

THE QUAD

Spring 2010

of Grove City College



THE QUAD

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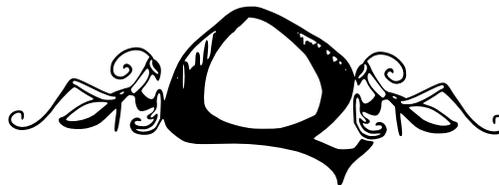
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EDITORS' NOTE

There's nothing worse than trying to help someone oblivious to their infirmities. Denial is often the deadliest killer. It takes such forms as mistaking sickness for health, danger for safety, the unnatural for the natural. Part of Christianity is acquainting those in denial with the facts of the matter. Flannery O'Connor in her collection of essays, *Mystery and Manners*, put it this way, "The novelist with Christian concerns will find in modern life distortions which are repugnant to him, and his problem will be to make these appear as distortions to an audience which is used to seeing them as natural..."

This issue is largely an attempt to highlight such distortions in our world and in the human condition. In an era of graphic sensationalism that has no concept of decency and discretion, we often disregard our impressionably tender consciences [Bateman, *Body*]. Many are ignorant (or ashamed) to admit that much of our daily luxuries are enjoyed at the expense of the more vulnerable and humble peoples of the world [Maust, *Everyday Justice*]. Others don't stop to consider how our culture's worship of convenience and immediacy has inhibited our ability to enjoy what we once did [Mayo, *Poetry as an Act of Recovery*]. Some would argue that such effort at attention raising and soothsaying are pessimistic or reactionary. Facing and overcoming denial is hard for us all.

This issue owes a particular debt of gratitude to Dr. T. David Gordon. His scholarship [*The New Perspective(s) on Paul*] marks our first efforts to highlight faculty scholarship over the course of an entire school year in a new section that we have titled *Scholar's Armchair*. It is only fitting that we would feature Dr. Gordon for this section's inauguration, as we are indebted to his continued and faithful commitment to the success of this magazine. Anticipate contributions from faculty to this section in the future.

It is also our distinct pleasure to introduce our readers to the wonderful creativity and talent of senior Caitlin Jenkins. We have selected her artwork as the cover art for our next volume. We think that you will find her work particularly delightful.

Once again we thank you all, our faithful readers and subscribers. Your support is the reason we are able to share our work in the first place. We thank the administration for their ongoing commitment to our growth and success, especially Dr. Richard Jewell and Mr. Jeff Prokovich. This publication would not be possible without the ongoing support of Dr. DiStasi and the TLC printing office. Thanks once again for your work and commitment. And finally, we thank Dr. Messer, our advisor, for his gracious guidance in our editorial efforts and in our lives as students and friends.

We hope you are challenged yet encouraged,

Enjoy,

Justin R. Olson
Senior Editor

Hannah Schlaudt
Junior Editor

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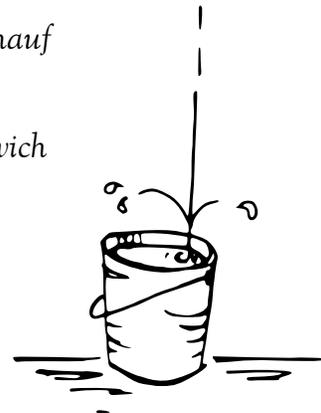
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Bearing Fruit

Dear Editor,

I was glad to see Mr. Horst address the Federal Vision issue in a mature and thorough manner, without the hysteria and invective which so often infects current theological debate. Though my knowledge of FV theology is patchwork and informal compared to Horst's, I would like to offer a few points of clarification and criticism.

First, Horst's "internal" bullet-point syllogism hinges on a single, unified use of the word "elect," despite the FV distinction between covenantal and decretal election. A critical FV defense of this distinction and other such neologisms is also unaddressed: namely, that the letters of the New Testament use such terms as elect and "in Christ" to address members of the Visible Church, which still has tares mixed in with the wheat. Thus, *all* those who are sealed by the sacraments have a certain status, along with certain obligations, and all are warned against falling away—because some will. Those who are truly "in the vine," and yet bear no fruit, are "taken away" (Jn. 15:2). Recognizing the consistent New Testament emphasis on bearing fruit can, I think, help to ease us off the horns of Horst's dilemma; he rejects objective covenant signs as the ground of assurance, and concludes that "our assurance must ultimately lay [*sic*] in the inward witness of the Holy Spirit" Yet Christ did not say His disciples would be known by their "inward witness," but by their fruit. Not that this fruit is of us; rather it is the "outward witness" of His Holy Spirit—the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) is manifested in attitudes and actions, not solely in an inner serenity. The Comforter may build our assurance internally and invisibly, or outwardly and visibly through Christ's Body and His daily work in our sanctification. Christianity may be a religion of the heart, but Christ tells us that "out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks."

Andrew Brinkerhoff '09

Exegetical not Logical

Dear Editor,

Upon reading the last issue of *The Quad* I was very intrigued Mr. Horst's article concerning Federal Vision. While this issue may not be well known in wide Christian circles it has become a point of controversy within the Presbyterian church and especially within the Classical Christian school movement. Mr. Horst's points out many problems with Federal Vision, which ultimately keep me from buying into the doctrine as a whole. However, his dealings with their ideas focused regrettably on a logical critique rather than an exegetical one. He very neatly lines up a series of premises of the Federal Vision movement and then shows how they lead to questionable doctrine. His portrayal of these premises, however, lacks any sort of examination of the passages that Federal Visionists use to bolster their ideas. The Federal Vision movement is certainly concerned with making doctrines such as election and baptism of some practical use to real congregations, but the movement is far more concerned with examining the Bible's use of such terms. Federal Visionists do not deny Westminster's definition of terms such as justification, election, and adoption, but they see the Bible applying them in a more general way that covers all members of the visible church. Steve Wilkins, the catalyst of the Federal Vision movement, responded to the criticism of the PCA general assembly by saying:

In short, I do not believe that decretal election can be lost, but I do believe that those who are "covenantally elect" as signified by their membership in the visible church can fall away from the faith and be lost. I believe that membership in the visible church brings with it a covenantal form of justification, adoption, and sanctification which would not be identical to the stipulated definitions given to these terms in the WCF. If I am correct here, then this



would not contradict the Confession (since the Confession speaks of all these blessings from a decretal perspective and blessings which are give to the decretally elect exclusively), but it would mean that these terms are used in a broader way in the Scriptures (i.e., they are applied to all members of the visible church).¹

Wilkins certainly does not see himself contradicting Westminster; he is suggesting that the definitions the Confession provides are too narrow to account for the way in which Scripture uses them. Therefore, any criticism of the Federal Vision needs to examine the Scripture points as well and evaluate whether those verses have a legitimate claim to broaden the definitions of these terms. While I think Mr. Horst's article provides some good insight into the Federal Vision movement, it is not the response needed to answer the exegetical questions that Federal Vision raises.

Benjamin C. Cox

Misunity of Robin Goodfellow

Dear Editor,

Josh Mayo's treatment of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* ["The Unity in Robin Goodfellow"] explains the unity of Shakespeare's work with Nietzsche's insightful dichotomy of the Apollonian and the Dionysian. He manages to inform our understanding of the play with *The Birth of Tragedy* without straying too far from Shakespeare's text. I wish, however, he had strayed a bit further.

Mayo realizes that the brilliancy and unity of the play are located in the character of Puck, but his effort to explain—in an Apollonian way—how Puck functions oversimplifies Nietzsche (and consequently Shakespeare). Mayo recognizes that Puck somehow manages to be both the Apollonian dreamer and the Dionysian drunkard, and that this paradox unifies the work by bridging the worlds of Athens and the Forest, but by simplifying Nietzsche's thesis into a handy binary opposition of Apollonian/Dionysian, we lose the beauty and truth of paradox that both poet and philosopher extol.

The two powers of ideality and frivolity are not strictly opposed; rather, they are a dialectic that goes back and forth. As Nietzsche says in his opening sentence: "the continuous development of art is bound up with the *Apollonian* and *Dionysian* duality: just as procreation depends on the duality of the sexes, involving perpetual strife with only periodically intervening reconciliations." Although Nietzsche is primarily concerned with the history of art, I think Mayo is right in appropriating this duality to artwork more locally. Mayo, however, downplays the strife (and pleasure) of the two worlds of this comedy in favor of a forced Apollonian "unity."

Mayo's myopia may result from looking at a comedy and not a tragedy—the real triumph of Shakespeare and the focal subject for Nietzsche—or rather, for *only* looking at this comedy, instead of looking at this comedy as distinctly a comedy or as contrasted by tragedy. In tragedy, we see most clearly the interaction between order and chaos, as the Dionysian undermines the Apollonian, which in turn conquers the Dionysian through its death (e.g. *Hamlet*). In comedy, the Dionysian reigns but is undermined by the Apollonian, which in turn is conquered by the Dionysian in the matrimonial farce of its *deus ex machina*.

A Midsummer Night's Dream is a superb comedy, not because of its unity, but because of its *disunity*, or if you prefer, because of its paradoxical and unstable unity. By trying to make Puck equally Apollonian and Dionysian, Mayo ruins the fun, the conflict, the genius of the character and play. Puck is "the primary mover," as Mayo says, but unlike Plato's unmoved mover, Puck is making it up as he goes—and with hilarious consequences. Puck is trying to play Apollo, but he's a fairy, not a god, and so it's as pathetic and enjoyable as a child playing with dolls—except that we foolish mortals are the dolls!

Joel Musser '09

Letters to the editor can be sent to quad.submissions@gmail.com. Please submit letters no later than Friday, March 12th. Anonymous letters will not be published. All letters are subject to the editors' discretion.

¹ Steve Wilkins' Letter to Louisiana Presbytery Regarding the "9 Declarations" of PCA General Assembly's Ad-Interim Committee's Report on the Federal Vision/New Perspective"

BODY

ARIELLE BATEMAN

The policeman opened a container of Vicks VapoRub, dipped his finger in the goop, and made a Charlie Chaplin stain above his mouth. The substance would lessen the stench of decomposing flesh hidden within the green bag in the middle of the room. Stretched on a table, the bag bulged with the outlines of head, feet, and limbs beneath its heavy fabric. When Clarice received the container, she turned from her partners to apply the gel and to steel herself for opening the bag.

I had to look away from the scene playing on the television screen. But I could still hear the rasp of the zipper as the body bag yielded its burden to the daylight. And then silence.

After the pregnant pause, I heard Clarice's voice again. "Two of the fingernails are broken off, and there's dirt or grit under the others. She tried to crawl her way through something." Each measured word analyzed rather than reacted, and built a barrier between her and the mutilated corpse on the table. I created distance of my own; I did not look. But my prolific imagination created its own horrors, and I fought for sleep that night.

Most people associate boundless imagination with childhood, an innocent enthusiasm that finds adventures inside every bin of costumes or mound of stuffed animals. Yet a mind that can transform a playground into a sailing ship or a summertime yard into an arctic wilderness can also generate the most fantastic terrors.

Darkness provides the greatest medium to activate the dark side of imagination. When I failed to close my closet door at night, I laid in bed and looked across the room at the black hole. What was in my closet? Clothes, three drawers of costumes, boxes of craft supplies. But what might be in my closet? Anything. Even now, I can't articulate what I feared. I remember saying, "I'm not afraid of the dark. I'm afraid of what's in the dark." It was an unnamable Something.

In the same way, I dreaded going upstairs alone. Every

bedroom door sat wide open, revealing blackness inside and an occasional gleam from a bookcase or lamp. Sometimes I pulled our couch afghan over my head before venturing upstairs; I peered through its quilted gaps for protection. The red carpet and wild swirls of paisley wallpaper lining the stairwell contributed to the unease that I felt during the climb. My heart pounded as I passed through the gauntlet of dark doorways before reaching the safety of my room. After my errand, I raced through the return journey and pounded down the stairs—thud, thud, thud!—to rejoin my family.

Once my sister thought it would be a great joke to hide in her room and jump out as I walked past. In my upstairs "red-alert" mode, I responded to her sudden assault with a scream and tears as I ran downstairs, seeking consolation from our babysitter. My worst fears had been realized. Was it so bad? No. But for a moment, I was paralyzed.

For a child, little hinges on reason; all possibilities are equal. Everything that the mind conceives lies just beyond the realm of the tangible. At any moment, it may cross that boundary. Reality is what the mind conceives, not what the eyes see. And so I thought in terms of what could happen, not what was likely to happen. When we traveled to my grandmother's house in Port Jefferson, we drove our new Grand Caravan. I woke early each morning with tensed nerves and navigated the creaking stairs to look out the window. There was no reason why the van should not be stolen, and so I was surprised and relieved each time when I saw it sitting in the driveway. Never mind the fact that the van was sitting in the back of the driveway and that my grandma lives in a small tourist town with little crime.

As I aged, reading provided fodder for my hyperactive imagination and taught me new things to fear. I loved books, but I could not resist the lure of magazines filled with articles that required only minutes to read. When I



opened the drawers of our mahogany cabinet, smelling of scented candles, I had access to piles of old *Readers' Digest* magazines. I laughed at "Life in These United States" and enjoyed inspirational stories like that of Seabiscuit. But I also read every "Drama in Real Life" article, where I learned about the menace of the natural world: the mauling power of grizzlies, the deadly sting of the box jellyfish, the crocodile that lurks in the Nile and pulls its victims into death rolls beneath the water until they drown.

Other stories featured the darker side of humanity: murderers, muggers, and rapists. I read these stories while sitting by myself in a nook on the porch or huddled on a couch in the playroom. I didn't want to be caught tasting from the tree of knowledge, and so, I hid. My sister caught me before I could finish reading about the Manhattan Strangler. But no one stopped me from learning about serial killers who sodomized their victims with bed posts before killing them or about a manhunt to find a young girl's kidnapper and killer. The latter article was called "Beauty and the Beast." The Beast was not a fairy tale monster: he was a man. The Something I had once feared had a new name.

Adults teach children to watch out for strangers, and now I knew why. The people I passed on the sidewalk now bore the titles of potential muggers or kidnappers. No one and nothing was safe. Why shouldn't one break into my house at night? Our door knob was right by a window pane, where it was easy for someone to shatter the glass and force the door open. I feared that a thief would enter the house, creep up the stairs, and into my room with weapon in hand.

At night, I guarded myself against this threat in the best way I could. I pulled all blankets over my head, leaving the smallest possible hole for breathing. I slept exclusively on my stomach, using the smallest corner of the pillow to cushion my head. Summer nights were hardest, because I had only a sheet to protect me. I never slept without a covering, no matter how hot the night became. Between the humming of the bedroom fan, I listened for muffled footfalls on my carpet. Whenever I heard them—an almost nightly occurrence—my heart rate soared and sent blood

rushing to my extremities. I would lie still and sweltering, expecting the prick of a knife in my back at any moment. Would it slide between my ribs or nestle in my kidneys? It took all of my courage to peek from my shelter and see no one standing above me, no dark form or brandished weapon, because one time I might look and my fear could be real.

Though I'm ten years older now, I still wrestle with fear. I hate the fact that I am afraid. I hate that my body screams, "Danger, danger, danger," when I hear the fatal squawk from a Hitchcock film. Horror films seek to evoke a visceral response, and I provided one. When I watched *The Silence of the Lambs*, I gained cultural literacy: Now I know that Hannibal Lector has a poisonous mind and that a serial killer might murder people because he wants to make—

No, I won't say what. If you don't know, I won't tell you. My blunt retelling would suggest that gruesome details fail to unsettle me, but it would be a lie. Perhaps I've been bluffing this whole time, trying to face my fear with false bravado. But I will not use my fear as an excuse to give you information that you don't need. It has power because it is sensational. For that reason it is not necessary knowledge, which is the reason why I looked away from the postmortem examination in *The Silence of the Lambs*. The images would leave a stain in my mind, whether they were real or not. The cost is too great for me. I lost something when I watched the film, and gained something else—should I call it knowledge or fear?

Since my *Readers' Digest* days, I have made more careful choices about my reading material. For example, I waited until college to read *The Rape of Nanking* because I knew that the book would disturb me. But I needed to know about that brutal segment of history because of the countless lives that it influenced. When Japanese soldiers invaded the Chinese city of Nanking, they raped and killed over 200,000 people in sadistic fashion. After I read the book, I cried out to God, struggling to understand the slaughter but realizing that at our worst, we create hell on earth for each other. That's what Jesus came to save us from: ourselves.



Logic and trite Christian phrases do not eliminate a child's fear, and they won't help me with the fear that I still face. My name comes from Hebrew, "lioness of God." But I wonder if I tremble more than I roar. My fear binds me in the darkness of my imagination, and I cower. I need the blood of Christ to wash my mind and to uphold my

quivering spirit.

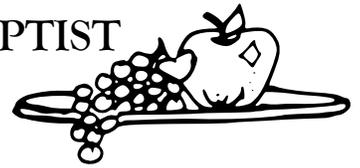
Lord, save me from myself. Q

Arielle Bateman believes that the epitome of delight is a bowl of cereal.



THE BEHEADING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

FAITH THOMPSON



A dance for pagan pennies, spirits
spilled all down your spine...
Can this be Esau's fierce-fair girl?
King Herod's hall, benign

In its flesh-dizzy drunkenness,
receives you with a smile.
So take a hand, and kiss a cheek,
and swallow down the bile

That must be rising in your throat.
Your father's bow, his thick, red hair,
His rough nobility
Are swallowed up in spice and silk,
In frank Gentility.

Up to half the kingdom, now,
For our brassy gazelle -
King Xerxes's offer was the same,
But Jacob's girl chose well.

The wind and light of Herod's halls
Are tainted now with blood.
Though Herod grieves, his word is law
And to this flower bud

His faith is pledged. Herodias
Can hardly help but cry
Out in her lust - her daughter
Bears it better than could I.

Salome, she breathes into her ear -
Her fingernails sink deep
Into her daughter's arms - *receive*
The plate. The fluids seep

Down through rough sacks of coarse-spun wool
Laid out beneath the neck
Of this dank thing of matted hair,
This foul, sword-mangled wreck.

And are you breathing heavily,
Dear girl, to see your prize?
You had not thought the thing would have
Such dark or gentle eyes.

Faith Thompson is a junior English major who has trouble being clever on demand. So she'll just tell you about her eating habits: she eats a lot of apples and chocolate ice cream. She wishes she liked tea and/or coffee, but she has the beverage palate of a five year old, so it's hot chocolate all the way.

BELIEVING AT ODDS

JAYNI JUEDES

I scrunched together tightly to brace against the damp summer chill, tucking my long legs under my short torso. The evening football game with its frequent pauses to fish the ball out of a boundary cornfield had slowly died with the sun, and I had retreated to the front porch steps. It was not a real porch, but an extended slab of cold cement, cracked and crumbling in tandem with the house's foundation. The steps fascinated me. In my imagination their dilapidation made them grand and gave them the same misguided charm as an old fixer-upper house. I drew near to the house to steal a bit of warmth through the panels and panes of glass that comprised its front. Bits of conversation drifted through the open screens, and the pieces assembled to denote a spirited discussion on gardening.

My mother believed in strictly functional gardens with carefully planned sections and rows for each nutritious vegetable that had a prayer of growing in the finicky, short summer season of the Midwest. She saw gardening as the practical means toward an abundant food source to feed her large family. None of my siblings or I would even blink at the notion of having twenty zucchini plants, a reality that really should be met with gasps of horror. "We're never going to eat that much!" we would feebly protest, knowing it was useless. "It's good for you," she would respond, then calmly dictate the planting of two rows of beets. My mother likes flowers and plants a few, but focuses on vegetables and forcing her children to eat them.

My aunt had multiple gardens, two devoted to a variety of types and colors of flowers. Even her designated vegetable garden slowly shrank each year as increasingly exotic flower seeds found their way into her hands. She had shown off her gardens earlier that day: Japanese lanterns, African violets that weren't dying, silver dollars . . . "And these are 'Four o' clocks'," she pointed to some drab-looking, leafy plants with delight. "They're called that because they wait

to bloom until four in the afternoon!" I thought it was a neat idea, but why wait all day for something to bloom when it just looked like a glorified petunia?

Their fascination with detailing how bushy their bush beans were or how much longer the pea plants would last before they dried up in the hot July sun was lost on me. Idly, I wondered if it was one of those things you start liking once you are old, and I smiled at the idea as I listened.

Around the corner came a cousin. She slogged through the wet grass and perched next to me on the steps. My solidarity had been interrupted and her presence disturbed me. It seemed that she occasionally sought me out and struck up conversation; and I couldn't understand why. I hated small talk, and my shyness made it difficult to hold a conversation. Besides, at four years my senior she could not possibly be genuinely interested in anything an eleven-year-old had to say. She lightheartedly chattered about the fascinating differences between our respective families: "I just think it's interesting how my mom and your mom are sisters but they're so different!" I mutely nodded in agreement and idly wondered how much silence I had to give her before she took a hint and left.

"You know you're not going to heaven, right?" she asked curiously, calmly. I froze at her words: they were a statement of fact. There have always been differences between our families. Though unspoken and unlabeled by our parents, as children we all felt or sensed the separating space between us, the gaping divide of a fundamental disagreement. God was the reason for this division and I was not sure how to tell her that she was wrong. Not only was she wrong, but she was the one going to hell. I was silent with my quiet realization that any attempt to enlighten her would fail. She would not understand. She was Catholic.

I had a limited concept of what Catholics believed. All I knew were the things with which my mother, having been



raised Catholic, now disagreed. It was never explicitly stated but it never had to be. Her eyes would alternately flash or grow dull; her lips would tighten into a thin line, then a forced smile. The distress in her voice was palpable when she recalled a conversation she had with one of my aunts wherein they described praying to my long-dead older sister, asking her to pass their prayer along to Jesus. I knew that the Catholic Bible shoved on the end of the “Bible shelf” on the living room bookshelf could flout its existence by the sole virtue of having been a wedding present. I knew that when I visited my cousins there were statues of Mary and basins of Holy Water in the entryway. Mealtimes began with a solemn “Catholic prayer” and ended with the sign of the cross. I would cluster together with my brothers and sisters for support; we were the only ones who didn’t follow suit. The prayer was duly memorized and perfunctorily recited, but always with a feeling of wrongness.

Had my mother been able to hear my thoughtful reaction to my cousin’s accusation I have no doubt she would have wreaked holy havoc on my backside with a wooden spoon. Both of my parents would be horrified to ever hear any of their children use the word “Catholic” in conjunction with “going to hell.” Yet until that night, I had never questioned my quiet assumptions about religion. I had thought that our parents’ refusal to name the giant elephant in the room—to openly confront the division—must be because those differences culminated in a hugely differing end result. I thought my mother’s forced smile existed because everyone knows that as Christians we are to convert the heathens by letting our light shine. I thought the labels “Christian” and “Catholic” were mutually exclusive.

That night, I followed example and responded to my cousin’s accusation with a forced smile. She continued to talk and I continued to smile and wish she would stop. The muffled gardening discussion that drifted to where we sat on the cold cement steps gradually changed to a chorus of goodbye’s and signaled an imminent departure. During the drive home I pondered how upsetting I found her words. “You’re not going to heaven” seemed to reverberate in the cricket chirps and the steady rhythm of the van wheels

spitting pieces of gravel from the unpaved road. We both loved God yet only one of us would go to heaven. It didn’t make sense.

Nine years later, my understanding of Christianity has solidified and it still doesn’t make sense that only one of us should go to heaven. The nitpicky theological lines that are drawn in the dirt disgust me in their divisiveness. Yet I have an increased ability to understand my parents and extended family’s approach to the subject. I see now that my mother’s forced smile was not a tactic to convert the heathen. It was borne of a deep well of hurt and sadness stemming from years of misunderstanding, condemnation and strife over her decision to convert from Catholicism. Yet, trial and error and the stubborn refusal of both parties to meet on common, theological ‘middle’ ground gave way to a refusal to address the issue, resulting in two young girls slinging condemnation at each other.

My mother likes flowers and plants a few, but focuses on vegetables and forcing her children to eat them. My aunt plants a few vegetables, doesn’t make her children eat them, and has more garden space for pretty things instead. Things change. Over the years, with every visit to my parents’ house my aunt has managed to share her flowers in some way. A few bulbs from a particular color of tulip in the fall, dried stems of Japanese lanterns to brighten the winter, seeds from her silver dollars; even vases full of gorgeous arrangements of gladiolas for the kitchen table. Over the years, my mother has, in turn, introduced my aunt to different varieties of vegetables to help entice her children to be healthy, causing her to recognize the genius of pear tomatoes and purple beans. Their different philosophies on gardening still remain, yet never has there existed any tension between them because of their preferences. The idea of accusing my cousin of being anemic and making poor health decisions, or of her accusing me of being aesthetically defunct seems downright laughable.

Why can’t religion be more like gardening? 

Jayni Juedes is the proud inventor of six different kinds of zucchini cake that effectively manage to taste less like zucchini and mostly like good cake.

MAYA ANGELOU

JULIA ANDERSON

It is when we are in moments of deep pain that we must learn to define ourselves apart from that pain. Our pain does not define us. Our sufferings do not define us. We are not defined by what people say about us, or by what people see when they look at us, such as that failing grade, or that five pounds gained. I have learned that dealing with pain and emotions is a process. The world will torment us. The muscles in our backs will become strained and heavy, and our hearts will droop like trees burdened by snow, but we are stronger than this. Truthfully, I tell you, we must feel these emotions to the greatest extent. What we are feeling is real, that cannot be denied, but how much we feel, how much we allow ourselves to be tormented is up to us. We cannot deny the negative, for that only brings ignorance to our doorstep, but we cannot embrace it as our reality either.

Hope. We as human beings need hope. Hope is what has gotten me through the worst of times. And that is how we get through suffering; we build within ourselves a belief that there is hope, and that we can control what we are going through. I have come to these conclusions as a result of much turmoil, much struggle. I have tried to pull myself out of the river of emotions I was drowning in only to fall back in time and time again, until I discovered how to build a mindset of hope. I owe many of these thoughts to my much beloved Maya Angelou and her famous poem, "Still I Rise."

In the last stanza she takes us through the mental process of finding hope and sanity even in the worst of circumstances. Dealing with pain is a three-step process. We must first acknowledge it, then define ourselves apart from it, and finally realize that pain can cripple us, and keep us from living. Angelou shows us this process by example. She acknowledges her pain, feels it, but does not let it diminish her hope. *Out of the huts of history's shame, I rise, out of a past rooted in pain, I rise.* She recognizes the source of her misery,

as well as the fact that her misery is real and she is validated in feeling what she feels. However the key here lies in the phrase *I rise*; she is not dominated by her aching soul, she is in control of the hurt. Moving on, she defines herself apart from her pain; *I am a black ocean leaping and wide welling and swelling I bear in the tide.* She is mighty. She is strong and beautiful like an ocean. These scars are not her identity. She is a "black ocean," is separate from the identity people have tried to place on her as a black woman. The final and most crucial step she takes is her gifts, realizing all she has to give and love, and how that pain can prohibit her from giving freely. *Bringing the gifts my ancestors gave, I am the dream and the hope of the slave.* I found this last point particularly striking, and it is indeed this point that gave me the power to pull myself out of my sorrows. Time spent mulling over these feelings, time spent feeling this pain over and over again is time wasted. It is time I could be giving, time I could be loving, time I could be helping others through their trials rather than wallowing in my own.

The human spirit is strong, stronger than we realize, and I believe that all of us have a strength buried deep whether or not we realize it. It is harnessing that strength that is the challenge. We must be strong of spirit, brave of heart. We must fight so that we do not lose our spirit, our joys, our passions, for these are at the core of a human being. We must have brave hearts, hearts that are not afraid to love, not afraid to care deeply, for that is true courage. We must see this in ourselves, not our pain, not the labels people place on us, but our strength, our gifts. We are strong human beings and in the end we will rise. From this point on I vow to not define myself by what I am not, what I fear I will become, or by what I fear people think of me. From this point on I am just Julia . . . 

Julia is a quiet soul with a "seemingly" contrasting adventurous spirit. She enjoys traveling, exploring the nooks and crannies of her hometown and sailing her backyard pond in search of manatees.

ASHES

TYLER ESTES

The first time the kitten showed up on our porch, my sister and I were ecstatic. I was nine years old when it happened; in retrospect, the event veritably paved the way for my realization of self-consciousness and perspective: people—that is, persons—perceive. It laid the first brick in a wall of awareness, a wall conceived the first time I remember hearing the hum of the refrigerator (as Annie Dillard describes; mine too was *An American Childhood*)—the first time I remember *being*—and coalescing in not only a loss of but simultaneously an initial perception of the immaculate.

My family hadn't owned a pet for years, ever since our goldfish was accidentally flushed down the toilet, and he had a more passive than active existence anyway. He'd peer curiously out of his fishbowl with his eyes that looked like spectacles, pacing over the brightly colored pebbles like a college professor in his office. And that was it. You couldn't scratch his belly or give him a ball of yarn or play catch with him. Of course you could look at him, but only through a pane of glass and some water. Our goldfish was weighed and found wanting.

But this kitten was different, and we knew it right away. Noelle saw it first. One July evening she opened the heavy front door and there it was, a tabby kitten with a misty coat of grey swirls, sitting on its haunches. "Mom, come quick, there's a kitten!" she squealed, and the noise scared the kitten away. She watched it disappear through the rhododendrons and into the woods.

Noelle described it for us: how innocently it sat, perfectly balancing the regality of an Egyptian sphinx with the humility of the slaves who sculpted it; how its head cocked curiously to the side, its eyes black holes begging for attention; how splotches of black fur scattered throughout its coat collided with grey and gradually melded into white near its chest and feet, manifesting with immediacy the progressive effects of old age on a person's head.

Mom told us that we should put milk out for it, that maybe it would come back. Noelle put her finger to her nose before I did and claimed, "Not getting the milk!" So she got a saucer and I hoisted the milk carton out of the refrigerator. Then we laid it all out on the porch and hoped.

By the next morning I had forgotten all about the kitten and the milk. I was pouring a bowl of cornflakes when Noelle crept into the kitchen. I could tell she was excited about something, but she was trying to keep quiet.

"Hey," she whispered, still in her pajamas. "Follow me."

"What's the big deal?" I said.

"The kitten's back," she said, tiptoeing towards the front door, a hand over her mouth. She must have learned her lesson. I snuck a peek out the living room window onto the porch—sure enough, there was the kitten, its head in the saucer, milk on its whiskers and everything.

I opened the door just a crack. Its ears perked and it looked up from the saucer, but it seemed frisky rather than afraid. Noelle pushed the door open a little more and peered out from behind me. "Here, kitty!" she called, and to our surprise, it bounded right up to the door. We both started laughing.

"It's licking my fingers," said Noelle, smiling. "It tickles."

"Maybe it's hungry?" I said.

"It just drank all that milk we gave it."

"Maybe it's still hungry," I said. "A kitten's just a baby cat, right? Babies eat stuff all the time."

"Babies only drink milk, silly," she said. "I think it's just being playful."

We asked Mom if we could keep it and she said yes—"If it's okay with your father"—then she checked and said the kitten was a girl. We named her Ashes because of her color. I came up with the name. Noelle thought she looked like a charcoal grey business suit—"Her white underside looks like the white dress shirt you'd wear with it, see how it even



curls up around her neck like a collar? Her eyes are like the buttons on the jacket.”—and Mom thought she looked just adorable. She reminded me of a thunderstorm.

At first we weren't sure how to get Dad on board with the idea of a kitten living in the house, but we came up with a good plan. Noelle and I were worried—what if Dad didn't like Ashes? What if he said we couldn't keep her? Reasoning with Dad was usually difficult. Sometimes the things he said just didn't make sense to a nine-year-old, and he valued a lot of things I didn't care for at the time. For the confrontation about Ashes, I had rehearsed to a T exactly how the debate would progress—I had a counterargument prepared for every argument, an answer for every question, a clarification for every discrepancy—but Dad had found loopholes in my arguments before.

Before Dad came home from work that afternoon, I clipped on a tie and Noelle put on a dress. We wanted to make a good impression. I even had Mom comb my hair. I heard the garage door open and close, and I winced from nervousness. When the front door clicked, I swallowed hard, looked up at Dad, and politely but sternly asked if he would please come into the living room for a matter of family business. He seemed surprised, but he was a good sport about it; he hung up his jacket and put away his briefcase and followed me there. Noelle stood by the couch with her hands folded. “Please, have a seat,” I said, motioning to the couch. Dad looked at Mom, who was smiling and leaning against the doorway into the kitchen, and sat down.

“What are you all dressed up for?” he asked.

“Dad, before you ask any questions, there's an important matter we have to discuss with you,” said Noelle, hardly a quiver in her voice. She must have been as nervous as me, but she kept her composure. I was proud of her.

“By all means,” said Dad.

“We've thought a lot about this,” I stuttered, “and we've decided to come clean with you.”

Dad looked at us with a suspicious smile and sat back in the couch. “Well?”

“I think we'd better show you,” I said. I looked at Mom and nodded.

Mom went into the kitchen and brought back the cardboard box in which we had hidden the kitten. I made to open the lid but Noelle cut me off. “Dad, don't say anything for a little bit, okay? Just...” She groped for the right word, her hands clenched. “Just experience.”

Ashes meowed from inside the box, and I handed her to Dad. She stretched her front legs and licked Dad's fingers. He laughed and was about to open his mouth but Noelle told him to *shh*. And so he sat there for a full five minutes without saying anything. At first he let her lick his fingers, then he held her in the air with his hand beneath her front legs and let her hang there, where she had the same dazed expression as a baby wearing a hat a few sizes too big. Then he set her down on his lap, and Ashes curled up, yawned, and fell asleep.

But Noelle was still nervous. “Don't be angry!” she cried, and flung herself at Dad, teardrops mixing with snot. Dad carefully set down the sleeping kitten and took Noelle into his arms.

“Noelle, don't be silly.” He spoke with tenderness. “I'm not angry with you. I love you love you love you.”

“But I don't want to get rid of the kitty,” said Noelle. She sniffled loudly, burying her head in Dad's chest. Ashes woke up and began sniffing around the couch.

“Noelle. Noelle, look at me.” She peered up at him. “We don't have to get rid of the kitten. It can stay, okay? It's a beautiful kitten. Look at that, he's already making himself comfortable.” The kitten's head was poking out from under the couch.

Noelle wiped her eyes with her sleeve and scowled through a smile. “It's a *she*, Dad. Her name is Ashes. Ethan named her.” She looked at me and beamed.

Ashes became a regular part of our lives over the next few weeks. Noelle and I spent the rest of July and most of August training her to use her litterbox, rolling balls of yarn for her to play with, filling up her food and water dishes, watching her get bigger. Dad brought home a flea collar, and I loved to watch her scratch at it. I guess it made her itch as much as the fleas did.

She was the most fun to watch when she was tired. She



would traipse around the house, bumping into furniture, and I thought she was really careless. Her yawn is what got me the most, though. I had seen her when she was in a bad mood, snarling at other cats in town, and I couldn't tell the difference between when she yawned and when she snarled. I thought about what it would be like if every time a person yawned they looked angry. If every time Noelle and I fell asleep listening to Dad read us bedtime stories we had scary dreams about angry people. Poor Ashes, I thought. What a scary world you live in.

One Thursday night that August I was lying on the living room floor looking at a storybook when I heard a frightening sound from outside in the yard. It sounded like a child screaming. I ran into the kitchen to get Mom. She and Noelle were coloring in a coloring book.

"Mom, there's a scary noise outside," I said.

"What, honey?" she said.

"There's a real scary noise outside. It sounded like somebody screaming."

"Where was the noise coming from?" she asked.

"I don't know," I said. "From the yard, maybe?"

Mom didn't waste any time. She roused Dad from his study, grabbed some flashlights from the closet, and went out the door. I looked at Noelle. She put her crayons down on the table and we followed Mom and Dad outside.

It was dark in the yard. Except for where Mom and Dad were shining their flashlights, I couldn't see anything. And even where they were shining their flashlights, I couldn't see anybody, which I thought was strange because the noise had sounded like somebody screaming. Finally, Dad seemed to have found something. He was crouched over in a corner of the yard where it bordered the woods. He called us over to him.

I knew what he was crouched over before I reached him, and my throat swelled up like a puffer fish. There on the ground, in a crumpled and bloody pile, lay Ashes. Noelle gasped and instinctively grabbed my arm. "Is she okay?" whimpered Noelle.

Dad was hesitant to answer. "She's alive, at least, but she's really beat up. We'll see if she makes it."

"What on earth could have happened?" asked Mom.

"There are scratch marks all over her face and side," he said. "It might have been a raccoon. That would make sense if Ethan said he heard a screaming noise. Sometimes raccoons can be vicious."

"Does she have rabies?" I asked.

"We'll take her to the vet first thing in the morning," said Mom. "Okay, dears? Ethan, please take Noelle inside and you two go get ready for bed. I'll get some washcloths and make sure Ashes is cleaned up and comfortable."

Mom brought Ashes inside and put her in a cardboard box with blankets. Noelle and I pretended to go to bed and then snuck downstairs. Mom was cleaning Ashes' fur with a washcloth.

Noelle crept up and softly voiced what we both were thinking. "Mom, can we stay with you? For a while at least?"

Mom's heart was too big to say no. She let us peer over the edge of the cardboard box while she dressed Ashes' cuts. "See how I'm being very careful with the washcloth? I don't want to hurt her," she said. As always, we devoured Mom's teaching; her pedagogy was empirical and practical.

There I was. I sat there next to Mom and Noelle, somber in my reflections but happy that I wasn't alone. I could see Ashes breathing, but it was sharp and heavy—not the relaxed and easy breathing she usually displayed. She lay on her side. Her eyes were closed, and her legs were sprawled out awkwardly beside her. There were streaks of blood down her face from cuts and scratches, some shallow and some deep. It reminded me of when my cousin Jeffrey slipped and hit his face on a tree root when we were playing in the creek behind his house. He slunk down into the water and I ran for help, afraid, panting, shouting for help, shouting for Jeffrey, shouting for anything. The tree root etched red letters deep into his face, symbols I couldn't read. Poor Jeffrey, I thought. What a scary world you live in.

There I was. I fell asleep on the living room floor next to Noelle. Mom carried us both upstairs to our bedrooms and wiped our faces, too, with a washcloth. The next morning I woke up early and nervous and ran downstairs; Ashes



was still asleep, but she looked more comfortable, more natural. Her breathing was more regular, and her feet were tucked under her like a cat's should be, not all crooked like a pipe cleaner animal. I felt a little better. Maybe she'll make it, I thought.

I reminded Mom about the veterinarian. After breakfast, Mom put the cardboard box in which Ashes was sleeping in the car, and we drove to the vet. He was a nice man, tall, with thick brown hair and a bushy mustache, but I doubted that he could care for Ashes like Mom could. He talked with Mom for a while and ran some tests on Ashes and talked with Mom some more. Noelle and I waited on a bench near the door. I was impatient.

"What do you think is taking so long?" I asked Noelle.

She was still sleepy. "I don't know. I'm not a vet."

"No, but this is ridiculous."

Noelle looked me in the eye. "Do you think she'll be okay?"

"I hope so," I said, trying to appear braver and more confident than I felt. "Mom knows what she's doing. And Ashes is real tough."

Noelle was silent. She looked at her shoes.

I continued. "Remember when Ashes caught the rat in the cellar?"

Noelle looked up at me. Her eyes weren't quiet. "A raccoon is a lot bigger than a rat," she said matter-of-factly.

"Hey," I said. "Ashes will be fine. Okay?" I knew that whether or not I felt up to the task, Noelle needed me. She nodded and looked at her shoes.

When we finally left the veterinarian, we both felt a little better. Mom told us what the vet had said: that non-rabid raccoons are sometimes aggressive towards other small mammals, often for territorial or other reasons; that the raccoon that attacked Ashes was not rabid; that Ashes therefore did not have rabies, which was good news; that the cuts and scratches on Ashes' face were mostly superficial and if we took proper care of her they would heal within a week; that if we took proper care of her, the only negative result long-term would be that the fur on Ashes' side would be beat up and mangy and probably never grow back to normal. I didn't understand everything, but Ashes

was definitely going to be okay. "All things considered," I told Noelle, "we came out pretty lucky."

The next few days were busy. School was starting that Monday—I was going into fourth grade, and Noelle was going into second grade. We were both nervous and excited—our excitement of finding and securing Ashes that summer had drawn us closer together. It had increased the depth of our humanity, had launched us from a sort of Edenic innocence into experiential knowledge and self-conscious understanding. An entire new sphere of human wisdom lay before us: we had all but seen death, had witnessed its very claws upon the essence of our being, and had by some grace or another escaped with nothing more than a few telling scars and nothing less than experiential knowledge of good and evil. I felt less like a child, helpless and dependent. I felt human. I didn't just exist, I *knew* I existed. I felt ready for the best and the worst that fourth grade could offer. Ashes had kindled a flame within me.

Monday morning finally arrived. I woke up and lay in bed a few minutes to relish the excitement. I had some extra time because Mom was driving me and Noelle to school instead of having us take the bus. Noelle was already in the kitchen eating breakfast when I went downstairs. I poured a bowl of cornflakes, got dressed for school, and brushed my teeth. Then I helped Noelle pack her things. I had packed my book bag the night before. "Mom, we're ready!" I yelled. The three of us walked out to the garage and got in the car.

"Are you two sure you have everything?" Mom asked. "Did you brush your teeth?"

"Yes, Mom," said Noelle and I.

"Ethan, do you have that slip you're supposed to give to Mrs. Eberly?"

"Yes, Mom."

"Noelle, did you forget your book bag?" said Mom.

"No, Mom, it's here on the floor," said Noelle.

"Okay. I guess we're ready," said Mom.

"I guess so," I said.

We weren't even out of the driveway when we heard it. A jarring, grating noise, similar to the grinding of gears but



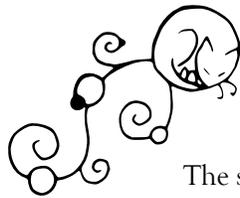
much quieter, sounded from underneath the car. It made me feel ill. “Mom, what was that?” said Noelle.

Mom stopped the car. “I don’t know, dear.” She got out of the car and peered underneath, and immediately put her hands to her face. “Oh, Lord. Kids, back in the house, now, please.” She covered our eyes with her hands as we walked back inside, but I ducked down and saw what she was hiding. At first, I didn’t register what I saw.

The driveway and the bottom of the car were streaked with red and grey. On the ground underneath the car, a messy pile of something not wholly solid and not wholly liquid absorbed the morning sunlight. It almost looked like the cinders of a fire, struggling to rekindle a flame. I stood openmouthed. It was Ashes. Somehow during the night, Ashes must have couched herself underneath the car near the engine or the front axle. Something under the car must have caught hold of her fur, and the turning axle, the pumping pistons, the purring gears, or *something* must have grabbed hold of her and churned her beneath the car: fur, skin, muscle, blood, bones, eyeballs, whiskers and all. Nothing recognizable was left, except tufts of fur caked with oil, splatters of blood, and guts. I couldn’t stop looking until Mom picked me up and I buried my face in her chest.

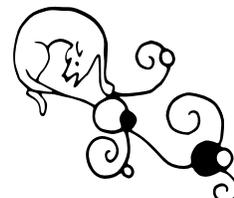
Neither Noelle nor I went to school that day. I stayed in Noelle’s room with her and Mom; I tried to be a comfort, but I think I needed comfort as much as she did. When Dad came home from work we had a burial service in the woods. Dad had wrapped what he could of the body in a rag to hide it from Noelle. He and Mom told her that Ashes looked peaceful when she was dead, like she was sleeping. I knew they were lying, of course, but I couldn’t bring myself to tell Noelle that the dead Ashes looked worse than when she got bit by the raccoon, that there was nothing of her left that looked anything like her, that any pieces of her remaining were stiffened by motor oil from the car engine, that a cremation would be more appropriate and less messy than a burial. But I couldn’t bring myself to tell Noelle. I think I myself eventually believed the lies Mom and Dad told her, if only to protect her. I put my arm around her shoulders and cried like a baby. 

Tyler Estes recommends Annie Dillard’s An American Childhood to everyone from Pittsburgh, from the United States, or from English-speaking humanity at large.



“ALLEGORY”

Laura HERMESMANN



The silence slips in secret corners
Waiting to be found
Like kittens curled up in a nest
And to their mother bound

The world, a bounding farmer’s dog
In circles hunts his tail
And faster, after his own part
Pursues a foolish trail
Here I pursue those sucking cats
And to their corners creep
To maybe hold a silky babe
And join her in her sleep.

Laura Harmesmann likes apple pie and baby birds. She would like to spend her years in the company of seven old men, preferably on the shorter side.



YOUR HAT AND GLOVES STILL WAIT FOR YOU

CAITLIN FRIIHAUF



Your hat and gloves still wait for you—
The decrepit, hairy-looking ones you have kept probably
much too long.
They live in the very rear of the wardrobe,
Along with fractured umbrellas and a lost golf club,
A splintered briefcase and stacks of meaningless
paperwork,
A blanket for picnics and a gust of brittle autumn leaves.
You had almost lost them forever, actually—
Almost.

Tonight as you clamor down the wooden staircase in search
of something,
Fumbling through piles of magazines and muttering to
yourself,
There they are, staring at you—
The hat glaring from the arm of your fireside chair
And the gloves, mottled and matted,
Curling by the heat into a toothy grin.
You squint at them and almost lumber away—
Almost.

Something draws you back; you cannot quite place it.
You creak across the bowed floorboards to warm your
hands at the fire,
And when you stagger up again, your hand on the mantle,
You cannot help it.
The gloves seem to leap onto your hands,
Fingers finding their mates,
And the hat plops itself upon your head—
A stubborn parrot.

All this while, you are wondering,
Not about how they appeared on your armchair,
But about how you went all of these years without them.
They are the color of spiced rum, ragged, and old.
They smell like firewood, and a little stale, but in the best
way,
Like aging library books.
You love them.
You put on your boots and step out the back door.

The fir tree trembles a quiet hello in your direction,
Her fidgety bristles caked with clumps of snow.
Sympathizing, you tap a few branches with a glove.
A penetrating gust sweeps away the excess,
And the revealed green seems too bright to behold—
Too free, too luminous, too naked in the frozen night.
A tremor shatters you and you almost abandon the cold—
Almost.

Instead you remain in the dusky, blue yard.
You clasp your gloved palms together and pull the ragged
hat over your ears.
You attempt to recall what you had been looking for,
Traipsing down the staircase just minutes ago—
You cannot. You let out a small giggle.
The fir tree giggles back, dusting you gently with snow.
You are like her: Stripped. Luminous. Green.
Your greenness is almost too much for you.

Almost.

*Caitlin Friihauf adores autumn, raspberry lattes, and children's books with
talking mice. If you need her, she will be sailing east on the Dawn Treader.*

THE LADY OF SHALLOT

KATIE MCINTYRE

The words often ring in my head, echoing incessantly. I am always annoyed, because usually I can't remember the rest.

But who hath seen her wave her hand?

Or at the casement seen her stand?

Or is she known in all the land, The Lady of Shallot?

A beautiful poem, but with grave implications, a word of warning to the faint of heart. To those who live life looking in a mirror, beware. To those who love shadows, beware. To those who turn to glance at the sunny face of Lancelot, beware. This lot I chose for myself. But the curse is just is valid. And so I took refuge in my humble abode, and made a shelter over my head. "So rested she by the Tum-Tum tree," and slept until 11 a.m.

This Monday was my favorite kind of day, alone and with all the time I wanted for reading and writing. I thirst for words, I live on them and eat them toasted and buttered with a cup of tea. My books are my food and my closest friends. Today, though, it was difficult to enjoy their company. Difficult to feel right indulging myself when I had only that weekend alienated my only sister and lost one of my more tractable students. I am a scholar by calling, a tutor of the intelligent by trade. A compromise by force of economy, and her Havilah was one of ten I taught.

I am a tutor because it is all that I know. Fill your mind with all the world, and you are unfit for all the world. Know the smallest thought, the shrillest heartbeat of a poet separated from you by sea and century—know the cosmos of perhaps a prophet-poet from fall to final judgment—and you have created a relationship that only you will ever understand, for the other is dead, and for which the world will always begrudge you. Know more and you can do less. Yet even with a PhD, I had carved out my niche, my tower of smooth stone in the form of a few pupils. Until my sister felt the need to help me. Help me like a splinter under my

finger nail. Eternally grateful, thank you. Starvation makes one stronger, certainly.

This day was also, of course, Havilah's birthday. We share November. I had planned to give her a book, as usual. No surprise there. But it was likely Havilah would forget to say thank you, and would flip lazily through the book and throw it on the couch. It was likely that like all the other children, Havilah had such a small imagination that the rich design of the cover would inspire no guesses at what it contained. It was all right; I was hardly concerned about what Havilah thought. Havilah was eight years old. Eight. An even number, with two symmetrical loops. A neat infinity, four iambs, or the insistent beat of a tribal drum. Still, she was old enough to evaluate with large brown eyes.

Havilah usually came at 3 p.m., so out of force of habit I set down *Middlemarch* at 10 minutes 'till—taking mental note of page number—and got up to clean a bit. I find that cleaning is as much an inward purgation as an outward. I swept across the brown-tiled kitchen floor, stopping at the sand-shag edge of the living room. The living room is my sanctuary, the room that Grandma, too, loved the best, and it faces the front of the house. Her rocker was still a calm blue-cushioned god in the corner, though feeble, and her cuckoo clock made hourly love to the mirror across the room. My grandmother's style mixed Georgian with the seventies, velvet couch with shag, heavy roller-top with wood-panel walls. All I added were the books. Hundreds of them, everywhere, on shelves, in stacks, and a few experimental blankets from a dark time, when my eyes hurt too much to read. My hands knew how to crochet. And so this beloved room of mine is what made my heart warm and calm as I cleaned. At 3 p.m. I was about to sit back down, clean, when I heard a knock on the door. Though I am not old, twenty-seven, I am near-sighted, so I put on my glasses and pulled the door open.



There she was, eight and irrepressible, standing on my front stoop. She was wearing a lime-colored peacoat against the cold air, with a wide collar. Her red hair was parted into two braids, and on her head she wore a store-bought pink crown with the words "Birthday Girl" written in glittery letters across the front.

"Havilah, what are you doing here?" I said.

"I came to read, Aunt Ollie," she said, and looked at me as if I was stupid. It was true, I knew that she liked to spend this hour with these books which offered her the imaginative vision of which she herself was incapable. She liked coming to see my hidden den, the one that children from the neighborhood walk by with whispers. Indeed, though sometimes I wondered if Havilah cared whether she saw me or not, the subtle flounce in her walk when she came inside told me that she loved the attention, wanted this glamorous beleaguered-princess-aunt to notice her coat and her pigtails, wanted me to acknowledge her. Wanted to be looked right into.

"Your mother doesn't want me tutoring you anymore." I always speak to children as if they are grown up. Someone once told me that speaking to them "at their level" is the only reason they speak at their level and not at ours.

"But you always teach me. Who would teach me if you didn't?" Her eyes were beautiful when she looked up at me this way. Usually she was too busy reading and I was too busy thinking about other things to notice.

What to tell her? *Your mother has cast aspersions on my character?* I don't like being dictated to by my Philistine sister? "Havilah, I'm sorry, but I can't do it. Your mother would be very unhappy, and besides, I wouldn't be getting paid for it."

"It doesn't matter what Mother says," Havilah was sure. Her tiny pointed chin raised a bit higher in a demonstration of eight-year-old will. "I like coming here. And besides, it's my birthday."

The last we both took as irrefutable logic. She held my gaze as I hesitated for one last moment, then I opened the door for her to pass inside.

Havilah took her favorite spot, a blue-cushioned

footstool pulled near the fire. She never sat in the miniature oak rocker I had bought for my students. I liked that. She looked up at me in expectation.

I felt some amount of obligation, so I walked into the kitchen and found a piece of the pie I had baked that week. I put it on a brown speckled plate and filled a mug with milk.

"Happy birthday, Havilah." I placed the pie in front of her. The top crumbled a bit when the plate tapped the surface of the coffee table.

She began to eat, having a bit of trouble with the heavy fork, and as she did, made conversation with a peculiar gravity. I sat across from her, on the green-velvet sofa, as she acquainted me with the continuing difficulties of third grade, in which I was well-versed. Third grade is seared into my memory. The boys were of course, intractable, the teachers kind but dull, the classes easy—except for math. This was the first time I had given Havilah this much time to talk, and I didn't quite mind her talking, as long as I didn't have to say too much. I watched her fork move upward and downward, and winced when she bit the metal.

"I have something for you," I said, and pulled out the book, wrapped in brown paper. She took it on her lap and peeled the tape off before unfolding the paper. The rich red cover peeped out, with a gold-embossed circle in the middle.

She opened to the middle and read aloud a few lines from "The Lamb." I waited for a reaction, watching her lips move as she read. When she finished, she said "That's dumb." She set the book down next to her and looked up at me for the next thing.

"Havilah, that's all I have. I didn't plan a lesson. And seriously, your mother is going to have my head when she finds out you were here. You should get home."

She stood up with her odd self-possession, and for a moment I envied her. She acted without anxiety, as if "she beholds the light, and whence it flows she sees it in her joy." Maybe she knew nothing, she couldn't appreciate Blake, but she looked at me fearlessly as she picked up the big red book and straightened the pink tiara. I knew that in some



ways, I fell short even in comparison to this brown-eyed eight year old.

“Havilah, don’t forget your coat.” Thankfully I still was the teacher.

As she waved goodbye, walking down my uneven front walk in the fading light, I said, “Come by on Wednesday and I’ll give you the bread for Thanksgiving.”

My older sister and I live in the same town, together. We have tangled roots here. We have always given thanks as a family. In fact, the family feast was a tradition since before I was born, when Grandma Phillips pulled together a meal for fifteen assorted relatives on Grandpa’s shoestring factory pay. Mother married into the tradition, and Mattie keeps it alive along with our father’s two older sisters. Just a few years ago, my mother would come around with her thundering Buick, help me from the door to the car, me clutching the bread to my chest and breathing hard. And I would go: for obligation, for love, for self-obliteration. I would go.

But I still make the bread. I cleared my kitchen table and put on an apron. I pulled out my recipe box and put it on the table next to my favorite large ceramic mixing bowl. I never pull out all the ingredients, instead I bustled around the kitchen to find the flour, yeast, salt, using each one and then putting it back so I wouldn’t have to clean up later. I mixed with the spoon till my arm was not strong enough, and then tipped the dough onto the heavy oak of the table. I floured the table to keep it from sticking, and then began to knead. I love repetitive motions, activities that are mindless and yet all-absorbing, like Frost’s description of mowing:

*There was never a sound beside the wood but one,
And that was my long scythe whispering to the ground.*

I divided the dough into four loaf pans and left it to rise.

The phone rang—of course—when I had my hands covered in flour. I hate answering the phone. I looked down at the screen, hoping for a telemarketer or unknown number so I didn’t have to pick up. It was my sister.

I ignored it, and then to make myself feel better I tapped “play” on the CD player in the kitchen and Mozart’s 41st became the air in my kitchen. I washed my hands and the big bowl and spoon, and then sat down to wait with *Middlemarch*.

The phone rang again. I got up and checked it. My sister again. Nope.

On the third call I finally picked up.

“What do you need, Mattie? I’m making the bread, you don’t have to worry.” I had been known to forget my part of the Thanksgiving proceedings.

Her voice was not panicked, but she spoke fast. “Aliana, did Havilah come by your house this morning?”

“No, I haven’t seen her since she showed up here yesterday. Don’t worry, I didn’t teach her. I gave her some pie and sent her on her way.”

She ignored the jab. “I sent her out this morning to pick up some ingredients from the grocery store, and I haven’t seen her since.”

My heart, not my will, began beating faster. “Maybe she got sidetracked on the way here. Maybe she went to the park. ‘If once right Reason drives that Cloud away, Truth breaks upon us with restless Day.’ There must be something we are missing.” Havilah knew about the bread. Could she have tried to come without telling her mother? She knew we were on bad terms. Teacher-aunt trumps mother love.

“Aliana, empathy. You need to learn to empathize a little. This is my daughter we’re talking about, not some plot to one of your stories.”

I bristled at that “Mattie, how can I help you? If there’s any way I can help, let me know, but otherwise, please don’t shout at me. I’m doing my best to find a solution.” It was true, I was thinking of every possible route she might have taken to get to me.

Mattie and I are the kind of sisters who know exactly how to aggravate one another. Our love enables us to wound each other more efficiently than anyone else can. After only thirty seconds we were both seething, breathless, on our respective ends of the phone line.

“Maybe you could go out and look for her. I know it’s



been a while.”

I knew she was going to say that. She always said that, she had said that two days before. And then I always said this: “I don’t need to change how I live because of you. You know I can’t stand it.”

“But you can. It’s in your mind, Aliana. I can’t believe you don’t see that.”

But it was not in my mind. I knew that the moment I stepped outside, I could not breathe; the anxiety rose up to strangle me. I knew that for twelve years I had needed to mentally grit my teeth to go to the grocery store, to the dentist. I knew that if it was only fear, I would have been fine. “Mattie, you have no idea what it is like to be me. Judge not, lest you be judged.”

“Stop quoting! Please, can we talk normally for once!”

And, as always, I knew she would never understand. She had gone to college, knowledge for her a rubric for personal behavior. Married at twenty-one, mother at twenty-two. Havilah was her PhD. “Here’s how I can help: If she comes here, I’ll let you know.”

She paused, absorbing from my silence exactly what I thought. “Fine,” she said at last, in a tone of feigned calm. “I will call you if we need you.”

The phone clicked on its blue plastic base, companionable because it had overheard. I leaned my head against the paneled wall next to it.

I thought about what steps I should take. I knew Mattie wouldn’t call back unless Havilah came back home. She knew I would be useless anyway.

I had time to breathe in and out, in and out, and then the doorbell rang. The patch of window in the door was turning purple, so I flipped the porch light on before I opened the door.

The Havilah on the doorstep was a very different eight-year-old than the one I had fed pie to the afternoon before. She looked like an animal that has one foot in a trap, shivering and hunched. Her hair was mussed, and one of the pigtails was completely loose. Her face and hands were scratched, and her corduroys and sweater bore muddy marks, especially on her knees. She wore no coat. And her

eyes, her confident big brown eyes, were averted, scared somehow to meet mine.

Accusations were completely out of the question. I grabbed her hand and pulled her inside the sheltering heavy door.

I kneeled to see her face. “Havilah, what is the matter?” The brown eyes kept their gaze down, sheltering them from whatever she had seen and didn’t want to anymore. “Please. I need to know what happened.”

She shrugged, that indication of a thought too deep for words.

“Did you get hurt?” She only blinked.

“Was it something you saw?” At this I could see tears in her eyes. I knew I needed to do this without Mattie, I needed this to be without coercion, without guilt. “Can you show me?”

She flickered for a moment, then looked up at me briefly. I took her hand and led her out the door.

Immediately it gripped me. The air seemed to thin and pull away until I was lightheaded, and my heart ran fast so that I couldn’t quite catch up with it. I was outside for the first time in a few weeks.

I walked along behind Havilah for a couple blocks, completely deafened by the sound of my own heart. I felt exposed, naked to the eyes of any passerby. I was unable to function, shut down by the last few years’ worth of growing anxiety.

November was in full-force, and I had forgotten a coat to protect me against the November kind of rain, that chills instead of giving life—“*Chilling and killing my Annabelle Lee.*” Novembers must have been invented after the Fall. Two kinds of shiver grabbed me at the same time and shook me out.

Havilah knew where she was going. She tug-boated me along a leaf-strewn street, calm with the fall of evening. The streetlights punctuated the brown darkness. We followed a route that was familiar to both of us, the quick mile and a half between her house and mine. She turned off after a few blocks. Forcing myself to concentrate, I realized this would be the way she walked that morning. Maybe she had



heard something in the woods.

Her eyes were wide and staring, the trapped animal, glancing to the right and left. A side street coated with leaves was to our left, and we turned onto it, shuffling along a narrow trail of leafless asphalt in the middle of the road. Havilah's footprints were small and uncertain here.

Havilah paused as the trees formed a clearing, and a prickle of a new kind of alertness made it suddenly easier to breathe. My senses were all on edge, like when you almost touch the edge of your paring knife and breathe in sharply. She looked around, probing the darkness for that which had lost her. I held her hand more tightly, but she pulled away and moved slowly to the right of the path. She stepped into the banked-up leaves on the edge of the path, and I followed: leaves up to my knees, and wet and cold, but not noticing, because in front of us in the dark was what I did not know.

I was horrified to realize that I should have brought a flashlight, didn't know what or who might jump out at me from the threatening branches. We were swishing slowly through the leaves, loud enough to be heard and not hear. And then Havilah stopped. I looked down.

There was something just in front of us, pale, wrapped in a dark cloth. I had to lean closer, then pulled back abruptly. It was a little girl.

"Havilah, this is what you found. . .?"

Havilah paused, and I noticed the way she breathed in, and the way the distant streetlights made a shadowy mask of her face, and the way the black and twisted trees

in the woods made her look small, smaller than eight years old, smaller than a child, small as a fairy who is disconnected from the world of human affairs and never cries over death.

Then finally the tears came. That bastion of juvenile self-possession finally cracked. And though I felt a touch of triumph I kneeled down in the soggy leaves and held her to me. I held her because she was braver than I was. I held her because she had seen a reality some people will avoid all their lives. I held her because she had red hair and two pigtailed. I held her because she was my student, my niece. I held her because in some ironic way she was my friend.

I rocked her quiet, wiping a couple of tears of my own away, then looked toward the stranger-girl once more. She bore traces of being touched: her dark hair was smoothed away from her face, and as I looked down I realized that over her was draped a bright green coat.

When I arrived home at last, having given Havilah over to a (for once) bewildered sister of mine, I yearned with all my sand-shag-and-velvet heart to soak up the light of my personal heaven just as before.

And it was just as it was in the beginning, world without end.

Except that the mirror was cracked from top to bottom, revealing the sincerity of the cuckoo's proposals, for he continued to whistle gently to her marred face. **Q**

Katie McIntyre loves to read so much that she often resorts to reading the backs of toothpaste tubes.

"RECEPTION" AND CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

HÄNNAH SCHLAUDT

“Read it again!” asks the child—but perhaps this is bedtime-avoidance tactics rather than sincere delight in a good book. Even so, a “good” children’s book earns its honor by more than mere whimsy or parental decree. Enduring favorites of children’s literature often prove C.S. Lewis’s argument on the nature of good and bad books, and the proper way to read literature.

The judgment a reader makes on a book—if it is a good book or a bad book—is largely based upon what I come to the book hoping to get out of it. Much of C.S. Lewis’s *An Experiment In Criticism* argues that coming to a book with expectations of “using” it to achieve a certain end, rather than “receiving” and enjoying the book for its own merit, abuses the book and gyps oneself out of the most satisfying reading experience. Lewis explains what he means by “receiving” and “using” literature:

A work of (whatever) art can be either “received” or “used.” When we “receive” it we exert our senses and imagination and various other powers according to a pattern invented by the artist. When we “use” it we treat it as assistance for our own activities.¹

A good children’s book is usually written with the assumption that the reader will approach it according to Lewis’s “reception” principle, rather than to “use” it. A good children’s book tells its story for the sake of delight in beauty without abusing the reader with caricature moral lessons or patronizing, artificial language. Applying Lewis’s thesis to both classic children’s books and those often deemed poorly-written supports this distinction.

Bad literature corresponds closely to bad art as described by Lewis—its purpose is to be used to achieve a predetermined end, not to be received as something lovely

and delightful for the sake of beauty. The popular children’s book series *The Berenstain Bears* exemplifies this especially well. The characters are charming and faithful to human nature, and the series is designed primarily to instruct children in common-sense life lessons—about bullying, teasing, neatness, talking to strangers, and so on. These books are popular with educators and parents but they don’t seem to be either beautiful or good literature. Few children enjoy the books enough to want to perpetuate the bears’ world in imaginary play and repeated readings. This may be perhaps because young children are more inclined to approach a piece of art (in this case, children’s literature) ready to receive it for its own sake, rather than seeking to use it to learn something.

The didactic nature of *The Berenstain Bears* assumes that the purpose of a children’s book is to teach, and that delight is secondary to this end. The illustrations are bold and garishly drawn, imitating television shows or comic strips in their bright, action-centered stylizations. This too supports the overall purpose of *The Berenstain Bears*; the pictures are not beautiful but utilitarian. They illustrate a point of action or significance in the story in a manner that conveys an idea. Once the reader understands the idea, there is nothing further that the picture can communicate, for it has been used and has achieved the purpose for which it was created. Delight may happen at some point during the reading, but it is never the first agenda of *The Berenstain Bears* books to do so.

The useful intent of *The Berenstain Bears* is furthered by the cliché-riddled language employed by the authors. Cliché assumes low intelligence in a reader and transfers an idea quickly, avoiding much thought or unnecessary (though elegant) words. For example, in *The Berenstain Bears and Too Much Teasing*, a section reads:

There was a new cub at Bear County School . . .

¹ C.S. Lewis, *An Experiment in Criticism* (Cambridge University Press, 1961), 88.



He wore little round glasses and a little smile on his big round face. Wow, thought Brother, what a relief! Too-Tall and his gang were looking at Milton the way a wolf looks at a plump chicken.²

The message of a book is conveyed rapidly in this manner, but fails to reward rereading or thoughtful perusal on the part of the reader. Beauty isn't considered as valuable in *The Berenstain Bears* as efficient instruction and a comfortable moral lesson.

Beatrix Potter has held her seat of honor in the realm of children's literature since publishing her little books in the early 1900s. Initially written as letters to her young friends, the simple stories and delicate illustrations of her books enchant children and haunt adults who grew up reading about Tom Kitten, Peter Rabbit, and Mrs. Tiggywinkle.

Potter's stories feature many of the earmarks of good children's books. She writes simply and tells the stories in conversational, beautiful language, allowing the child reading them to enter into her imagined world with ease. Potter gives the child a storybook world ordered by the same rules as his own experience, but lively with fresh creatures and their adventures. She avoids patronizing children by maintaining the same social order found in reality—Tom Kitten and his sisters get in trouble for losing their clothes, Peter Rabbit is punished for disobeying, and Squirrel Nutkin's impertinence is humorous but costly. However, these points are not forced morals tacked onto the end of the story; they are natural assumptions woven quietly into the plot, like so:

But Nutkin sang as rudely as ever—
 “Old Mr. B! Riddle-me-ree!
 Flour of England, fruit of Spain,
 Met together in a shower of rain;
 Put it in a bag tied round with a string,
 If you'll tell me this riddle, I'll give you a ring!”

Which was ridiculous of Nutkin, because he had not got any ring to give Old Brown.³

Nutkin doesn't get away with anything. Yet despite obvious moral judgments like this throughout her stories, Potter exercises remarkable restraint in all of her books by not allowing cliché moral endings to detract from the beauty of her economic and powerful prose. Nothing distracts from the delight of the story itself; there is no room for use here.

The simple elegance of Potter's tales is adorned by her watercolor illustrations, furthering the delight found therein. These are not consistently beautiful, but generally they reward study and delight the reader with their delicacy and whimsy. Each animal or person is faithful to life, yet stylized to appear more winsome and appealing. Potter isn't attempting to merely depict the action of her stories; delight in beauty seems to be her main motive in illustrating. Children, often functioning habitually in the “receiving” mode, are able to delight in the non-utilitarian beauty of Potter's artwork much more than they could ever enjoy the illustrations of *The Berenstain Bears* books.

These two children's literature series are merely representative of similar types of books within the children's storybook genre. The *Berenstain Bears* is a poorly done series, typical of all the children's books that seek to instruct via crude entertainment, demanding use in order to read them in a manner faithful to their purpose. Beauty is neglected by these sorts of books; perhaps as a result, their popularity resides more with parents and educators than with children. However, the sort of children's books which are written to help children delight in beauty—Beatrix Potter's tales have been an example of this sort of book—are as a whole usually very good. These tend to be popular with children first, never flagging in their attraction as their readers grow up and new generations discover their charms. The stories are intended to be received: to first delight the reader and then perhaps instruct. Hence, beautiful writing, tale, and illustrations are all rightly valued as primary to the purpose of these books. A good writer writes a book with a higher purpose than merely instruction; likewise, good children's literature will not deviate from rightly valuing beauty and delight as ends. Q

² Stan and Jan Berenstain, *The Berenstain Bears and Too Much Teasing* (Random House, New York, 1995), 16.

³ Beatrix Potter, *The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin* (Republished by The Penguin Group, 2002), 32.

Hannah Schlaudt has been forever changed by a communist duck, a hedgehog, and a bear from Darkest Peru.

IF YOUR LATTÉ COULD SPEAK

EMILY MAUST

Julie Clawson starts her book on all that is wrong with our world with the charge “Don’t panic.” Our most ordinary purchases are probably laced with the blood, sweat, and tears of African children, and our daily decisions entrench our brothers and sisters irrevocably in poverty, but this is no cause for alarm. In fact, until conviction is paired with instruction, people are useless to fight injustice—or so states Clawson’s thesis. Her book binds calmness to urgency, consistently seeking to wed the worlds of activism and ordinary suburban life. In order for the global cause of social justice to move forward, the dichotomy that currently stands between the two must be eliminated. Clawson explains that without practical solutions to injustice, the average person will live out his life in useless, inactive sympathy and, ultimately, the silent approval of cruelty.

Most of us don’t have images of exploited children rush to mind when we drop a couple coins for a candy bar. The truth, though, is that your truffles could be indirectly forcing children into slavery. Every product that makes it into your consumeristic hands has a trail, and the trail of most chocolate twists and turns and sidesteps humane guidelines all the way to its roots of slavery. Clawson’s book reveals that the history of your morning latte probably isn’t any brighter. Most coffee farmers gain nothing close to a fair wage for their work. When prices in the coffee market are sliced, farmers are devastated, but first world consumers don’t see a difference, because most retailers don’t pay the farmers any mind and rejoice in the opportunity for a greater profit. Clawson urges that the very fact that companies so strongly advertise their one or two types of fair trade coffee should alarm us. Why do companies treat as a novelty the sales that allow farmers to make a living, and what does that say about most on the market?

Our environment hasn’t fared any better. A continent-sized mass of trash is bubbling amiably about our oceans, and an estimated 150 million personal computers are dangerously leaking lead from landfills into adjoining communities. Grocery chains artificially “ripen” their foods, and the dyes used in countless factories harm the environment and their workers. Gas companies often dump a greater level of mercury than what is permitted into bodies of water, placing profits over people, a fact that Clawson underscores when she cites a tragic instance in which one such company reportedly stole land from African locals and killed protesters. The economic struggle in Haiti can be traced, in part, back to US-bred calamity in its environment, and, every year, pesticide poisonings take the lives of around forty thousand of our global neighbors.

By this point, it’s hard to hear Julie Clawson’s faint cries about restraint from panic. Still, her point remains valid: none of us will save the world alone. We can research the topics that most impact us and make the “tweaks” necessary to inch from comfort’s clutch into cultivating a more livable corner of the planet. In emphasizing this, Clawson seems to care equally about the planet and the people who inhabit it and laments that she has come “face to face with two distinct worlds of justice issues: those who are passionate about caring for the environment, and those who seek justice for people.” I am inclined to believe that the Bible teaches more explicitly about showing justice to people, but I agree with Clawson’s point that we are to subdue the earth in respect.

Clawson spells out the symptoms and solutions of each issue in a clear, conversational style, coupling statistics with stories of real people to beat all the reports from the reader’s head to her heart. Although this work might not earn her

Everyday Justice:
The Global Impact of Our Daily Choices
Julie Clawson
IVP Books, 2009

land from African locals and killed

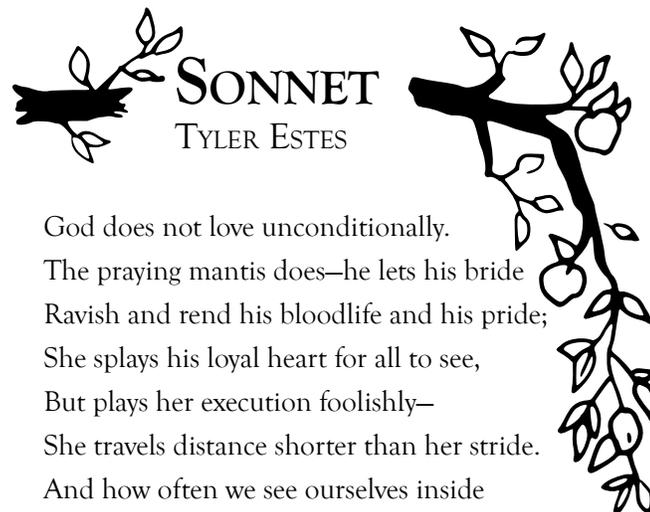


awards for wordcraft, her sound, well-structured argument makes this book a must-read for anyone curious about the social implications of the Gospel. Her refreshingly unified view reaches across political borders, exhorting her readers that “people living in poverty and oppression should not be dismissed as merely a liberal or a conservative issue . . . God is bigger than twenty-first-century American politics.”

Clawson stresses that relationships form the basis of justice, as well as the essence of the Gospel and, from this conviction, questions the lack of responsibility that individualism tends to breed. Her frequent references to Scripture remind us that those unconcerned with the cause of justice don’t answer to Julie Clawson but to God Almighty.

Ignoring the cries of our fellow man disregards not only the image of God in him, but the command of Christ to love that man as yourself. Suppose Clawson is right when she asserts, “When we choose to love God and love others, we have no choice but to treat others with respect and fairness as we acknowledge them as fellow image-bearers.” What would that require from our daily choices? Is it possible that ignorance is unloving? What if things like bananas, t-shirts, and iced mochas sit closer to the heart of God than we have realized? 

Emily Maust is a junior English major who appreciates live music and long hikes and hopes that EasyMac is fair trade.



God does not love unconditionally.
 The praying mantis does—he lets his bride
 Ravish and rend his bloodlife and his pride;
 She splays his loyal heart for all to see,
 But plays her execution foolishly—
 She travels distance shorter than her stride.
 And how often we see ourselves inside
 This cannibal. We cut down the fruit tree
 For firewood. But little did we know
 This fire has some wonderful effects—
 Itself consumed, it purifies like snow;
 Itself the food, it offers something strange.
 From the ashes a new prophet resurrects—
 He loves his bride: he will make her to change.

Tyler Estes is a junior who does not love unconditionally, for reasons less noble.

WHEN HELPING HURTS

JAMES BRINKERHOFF

In the first chapter of his book *Heretics*, G. K. Chesterton laments the tendency of moderns to dismiss discussions of religion and philosophy in exchange for the practical. He writes, “But there is one thing that is infinitely more absurd and unpractical than burning a man for his philosophy. This is the habit of saying that his philosophy does not matter, and this is done universally in the twentieth century, in the decadence of the great revolutionary period.” Sadly, the situation has not improved with time. As a culture, we seem to have

little care for who we are, where we are from, and where we should be going, so long as we make good speed getting there. Simply compare the number of times a politician has expounded on their philosophy of the State, or even some understanding of the United States Constitution, with their incessant barrage of economic facts and figures.

This tendency has been a blight not only in the realm of politics, but also in our efforts to care for the poor. The condition of poverty-stricken third world countries is a most striking example. Never have our world’s richest nations given so much to the world’s poorest. The results, however, have been far from impressive. In a recent New York Times Op-Ed, columnist David Brooks summed up the situation this way:

Over the past few decades, the world has spent trillions of dollars to generate growth in the developing world. The countries that have not received much aid, like China, have seen tremendous growth and tremendous poverty reductions. The countries that have received aid, like Haiti, have not.¹

Our practicality has succeeded in tremendous cash flows, but the river of peace and prosperity is nowhere in sight.

¹ David Brooks, “The Underlying Tragedy” (New York Times, January 14, 2010)

It is exactly in this matter that Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert’s new book, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor . . . And Yourself*, stands out. As the title suggests, their book is eminently practical. But, they write, “[w]e need to establish a solid theoretical foundation if we want to build successful poverty-alleviation efforts.” (56) This foundation is not simply a theory of poverty relief; they insist that “we must consider the fundamental nature of reality, starting with the Creator of that reality.” (56)

The first third of the book is dedicated to establishing this “solid theoretical foundation,” and, even more encouragingly, the rest of the book explicitly builds on that groundwork. The fact that the first chapter is titled, “Why Did Jesus Come to Earth?”, starts everything out on the right foot. In answering this question, the authors reject the notion that Jesus’s work on this earth was simply the saving of souls from this hell-hole we call home. Instead, they recognize that Jesus came to usher in a new kingdom, in which He is the reconciler of all things [Col. 1], and we, the church, are His body. They argue that “the comprehensive implications of the kingdom of God” (47) bear directly on how we view the problem of poverty, and then necessarily on how we attempt to implement solutions.

The reason we need a Reconciler in the first place (and the reason poverty even exists) is addressed in the second chapter, “What’s the Problem?” Corbett and Fikkert explain how the Fall marred all aspects of creation, in particular, human relationships. They summarize these in terms of man’s four foundational relationships—our relationship with God, with self, with others, and with the rest of creation—which have all been broken or impoverished by the Fall. The problem of poverty, then, is not an isolated problem, but part of the problem that all men have as they



must deal with broken and imperfect relationships in all these areas.

The authors note that this understanding has tremendous bearing on how we view poverty and the poor. It necessarily serves as a corrective to the overwhelming materialism of Western culture, which encourages us to understand poverty only in terms of material lack. This in turn contributes to a kind of “god-complex” in the wealthy even as they seek to help the poor. They are materially rich, so they must not have much of a problem; it is the materially needy who have the real problem. “[O]ne of the biggest problems in many poverty-alleviation efforts is that their design and implementation exacerbates the poverty of being of the economically rich—their god-complexes—and the poverty of being of the economically poor—their feelings of inferiority and shame.” (65) To combat this, the authors insist that “until we embrace our mutual brokenness, our work with low-income people is likely to do far more harm than good.” (64) Furthermore, it is this very tendency to view poverty as simply material need that has led to such incredible amounts of money spent in vain, as noted earlier by columnist David Brooks earlier. The poor need reconciliation in all areas of life for real and meaningful change to occur.

After the “foundational concepts” have been explained, the book moves on to discuss “general principles” and finally to “practical strategies” for helping the poor without hurting. As it does, the robust Biblical foundation is strengthened by the wealth of wisdom and experience of Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert. Both individuals work at the Chalmers Center for Economic Development at Covenant College, a training center devoted to helping churches minister effectively to the poor. Additionally, Steve Corbett worked for years for Food for the Hungry International. Throughout the book, they include numerous stories both from their own experience and that of others to illustrate their conclusions.

These conclusions often highlight significant problems not only in how the “world” ministers to the poor, but, perhaps more frequently, in the church’s efforts as well. There is no place for rose-colored glasses here. The authors note the need to evaluate situations thoroughly to determine what is

really needed—relief, rehabilitation, or development. “One of the biggest mistakes that North American churches make—by far—is applying relief in situations in which rehabilitation is the appropriate intervention.”(105) Related to this is the dangerous tendency toward paternalism—doing for people what they can and should do for themselves. This paternalism can include resources, knowledge, labor, management, and spiritual leadership, and often does more harm than good.

These problems and several others are highlighted when Corbett and Fikkert take particular aim at the shortcomings of the Short Term Missions movement. By the very fact that these trips are short term they are rarely, if ever, able to evaluate the situation thoroughly to determine what is truly needed. Poverty is a complicated disease, or perhaps better put, a complication of a disease, and much time and effort need to be made to diagnose it correctly in each particular situation. As noted before, the lack of evaluation frequently results in a short term missions group applying relief where something else, particularly development, is really needed. The authors note that, “[d]evelopment is a lifelong *process*, not a two week *product*.” (168) Additionally, the dynamic created by a group of outsiders coming in to “fix all the problems” can exacerbate the problem of paternalism. The group wants to “serve” the people in every way possible, thereby stifling the necessary development of responsibility in the people themselves.

Particularly for a generation of young Christians born and raised in the hey-day of the Short Term Missions movement, this book could not be more necessary. Our assumptions and attitudes must be directed by the truth of the Word of God, and guided by sound wisdom. Both of these are found in abundance in this book (much more than there was room to explain here) and I would strongly encourage any Christian involved or interested in ministering to the poor, either at home or abroad, to obtain a copy of this book without delay. 

James Brinkerhoff recently had the privilege of spending a semester in France. Among his many discoveries, he found that the most affordable escargot is the homemade variety, and he likes to think of himself as an amateur snailfarmer

THE DREAM LIFE OF SUKHANOV

BRITTNEY TODD

"Our days flowed into nights, our nights were endless, and every windbag who talked about Russia, God, and art was a brother, every artist a genius, every painting a miracle—and the world did not know us yet, but we were together, we were brilliant, we were destined to light up the skies."

– Olga Grushin, *The Dream Life of Sukhanov*

The *Dream Life of Sukhanov* is the story of Anatoly Sukhanov, who leads a successful life. He has a beautiful wife, two attractive and talented children, a prestigious and lucrative job, a famous and influential father-in-law, a home in Moscow, and a cottage in the country. When Sukhanov's comfortable present as editor of a prominent art magazine is interrupted by a brush with the past, he finds that his grasp on his life, his world, and himself is slipping. Past and present flow interchangeably into and out of one another, reality fades into dream and back again, and Sukhanov is forced to evaluate his present in the suddenly glaring light of the past he thought he had forgotten. An artist caught between the Soviet view of art as something primarily useful in support of the motherland, and the modern, surrealist approach to art as an expression of the vision of the artist, Sukhanov is forced to ask himself whether revolutionary art is worthy if it affects no change and brings pleasure to few. Is the purpose of art to inspire people with comforting falsehoods and further social causes, or to express truth as the artist sees it? These questions become more than a simple matter of ideals when his family is threatened, and he must choose allegiance to art or to his duty as a husband and father. The decision haunts him, drawing him into his past, and revealing that perhaps a true artist can never fully lose his passion for truth and beauty.

I read this book on a plane. The flight was long, and between chapters I drifted into and out of naps. When I fell asleep I dreamed of Anatoly Sukhanov. His Russia, his family, his paintings melted off the page into my restless

dreams. I awoke feeling that I had fallen under Grushin's spell; Russia and the conversations around me combined bizarrely in a parallel to the life I was reading about—the dream life of Sukhanov. Grushin did not allow me to read from a distance; the flow of the narrative, the rhythm and beauty of the language, and the person of Sukhanov himself drew me into the story. With every page I knew Sukhanov and his family more, as complete, breathing people. Yet as the story progressed I was surprised to discover who they were at the deepest levels. Their stories were seamless and consistent, and yet not what I had expected them to be. Along the way, my pen slid over the page frequently, marking the most beautiful passages as something worth returning to, something worth rereading. Grushin left me not only with new thoughts and refined ideas, but impressions of a beautiful way of seeing the world.

I don't know art well. I'm a terrible painter, and I appreciate the beauty of paintings only in the most ignorant and uninformed ways. But while this novel is in some ways about art, it is truly about an artist, a man caught between dream and reality, passion and apathy, greatness and mediocrity, the danger of authenticity and the comfort of conformity. I may not know much about Dali, but I appreciate Sukhanov's anxiety in making decisions that will shape his life, the pain of wondering if he has wasted himself, and the loneliness of wondering who he is. Sukhanov's struggle with his past is universal; his grapple with art is intriguing; and his efforts to resist apathy are compelling, with implications that go beyond the theoretical.

The Dream Life of Sukhanov
Olga Grushin
Penguin Group, 2005



Grushin's novel has been highly praised as a work of art, a masterpiece. In weaving through Sukhanov's memories and collapsing present, Grushin creates a novel that is the literary equivalent of the surrealist technique it considers. The language is stunning, truly communicating the dreamlike quality of knowing without finding out, of breathtaking detail, and of beautifully impossible landscapes, making the world, in Grushin's words, "seem a breath deeper and a trifle less certain, as

if seen through a sheet of crystal." Grushin's discussion of the purpose and nature of true art and the role of the artist is both graceful and compelling, and though Sukhanov's quest to know himself and to find truth and beauty is a journey haunted by shadows, it ends in a sunburst of dazzling hope that makes the journey seem well worth the heartache. **Q**

Brittney compulsively alphabetizes letters within words. Does that make her strange? (Or aegnrst?)

BABY CHEMISTRY

HENRY YUKEVICH

She wore a white bib that said BABY CHEM in light blue.
 And she would have been cute if she weren't ten times my size.
 Giggling and sputtering horribly,
 She grabbed me with pudgy, fleshy fingers and began to smash me against the baby tray
 Like a piece of broccoli she didn't want to eat.
 She was deaf to my cries of "I'm an English major!"
 Sometime around the day we learned about gel electrophoresis,
 She dumped me in a beaker full of nasty bad smelling things and then
 Extracting me with tweezers, placed me on to a hot plate
 Where I danced for her as best I could to keep my feet from burning,
 After which I plunged down a funnel while she stared on with large blue eyes.
 And so I've learned to empathize with the chemicals,
 Even though they ate through my favorite pair of jeans.



*Henry Quentin Yukevich believes that life is made up of small victories.
 He is quite sure that castles made of sand melt into the sea eventually.
 Also, he is haunted by the ghost of J. Alfred Prufrock.*

POETRY AS AN ACT OF RECOVERY

JOSH MAYO

I: Two Graces

*The bird would cease and be as other birds
But that he knows in singing not to sing.
The question that he frames in all but words
Is what to make of a diminished thing.¹*

For centuries, poetry was expressly valued for both its didactic and beatific qualities. In the first, we say that poetry is instructive; it gives wisdom and insight. The reader or auditor is summoned from the particular to witness the universal. In the second, we say the art gives joy and pleasure; that the beautiful expression is valued for its beauty. The good poem, the legitimate poem, is the unity of these two graces. In the words of Horace, lyric poet of Rome, “. . . the writer who has combined the pleasant with the useful [miscuit utile dulci] wins on all points, by delighting the reader while he gives advice.”² In *An Apology for Poetry*, Sir Philip Sidney too presents the ultimate purpose of poetry in these aforementioned terms:

Poesy therefore is an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in his word Mimesis, that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth - to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture; with this end, to teach and delight.³

Today, that art of “poesy” persists, but its appreciation atrophies. One may remember the irony of Matthew Arnold’s past predictions for the grand future of poetry: “More and more mankind will discover that we have to

turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us.”⁴ To this optimism, the contemporary poet will have two immediate reactions: “yes, we must!” and “no, we haven’t!” For some reason, poetry has gone by the wayside. The “popular philosopher” (as Sir Philip Sidney dubbed the poet) has become the esoteric mumblor—hardly sane and less than sage. Few understand poetry; of those that do, only a fraction enjoy it. This, Sven Birkerts suggests, is more than a general unfamiliarity with poetic forms: “What is at issue is not diction, not syntax, but everything that diction and syntax serve. Which is to say, an entire system of beliefs, values, and cultural aspirations.”⁵ Hence, what is frustrating to the majority about poetry may not be the ornament or the content; the stumbling block is the medium itself. In brief, many people just don’t get it.

There is a temptation to blame the modern reader—to blame “people today.” Yet, it would be foolish to blame that abstraction we call “the majority;” for who of that collective would we say hates knowledge? Who would we say despises joy? Those judgments do not belong in the aesthetic conversation. Rather, one must identify bad uses of language—not bad users. This is a matter of media, thus, a matter of addressing and assessing extant forms of communication. Here are a few salient questions: Which media have supplanted poetry and why? Are they superior or inferior in teaching and delighting? If they are inferior, why?

The following is an apology for poetry—one essay among many. However, this defense may differ from others in urgency. In an age where the poet was the “popular philosopher,” apology was maintenance; today, while in fear that poetic practice may take the last train for the coast, apology is an act of recovery.

¹ Robert Frost, “The Oven Bird” in *Robert Frost: Collected Poems, Prose, & Plays*, ed. Richard Prior and Mark Richardson (New York: The Library of America, 1995), 11-14.

² Horace, “Epistle to the Pisones,” in *Criticism: Major Statements*, ed. Charles Kaplan and William Davis Anderson (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2000), 97.

³ Sir Phillip Sidney, “An Apology for Poetry,” in *Criticism: Major Statements*, ed. Charles Kaplan and William Davis Anderson (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2000), 106.

⁴ Matthew Arnold, “The Study of Poetry,” in *Criticism: Major Statements*, ed. Charles Kaplan and William Davis Anderson (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2000), 334.

⁵ Sven Birkerts, *The Gutenberg Elegies: The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age* (New York: Faber and Faber, Inc., 2006), 19.



II: Where is the *Dulce*?

*For this, for every thing, we are out of tune;
It moves us not—*⁶

Of these two aforementioned graces (*utile et dulce*), it is the latter that today is strangely absent. For many, delighting in the word itself (not merely that which it accomplishes) is a foreign notion. One savors the ends (*utile*) and not the means (*dulce*). Certainly, our new media (e-books, blogs, feeds, etc.) are useful and in some sense instruct (one notes the plethora of “how-to’s” and “x-steps-to-x’s”). What is lost, however, is a joy in the word—a former delight in compositional forms such as poetry. As I previously stated, I am leery of the blame game: I do not believe that humankind itself has drastically devolved in the last hundred years. There are, I believe, more satisfactory explanations for our recent estrangement from poetic delight. Perhaps, in the end, it is not that new media diabolically refuse the delight of their users; perhaps, simply, they cannot provide it.

Every medium of human discourse has unique advantages and limitations. Consider the differences between oral discourse and written discourse—the two most primary means of communication. Intonation, speed, and volume are peculiar to verbal converse. The written word can at best suggest these qualities, but it cannot replicate them. Thus, writing has disadvantages. But it has advantages too. Chirography conquers the temporality of spoken language; it freezes the word in space and time, allowing any literate to observe and re-observe it. Prior to the written word, all systems of knowledge were memorized. Chirography gave birth to language “study”; it opened a whole new world of analysis and reflection. Clearly, when any culture moves from being an oral culture to being a literate one, there is a monumental change. For literate cultures, the pre-chirographic consciousness is almost impossible to envisage. Walter Ong, author of *Orality and Literacy*, does his best to aid the effort:

Try to imagine a culture where no one has ever ‘looked up’ anything. In a primary oral culture, the expression ‘to look up something’ is an empty phrase: it would have no conceivable meaning. Without writing, words as such have no visual presence, even when the objects they represent are visual. They are sounds. You might ‘call’ them back—‘recall’ them.⁷

As the text suggests, the advantages and limitations of any medium do more than simply aid or hinder communication; they structure thought itself. They affect consciousness. Because a purely oral culture can only retain knowledge through memory, human memory must be strong. In a writing culture, knowledge is recorded and garnered in the form of manuscripts; this obviates the former standards of mnemonic aptitude. Consequently, memory wizens.

By extension, one concludes that new media, new means of human converse, also have advantages and limitations that impact human consciousness. The text message, for instance, allows the effortless transmission of textual information from one place to any other place. This is a great advantage; but there are disadvantages too. Compare the text message medium with its predecessor—the hand-written letter. Both are text-based, so what is the difference? Consider what each medium itself encourages and discourages. Hand-written letters take time to deliver. Accordingly, the letter demands thought, organization and eloquence. On the other hand, text messages are delivered instantaneously. Hence, the text does not require the same thought, organization and eloquence—one could say it discourages these things. By its ease, by its convenience, the text supplanted the hand-written letter. The former skills of composition endemic to a letter writing culture no longer need to be practiced with the same frequency. Like memory in the chirographic age, composition wizens in the electronic age. This is an unfortunate effect of media originally purposed to aid communication. There is the real possibility that our brightest, budding means of converse are actually making us less conversant.

In this example of the letter and the text message, there

⁶ William Wordsworth, “The world is too much with us; late and soon” in *The Making of a Sonnet: A Norton Anthology*, ed. Edward Hirsch and Eavan Boland (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009), 139.

⁷ Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2008), 31.



are two types of mediated communication: transmission and composition. The chief end of texting is to transmit bits and relay them indefinitely; the aim of letter-writing is meaningful, personal, composition. Consider two other disparate media forms—a telephone and a painting. Of course, a telephone is a machine (a transmitter) and not a composition. Few regard the phone for its “phone-ness” because its primary use is to transmit voice—to allow conversation. A painting, contrarily, is a composed medium; that is, it does not “transmit” anything. Unlike the phone, the painting is regarded for its “painting-ness”. Because it is a composition, we regard the medium.

Chiefly, things transmitted are things used and things composed are things received. Today, it is acceptable to say, “I received a text message from ‘x;’” but in a sense, this is a malapropism. A written letter is received because it was composed; a text message is used because it was transmitted. Reception implies reflection, just as one reflects on a gift he or she receives from a loved one. Use implies non-reflection—when one “receives” a text message, do they ever reflect on it? Evidently, there should be a difference in response to things transmitted and things composed. Things composed encourage reception; things transmitted encourage use. For C.S. Lewis, this distinction between things used and things received is the foundation of *An Experiment in Criticism*. According to Lewis, many readers inappropriately use literature instead of receiving it; these users of composition are identified as that aforementioned un-poetic majority:

The distinction can hardly be better expressed than by saying that the many *use* art and the few *receive* it. The many behave in this like a man who talks when he should listen or gives when he should take. I do not mean by this that the right spectator is passive. His also is an imaginative activity; but an obedient one.⁸

As Lewis explains, there is much confusion about what to do with composed forms. “The many” are so accustomed to using media that they have forgotten how to receive them.

Consequently, those estranged from composed media are estranged from its unique joys.

The art of reception is nearly gone, and it may be harder than ever to revive. In *The Gutenberg Elegies*, a collection of essays on reading, Birkerts identifies two dimensions of attention—the lateral and the vertical. The former, he suggests, is the horizontal plane of information—the axis of transaction; the second is the vertical plane of philosophy—the axis of ideals. According to Birkerts, modernity is experiencing a dimensional imbalance, a frightening lack of vertical attention:

Inundated by perspectives, by lateral vistas of information that stretch endlessly in every direction, we no longer accept the possibility of assembling a complete picture. Instead of carrying on the ancient project of philosophy—attempting to discover the “truth” of things—we direct our energies to managing information...Wisdom can only survive as a cultural ideal where there is a possibility of vertical consciousness.⁹

One approaches wisdom *via* reflection. Vertical depth, Birkerts says, can be found in the reception of compositions:

Depth survives, condensed and enfolded, in authentic works of art. In anything that can grant us true aesthetic experience. For this experience is vertical; it transpires in deep time and, in a sense, secures that time for us. Immersed in a ballet performance, planted in front of a painting, we shatter the horizontal plane. Not without some expense of energy, however. The more we live according to lateral orientation, the greater a blow is required, and the more disorienting is the effect.¹⁰

When the dominant media of any culture are essentially lateral (that is, primarily purposed for transmission), the vertical art of poetry requires more energy than ever before. It is no surprise that poetry is suffering, for a culture that does not understand composition cannot its way of speaking. One does not go to poetry for information because the

⁸ C.S. Lewis, *An Experiment in Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 19.

⁹ Birkerts, 75.

¹⁰ Birkerts, 76.



aim of poetry is not transmission. One goes to poetry to be instructed and delighted.

III: The Medium is the Marvel

“Yet poetry has existed from the time of the emergence of the human race from shadowy prehistory and has survived, in one form or another, in every society since that time. When we realize this, we may be inclined to consider the possibility that poetry only *seems* unnatural and irrelevant. We may even decide, on reflection, that it does spring from deep human impulses and does fulfill human needs.”¹¹

There is one question that should never be asked of a poem, but still frequently is: “What does it mean?” This is the question of a poetry user. He or she assumes that a poem is a means of transmitting a message—that the meaning is found behind, not in, the words. It is a common misunderstanding in a language-using culture, for there the media are rarely received.

In a letter to a friend, J.H. Reynolds, poet John Keats addresses this frequent folly of the novice reader. The poem, he suggests, is not something to be consumed, but something to be savored:

Now it is more noble to sit like Jove that to fly like Mercury—let us not therefore go hurrying about and collecting honey-bee like, buzzing here and there impatiently from a knowledge of what is to be arrived at: but let us open our leaves like a flower . . . budding patiently under the eye of Apollo and taking hints from every noble insect that favors us with a visit—sap will be given us for Meat and dew for drink.¹²

To engage poetry, the user must perform a revolution of approach: he or she must become a flower—still, attentive, and receptive. He or she must exercise unpracticed patience. How much better to be a flower than a bee? How much sweeter to repose than slave in that poor prodding

of the poem? To rest and regard—that is the role of the auditor. If forms are not regarded, they cannot be truly received. If they are not received—I argue—they cannot be truly enjoyed.

To elucidate that correlation between reception and delight, let us return to the second thought experiment of the telephone and the painting; it may be helpful to ask what media we do and do not delight in. Which of the two sounds stranger: “I delight in this painting;” or, “I delight in this telephone”? Surely, the latter is the stranger of the two. One might express positive feelings about a telephone, but they are generally feelings about the telephone’s functionality. This is because a phone is ultimately a transmitter. It is something to transmit human voice. It is something to be used. Only when the aesthetic quality of the phone is considered (the color of the phone, the texture of the phone’s casing, etc.) do we regard the phone itself. Even then, its beauty is often obscured by its utility. Occasionally, you might hear someone say they delight in a novel, functional medium (ex. a phone in the shape of a hamburger); but in this case the function of the medium is secondary. No one buys a hamburger phone for its sound quality or convenient interface—they buy it for its novelty. They buy it for its compositional quality. Thus, we see that composition, and not transmission, is the medium of delight.

One may discover there is a substantial, lasting joy in a thing received. Consider it: do good poems, timeless poems, ever exhaust? Of course, they do not; rather, they appreciate value with time. Was a sonnet by Shakespeare ever “used up?” Was a work by Robert Frost ever “obsolesced?” The notion is absurd. There is a transitory nature to today’s functional media: When the use of a tool is exhausted, so is the medium. When all transmissions are made, the means are done and dead. Poetry, like other arts, lasts; but that which lasts through it is the dearest expresser—the brightness of the human tongue. Language, that means by which we teach and advise, also becomes a means of joy. In such volatile times, times when false tongues fade with the day, poetry is one delightful remainder.

¹¹ Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, *Understanding Poetry* (Florence: Wadsworth Publishers, 1976), 1.

¹² John Keats, “Four Letters,” in *Criticism: Major Statements*, ed. Charles Kaplan and William Davis Anderson (Boston Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2000), 284.



IV: Recovery

*The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
From a hemlock tree*

*Has given my heart
A change of mood
And saved some part
Of a day I had rued.*¹³

The decision to engage poetry as an art form is a personal decision to counteract the dangerous imbalance of our modern media. It is a personal act of recovery. A love of poetry foments many other loves (a love of order, a love of beauty, etc). These loves edify and entertain the individual person; however, one cannot say poetry is merely for the individual. Engaging poetry recovers something communal as well. Composed language reminds us of the humane qualities of language. It sets a standard for our discourse; it encourages more than information transaction. One may realize that composed thought and ornamented speech in our converse are not marks of pomposity (as they are often

thought to be). Rather, they are interpersonal offerings—reminders that we receive and do not use each other’s company.

In conclusion, the decision to avoid the blame game proves rewarding, for it is human company that enlightens these forms. As C.S. Lewis suggests, people are an irreplaceable part of the literary experience—composition must be coupled with humankind:

Admittedly, we can never quite get out of our own skins. Whatever we do, something of our own and of our age’s making will remain in our experience of all literature. Equally, I can never see anything exactly from the point of view even of those whom I know and love best. But I can make at least some progress toward it...Literature helps me do it with live people, and live people help me do it with literature.¹⁴

Poetry returns two delights: a delight in the word and a delight in communion. Performing the ceremony of poetry may not only recover the joy of a dormant form; it may also restore some joy of each other. **Q**

Josh Mayo believes in collective memory.

¹³ Robert Frost, “Dust of Snow,” 1-8.

¹⁴ Lewis, 101.

OBITUARY FOR AN OLD WOMAN

PHILIP GRUBER



Born 1938, died 2009,
Married, homemaker, three children in that time:
All three married and living out of state;
Who's left can watch her lie in state
On Monday 10 to noon. Funeral following, luncheon after.
Interment private; omit flowers; donations through the pastor
To American Cancer Society.

What

Did she do before the rhomboid pine was shut?
Was very involved in the Methodist Church,
Collected bird figurines: plovers and gulls perch
On resin wood posts over imitation shore.
Enjoyed traveling, vacations at The Shore
(Meaning Rehoboth Beach, Delaware),
Spending time with family spread out everywhere,
Including one niece in the area. Preceded
In death by her brother Harold.
Born to the late Elmer and Esther somethingorother
Of Palmyra or Philadelphia or Lancaster.

Seagulls fly, tourists trappings, over the beach,
Over hot dogs and the Ferris wheel that are pathetically within reach.
Summers spent "making memories," now come to naught?
Winters spent with trinkets that won't let her be forgot

Until they're tossed.

It's a knick-knacky life
For a Soroptomist, plastic plover holder, chintz-gilt wife.
Plug in the hutch-top Christmas tree.

Philip Gruber was born in Columbia, Maryland, a utopian city with a population rivaling Fargo's and a darling of both the urban planning movement and defense contractors. He was uprooted from that admixture of optimism and necessity before he was capable of forming lasting impressions of the place and was transported across the Mason-Dixon Line (thereby becoming a transgressor at the age of 11 months) to a rural community in the Pennsylvania Dutch Country represented on maps by a dot that shares its label with a topographic feature currently owned by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

THE NEW PERSPECTIVE(S) ON PAUL: AN INTRODUCTION

DR. T. DAVID GORDON

The following essay is an editorial summary of a lecture delivered at Grove City College on September 23, 2009 by Dr. T. David Gordon. The talk was a part of the Grove City Evangelical Scholarship Conference and can be seen and heard in its full glory online at www.evangelicalconference.org, along with other lectures from that conference. Dr. Gordon's own extensive notes for the lecture can be found on his website, at www.tdgordon.net/theology.

Paul's writings have been studied by scholars and theologians for centuries, and it might seem strange, or even presumptuous, to title any recently published angle on Paul as a "New Perspective." In the past three decades, however, the developments in Pauline studies have dramatically influenced our understanding of the message of God through Paul, challenging many set assumptions and beliefs.

The focus of this new perspective has centered around Paul's relation to the Law. While this might seem a narrow or arcane issue to some, a quick look at the statistics indicates the importance of this subject. Paul refers 121 times in the Greek text to the word νόμος, ordinarily translated "law."¹ This number is slightly more than the 118 times in which he uses any of the Greek words referring to "love" (love, loving, beloved, etc.), either divine or human. He refers to "grace" 86 times, and uses soteric or saving language only 32 times. It should be obvious that the Law is at the heart of what Paul is all about.

The expression itself was coined in 1982 by James D. G. Dunn in his article "The New Perspective on Paul."² Prior to this publication, the research and writings of E. P. Sanders, Krister Stendhal, and the German theologian Ernst Käsemann all laid the groundwork for The New Perspective. Today, N. T. Wright, an Anglican Bishop and theologian, has written several books popularizing The New Perspective outside of academia. While not all proponents

agree, which is why we now often refer to the "New Perspectives on Paul" in the plural, the following points represent their general concerns.

Components of the New Perspective

First, The New Perspective re-appraises first century Palestinian Judaism, in such a manner that it denies its alleged legalism is denied. Previously, our understanding of Palestinian Judaism was based largely on the Talmud and other literature written several centuries after Christ and Paul. Because of these writings, scholars had characterized the Judaism of Paul's day as overwhelmingly legalistic; first-century Judaism emphasized man's own works to establish right standing with God. The New Perspective challenges this view, arguing that the Palestinian Judaism at that time was not a strictly legalistic religion. This aspect of the discussion is primarily a historic concern, but has significant implications for understanding what Paul was contending against.

Second, The New Perspective calls into question the understanding of "God's righteousness," and, ordinarily, of justification. "God's righteousness" is not simply judicial righteousness; it is faithfulness to a promise or to a covenant, or it is soteric power. In other words, justification is not so much about how an individual stands before the bar of God's judgment; it is about who is and who is not considered to be part of the covenant community. Paul argues "from" justification, not "for" justification, which he regards as a matter settled in Abraham's covenant. For N.T. Wright and James D. G. Dunn, "to be justified" means to

¹ This is an unfortunate translation. What Paul is really referring to is the *covenant made at Sinai*, characterized by law giving. In the same way he uses the word promise to refer to the covenant made to Abraham in Genesis 3, because it was a covenant characterized by promise giving.

² James D. G. Dunn, "The New Perspective of Paul," *BJRL* 65 (August, 1982): 94-122. Reprinted in *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, Louisville: John Knox, 1990.



be a member of the covenant people of God. Dunn writes, “God’s justification is rather God’s acknowledgement that someone is in the covenant.”³ Wright also contends, “justification in this setting, then, is not a matter of how someone enters the community of the true people of God, but of how you tell who belongs to that community.”⁴

Third, Paul’s “problem” with the Law is that it distinguished Jew from Gentile. As the apostle to the Gentiles, ministering a new covenant to the nations, he could not abide the continued observance of a law that set apart the Jewish people from the Gentiles around them. It is this mind-set that primarily drives Paul’s discussions on the law.

And finally, in connection with this, some in The New Perspective, particularly James D. G. Dunn, restrict the “works of the law” in Paul’s writings to mean the boundary markers of circumcision, diet, and calendar, not the entirety of Old Testament commands.

Sources of the New Perspective

The New Perspective on Paul draws on two major literary sources to support of its assertions. The first source (explicitly referred to by Dunn in “The New Perspective on Paul”), is E. P. Sanders’s re-evaluation of Palestinian Judaism in his 1978 book *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*.⁵ To begin, Sanders argues that the Rabbinic material which had previously been the foundation of our understanding of Judaism did not apply to Palestinian Judaism of the first century. It was this literature that indicated the legalistic nature of Judaism. However, it was written almost two and a half centuries after the time in question and, even more importantly, well after the destruction of the temple: the heart of the Jewish religion, as well as the most palpable symbol of their own failures and need for God’s atonement, was no

more. Thus, the rabbinic literature of the third century and onward necessarily represents a radically different form of Judaism than the religion of Paul’s day.

After removing that literature from the discussion, Sanders assesses the remaining text, dated more accurately to the time of Christ, and finds no evidence of legalism.⁶ Instead, he notes an emphasis on three things: the doctrine of election, appeals to God’s mercy, and the concept of atonement. None of these concepts make sense in a framework of legalism, and Sanders argues that this is because Judaism at that time was not, in fact, a meritorious religion.

This re-establishment is important because the standard ways of interpreting Paul’s relation to the Law had been based largely on the assumption that Judaism at the time was legalistic. The reason that Paul’s relation to the Law needs explaining in the first place is that of the 121 times he refers to it, many are positive, noting that it is holy, and just, spiritual, and many are negative, even declaring it an administration of death. The traditional solution to this problem was to consider all of Paul’s negative comments to be directed against the Jewish legalistic abuse of the law. Sander’s historical analysis undermined this explanation and forced scholars to take another look at Paul to understand and explain his harsh criticism of the law. This is, in essence, the inspiration for The New Perspective; it explains the reasons we need a new perspective in the first place.

The second source of The New Perspective is Ernst Käsemann’s influential “Gottesgerechtigkeit bei Paulus,”⁷ translated and re-published as “The Righteousness of God in Paul,” in *New Testament Questions for Today*.⁸ While Sanders is explicitly referenced by Dunn and others, Käsemann rarely receives the credit for his work, even though Dunn, Wright, and most other proponents of The New Perspective fully embrace the essence of his hypothesis. One of his main concerns is removing the δίκ-language in Paul (such

³ Dunn, 190.

⁴ N. T. Wright, *What St. Paul Really Said*. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 119.

⁵ E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978). Even before Sanders, scholars such as David Daube and W. E. Davies had begun a revision of understanding Palestinian Judaism in two ways: they questioned the validity of the distinction between Hellenistic and Palestinian Judaism, and they questioned whether there was any “normative” Judaism.

⁶ Some of the remaining literature we have as a result of more recent discoveries, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, was not available to previous generations of scholars.

⁷ Ernst Käsemann, “Gottesgerechtigkeit bei Paulus,” *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 58 (1961): 367-378.

⁸ Ernst Käsemann, *New Testament Questions for Today* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 168-182.



as δικαιοσύνη θεου, the “righteousness of God”) from the forensic, judicial arena to the soteric arena. In Romans 1:16-18, Paul writes:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the *righteousness of God* revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

Käsemann argues, contrary to the majority opinion, that righteousness here and elsewhere does not refer to God’s upright moral character, or his righteous judgments as a judge. Instead, it means something closer to “God’s saving activity” or “saving power,” or faithfulness in the context of a community, (later, in the language of N. T. Wright, “God’s covenant faithfulness.”) Note the following quotes from Käsemann (*italics added*):

From the outset it will be noticed that in the field of the Old Testament and of Judaism in general, righteousness does *not convey primarily the sense of a personal, ethical quality*, but of a *relationship*; originally signifying trustworthiness in regard to the community, it came to mean the rehabilitated standing of a member of the community who had been acquitted of an offence against it. Any interpretation which begins from the general concept and its specifically *juridical* application is bound to centre on the character of righteousness as gift and, in practice, on anthropology. But the formulation which Paul has taken over speaks primarily of *God’s saving activity*, which is present in his gift as a precipitate without being completely dissolved into it.⁹

The widely-held view that God’s righteousness is simply a property of the divine nature can now be rejected as misleading. It *derives from Greek theology*, which speculates about such properties; it contradicts the basic sense of ‘righteousness’ within the tradition of the Old Testament and later Judaism—namely, *faithfulness in the context of the community*; and it proves ultimately inadequate because it postulates what cannot be convincingly intellectualized—namely, the making-over to a human being of

a property of the divine nature. Δικαιοσύνη θεου is for Paul, as it is for the Old Testament and Judaism in general, a phrase expressing divine activity, treating not of the self-subsistent, but of the self-revealing God.

We take the decisive step along the road to the proper understanding of Paul when, and only when, we grasp the indissoluble connection of *power and gift* within the conception of the divine righteousness; having done so, we wonder why this finding has not long ago come to be taken for granted.¹⁰

As we will later see, this shift in definition has significant implications.

General Remarks: Setting and Straw Men

To understand the appeal of The New Perspective, one must grasp its historical setting: the ecumenical discussions of the late twentieth century, specifically within the context of the post-holocaust, continental Europe and the Vatican British Isles. There is a not-so-thinly-veiled effort to remove perceived barriers between Jews and Christians (Käsemann) and between Catholics and Protestants (Dunn, N. T. Wright). That is, faith *in* Christ distinguishes Christians from Jews, and faith *alone* in Christ distinguishes Protestants from Catholics. So, if we can remove these cards from the deck, the ecumenical card game may proceed more expeditiously. E. P. Sanders (in)famously stated, for instance, that the only problem Paul had with Judaism was “that it was not Christianity.” Dunn and Wright suggest that “getting in” the covenant (and, regrettably, they will almost never explain which of the six or seven OT covenants they are referring to) is by election and “staying in” is by grateful and faithful obedience, a view entirely indistinguishable from that of medieval Roman Catholicism.

This setting, unfortunately, creates two problems for The New Perspective. First, it leads to a distortion of many important Pauline points, especially those related to God’s righteousness, judgment, and justification. Second, it actually injures the ecumenical discussion by essentially requiring Christians to concede that Christianity is hardly

⁹ Käsemann, 172.

¹⁰ Käsemann, 174.



different from Judaism and by requiring Protestants to reject any recognizably Protestant doctrine of justification. The ecumenical dialogue becomes, effectively, a monologue.

Finally, as a general introductory comment, proponents of The New Perspective manifest a shameful ignorance of the Church's historic creeds and confessions. I tell my students I will give them a dollar for every quote of an historic confession they can find in Wright or Dunn, and I'm not nervous about losing a cent. Wright and Dunn apparently regard the Church and her creeds with such contempt that they do not even give them the courtesy of an occasional citation. Routinely, they make comments about "traditional" understandings (which they regard as traditional misunderstandings) of matters without any citation. Worse, what they ordinarily regard as a "traditional" understanding is not found in any creeds anywhere; it is a pure straw man.

Wright, for instance, repudiates the traditional understanding of the imputation of righteousness by arguing that a judge, in a court, does not impute his own righteousness to the accused. True enough, but no Protestant confession ever said that God imputes his own righteousness to anyone; to the contrary, God imputes the righteousness of the Mediator, the God-Man, to sinners. Westminster's Shorter Catechism, for instance, says: "Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone."¹¹ This is also upheld in the Larger Catechism (Question and Answer #70) and the 30th Article of the Lutheran Formula of Concord. So, no Protestant confession ever affirmed what Wright takes such pains to deny; yet, with his denial he certainly implies, at least, that someone else does affirm the matter.

Similarly, Käsemann implies that he has discovered some earth-shattering insight when he declares that justification and sanctification, faith and works, cannot be separated from one another. He writes, "Neither are justification and sanctification to be separated."¹² But this has always been affirmed by the Protestant confessions.

The Westminster Confession says: "Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is alone the instrument of justification: yet *it is not alone* in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with *all other saving graces*, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love."¹³ Again, this is supported by Articles IV and VI of the Augsburg Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism's 64th question and answer, and the 12th of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Anglican Church. It is a much-to-be regretted reality that The New Perspective often suggests that it is solving a traditional problem when in fact what it "solves" was never affirmed by any Protestant tradition anywhere.

Analysis: Point-by-Point

I largely concur with The New Perspective in its re-estimation of first century Palestinian Judaism. As noted previously, this is not a theological or confessional issue, but a matter of historical judgment. It is, therefore, not a test of orthodoxy. Sander's "positive" evidence is compelling: neither the notion of election, nor appeals to mercy, nor recourse to atonement, which are found in the Jewish literature, is necessary (or even intelligible) within a legalistic framework. The caricature of Judaism that characterized the "dominant approach" for several centuries was just that, a caricature, and one largely dependent on later Rabbinic sources. The fewer assumptions we make about it in order to understand the New Testament, the better off we probably are. We must go to the text itself to understand what Paul really means, instead of constructing a false setting in which to understand him.

I also have considerable concurrence in calling attention to Paul's overwhelming concern for the distinction between Jew and Gentile, and the way this drives his polemic with the Law. For Paul, the gospel is not just a gospel to the Gentiles; it is a gospel that embraces the Gentiles. He is very Abrahamic in his reasoning, particularly in Galatians, but also Romans 4. Paul remembers the same thing you and I remember from Sunday school, that Paul pledges three things to Abraham and Sarah: numerous descendents, a

¹¹ Westminster Shorter Catechism, #33.

¹² Käsemann, 171, (cf. also 181-82).

¹³ Westminster Confession, Chapter 11, ii.



homeland in Canaan, and through their seed to bless all the nations of the earth. The Mosaic Law was necessary for the preservation of that seed, in order that the promise might come to fruition in Christ. But as long as that law excludes Gentiles, the promised blessing cannot come. Paul ends up with a redemptive-historical critique of the Law: beautiful for its time, yet horrible one second beyond it. To continue to observe it in Paul's day requires a continued "wall of hostility" between Jew and Gentile, which Jesus defeated.

The New Perspective expends a good deal of energy wrestling with the idea of the "people of God." Is often a very fruitful endeavor. It has also rightly called attention to the theological reality that the Christ-event constitutes the fulfillment of the third pledge-promise to Abraham and Sarah. In short, The New Perspective is right on the money on this point. Paul's issue with the Law is largely settled by understanding how the Law cuts the Gentiles off, and through that avenue we can start solving the problem of Paul and the Law.

However, I believe The New Perspective goes too far when it argues that "works of the law" refer only to the so-called "boundary marker" laws of circumcision, diet, and calendar. Dunn especially, but also N. T. Wright, takes the expression *εργων νόμου* (works of the law) at Gal. 2:16 (and elsewhere) to refer to these "boundary marker" laws, but not to the entirety of the works required by the Mosaic Law. Paul writes, "yet we know that a person is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified."¹⁴ For Dunn this means that one is not justified by observing those boundary markers within the Sinai covenant that distinguish Jew from Gentile.

This hypothesis is not only contrary to any ordinary understanding of the vocabulary, it is contrary to Paul's usage of the expression elsewhere, such as in Romans 3:20:

"For by works of the law (*εργων νόμου*) no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law

comes knowledge of sin." Note here that through the law comes knowledge of sin, not knowledge of one's Jewish ethnicity. This "sin" is comprehensive; Paul expressly refers to covetousness, for instance, in Romans 7. Indeed, one could argue that the boundary markers provide significantly less knowledge of sin than the moral law. Again, Paul writes in Galatians 3:10:

For all who rely on works of the law (*εργων νόμου*) are under a curse; for it is written, 'Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.'

The citation of Leviticus 18:5 by Paul here could hardly be plainer: "all things written in the Book of the Law," not just some things.

Finally, my most significant point of disagreement is in The New Perspective's redefinition of the righteousness of God. All parties agree that in the ordinary Greek usage, and in many OT texts also, *δικαιοσύνη* refers to God judging uprightly, as a reflection of his moral uprightness.¹⁵ Note in the following passages the association of the "δικ-*language*," or righteousness, with the forensic or judicial sphere:

Psa. 9:4 "For you have maintained my just cause; you have sat on the throne giving righteous judgment (*δικαιοσύνην*)."

Psa. 50:6 "The heavens declare his righteousness (*δικαιοσύνην*), for God himself is judge."

Psa. 58:1 "Do you indeed decree what is right (*δικαιοσύνην*), you gods? Do you judge the children of man uprightly?"

Psa. 98:9 Let them sing before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness (*δικαιοσύνη*), and the peoples with equity."

Mic. 7:9 "I will bear the indignation of the LORD because I have sinned against him, until he pleads (*δικαιωσύνης*) my cause and execute judgment for me. He will bring me out to the light; I shall look upon his vindication (*δικαιοσύνην*)."

Is. 1:26 "And I will restore your judges as at the

¹⁴ Galatians 2:16

¹⁵ Following the observation that *δικαιοσύνη* in the Septuagint often refers to the moral uprightness of humans, cf. Stephen Westerholm, "The Righteousness of the Law and the Righteousness of Faith in Romans," *Interpretation* 58 (July, 2004): 253-264.



first, and your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness (δικαιοσύνης), the faithful city.”

Is. 16:5 “[T]hen a throne will be established in steadfast love, and on it will sit in faithfulness in the tent of David one who judges and seeks justice and is swift to do righteousness (δικαιοσύνην).”

The Old Testament meaning of this Greek word is of enormous import in understanding the language of Paul, as his theological vocabulary was informed by the Septuagint.¹⁶ So when he uses δικ- language, it is necessarily with the Old Testament, judicial language in mind. Significant evidence would be required to alter this meaning.

Käsemann and others support their redefinition by noting the “soteric” nature of the use of δικαιοσύνη. That is, it is often associated with God’s saving power. However, they seriously underestimate the *judicial* context of this so-called “soteric language.” When God was said to demonstrate his “righteousness” in Israel’s deliverance, the deliverance was from the nations around her, whom Yahweh *judged*. Such “deliverance” anticipates the final judgment, which is soteric for the elect but *not* for the non-elect. “Righteousness” is still, therefore, juridical, and still refers to the fact that God will judge rightly; it is when He judges His (and His people’s) enemies that this accrues to His people’s deliverance and salvation.¹⁷ Note how this is the case in Isaiah 51:5-7:

My righteousness (δικαιοσύνη) draws near,

¹⁶ When Paul quotes the Old Testament, he overwhelmingly uses the Septuagint, and not the Hebrew.

¹⁷ Douglas J. Moo, Kenneth Barker *Romans 1-8*, *Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 1 (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1991). 79, noted this same problem with the Käsemann hypothesis:

“Thus far, it would appear that God’s δικαιοσύνη is exclusively beneficial in its operation; and, indeed, scholars such as von Rad conclude just that. But a number of texts show how short-sighted such a conclusion would be. First, several of the passages that highlight the salvific benefits of God’s righteousness also refer to the judgment that it brings on the wicked.... When Israel’s enemies are in view, or when Israel breaks the terms of the covenant, God’s righteousness naturally takes on a negative, judgmental aspect (cf. Isa. 5:16; 10:22)” (*Romans 1-8*, p. 79)

my salvation has gone out, and my arms will judge the peoples; the coastlands hope for me, and for my arm they wait. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and they who dwell in it will die in like manner; but my salvation will be forever, and my righteousness (δικαιοσύνη) will never be dismayed....”

The salvation here is manifestly the result of God’s righteous judgment.

Even if δικαιοσύνη θεου could mean something like “God’s power” or “God’s faithfulness” in some contexts, the context of the first chapters of Romans is overwhelmingly juridical:

Rom. 1:32 “Though they know God’s decree (δικαίωμα, alternately translated “judgment of God”) that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.”

Rom. 2:1-2 “Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who do such things.”

Rom. 2:5 “But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment (δικαιοκρισίας) will be revealed.”

Rom. 2:12 “For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law.”

Rom. 3:21-26 “But now the righteousness of God (δικαιοσύνη θεου) has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God (δικαιοσύνη δε θεου) through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction; since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified (δικαιουμενοι) by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness (δικαιοσύνης), because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness



(δικαιοσύνης) at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier (δικαιον και δικαιουντα) of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

There is no compelling reason, given the Old Testament meaning and the context of Romans, to alter the fundamentally juridical tone of righteousness and justification.

Käsemann, Dunn, Wright, and others avoid, as did Protestant Liberalism before them, the fundamentally juridical tenor of the Bible *per se*, and of its soteriology. It was *judgment* that removed the human race from the blessedness of God’s Presence in the garden; the entire race, except for a small family, was destroyed in a *judicial flood* in the days of Noah; Israel, when disobedient, was subject to God’s repeated *judgment*; Christ died as a Substitute to bear God’s *judicial wrath* on behalf of his people. His apostle described the new Christian faith of the Thessalonians this way: “. . . how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who *delivers us from the wrath to come*.”¹⁸ Peter declared, “And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be *judge* of the living and the dead.”¹⁹ And Paul also said, “The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”²⁰ Note that Peter and Paul follow the language of the Old Testament (Paul’s is identical to Psalm 96:13, for example) in describing the redemptive activity of Christ as *culminating* in his return for judgment, to “judge the world in righteousness,” as does the Apostles’ Creed.

Biblically, we could even speak of “salvation-judgment,” because the salvation of God’s creation requires the elimination of the wicked therefrom. As Peter said:

. . . who formerly did not obey, when God’s patience waited in the days of Noah, during

the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water [note that the floodwater may have “saved” eight souls, but it judged the entire remainder of the race!]. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him.²¹

The correlation of judgment and salvation could not be stated any more clearly. The very waters of judgment are described as saving for Noah and his family. Because of the Fall, judgment is at the core of God’s plan for this world; without it, there can be no redemption of His people, or renewal of the world. Inasmuch as The New Perspective downplays this, it fundamentally misunderstands the Scriptures.

Building on the Käsemann hypothesis, The New Perspective often seeks to equate justification with membership in the covenant community. Dunn writes, “God’s justification is rather God’s acknowledgement that someone is in the covenant.”²² Wright also explains, “Justification in this setting, then, is not a matter of how someone enters the community of the true people of God, but of how you tell who belongs to that community. . . .”²³ And later, “Within this context, ‘justification,’ as seen in 3:24-26, means that those who believe in Jesus Christ are declared to be members of the true covenant family.”²⁴

This is extremely confusing, and wrong-headed. It is confusing because we can never know which covenant Dunn or Wright are speaking of. Even if we omit the Adamic administration, we have two covenants with Noah, one with Abraham, one with the Israelites at Sinai, one with Phinehas and his sons to be priests, one with David’s lineage to build Yahweh a permanent house, and a pledged “new covenant” that will come in the future (Jer. 31:31). So, to confuse or conflate these seven distinct covenants is itself

¹⁸ I Thes. 1:9-10

¹⁹ Acts 10:42

²⁰ Acts 17:30-31

²¹ I Pet. 3:20-21

²² Dunn, 190.

²³ Wright, 192.

²⁴ Wright, 129.



a substantial problem. The Gentiles, for instance, are comprehended in the Abrahamic covenant by the third pledge (and indeed, Abraham himself is an uncircumcised Gentile when he is justified!), but they are not comprehended in the Sinai covenant. On precisely a matter that interests The New Perspective – “Who are the people of God?” – two of the covenants in the canonical Old Testament give two entirely different answers.

It is also quite wrong to think that to be “in the covenant” (whichever one is being referred to) is equivalent to being justified (or anything else soteric). Were not the Israelites all included in the Sinai covenant? But were the ones who murmured and died in the wilderness justified? And if justification includes not only judgment, but sometimes terminal judgment, who needs to *be* justified? Throughout her history, Israel was repeatedly on the wrong end of the prophetic lawsuit; she was repeatedly judged as being *unrighteous*, though she was manifestly *in* the Sinai covenant. The Israelites plainly did not understand “being in the covenant” as The New Perspective understands it. They resisted being in it at Sinai, wanting nothing to do with Moses’ thunderous Deity and frightened that He would “break out against them”²⁵, frightened that if God spoke to them they would die. Half of their psalms were laments, and most of those were laments about God’s judgment. They complained about the Sinai covenant in the wilderness, and even desired to go back to slavery to the Egyptians. They not only did not view “being in the covenant” as being justified or soteric; they obviously considered it to be a nuisance, a burden the apostles later said “neither we nor our fathers

could bear.”²⁶ So The New Perspective is way off base here, not only for its consistent confusing of the Abrahamic covenant with the Sinai covenant, but even more so for suggesting that being “in the covenant” at Sinai implied justification or anything else soteric.

Conclusion

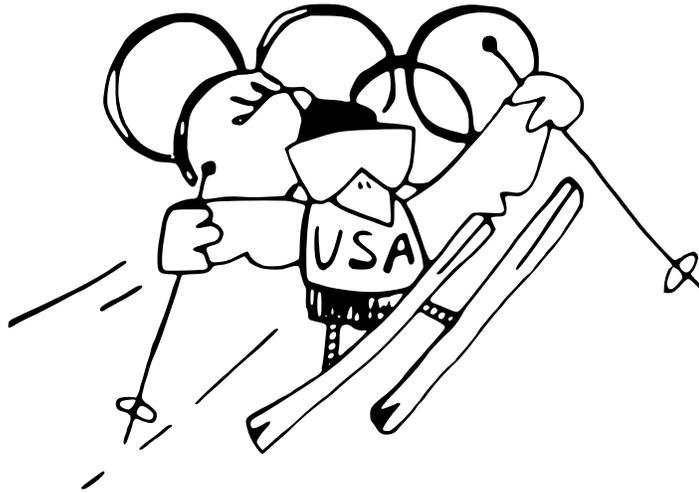
If Sanders is right, and we re-evaluate Judaism the way he suggested, then what we normally thought Paul’s negative comments regarding the Law were about probably is not the case. We must seek another solution. I, and many others, believe this solution is found in the Gentile-excluding nature of the Law. Paul looks forward to the day when Abraham’s seed will bless all the nations, not just one nation, and he sees the Law as a problem in that moment, though it served very good purposes until we got there. In this regard, The New Perspective gives us a perspective on Paul that is better than the one we had before. I do not know why some authors think that in addition to that, they must completely redefine the nature of justice, righteousness, and justification in the Bible. It is not inherent at all in Sanders proposal that we have to do that; we can still reassess Paul and the problem of the Law without undercutting everything the Bible says about the those realities. **Q**

Dr. T. David Gordon lives with his wife Dianne, and daughters Grace and Dabney (and innumerable cats). Prior teaching at Grove City he taught New Testament (primarily Pauline studies) for thirteen years at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in S. Hamilton, MA; and for nine years he was pastor of Christ Presbyterian Church in Nashua, NH.

²⁵ Ex. 19:22, 24

²⁶ Acts 15:10

CONUNDRUMS



I. Assign truth values (true or false) to each of these statements so that all ten are consistent. There are at least three valid sets of answers.

1. This statement is true.
2. At least five of these statements are true.
3. At least six of these statements are true.
4. Statements 5 and 7 have the same truth value.
5. Statements 2 and 4 are not both false.
6. At least six of these statements are false.
7. At least two of the following statements are true.
8. Statement 1 is false.
9. Statements 5 and 6 are not both true.
10. The largest number of consecutive statements having the same truth value is also the number next to a true statement. (For instance, the longest streak is 5 false statements in a row, and statement #5 is true.)

II. I am the most energy-efficient machine that has ever been invented, but I am not new. What am I?

If you think you have an answer to one of the conundrums, please email it to Doug Smith at smithdp1@gcc.edu. There will be a \$5 prize for the first submission of each unique answer for the first puzzle. The second conundrum is also worth \$5.

Congratulations to Dani Sisto, who separately solved both parts of the previous conundrum! The next seven numbers in the sequence were 29, 30, 36, 37, 39, 40, and 43. The simplest way to see the pattern is to create a binary tree numbered from 0 at the left; the sequence is composed of the numbers along the bottom. So the hint, dichotomous deciduous, referred to the leaves of a binary tree.



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AT

GROVE CITY COLLEGE MARCH 11-13, 2010

The 2010 Midwest Regional Conference on Christianity and Literature will be held at Grove City College in Grove City, PA, March 11-13, 2010. In plenary sessions and paper panels, we will explore intersections between Christianity, literature, and notions of pilgrimage and place—particularly the seeming tension between the necessary discipline of place that Wendell Berry writes about and the equally compelling disposition of Gabriel Marcel’s homo viator or Walker Percy’s castaway. G.K. Chesterton’s concern with cultivating a proper kind of exile, which he termed “homelessness at home,” will also illuminate our discussions.

FEATURED SPEAKERS

STEVEN BOUMA-PREDIGER

Professor of Religion, Hope College, Holland, MI

Steven Bouma-Prediger is most recently the co-author of *Beyond Homelessness: Christian Faith in a Culture of Displacement* (Eerdmans 2008). He is also author of *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care* (Baker 2001)

Chapel Address on Thursday, March 11
“The Homemaking Father”

Plenary Address, Sticht Lecture Hall, 7pm on Thursday, March 11
“Sojourners in a Time of Homelessness”

FARRELL O’GORMAN

Novelist and Associate Professor of Catholic Studies, Depaul University, Chicago, IL

Farrell O’Gorman has published a novel, *Awaiting Orders* (Idylls Press 2006), and a highly acclaimed study of Walker Percy and Flannery O’Connor, *Peculiar Crossroads: Flannery O’Connor, Walker Percy, and Catholic Vision in Postwar Southern Fiction* (LSU Press 2004).

Plenary Address, Sticht Lecture Hall, 1:30pm on Friday, March 12
“Seeking Our ‘True Country’ in American Literature”

The entire campus community is invited to all plenary sessions and panels.

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