to live.

But then I glanced upon his face
With fear it'd be hostile;
I saw upon his weary face
Remained a hopeful smile.
And I didn't understand this,
Because I thought he was in pain,
And that no one would appreciate
The sacrifice he made.

But that was before I held the world
And knew it as my own;
That my old interpretation
Was that Atlas was alone,
But I see now, know the sacrifice,
That the world he bore above,
Was never of an act of strife,
But the greatest act of love.

Because I'll carry you through your struggles, love,
Hold you above the ground;
Take refuge in my open arms
And you'll be safe and sound;
And I'll hold you above the suffering,
Protect you at any cost;
I'll lose the greatest part of me
If the world I hold is lost.

So I promise to protect you,
And my promises I'll keep;
I'll carry you if you're tired
And I will rock you to sleep.

Atlas smiled with his world,
With love they intertwine;
For just as Atlas loved his world
I will love you as mine.

Jolicoeur

Poetry's imperfect,
I wish I had her hand—
Took for granted once while holding it
And now I lack the chance;

Only because you're distant,
But tomorrow you'll be here,
And I don't know when the day will come
But I'll be waiting, dear.

My rhythm is off kilter,
And my rhyme scheme's nothing new,
But my days are filled with longing
For more time to spend with you;
I need an extra hour,
A day, another year;
I don't know when the sun will wake
But I'll be waiting, dear.

Ink is not as lovely,
Nor is writing out the thought,
But my heart aches with a longing
Of you being here, and not,

So my days are spent with dreaming
And my nights are spent awake,
And I don't know when the moon will set
While waiting for daybreak.

I remember each embrace and time
In which our fingers swirled,
And life— how beautiful it is
With you within my world;
And the stars create a masterpiece
Of memories we'll keep,
And counting stars, within the dark,
By your side, asleep.

The American Fallout

Ask the dead if their country and pride,
Was worth their life, now that they've died.
And listen carefully, as the wind will sigh,
The solemn silence is their reply.

This was the place where children could grow,
Where the greatest dreams they could reap and sow.
And now we imagine the ashes that lie,
To remind the greatest men we die.

This once was called the home of the brave,
And from their failed hands they gave,
What once was beauty, and is now destroyed,
With the future stripped: America no longer enjoyed.

America, the land of the free,
Now long forgotten history,
Answered war's rage, answered the call,
Which took America from all.

And in the bunkers, sirens don't sound,
We all should be six feet underground.
But we are further, and forever will be,
What once was home, is history.

Valediction

They're shouting "Carpe Diem!"
And to live like you won't leave.
If I come to acceptance
Then I will not have to grieve.

But I don't seek acceptance,
I wish to seize the day!
I wish to take a chance and yet
You are going away.

I pretend that I don't see you
Sitting kindly in your chair,
Or that you got your nails done
Or that you cut your hair.

Not that I would mention it,
I loved your hair before,
But when you came to class with bangs
I loved that even more.

There're things like this that you don't know,
And perhaps will never see.
I probably meant naught to you
But you meant a lot to me.

And maybe that is living life,
I stand with my conviction.
I hope that you will thus accept
My candid valediction.

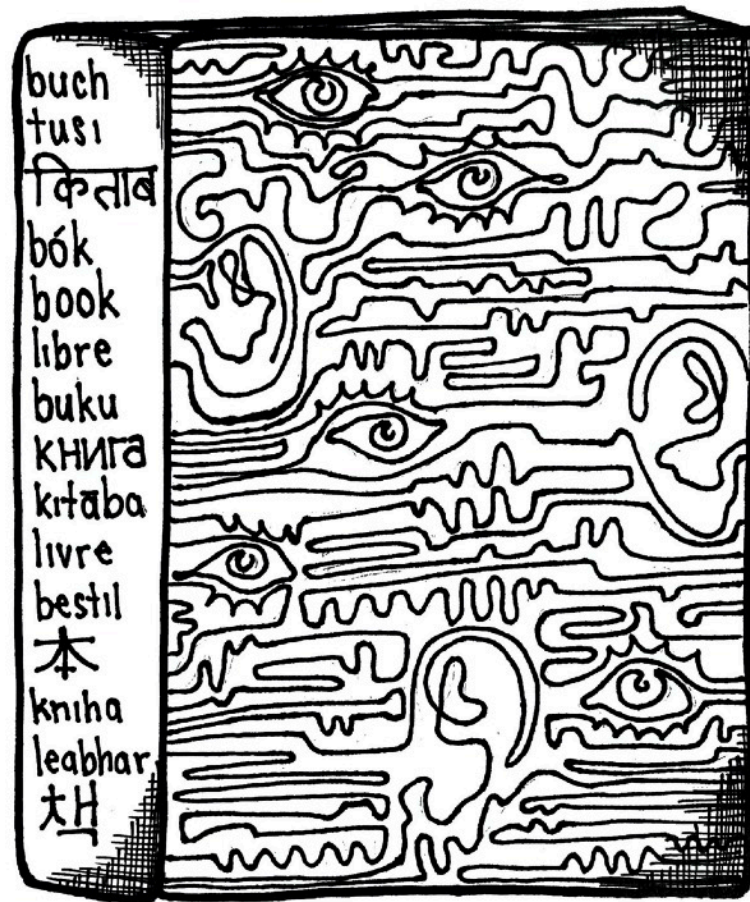
4

Art

“A picture is a poem without words”
—Horace

Cornerstone Contest: “The Book”

by Jessica Joslyn



Words from the Artist:

Following the theme of “the book” and what it means to me, my artwork represents the idea that books are universal. I have drawn a book, and on the spine, the word “book” is written in many different languages. The cover of the book contains a design with eyes and ears amongst a pattern of lines. The idea is that the stories told through book can be read and heard in any language but still evoke the same feelings or communicate the same information. Books have the power to transcend cultural and lingual barriers, making them universal. This alludes to the transformative texts we have read in SCLA 101 because many of the books we have read have been translated from some other language in which they were originally written, and hundreds of years later we are reading the same stories in a language which we understand.



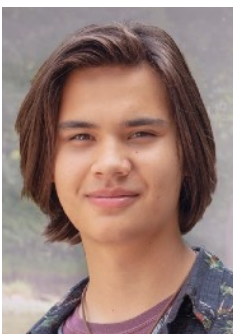
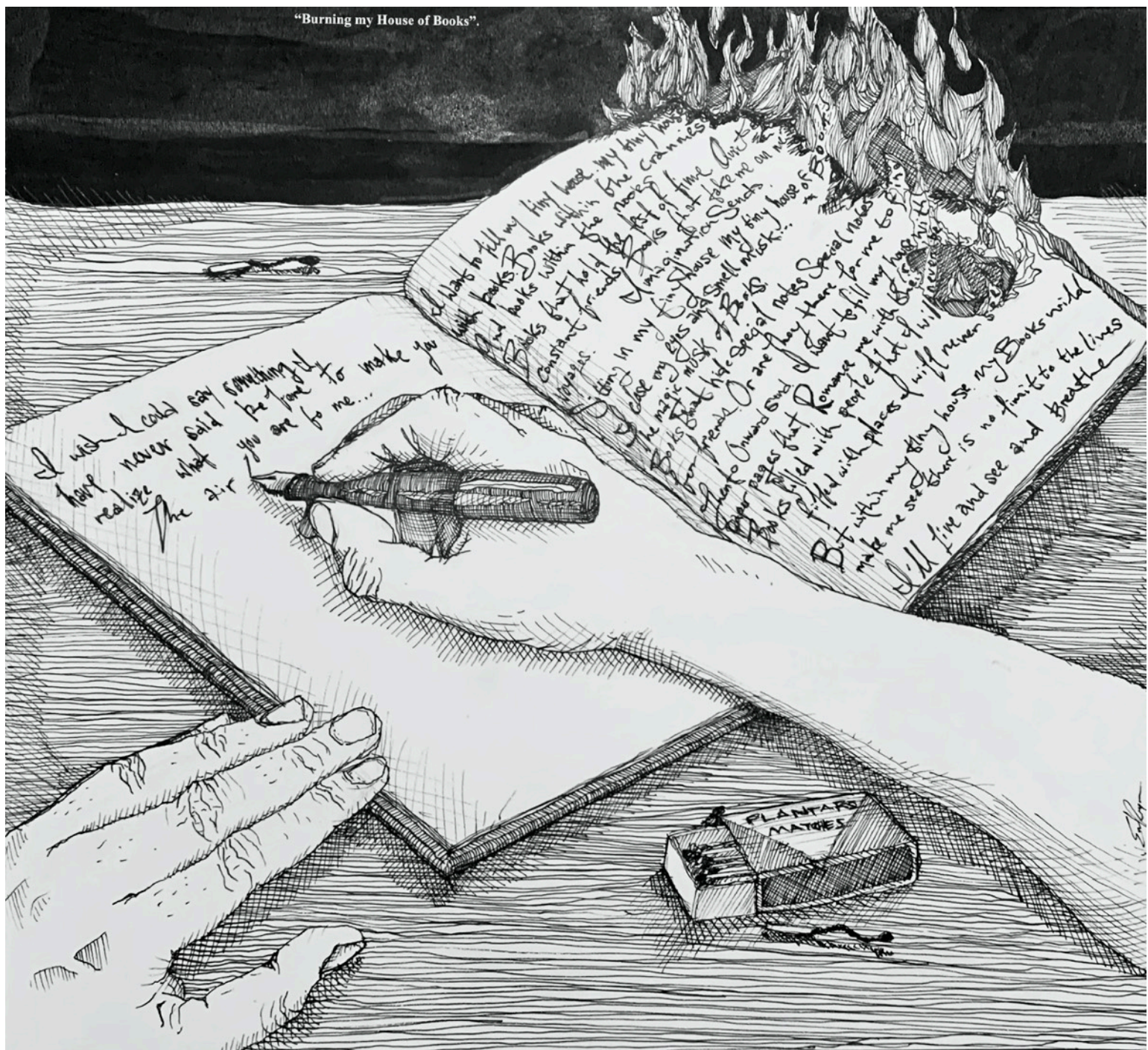
Jessica Joslyn is a Purdue undergraduate student majoring in Engineering. She was a student in Professor Jody Watkins’s SCLA 101 class in Spring 2021. Jessica’s art speaks to how books have the power to transcend cultural and lingual barriers. This illustration from Jessica won the first place in the Cornerstone Spring 2021 Contest.

Cornerstone Contest: “The Book” by Olivia Eavey



Olivia Eavey is a Purdue undergraduate student majoring in User Experience Design. She was a student in Professor Sokolsky-Tifft's SCLA 101 class in Spring 2021. Her artwork was inspired by Leo Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* and it received an Honorable Mention in the Cornerstone Spring 2021 Contest.

Cornerstone Contest: “The Book” by Evan Reynon



Evan Reynon is a Purdue undergraduate student majoring in Industrial Design. He was a student in Professor Ibrahim Marazka’s SCLA 101 class in Spring 2021. In this drawing titled “Burning my House of Books”, his goal was “to create a combination of two forms of art to show the feeling of unreturned desire and unaccomplished dreams. Books were used multiple times within this piece within the poem and within the imagery to display those two ideas.” His artwork received an Honorable Mention in the Cornerstone Spring 2021 Contest.

Art

LITERATURE'S POWER IN RELATION TO A PANDEMIC

by
Tessa Dolph



Tessa Dolph is a Purdue undergraduate student majoring in Computer Science. She created this digital artwork accompanied by a short story to fulfill a writing assignment in Professor Morganna Lambeth's SCLA 101 class in Fall 2020. The artwork is meant to show the connection between a piece of literature (Medea), and its relationship to the reality we are facing today in a worldwide pandemic.

The drawing is the sword that Medea used to kill her two boys. On the sword, there is a reflection of people who are trying to approach the sword. The sword is drawn horizontal to portray a defensive mentality. Medea would not listen to advice from her support network, like the Nurse. She is defensive of other people and allows her emotions to bottle up inside and harms the people who matter most to her. Similarly, in quarantine, there is a lot of sadness and feeling of loneliness that subtly gnaws away at you daily. Like Medea, we begin to deflect our feelings and hurt the people close to us because we are hurting inside.



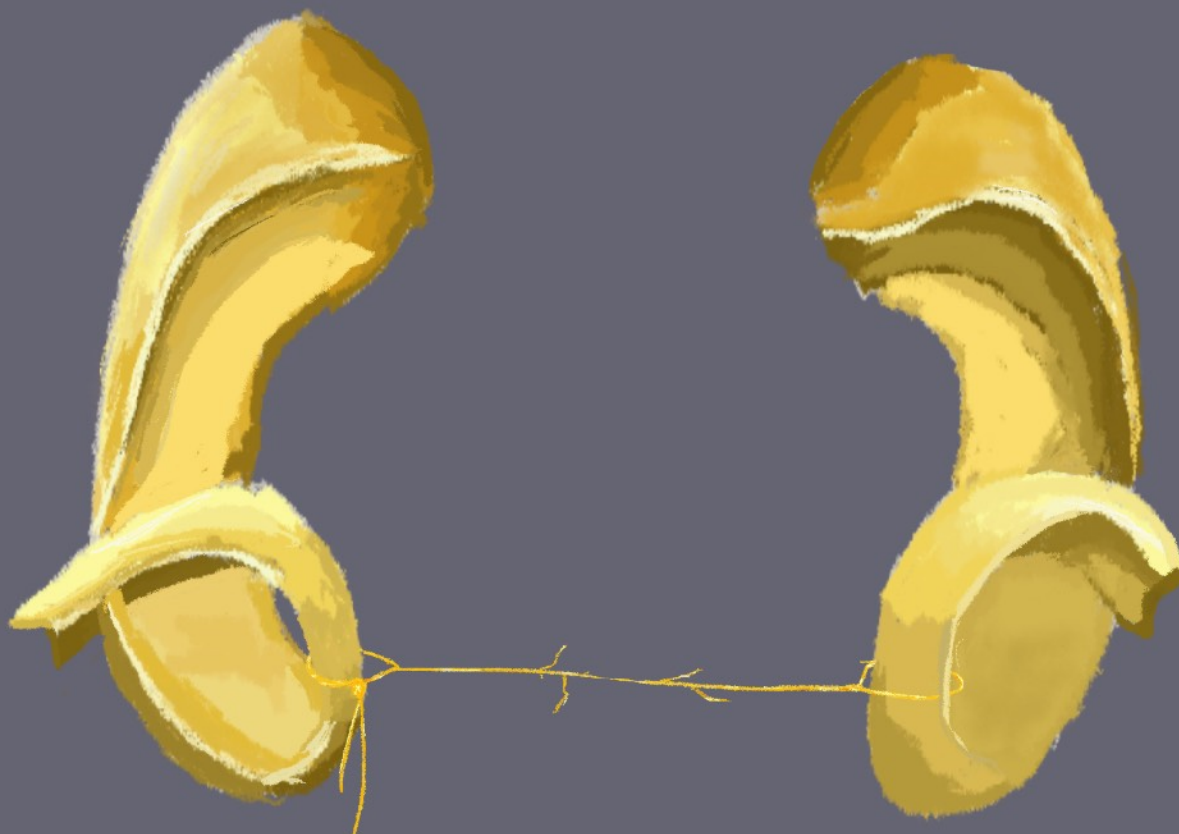
This is a drawing of an ear that wears an earring and a mask. The earring is the crown that Medea gave to Jason's soon to be wife. In *Medea*, the crown is poisoned and when placed on a head, poison will course through your body and kill you. A mask has become the most important object to not forget than your phone nowadays. So, in this picture, the person is not wearing their mask correctly and is potentially spreading to the people around them. I think the incorrect wearing of a mask and the poisoned crown significantly relate to one another. Both items come from a place of selfishness and creates destruction of others.



This drawing is a captured moment of perfume being sprayed into the air. In *Medea*, Medea is forced to leave her home because her husband decided to leave Medea. Her femininity has depleted solely based on the choice of a man. Perfume is generally seen as a feminine object, so I drew it to portray Medea's femininity dissolving into thin air. With COVID, the sickness is spread by airborne particles that are extremely tiny. The perfume drawing relates to COVID because these tiny droplets are making people feel like their own identities are dissolving away with no control. As a student, I feel like my identity has become stale because, with COVID, I stay in my room and do work. An endless loop of nothing has become my reality all thanks to these airborne particles.



The final drawing is of a sheep's golden horns with gold string snugly tied to them. Medea and Jason's marriage are held on breaking string of the golden fleece that Medea helped Jason retrieve. Medea left her whole life behind to fulfill this quest for Jason. This golden fleece is often brought up when discussing Jason and Medea's relationship because it reflects tension and absence of love. In COVID, people's relationships rest on this nearly breaking string because households are forced to be together.



Hero's Journey

by Yukina Murata



Yukina Murata is a Purdue undergraduate student majoring in Food Science. She created this artwork to fulfill an extra credit assignment in Professor Jody Watkins' SCLA 101 class in Spring 2021. As a native Japanese student, it was a unique opportunity for her to read some of the world's transformative texts in English. Her artwork references the theme of the Hero's Journey. The various stages of the Hero's Journey are written into the artwork, which depicts Gilgamesh, Beowulf, and Aeneas, whose names are written into their clothing. In the background are four of the monster figures found in the semester's readings: Humbaba, Grendel, Frankenstein's creation, and the dragon. She depicted these characters and wrapping them around the Hero's Path, to pay homage to what she learned and experienced in SCLA 101.

Dante's Paradise, From the Ring of Jupiter

by Jacob Heard



Words from the Artist:

I read the *Divine Comedy* in high school and in the 5th ring of heaven in *Paradiso*, there is a beautiful description of the stars aligning in the shape of an eagle, the symbol of Jupiter. The stars also align to form in Latin, “Cherish Justice, Ye who Judge the Earth”. Ever since I read that passage, I envisioned an almost godly image of a cosmic eagle looking down and judging Dante and Virgil. Like Dante did over 700 years ago, I tried to capture what it be like to look upon God itself.



Jacob Heard is a Purdue undergraduate majoring in Aerospace Engineering. He drew up this piece to complete an extra credit assignment for Professor Jody Watkins in SCLA 102 class in spring 2021. The assignment was to make up an art piece based off of a book that we had read previously.

Cornerstone Contest: “The Book”



Click anywhere on the picture or use the following link: <https://youtu.be/geMKtWUm27g>



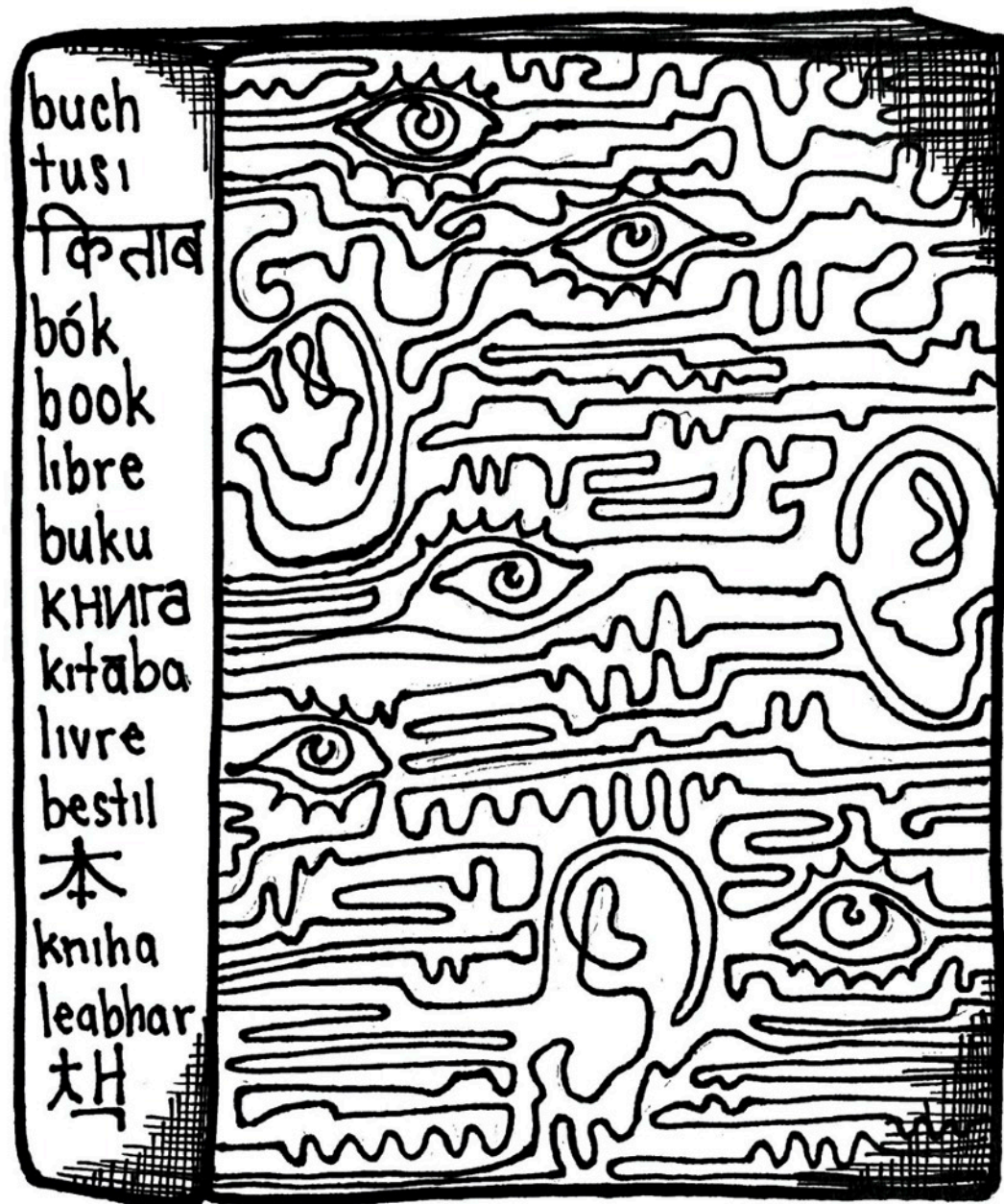
Olivia DeYoung is a Purdue undergraduate student majoring in English Literature. She wrote this speech to fulfill a writing assignment in Professor Jody Watkins’ SCLA 102 class in Spring 2021. In her speech, Olivia reflects on how Donald Miller's memoir, *A Million Miles in a Thousand Years*, has inspired her to make the changes necessary to live a more fulfilling life, and she encourages her listeners to do the same.

BACK COVER ART by Jessica Joslyn

Jessica Joslyn is a Purdue undergraduate student majoring in engineering. She was a student in Professor Jody Watkins's SCLA 101 class in Spring 2021. Jessica's artwork depicts a book: on the spine is the word "book" in many different languages and on the cover are eyes and ears. Jessica's art speaks to how books have the power to transcend cultural and lingual barriers, and it wins the first place in the Cornerstone Spring 2021 Contest.

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