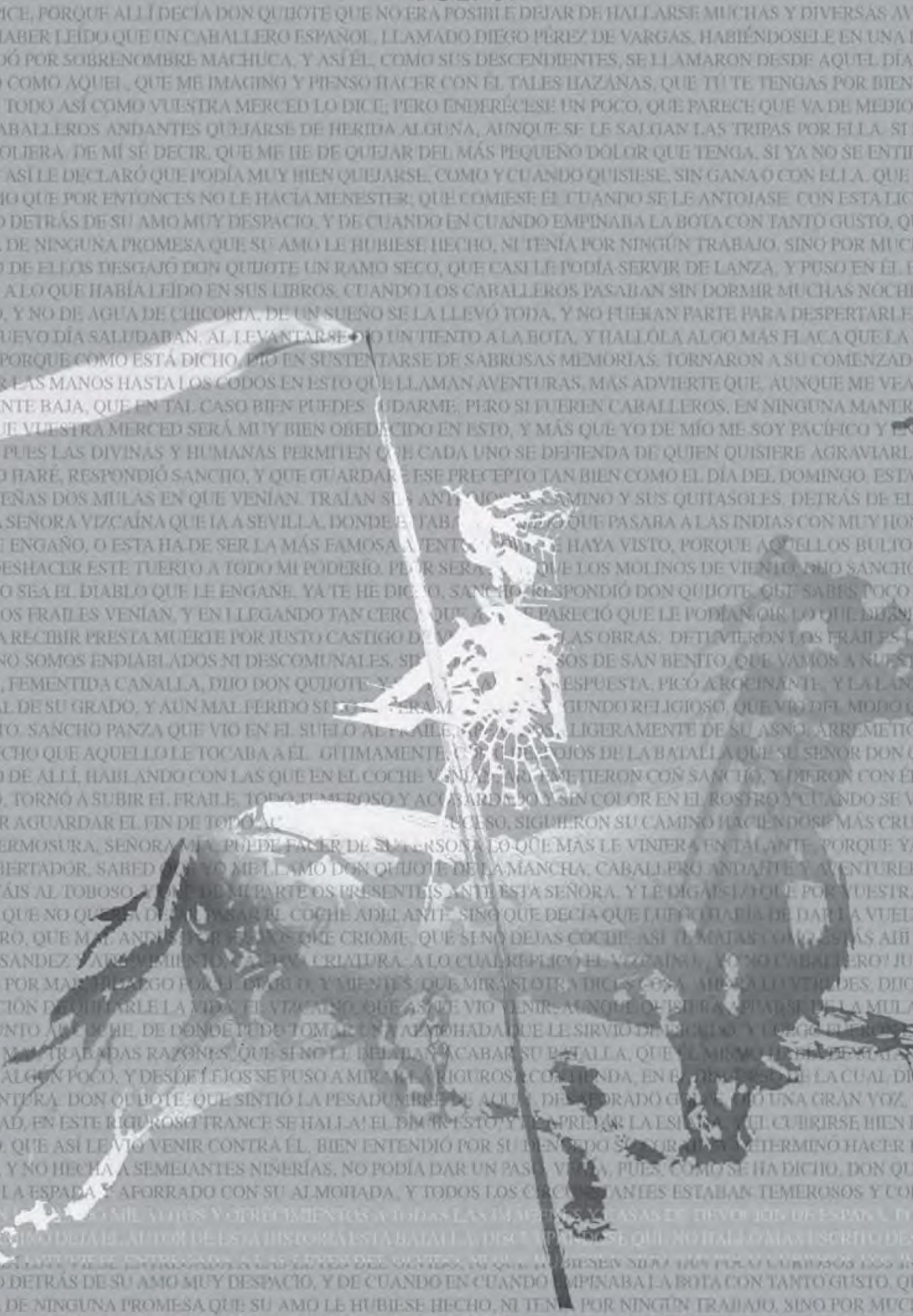


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SYMPOSIUM

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** The cover is a tribute to Miguel de Cervantes' Don Quixote and to the students in the Honors College who have the courage to make their ideas a reality. The background text is from the Knight's most famous adventure in Chapter VIII, and the images are composed of pixel segments of photographs taken in the Honors College.*

Special thanks to Linda Romano and Christine Raio for their assistance.

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THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS: “REVISIONISTS REVISITED”

by Robert J. Meekins

For most Americans who are familiar with the Cuban Missile Crisis, it is a story of near nuclear holocaust brought to an end by the courage and resolve of President John F. Kennedy. For some historians, however, this is just another example of history being distorted by what people want to see as opposed to what really happened. Donald Kagan is perhaps the most prominent American revisionist writer on this subject. In *On the Origins of War*, Kagan takes issue with other recent and more traditional historians, like Max Frankel (*High Noon in the Cold War: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Cuban Missile Crisis*) and William Taubman (*Khrushchev: The Man and His Era*), arguing that Kennedy's heroic image is far-fetched, that Kennedy had ample opportunities to avert the crisis before it even started, and that the president's weak-kneed diplomacy, more than any other factor, contributed to the near catastrophe that the world faced in October 1962.

Kagan's thesis rests primarily on his interpretation of the origins of the crisis. Like Frankel and Taubman, he accepts the commonly held beliefs about Khrushchev's leading role in inciting the troubles. Khrushchev clearly set the stage for the October crisis by deciding to deploy offensive nuclear missiles in Cuba. At the time, the Soviet premier found himself in a terribly uncomfortable diplomatic and political situation at home and saw this maneuver as a chance to improve his standing with the Soviet leadership and people, as well as with the global communist movement. According to Kagan, Khrushchev was moved by

...the desire to defend Cuba; an attempt to close the missile gap; as a bargaining chip to trade for the missiles in Turkey and, perhaps, even

elsewhere; to create an opportunity for...a favorable settlement in Berlin; as a way of gaining ground against China within the socialist bloc; to achieve a general victory in the Cold War...; to gain a victory in Soviet domestic politics.¹

There is no reason to believe that Kagan's assessment is untrue; indeed, Frankel and Taubman are in agreement with Kagan on these points.

If there are differences between the authors, they are only ones of emphasis. Taubman refers to Khrushchev's decision as the "Cuban Cure-all," an attempt to alleviate all of Khrushchev's domestic and foreign policy ailments with one strategic victory. Unlike Frankel and Kagan, however, Taubman places heavy emphasis on the importance of the issue of Berlin in Khrushchev's calculus. Taubman writes that Khrushchev had become desperate to sign a treaty with the United States regarding Berlin's future. Indeed, in November 1961, Khrushchev told Kennedy, "You have to understand, I have no ground to retreat further, there is a precipice behind me."² Moreover, Taubman states that Khrushchev's thoughts and statements in mid-May 1962, just as he made the Cuban missiles decision, "kept coming back to Berlin." Sounding as if he were hoping to use the missiles in Cuba as a card to force Kennedy's hand in Berlin, Khrushchev reprimanded visiting U.S. Secretary of the Interior Udall (in September 1962): "We will give him [Kennedy] a choice—go to war, or sign a peace treaty....It's been a long time since you could spank us like a little boy. Now we can swat your ass."³

If Taubman tends to emphasize Berlin more than Frankel and Kagan, these two authors certainly do not downplay its significance. They do, however, prefer to focus on Khrushchev's desire to level the nuclear playing ground. It is accepted by all three authors that, at that time, the United States had an enormous strategic advantage, including some 6000 nuclear warheads to the Soviet's 300, and several thousand intercontinental ballistic missiles to the Soviet's 25. Indeed, by the summer of 1962, U.S. Undersecretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatrick was able to announce that "we have a second-strike capability which is at least as extensive as what the Soviets can deliver by striking first."⁴ Such a strategic environment was unacceptable to Khrushchev, but he was—unfortunately for him—without many options, since the sagging Soviet economy could not permit the production of enough weapons to equalize the strategic balance. Thus, for Frankel, the decision to place missiles in Cuba was a 'Hail Mary' attempt to solve this larger problem by making use of Soviet medium-range ballistic missiles in Cuba. This would effectively double the intercontinental striking power of the Soviet nuclear arsenal. Agreeing with Frankel, Kagan cites Georgi Shakhnazarov, aide to Mikhail Gorbachev in 1988, who stated that

¹Donald Kagan, *On the Origins of War: And the Preservation of Peace.* New York: Anchor, 1995, p. 495.

²Kagan, *On the Origins of War*, p. 538.

³William Taubman, *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era*, New York: W.W. Norton, 2003, p. 539.

⁴Kagan, *On the Origins of War*, p. 490–91.

the deployment of missiles to Cuba “was an attempt by Khrushchev to get [nuclear] parity without spending resources we did not have.”⁵

It is indeed likely that the question of nuclear parity was foremost in Khrushchev’s mind, for it was the only clear benefit that could be guaranteed by placing missiles in Cuba. All of the other Soviet interests, including those in Berlin, might have been satisfied if Moscow succeeded in October 1962, but they would only have been bonuses. Arguably the only other possible goal that would have been achieved was the protection of Cuba itself; however, this goal could have been accomplished without the placement of nuclear weapons. Instead, as all three authors admit, Khrushchev could have decided to deploy large amounts of Soviet troops and defensive weapons to serve as a sort of ‘tripwire.’ In the end, regardless of what was most important, it was the totality of Khrushchev’s disadvantaged position that pushed him to emplace missiles in Cuba.

The more important question that arises from the discussion of Khrushchev’s motives is why the premier ever thought that he could get away with stationing nuclear weapons 90 miles off the coast of the United States. It is at this point that Kagan’s version of the origins of the crisis diverges seriously from Frankel’s and Taubman’s. Kagan places the blame for this at Kennedy’s feet. According to Kagan, since the beginning of his term as president, Kennedy had made a habit of failing to stand up to Khrushchev. Starting with Kennedy’s refusal to support the American-trained Cuban rebels during the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion, Kennedy seemingly showed that he was unwilling to do what was necessary to defend American interests and prestige. In that instance, Kennedy wholeheartedly desired to see the operation succeed, but recoiled from providing air power when the rebels were stranded on a Cuban beachhead. As Abram Chayes, Kennedy’s legal adviser in the State Department estimated, the Russians had to have interpreted Kennedy’s failure to back up his tough words with tough actions as a “failure of nerve.”⁶

This “failure of nerve” was the beginning of what Kagan sees as a pattern of Kennedy’s weak-kneed handling of Khrushchev. With regard to U.S. German policy, Kagan records a veritable litany of Kennedy’s alleged concessions to Khrushchev, including de facto acceptance of the Oder-Niese line and the Berlin Wall as well as a shift away from the idea of sharing nuclear weapons with West Germany. In addition, Kagan criticizes Kennedy for not holding Khrushchev to the promises that the Soviet premier had made at the 1961 Vienna summit, at which the two heads of state agreed to end their nuclear testing programs. When Khrushchev violated that agreement, Kennedy did nothing to penalize the Soviets, and, indeed, continued to moderate the American testing program in the hopes that Khrushchev would voluntarily return to

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 509.

⁶Kagan, *On the Origins of War*, p. 465.

the terms originally agreed upon in Vienna. Khrushchev did not do so, and Kennedy reacted with little more than complaints.

Kagan maintains, therefore, that Kennedy's approach to Soviet relations was dangerously accommodationist. Rather than confront Khrushchev on these serious issues, Kennedy decided to back down and accept Soviet incursions on American interests. This, Kagan argues, left Khrushchev with the impression that Kennedy was willing to accept Soviet gains at the United States' expense. As a result, Khrushchev saw an opportunity to score a lasting diplomatic/strategic victory by placing missiles in Cuba. Indeed, Kagan asserts that Kennedy's feeble attempts to oppose Khrushchev convinced the Soviet premier that Kennedy would never even question the missiles if they could be installed secretly and then presented as a *fait accompli*. Kagan thus contends that Kennedy's soft approach played the determining factor in Khrushchev's decision to send missiles to Cuba, and concludes, "A stronger line, as Kennedy himself sometimes perceived, might have avoided it [the crisis] altogether."⁷

Kagan's brief against Kennedy does not stop there. Kagan also insinuates that Kennedy might have been attempting to ignore the placement of Soviet nuclear weapons in Cuba in order to protect himself and the Democratic Party politically. Kagan writes that when the Soviets had previously scored diplomatic victories over the United States, Kennedy had shown a willingness "to conceal what had happened from the public to avoid political embarrassment."⁸ Pointing to Kennedy's decision to ignore repeated warnings during the summer of 1962 from CIA Director John McCone as well as the caution offered contemporaneously by Republican Senator Kenneth Keating of New York, Kagan claims that Kennedy was more concerned about the upcoming mid-term elections and his own domestic political future than about the security of the United States when assessing the possibility that the Soviets might be delivering offensive missiles to Cuba.

Kennedy's September 4th address is proof for Kagan that political concerns dominated Kennedy's thinking as the missiles were being deployed to Cuba. After finally realizing that Keating and McCone had been right all along, Kennedy decided that he should respond to the Soviets in early September 1962. Years later, Kagan records the National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy recalling that the September 4th warning was made "because of the requirements of domestic politics, not because we seriously believed that the Soviets would do anything as crazy from our standpoint as placement of Soviet nuclear weapons in Cuba."⁹ The warning itself was, moreover, outlined in such a way as to keep the United States from having to back it up. As later explained by Theodore Sorensen, "the President drew the line precisely where he thought the Soviets would not be..." In essence, Kagan concludes, Kennedy had no intention of stopping the Soviet military build-up in Cuba; he only wished to make sure that the public did not perceive that decision as weak:

⁷Kagan, *On the Origins of War*, p. 548.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 497.

⁹Kagan, *On the Origins of War*, p. 503.

...these remarkable statements suggest that Kennedy was willing to accept Soviet offensive missiles in Cuba without complaint; that only political pressure forced him to warn the Soviets against them; that it was only the mistake of refusing to believe that Khrushchev would really put offensive weapons in Cuba that compelled Kennedy to take serious measures to remove them after they were discovered.¹⁰

Later, Kagan goes so far as to accuse Kennedy of potentially being “unwilling to protect his country’s safety and interests.”¹¹ This is certainly an exaggeration. Both Frankel and Taubman blame Kennedy for not taking seriously the intelligence provided by the CIA and Senator Keating about a possible nuclear build-up in Cuba, but they do not ascribe Kennedy’s oversight to devious political motivations. If anything, these two authors blame Kennedy for a lack of imagination and foresight: he and his team of advisers just didn’t believe that Khrushchev would try something so brazen and so clearly opposed to U.S. interests. As Taubman writes, “the White House couldn’t imagine that Khrushchev would challenge the United States in its own ‘backyard.’”¹² (However, Frankel also acknowledges that, since he was a Democratic president, it was not easy for Kennedy to trust Keating and McCone, who were Republicans.)

While Kennedy may have made mistakes, neither Frankel nor Taubman believes that it was Kennedy’s weak diplomacy that paved the road for the crisis. Indeed, both authors argue that Kennedy had proven himself to be quite a strong leader in his first year as president. Of course, the Bay of Pigs was a disaster, but Kennedy had made a significant comeback in Vienna. Frankel argues that when Khrushchev “drove full throttle” toward his goal of a permanent division of Germany, Kennedy “was primed to stand firm” and expressed his willingness to wage war “to preserve access to Berlin.”¹³ Moreover, as Frankel also mentions, it was Kennedy, who upon becoming president, took the risky and gutsy step of declaring an end to the doctrine of no nuclear first strike. This is compelling evidence that Kennedy was not quite as weak as Kagan would have us believe.

If this is so, then clearly Khrushchev miscalculated. Frankel and Taubman are indeed convinced that the primary causes for the crisis lay in *both* leaders’ miscalculations. As noted above, Kennedy mistook the risks that Khrushchev was willing to run and slighted the importance of paying closer attention to intelligence reports even if they were coming from Republicans. Khrushchev, on the other hand, miscalculated just how firm Kennedy’s response would be. Taubman, who is the Khrushchev expert among our three authors, writes bluntly that the Soviet plan to place missiles in Cuba was “a crackpot scheme.”¹⁴ Taubman continues by explaining that Khrushchev never

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 504.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 504.

¹²Taubman, *Khrushchev*, p. 503.

¹³Max Frankel, *High Noon in the Cold War: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Cuban Missile Crisis*, New York: Ballantine, p. 51.

¹⁴Taubman, *Khrushchev*, p. 551.

actually thought through how the Americans would respond to his plan and did not prepare backup plans for various contingencies. Khrushchev believed that it would be possible for the Soviets to deploy the missiles ‘very speedily’ by September or October and then disclose the deployment to Kennedy following the U.S. elections in November. If that could be accomplished, the premier expected that Kennedy would receive the news of Soviet missiles in Cuba with the same equanimity with which the Soviets had received the news of American Jupiter missiles placed in Turkey earlier. As it turned out, it was virtually impossible for the Soviets to undertake such a large scale operation, including over 150 cargo ship trips to and from Russia as well as the deployment of over 50,000 Soviet troops, without the United States uncovering it.

Khrushchev’s inability to foresee the plan’s failure was not only a result of his own poor judgment, but also a consequence of the way in which the decision was made in Moscow. Despite Khrushchev’s claims that he wanted his advisers and associates in the Politburo “to accept and support the decision with a clear conscience and a full understanding,” the premier never took seriously any of the criticisms, warnings, or questions raised by his comrades.¹⁵ When Mikoyan expressed his doubts that the project could be undertaken quickly and covertly, Khrushchev ignored him. After Foreign Minister Gromyko objected that “putting missiles in Cuba would cause a political explosion in the United States,” Khrushchev insisted he had “no intention of changing his position.”¹⁶ Frankel, too, cites these examples and agrees with Taubman that Khrushchev severely underestimated the strength of the American president and his willingness to respond firmly. In combination with Kennedy’s mistakes, Frankel concludes, the crisis was a product of their “equally disastrous miscalculations.”¹⁷

To be fair, Kagan does not totally excuse Khrushchev’s miscalculations, but his criteria for judging them are significantly different. Since Kagan believes that Kennedy essentially brought the crisis on himself by tempting Khrushchev with his accommodationist diplomacy, he blames Khrushchev not for thinking that he could get away with the missile deployment, but for the way in which he implemented it. The Soviet premier, Kagan explains, should have never assumed that the missiles could be implanted secretly. Second, Kagan blames Khrushchev not for underestimating Kennedy, but rather for overestimating the president’s role in American crisis management. Kagan writes, “Khrushchev’s second mistake was to misunderstand the nature of the American government and political system, putting too much importance on the role of the President.”¹⁸ In other words, even if Kennedy himself would have preferred to accept the Soviet missile emplacement, the more hawkish members of his cabinet, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Republican Party would have clamored for a fierce response to the Soviet actions.

If Kagan differs with Frankel and Taubman in discussing the origins of the crisis, he also differs with them in explaining how the crisis was resolved. Once again, Kagan’s

¹⁵Taubman, *Khrushchev*, p. 541.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 544.

¹⁷Frankel, *High Noon in the Cold War*, p. 19.

¹⁸Kagan, *On the Origins of War*, p. 547.

attention is focused primarily on what he perceives as Kennedy's mistaken judgment. The primary reason for the peaceful resolution of the crisis identified by Kagan is that Kennedy was willing to acquiesce to Soviet demands. According to Kagan, Kennedy never really had any intention of standing up to Khrushchev, and he certainly never seriously contemplated authorizing a military strike on the missiles in Cuba; that is, Kennedy was willing to do whatever it took to preserve peace and avert nuclear war. Thus Kagan argues that, as early as October 19th, Kennedy was prepared to trade a pledge not to invade Cuba and the removal of the U.S. Jupiter missiles in Turkey for the extrication of the Soviet missiles from Cuba.

Kagan therefore concludes that the crisis ended peacefully only because Kennedy was ready to buy Khrushchev out. Again, Kagan quotes legal counselor, Abram Chayes, who stated in 1987 that

...Max Taylor said that there were three options [for resolving the crisis]... There was a fourth: buy 'em out. This one gets talked about much less than the others because of the power of the Munich stigma and because it sounds a lot less courageous. But in fact we did, in part, buy 'em out, and the President seems to have been willing to go even further than he did in this direction if need be.¹⁹

Indeed, Kagan is convinced that the crisis would have ended even if Khrushchev had not accepted the American deal of October 26th, since Kennedy would have continued to concede to Khrushchev until he had accepted: "there is no obvious limit to what concessions Kennedy would have made if Khrushchev stuck to his guns."²⁰

Fortunately, Kagan contends, Khrushchev did not stick to his guns, but this was by no means a result of Kennedy's hard work. Rather, Kagan maintains that the reason that Khrushchev accepted the American offer was because he was frightened by events that bore no direct relationship to Kennedy's diplomacy. The first of these events was the shooting down of an American U-2 by a Soviet commander in Cuba. Second, there were reports and leaks from the United States that the Americans were planning an imminent invasion of Cuba. Finally, to combat that possibility, the Cubans were putting pressure on the Soviets to take provocative actions, including a preemptive nuclear strike on the United States. According to Kagan, the convergence of these factors, which had nothing to do with Kennedy, led Khrushchev to conclude that the crisis was spinning out of control and that an accident or unauthorized Soviet or Cuban provocation could set off a nuclear war. Thus, Khrushchev chose to quit while he was ahead and accept Kennedy's concessions—the pledge not to invade and the promise to remove the Jupiters from Turkey.

For Kagan, Kennedy's only role in the resolution of the crisis was to concede to

¹⁹Kagan, *On the Origins of War*, p. 543.

²⁰*Ibid.*

Soviet demands. Moreover, it was Khrushchev's concern about variables unrelated to Kennedy that actually brought an end to the crisis. Once again, Frankel and Taubman essentially identify the same reasons for the end of the crisis but they interpret them differently. First, Frankel assesses Kennedy's decision to barter the Jupiters in Turkey for the missiles in Cuba as a rational and prudent choice. According to Taubman, Kennedy's decision to reply to Khrushchev's first letter of Friday, October 23rd, rather than the letter of Saturday, October 25th, was a rational choice and not a "Trollope ploy." He decided to provide the no-invasion pledge and to promise privately to remove the Jupiters at a later date. For Frankel, as well as Taubman, this decision was symbolic of Kennedy's deeply held desire to avoid an even more serious crisis, and is to be considered a prudent move, not a pathetic concession.

Of course, well before his decision to trade the Jupiters, the president decided to choose a middle ground between mere protest and military action: a blockade. The blockade, or rather quarantine, was the least provocative aggressive measure. Kennedy decided early on to give himself and Khrushchev room to maneuver or back down. The blockade provided Kennedy with more than one intermediate option before resorting to the use of force. If the Soviets had refused to remove the missiles from Cuba after the blockade was in place, then Kennedy could have tightened the blockade rather than using military force. In fact, the most dangerous situation that the blockade could have produced occurred on October 23rd when the Soviet vessels approached the American "cordon" and decided to turn back. Had the Soviet ships ignored the blockade, then the crisis would have hit a peak that was never reached during the 13 days in October 1962.

Frankel and Taubman both argue, however, that it was unlikely that Khrushchev or Kennedy would have crossed such a red line during those tense days. Indeed, for both Frankel and Taubman, it was the combination of both leaders' courage *and* prudence that, in the end, produced the peaceful settlement. Both of these authors agree that neither Khrushchev nor Kennedy really entertained the idea of starting World War III and therefore both sought to escape the crisis before it spun out of control. Taubman and Frankel agree with Kagan that the crisis was, in fact, in danger of serious escalation since, as Kagan points out, even the slightest accident, unintended provocation, or unauthorized offensive could have produced a domino effect. This was especially true on the American side, where Kennedy faced the urgency of finding a solution to the crisis before the hawks in his administration could no longer be restrained. There was danger of escalation on the Soviet side as well: Khrushchev had clearly lost absolute control over his soldiers on the ground in Cuba, never mind the Cubans themselves.

In the end, Frankel and Taubman praise Khrushchev and Kennedy for their willingness to end the crisis peacefully. For Khrushchev this decision was a serious threat to his personal prestige and political future, but Khrushchev realized the higher

value of ensuring that war with the United States was avoided at all costs. In Kennedy's case, the decision was not as difficult, but it still required some serious losses, especially the pledge not to invade Cuba. It had been the policy of the United States and the Kennedy administration to support rebel Cuban groups and even to seek every possible avenue for deposing Castro and returning Cuba to a democratic system of government. Yet Kennedy also recognized that it was necessary to prioritize, and avoiding war with the Soviet Union was first on Kennedy's list. As John Lewis Gaddis emphasizes, Kennedy was willing to accept compromise more than any other member of his administration: "Far from placing the nation and the world at risk to protect his own reputation for toughness, [Kennedy] probably would have backed down, in public if necessary, whatever the domestic political damage might have been."²¹

In Frankel's view, there was one last crucial factor in play in the peaceful resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis: pure luck. Frankel states, "Luck played a role in averting disaster, in preventing events from racing out of control."²² Frankel believes that, given the extreme amount of miscalculation, misinterpretation, and misjudgment that helped spawn the predicament, it could only have been luck that assisted Khrushchev and Kennedy in learning their own priorities and how to judge each other's actions. In addition, given the very tenuous hold that each leader had over the external variables, including the Cuban leaders, it could only have been luck that no unauthorized foul play occurred that might have set an even graver crisis in motion.

While Frankel and, to a lesser degree, Taubman laud Kennedy for his perseverance and craftiness in manipulating and dodging the demands from General Max Taylor and Admiral Curtis Le May, Kagan sounds as if he thinks that Kennedy never really gave the military option a chance, and that he was closed-minded in his determination not to be overpowered by the military men in the Joint Chiefs of Staff. What Kagan rightly points out about this issue is that it was more than just the military leaders who were pushing for military action, for so too were McGeorge Bundy, McCone, Llewellyn Thompson, Dean Acheson, and others. As Kagan writes, "Kennedy *was* under pressure from the military, and civilians as well, to take immediate military action, and the President *was* reluctant to do so."²³ And this was not the only time that Kennedy decided to buck the recommendations of his military advisers. On October 23rd Kagan recalls, "As the [Soviet] ships kept their course toward Cuba, over the passionate protests by the Navy, Kennedy pulled back the quarantine line from eight hundred miles, originally set to keep American ships out of range of Soviet MIGs on Cuba, to five hundred miles."²⁴

Instead of holding a hard line prior to the crisis and insisting on a decisive response during the crisis, Kennedy is described by Kagan as a foreign policy dilettante and sentimentalist, eager to sacrifice anything and everything to avoid war. Since the very first days of the crisis, Kagan says, Kennedy was ready and willing to give up the

²¹Taubman, *High Noon in the Cold War*, p. 174.

²²Frankel, *High Noon in the Cold War*, p. 5.

²³Kagan, *On the Origins of War*, p. 541.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 523.

American Jupiters in Turkey in exchange for the removal of the Soviet missiles from Cuba. Kagan believes that such a deal would have been unnecessary had Kennedy chosen a harder line and been willing to use America's vast military superiority.

As noted above, Kagan is also convinced that political considerations played at least as much a part as did security concerns when Kennedy was assessing the intelligence indicating the presence of the missiles in Cuba. Moreover, when discussing the blockade with his brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, the president expressed, in "puerile terms," his own disgust with the blockade since "it looks really mean."²⁵ But he and his brother agreed that if the president had done nothing to respond to the Soviet missiles in Cuba, he would have been impeached. Thus, Kagan is disgusted by what he sees as Kennedy's obsession with his own political safety even in the midst of a potential nuclear war.

Finally, Kagan's last major qualm about Kennedy's handling of the missile crisis regards his decision-making procedures. Kagan portrays Kennedy as a president who, even in the midst of a grave crisis, would not tolerate criticism. Indeed, Kagan's portrayal of Kennedy is akin to Taubman's portrayal of Khrushchev. According to Kagan, Kennedy was unwilling to listen to intelligence that contradicted his image of Khrushchev and how he saw Soviet intentions. And when Kennedy made a decision, for example to choose to blockade Cuba, he did so peremptorily, without receiving important opinions of those like Air Force General Walter C. Sweeney, who provided the president with information about how effective air strikes might be. In addition, although preaching the importance of consensus, the president was not fazed when the Joint Chiefs of Staff and his national security adviser openly declared that they were not part of the so-called consensus in favor of the blockade. When the president went to discuss the blockade decision with congressional Republican leaders, he provided so little room for their input that they demanded that they be recorded as "informed, not consulted."²⁶ Taken in combination, Kagan sees this series of events as indicative of a closed-minded and flawed decision-making process.

Taubman has the least to say specifically about Kennedy, since he is actually writing a biography about Khrushchev. Nevertheless, Taubman definitely provides supporting evidence for the picture of Kennedy as a decisive leader. From the very first day of the crisis, October 16th, Taubman tells his readers, that Kennedy was "determined that the missiles must go. No matter what his motives were, if Khrushchev got away with this, he would inevitably try other adventures."²⁷ Taubman implicitly extends this assessment of Kennedy in his analysis of Khrushchev. If, as Taubman contends, Khrushchev underestimated the strength of Kennedy's response, then clearly Kennedy was able to stand up to the premier during the most important moments of the crisis.

Frankel's own account provides more on Kennedy's role during the 13-day crisis.

²⁵Kagan, *On the Origins of War*, p. 523.

²⁶Kagan, *On the Origins of War*, p. 521.

²⁷Taubman, *Khrushchev*, p. 557.

In his narrative, Frankel discusses virtually every one of the points brought up by Kagan: Kennedy's fragile mandate, his political concerns, his desire to act tough towards Khrushchev, his battle with the hawkish Joint Chiefs, his debilitating illnesses, and his own personal conflict between what was right and what was effective as a course of action. Whereas Kagan portrays Kennedy as fairly easy to read and understand and as unimaginative, but full of naïve moral concerns and transparent political needs, Frankel paints a very complex Kennedy, one who may have been unprepared for the missile crisis on October 16th, but who amazingly grew into the role of statesman as the crisis unfolded.

Frankel's Kennedy is firm and calculated: "Those [Soviet] lies were going to be punished. Those missiles were going to be removed. The only question was how."²⁸ Kennedy chose to act in secret, rather than tell Khrushchev what he knew. For Kennedy believed, rightly, that "secrecy would shift the initiative in this crisis from the Kremlin to the White House."²⁹ According to Frankel, Kennedy remained calm and willing to compromise from the outset, since as much as he wanted the missiles removed from Cuba, he knew that rash action—perhaps military action—might provoke a war with the Soviet Union. And in the back of Kennedy's mind, his most important priority was the preservation of the peace.

To that end, Kennedy developed a series of options that he could choose from before the use of force would become necessary; according to Frankel, he was willing to wait months if necessary for the crisis to resolve itself peacefully. First, Kennedy's cooler head prevailed, and, in the early going, he decided against the original suggestion of air strikes and instead settled on the blockade. If necessary, Kennedy would be able to tighten the blockade to include oil and other supplies essential to Cuba. Additionally, Kennedy was utterly rational about the Jupiter missiles in Turkey, realizing that those obsolete missiles were not worth a war with the Soviets. Therefore, the president was perfectly willing to dismantle them in exchange for a Soviet retreat in Cuba. At the same time, however, Kennedy was firm enough to force Khrushchev to accept that promise privately, which preserved Kennedy's reputation for strong leadership with the Joint Chiefs and the American public, and preserved the United States' image with its NATO allies, while simultaneously scoring an important diplomatic victory for Kennedy vis-à-vis Khrushchev.

Kennedy was indeed so concerned with preserving international peace that he was prepared if necessary to announce the Jupiters deal publicly. Indeed, under Kennedy's orders, Secretary of State Dean Rusk "plotted a more circuitous escape route."³⁰ Rusk drafted a proposed Turkey-Cuba trade and sent the document to Andrew Cordier, then president of Columbia University and an old friend of United Nations Secretary General U Thant. If the Soviets insisted on the publication of this deal, Rusk would request Cordier to submit the draft to U Thant, who would present

²⁸Frankel, *High Noon in the Cold War*, p. 75.

²⁹*Ibid.*

³⁰Frankel, *High Noon in the Cold War*, p. 149.

the scheme to both the Soviets and the Americans as a UN initiative. This is further proof, provided by Frankel, that Kennedy was truly thinking out every angle during this crisis. Certainly, he had his priorities—missiles out without war—but he was also flexible and ready to change gears when necessary.

Ultimately, Kagan appears entirely too harsh on Kennedy. Of course, Kennedy might have done more to demonstrate to Khrushchev that the United States would not tolerate any Soviet expansionist adventures, especially in the Western hemisphere. By the end of the 13-day crisis, however, the United States was not in such awful shape. Indeed, Kagan seems unreasonably overconfident in assuming that an air strike would have been the more advantageous method of removing the missiles from Cuba. Soviet advisers and soldiers in the area would assuredly have perished in the attack and the strike might not have succeeded in eliminating all of the missiles, leaving the United States vulnerable to a retaliatory attack from the remaining Cuban missiles.

That other possible way was the blockade, or ‘quarantine,’ which was brilliantly designed and utilized by Kennedy and the Excomm. The blockade in itself was, of course, only enough to stop shipments of missiles and supplies, and was not capable of eliminating the missiles already stationed on the island. To achieve that goal, Kennedy would have had to choose between tightening the blockade, air strikes, or ‘sweetening’ the deal. Kennedy rightly chose to sweeten the deal. The president realized that Khrushchev did, in fact, have a legal right to place missiles in Cuba, and that those missiles were in reality no different than the U.S. missiles in Turkey. Since Kennedy was able to look more or less objectively upon the situation and attempt to see the world through Khrushchev’s eyes, he realized that there was no need to have a world war over missiles in Cuba.

If there was any ‘loss’ suffered by the United States it was through the pledge not to invade Cuba. Ironically, Kagan barely even speaks about this issue, since he spends almost all of his narrative criticizing Kennedy’s sacrifice of the Jupiter missiles in Turkey. The Jupiters were already obsolescent and were replaced by submarine-based nuclear weapons, and the United States still maintained far more intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of reaching the Soviet Union, than the Soviets had capable of striking the United States. Therefore, as long as Kennedy could soothe his NATO allies in the midst of the loss of the Jupiters, the United States would still maintain the upper hand in the international strategic balance. Kennedy realized this and acted astutely. If there was any place that the Soviets might have gained, however, it was not in relation to the Jupiters, but in Cuba. But the no-invasion pledge was anything but set in stone. According to Frankel, the Soviets themselves doubted the long-term reliability of the U.S. no-invasion promise. And it is well known that U.S. covert operations against Castro still continued into the 1970’s. In the end, as long as the United States kept a tight watch on the small island nation, did the United States really have to invade it? And Cuba might understandably make for some possible security

questions in the future, but not many, as long as the United States learned the lessons of the 1962 crisis and stepped up surveillance.

In the final analysis, the Cuban Missile Crisis was an enormous diplomatic and political victory for Kennedy and the United States, and a diplomatic and political loss for the Soviets, especially Khrushchev. The Soviets appeared to gain more—the removal of the Jupiters and the no-invasion pledge—but the Jupiters deal was not made public for almost a year and the no-invasion pledge was hardly permanent; thus, the combination of the two Soviet ‘gains’ did not significantly alter the strategic balance, or the overall dynamic, of the Cold War. Despite all his faults, and despite what he might have failed to do to preempt the crisis, Kennedy did indeed perform well under pressure. He kept his eye on what was important—preserving peace and removing the missiles—at the least cost to the United States. Thankfully, he achieved those goals.

LEETSPEAK: 13375p34 | < | - | 4xx0r3 |)

by Leah Prestamo

Since the invention of the Internet, a new language has emerged from the rapidly expanding forms of instant communication that have begun networking the entire world. This language is known as Leetspeak. The breeding ground for Leetspeak was originally online communication programs such as AOL Instant Messenger. Although the precise origins of Leetspeak are unknown, it is most likely that the language began in online communication programs with the frequent misspellings of words by fast typists who were unconcerned with their spelling. Over time, certain misspellings became generally accepted spellings of words because they made typing easier. For example, “you” was shortened to “u,” and gradually this new spelling became widely understood and accepted. Accepted misspellings slowly morphed into entirely new words, and, as time passed, a large vocabulary was developed. Then, with the invention of online multiplayer roleplaying games, the growing vocabulary of Leetspeak began to overflow into the spoken languages of these gamers.

The creators, and present-day speakers, of Leetspeak were people, generally in their teens or tweens, who were frequent players of these online multiplayer games (which will be explained in greater detail in the following lexicon) and were accustomed to communicating with others via the Internet. The misspellings that had grown out of programs like AOL Instant Messenger became standard words for these people, and gradually a new system of typing began to emerge. For reasons unknown to myself or any of the other speakers of Leetspeak I have spoken to, letters began to be transliterated into numbers and other characters. These transliterations were based on the resemblance numbers and characters, or combinations of characters,

bore to letters. For example, the letter “A” began to be typed as the number “4” and “J” began to be typed as “_.” Thus, Leetspeak is properly spelled “13375p34|<,” though it is most often shortened to “1337.” It is worth noting that 1337 typing was not created for convenience, since it can be seen that some transliterations of letters require more keystrokes than standard typing (for example: transliterating the letter “w” as “\/\” requires three extra keystrokes). This indicates that 1337 was, in part, created to distinguish 1337 typists as a class of their own, entirely distinct from mainstream culture, as well as other subcultures. This desire for distinction also appears in the vocabulary covered in the following lexicon, some of which were specifically created to sound 1337.

Over time, 13375p34|< began to develop its own words in addition to its new style of typing and spelling. Although these new words were originally used in typing exclusively, it was not long before typists of 13375p34|< began to use their newly created words in daily speech. Because of the vast numbers of people involved in online multiplayer games and other places where 13375p34|< was being used, and because of the “instant” communication possible between them, new words spread quickly and were soon widely understood and used. The words created by 13375p34|< fit into five categories: those that were created to make typing easier; those used to avoid filters on chat rooms and other such places (which were set to inhibit the use of profanities and restrict discussion about hacking and pirated software); those created to describe newly emerging ideas adequately; those formed from frequent misspellings that stuck; and, once 13375p34|< had become a well-established language, those created specifically to make words sound more 13375p34|<-ish. Each word in the following dictionary fits into at least one of these categories.

1337 has become so widely spoken (it is, in fact, used worldwide) among Internet gamers (players of online multiplayer games) that it has become difficult for persons who do not belong to this subculture to understand the speech of these gamers, let alone their typing. For this reason, I undertook to write this dictionary, so that those who have contact with such gamers can begin to understand the words of 13375p34|<. In order to make this dictionary as accurate as possible, I interviewed several Internet gamers, who have been a part of this subculture for many years and have watched it develop. It must be noted, however, that the entries in this dictionary can only describe the uses of these words; I do not mean to give prescriptive definitions of these words or imply that the definitions I give are the only possible uses of these words. 1337 is constantly growing and changing; thus, many of the words I have included here may change or expand in meaning in the future, and may perhaps be used differently in different online games and programs.

The words in this dictionary are restricted to words that are not used in English, or are assigned entirely new meanings in 1337. Typed 1337 is primarily made up of

English words translated into the 1337 style of typing. This dictionary is not intended to be a code-breaker to help decipher 1337 typing, but rather a dictionary to help people who do not speak 1337 to understand the spoken aspects of 1337. The entries of this dictionary are only words that are spoken by 1337 speakers, and have meanings exclusive to 1337.

Because 1337 has no standardized spellings, I have chosen to include only the most common spellings of each word. Because certain characters have more than one possible equivalent, any given word in 1337 may be spelled many ways. For example, “a” can be translated as “4,” “@,” or “/-\.” In addition to this, any individual may choose to leave a certain letter as a standard character in any given word and this choice cannot be considered incorrect. For these reasons, I have chosen the most common transliteration for each letter of the alphabet and will keep my transliterations consistent throughout. For instance, “a” will always appear as “4,” “e” will always appear as “3,” and so on. Some letters have no common transliteration, such as “z,” which generally appears in 1337 typing without a substitute, though the occasional 1337 speaker may transliterate it as “2.” In these cases I have left the letter as it appears. In this manner, I am essentially standardizing 1337 spellings in order to make this dictionary convenient and accessible to those with no prior knowledge of 1337. At the same time, although I am keeping my transliterations of letters constant throughout this dictionary, there are words in which certain characters generally transliterated are always left as standard characters, even by fluent typists of 1337. I have left those letters as they appear. An example of this is the word “t3h” in which the generally transliterated “t” is always left as a standard character. The reasons for these inconsistencies in 1337 are unknown to me, and most likely to all 1337 speakers; yet, because I wish to present the most common spellings of words in this dictionary, I will refrain from standardizing my transliterations too much and will set these words forth as they are, in fact, most commonly typed. I set these spellings forth not as the only correct ones, but simply the most common ones.

In addition to standardizing spellings, I have also chosen to use the most extreme form of 1337 possible. Many 1337 typists, simply because 1337 typing is so much more complicated than ordinary typing, use somewhat diluted forms of 1337. In these diluted forms, certain letters are arbitrarily left as ordinary characters when they could be translated into 1337. Because I want to give a strong sample of what 1337 typing and spelling look like, I have chosen to transliterate every letter that a 1337 typist would conceivably transliterate.

As a last point, I should include a note about the organization of the entries in this dictionary. For each entry, the 1337 spelling of the word is given as the entry word and is followed by the English spelling, except in those cases where the English spelling is the same as the 1337 spelling. However, since it is difficult to organize a

collection of words that begin with letters, numbers, or other characters, the entries will be alphabetized according to their English spellings. In order to make words easy to locate, anytime they are referred to at other places in the dictionary, the English translation of the word will be provided.

As previously mentioned, 13375p34|< is constantly growing and changing. There are thousands of speakers of the language worldwide, some, in fact, who cannot even speak standard English, but can speak fluent 1337. With the invention of new technology and new online games and resources, new words are being constantly created and the meanings of old words may be altered. The words I have included in this dictionary may soon be obsolete and new words have quite likely already been created that are not included here. I include this information not to undermine the credibility of the following dictionary, but to alert the reader that the following information is, unavoidably, limited.

Afk—Initialism—a[way] f[rom] k[eyboard]. A message used to signify that a person has left his computer. Etymology—The origin of this initialism is unknown, but it was certainly created for convenience in typing. This word is used alone as an entire sentence.

C-1—Adverb. Affirmative; yes; it is so. Etymology—This word was derived from a key-command signifying “yes” in Counterstrike, an **fps** (see entry **fps** for more information); the word moved from specifically meaning affirmative in the limited realm of Counterstrike, to meaning affirmative in general.

-ez—Suffix. An ending that, when attached to a noun, creates the plural form of the word, and when attached to a verb creates the present tense. Also used to add emphasis. Etymology—This suffix is a variant of the “s” ending (which is used to pluralize or

create the present tense) and was probably adopted because of the pronunciation of the final “s” of pluralized English words. This change was most likely adopted to make words appear more 1337. In certain cases, if a word ends in “-es,” the “s” will simply be changed to a “z.” Example: *waffles* becomes *wafflez* and *rofl* becomes *roflez*.

Fps—Initialism—(1) f[first] p[erson] s[hooter]. Noun. A computer game that can be played online with other participants, or offline alone. Etymology—This initialism was created to make this frequently-used phrase easier to type and say. Example: *Counterstrike is an fps*.

| - | 4 (| < (hack)—Verb. 1. To gain entrance to a computer or program one should not be able to enter. 2. To defeat, enter, or master (usually combined with suffix **-x0rx** for this meaning; for further information, see **-x0rx (-xorx)**).

Etymology—The origins of the original word “hack” are unknown; however, the word evolved from its original specific meaning, to enter a computer or program one should not be able to enter, to the more general meaning, to defeat, enter, or master. Example: *Grace, once I |-|4(|< your secret code, I'll be able to understand everything you say to your brother.*

|00 (joo)—Pronoun. You; second person singular or plural pronoun. Etymology—Origin unknown, though it is speculated that this word grew from the common pronunciation of “you” after words ending in “d,” for example, “would you” as “wou’joo.” This was probably also a deliberate attempt to create a new, specifically 1337 word. Example: *|00 are t3h smart.*

1337 (leet)—1. Noun. Shortened version of 13375p34|< (leetspeak), the name of a system of substituting numbers and characters for letters while typing, and a language consisting of a newly formed, limited, spoken vocabulary. 2. Adjective. Elite; special; awesome; incredible. Etymology—Apheretic form of the word “elite,” with the spelling changed to make it easier to type. Example: (def. 1) *This is a dictionary of 1337.* (def. 2) *My new video game is incredibly 1337.*

13375p34|< (leetspeak)—Noun. The name of a system of substituting

numbers and characters for letters while typing, and a language consisting of a newly formed, limited, spoken vocabulary.

Etymology—This word consists of two morphemes, “1337 (leet)” (see entry 1337 (leet) for the etymology of this morpheme), and “5p34|< (speak).” These two morphemes were fused together to form a compound word literally meaning “the speech of the elite.” Example: *I can understand 13375p34|<, can you?*

Mmorpg—Initialism- m[assively] m[ultiplayer] o[nline] r[oleplaying] g[ame]. An online game in which each player assumes an identity not his or her own and plays in a persistent world, meaning the game continues regardless of whether or not any individual player is participating at any given moment. Etymology—This initialism was created to make this frequently-used phrase easier to type and say. Example: *The identities players assume in any |V| |V|0rp9 often become like second lives to them.*

|\\|3\\//bi3 (newbie)—Noun. 1.

Any person who is new to an online game. 2. A derogatory term for any person who is new to any particular field. Etymology—This word is a combination of two morphemes: “|\\|3\\// (new)” and “bi3 (bie).” The meaning of this word evolved from its original neutral and specific meaning, any

person who is new to an online game, to a pejorative and more general meaning. Example: *Jen keeps falling off her bike; she's such a |\|3\|bi3.*

|\|00b (noob)—Noun. For definition, see entry |\|3\|bi3 (newbie). Etymology—This is a clipped form of |\|3\|bi3 (newbie), the spelling of which has been altered for typing convenience.

|\|_|b (nub)—Noun. For definition, see entry |\|3\|bi3 (newbie). Etymology—This is a variant of “|\|00b (noob),” the spelling and pronunciation of which was altered for convenience.

omfg—Initialism—o[h] m[y] f[ucking] g[od]. Etymology—Created for convenience while typing and also to avoid filters of chat rooms and other such mediums that are set to block the use of profanities. The initialism is used alone as an exclamatory sentence.

pwn—Verb. To master; defeat; conquer. Etymology—This word is the result of the frequent misspelling of the word “own,” which is caused by the “o” and “p” keys being located next to one another. The use of the word “own” to describe mastery is taking the meaning of the word from the concrete to the abstract. Example: *I pwn everyone when it comes to tennis; no one has beaten me yet.*

Pr099i3 (proggie)—Noun. User-made programs used to enhance basic

programs from Internet service providers. Etymology—This is the clipped form of the word “programs.” Example: *If you want to bother someone online, you'll need a pr099i3 that floods their mailbox.*

rofl—Acronym—r[olls] o[n] f[loor] l[laughing]. A term used to express great amusement. Etymology—Created to provide a brief way to express amusement, though the full term was not in use before the initialism was created. This acronym is used as an entire sentence.

Rtfm—Initialism—r[ead] t[he] f[ucking] m[annual]. A term used to provide a brief answer to simple questions, such as “why won't my computer turn on?” posted on help boards. Etymology—Created to provide an easy way to say a much-used phrase. This initialism is used as a complete sentence.

5(|-|001 (school)—To teach someone a lesson; to bring upon someone their come-uppance. Etymology—The meaning of this word became specialized and more specific from the general meaning it has in standard English. Example: *If that boy disrespects you again, you'd better 5(|-|001 him; give him a beating he won't forget.*

5(rip7|<i>i|)|i3 (scriptkiddie)—Noun. A person who uses visual basic scripts, which are simple, malignant programs used to destroy other people's computers;

one who uses cheap tactics to harm others. Etymology—this word is a compound word compose of three morphemes “5(rip7 (script),” “| <I |) (kid),” and “i3 (ie),” most likely to make the term as derogatory as possible by implying the childishness of the person and using the diminutive “ie” for emphasis. Example: *If Matt doesn’t learn another programming language soon, someone will call him a 5(rip7 | <i |) |i3.*

stfu—Initialism—s[hut] t[he] f[uck] u[p]. Etymology—Created for convenience and also to avoid the filters on chat rooms and other such mediums that are set to block the use of profanities. This initialism is used as a single sentence.

t3h (teh)—Article. The; a definite article. Etymology—This word is a misspelling of the word “the” that became an accepted word. Example: *You are t3h smart one.*

\/\4r3z (warez)—Noun. Pirated software; software one has illegally obtained. Etymology—This word is the clipped form of the word “software” that was deliberately shortened to avoid filters on chat rooms and other such mediums that were set to prevent conversations from dealing with hacking. Example: *I get all my mp3s from \/\4r3z sites.*

\/\007 (woot)—Interjection. An exclamation of delight; hooray;

yippee. Etymology—Origin unknown. This word is used alone as a complete sentence.

wtf—Initialism—w[hat] t[he] f[uck].

Etymology—Created for typing convenience and also to avoid the filters on chat rooms and other such mediums that are set to block the use of profanities. This initialism is used as a single sentence or in conjunction with other words. Example: *Wtf is wrong with you?*

-x0rx (-xorx)—Suffix. An ending that can be attached to a noun or verb to add emphasis. Note: when attached to words ending in “ck” the “ck” generally changes to an “x.” In addition, when appearing before an “ed” ending, the final “x” is dropped. Etymology—This suffix was created specifically to make certain words seem more 1337 and to add emphasis. Example: *Jamesx0rx haxx0red my xanga site.*

THE PROGRESSION OF SIGHT FROM THE PHYSICAL TO THE METAPHYSICAL IN JOHN MILTON

by Min Ja Hong

John Milton's epic *Paradise Lost*, and his dramatic poem *Samson Agonistes*, discuss the larger themes of mankind's relationship with God. Among the most fundamental of these themes is that of the Physical versus the Metaphysical with regard to man's perception of God, which is limited by his need of sensory proof. Milton addresses this issue by depicting Adam and Eve in *Paradise Lost* as relying on their senses in order to understand the world around them, a need which eventually leads to their downfall. This may be seen specifically in Eve's preoccupation with physical sight, and the purely mechanical way in which she initially perceives her world. In *Samson Agonistes*, the main protagonist, Samson, relying too heavily on his physical strength, is initially depicted in a state of crisis, having lost his physical sight. In order to illustrate man's ideal relationship with God, Milton's characters undergo a progression from depending solely on sensory sight to accepting a more spiritual or faith relationship with God based on faith and denoting a state of Grace. Milton uses the motifs of light and dark to illustrate mechanical sight as a means of gaining physical knowledge as opposed to inner sight by which God imparts metaphysical knowledge to his characters. The light, which enables physical sight, is symbolic of God and his grace while the dark, which impedes physical sight and thus enlightenment, is taken to be the absence of God's grace.

In *Paradise Lost*, the character of Eve, who is made inferior to Adam intellectually, relies more on her mechanical perception of sight, indicating that she is unable to grasp the greater metaphysical idea of God's grace. Her inferior knowledge of all

things is therefore depicted as being, for the most part, based on her senses. Thus after she eats the Forbidden Fruit in Book 9, she rationalizes her sin with her limited perception of God's 'sight,' which she equivocates with her own limited mechanical sight. Eve reveals how her sensory perception of the world at this moment affects her relationship with God :

...Experience, next to thee I owe,
 Best guide; not following thee, I had remained
 In ignorance, thou op'nst Wisdoms way,
 And giv'st access, though secret she retire.
 And I perhaps am secret; Heaven is high,
 High and remote to see from thence distinct
 Each thing on Earth; and other care perhaps
 May have diverted from continual watch

Our great Forbidder, safe with all his Spies ... (*Paradise Lost* 9.807-14)

This alteration in how she perceives God, indicated by the epithet "Our great Forbidder," foreshadows her moment of crisis in which God, along with his angels ("Spies") will proceed to make the Garden of Eden forbidden to Adam and Eve in Book 12. Her dependence on her own senses as opposed to the knowledge that God would impart to her through Adam, is revealed in the first lines of her veneration to "Experience" as the "Best Guide" and a source of "Wisdom" (9.807-809).

Since the "Experience" she speaks of is based on her own sensory perceptions, Eve seems to sins by elevating herself above her proper position in God's hierarchy. In this case she not only raises herself above Adam but also equates her capabilities with God's: "I perhaps am secret; Heaven is high,/High and remote to see from thence distinct/Each thing on Earth" (9.811-12). She rationalizes that God's sight must be limited like her own and there is the chance that he did not physically see her transgression, because of the limitations of distance on physical sight. This reliance on the purely physical aspect of sight in understanding or interpreting God's will echoes in the Chorus of *Samson Agonistes*, since they too seem unenlightened as to the mental and spiritual aspects of Samson's relationship with God.

The Chorus's perception of Samson's plight is limited to the physical, which they equate with the mental and spiritual aspects of Samson's relationship with God at the start of *Samson Agonistes*. The Chorus, lamenting Samson's state, says, "Which shall I first bewail, / The Bondage of lost Sight, / Prison within Prison/ Inseparably dark? / Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!)/ The Dungeon of; thy Soul" (*Samson Agonistes* lines 151-56). The unenlightened Chorus thus laments the state of Samson's physical condition as a reflection of the state of his Soul. The "lost Sight" they "bewail" is significant, and therefore capitalized by Milton, as meaning both his inner sight, his

relationship with God, and his physical blindness. However their view is unsupported, and shows the superficial nature of the Chorus in equating Samson's physical and spiritual states. In fact, the Chorus continues to say, "Imprison'd now indeed, / In real darkness of the body dwells, / Shut up from outward light / To incorporate with gloomy night; / For inward light alas / Puts forth no visual beam" (*Samson Agonistes* lines 158–64). This implies that the Chorus knows of Samson's relationship with God by its allusion to the "inward light." However, it considers the "inward light" subject to the lack of "outward light" caused by Samson's blindness.

The idea that mechanical sight may affect inner sight is also reflected in Samson's own initial lamentations of his blindness as, "Oh loss of sight, of thee I most complain! / Blind among enemies, O worse then chains, / Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age! / Light the prime work of God to me is extinct" (lines 67–70). The motifs of light and dark continue with the Chorus's assessment of Samson's predicament. The line, "Light the prime work of God to me is extinct," suggests that Samson is not talking exclusively about his physical blindness. Rather, he is also lamenting that God's "Light" is "to me extinct" indicating that he sees the damage to his relationship with God. In this way Samson shows an awareness of the different aspects of sight, both physical and spiritual. However, in his lamentation he makes the inner sight subject to the physical capacity of sight by observing that "since light so necessary is to life, / And almost life it self, if it be true / That light is in the Soul, / She all in every part; why was the sight / To such a tender ball as th' eye confin'd" (lines 90–94).

In this way, Samson's initial perception of sight is similar to that of the Chorus, except that he acknowledges that there is another "light" allowing for inner sight, which is endangered by his actions. The Chorus, however, attributes his problem to the physical blindness that has reduced him to the "Dungeon of [his] Soul," which is "inseparably dark" (*Samson Agonistes* 154–56).

This motif of light and dark is also found in *Paradise Lost* at the moment of crisis in which Adam and Eve awaken after they have eaten the Forbidden Fruit. Milton writes that "...they rose / As from unrest, and each other viewing, / Soon found thir eyes how op'nd, and thir minds / How dark'nd; innocent, that as a veile / Had shadow'd them from knowing ill, was gon" (*Paradise Lost* 9.1051–1055). This passage suggests, that as their physical sight, indicated by "thir eyes how op'nd", was enhanced, their mental state was conversely "dark'nd". This scene also illustrates the fallibility of physical sight by bringing Eve, who relied only on the physical senses to understand her position and her connection with God, to a moment of crisis in which "the veile [which] had shadow'd them from knowing ill" was taken away (9.1055). In this way the motif of darkness or shadow is used to indicate the absence of God, whereas the newfound clarity or 'light' in physical sight that is given to Eve takes her further from God and his inner light.

This scene of crisis is mirrored later on in *Paradise Lost* when Eve awakens by herself in the Garden of Eden for the last time in Book 12. The idea of awakening, although applied to the physical action of stirring from sleep, is also indicative of an internal enlightenment. Eve's moment of crisis in which she realizes what has happened as a consequence of her eating the apple is mirrored later on in Book 12, reflecting how her crisis has been resolved through an internal enlightenment or sight brought on by the dreams she has while still in the Garden of Eden. For instance she states,

For God is also in sleep, and Dreams advise,
Which he hath sent propitious, some great good
Presaging, since with sorrow and hearts distress
Wearied I fell asleep: but now lead on;
In mee is no delay; without thee here to stay,
Is to go hence unwillingly; thou to mee
Art all things under Heav'n, all places thou,
Who for my willful crime art banisht hence.
This further consolation yet secure
I carry hence; though all by me is lost,
Such favor I unworthy am voutsaft,
By me the Promis'd Seed shall all restore (*Paradise Lost* 12.611–622)

The first three lines of the passage above show Eve's new perception of knowledge that is not gained by physical sight but rather by "presaging" sight through the internal vehicle of "Dreams". This change of perception is also applied to God who is no longer the "great Forbinder" as He was in her initial perception of sight in Book 9 (*Paradise Lost* 9.814). Eve's awakening from the dreams God has sent her marks her new enlightenment that her relationship to God is not defined by the physical limitations that the senses, especially physical sight, provide. By accepting the dreams that "he hath sent propitious... [p]resaging" she embraces a new kind of inner vision that is based on faith. This faith is necessary since it shows Eve through the internal medium of dreams that Grace will redeem her of her "willful crime" by the "Promis'd Seed" that she shall "carry hence". This is referring to Christ who will eventually be born through her progeny and bring true grace to mankind, as well as her own recognition of her sin, which allows her grace through the "consolation" of the vision.

A similar progression occurs in *Samson Agonistes*, although the dramatic poem begins with the crisis of Samson's imprisonment and blinding. However, there is a specific moment of crisis in which Samson struggles with the physical versus the spiritual as he does throughout his career when the Philistines summon him to perform in honor of their deity, Dagon. However, he is moved from both the crisis

of his imprisoned state and the dilemma of going to perform for the religious day of the Philistines by an event not unlike Eve's awakening in *Paradise Lost*. Samson states that he,

....begin[s] to feel
Some rousing motions in me which dispose
To something extraordinary my thoughts.
I with this Messenger will go along,
Nothing to do, be sure, that may dishonour
Our Law, or stain my vow of Nazarite.
If there be aught of presage in the mind
This day will be remarkable in my life
By some great act, or of my days the last. (Samson Agonistes lines 1381–89)

The “rousing motions” that he feels are supposedly from God, who sends them in a form similar to Eve's dreams, that is, through the inner medium of thought. The difference is that Samson is awake when the “rousing motions” come to him. However, the similarity is in the use of the word “presage”, which means to portend or foreshadow coming events. Samson acts on this inner sight or vision of future events by accepting the idea of Faith, a conceptual notion, as opposed to the concrete, physical sight that he has lost and that he initially thought connected to his inner sight or relationship with God. The use of the word “Presage” in both Eve's and Samson's progression from perceiving the physical aspect of sight to recognizing the mental and spiritual aspect of inner sight is interesting since it indicates the foreshadowing quality of their inner sight. This inner sight leads them to Faith that results in God's grace.

Samson's development in particular is further complicated by his martyrdom. After this event, the Chorus, who initially considered Samson's physical plight to be a reflection of his inner being, breaks apart to become the Semi-chorus. This Semi-chorus, unlike the full Chorus, seems more enlightened, further supporting the idea of a progression from regarding sight as merely a physical sense to a metaphysical vision indicating faith as the basis of a relationship with God, and the grace that comes from that relationship. The Semi-chorus emphasizes Samson's realization of the importance of inner sight by juxtaposing his final act with the blatant physicality of the Philistines who,

...only set on sport and play
Unweeingly importun'd

Thir own destruction to come speedy upon them.

So fond are mortal men

Fall'n into wrath divine,
 As thir own ruin on themselves to invite,
 Insensate left, or to sense reprobate.
 And with blindness internal struck
 Semichor. But he though blind of sight,
 Despis'd and thought extinguish't quite,
 With inward eyes illuminated (*Samson Agonistes* lines 1679–89)

The preoccupation with the physical is indicated by words such as “sport”, “play,” and “mortal” in the passage above referring to the Philistines. This consideration of only the mechanical and physical brought down upon them the “wrath divine” making “thir own ruin on themselves to invite.” The use of the word “insensate,” which refers to a want of mental or moral feeling according to the Oxford English Dictionary, signifies that the Philistine’s preoccupation with physical pleasures resulted in the lack of inner sight, leaving them “to sense reprobate,” meaning as “one who has fallen away from grace”(OED, “reprobate”). Their consideration of only the physical has “with blindness internal struck” which serves as a contrast to the Semi-chorus’s reference to Samson as, despite being “blind of [physical] sight” now has “inward eyes illuminated”, indicating his last act of martyrdom is based on a spiritual awakening or inner sight imparted by God. The line, “Despised and thought extinguish’t quite/ With inward eyes illuminated,” is in a sense a refutation of the Chorus’s initial position that Samson’s physical blindness was an indication of his spiritual state, or relationship with God.

The theme of physical versus spiritual sight and the progression to greater enlightenment by finding the inner light is central in many of Milton’s works. However, it is pertinent to note that both *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes* were written well after the onset of Milton’s own physical blindness. In her book, *The Life of John Milton: A Critical Biography*, Barbara Lewalski proposes the actual date of Milton’s complete blindness to be March 1652, while she dates the writing of the manuscript of *Paradise Lost* to be “around 1658.” (279, 442) While the actual date of composition for *Samson Agonistes* is open to debate, according to Roy Flannagan, both works were written roughly around the time that Milton’s sight began to become compromised (*The Riverside Milton* 792). Another, much more condensed exploration of this issue and the motifs he uses to discuss it may be found in Milton’s “Sonnet 19: When I consider how my light is spent,” written around 1652 at the onset of his blindness.

In “Sonnet 19”, Milton presents the problem of his own blindness and its effect on his work. After the pronouncement of the problem, he refutes what he has initially stated as the problem to reach a resolution that emphasizes the idea of Grace. Using

the same motifs that he later uses in *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes*, Milton creates a play on dark and light in the first lines: When I consider how my light is spent, / Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide, / And that one Talent which is death to hide, / Lodg'd in me useless, though my Soul more bent / to server therewith my Maker, and present / My true account ("Sonnet 19" lines 1–6). The "light" in the first line indicates as it does in his later works the presence of God in him, and the "dark" of the second line offers a contrast to the world that is without God in its state of sin as well as being a reference to his own physical blindness, thus making himself somewhat of a beacon of light in a Godless world. It is this sense of obligation that poses the dilemma in the next lines, which is that his blindness impedes his work, otherwise his means of serving God.

However, as with any sonnet, there must be a final resolution, and Milton comes to the conclusion that he "who best / Bear his milde yolk, they serve him best... / ... / They also serve who only stand and waite" ("Sonnet 19" lines 10–11, 14). The ultimate conclusion elevates the idea of inner Faith, that leads to Grace, as opposed to only physical deeds that "God doth not need" ("Sonnet 19" line 9). Therefore the idea of Grace is exemplified in the end since man does not need to achieve physical deeds in order to serve God, only be willing to "Bear his milde yolk" and "stand and waite," which both indicate internal processes.

Thus "Sonnet 19" is a concentrated version of Milton's later works *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes*. The progression of perceiving the physical and metaphysical aspects of Sight through the occurrence of a crisis holds true for Eve and Samson, as well as Milton himself. The fact that Milton uses the motifs of light and dark in conveying the presence and absence of God from each character's inner self reveals a play on the same pairs' effect on physical sight, to either enhance or impair. The progression concludes with Eve leaving the Garden of Eden with a newfound inner sight, manifested in a faith of God's grace while Samson's newfound inner vision results in his physical death signifying his redemption by the inner vision sent by God. The larger issue of elevating the importance of inner sight as opposed to physical sight ultimately addresses the metaphysical concepts of Faith and Grace that are at the heart of man's relationship with God in Milton's world.

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POLITICAL CARTOONS IN THE UNITED STATES

by Rattan Kamboj

Political cartoons have been a part of our life in America since our beginning and they remain a beloved and effective means of expressing opinion in the editorial portions of American news media. In the United States, they were integral in helping to achieve independence from Britain. However, political cartoons are more than just humorous works of art. They make us think about our political ideology and have been influential throughout U.S. history. Where did they originate, and what is their significance in our lives in the 21st century?

Ironically, political cartoons declare a statement with few or no words. “A political cartoon is a peculiar thing: out of the practice of politics, which is conducted essentially through words, it makes an image” (Lewis 27). Still, the written word may play a useful role, since most cartoons contain a “cant political phrase of the day” (Lewis 27). Remarkably, neither the art nor the actual words have to be funny, but instead it is the “combination of the two elements” that determine a successful cartoon (Lewis 27).

But really what is a political cartoon? Primarily, a political cartoon is a satirical or humorous drawing that comments on an event or issue. The political cartoon has a specific agenda, and that is “to bring order through governmental action” by “championing a specific political faction or point of view” (Press 11, 13). Herbert Block believed that cartoons should have meaning “beyond the chuckle” (Herblock’s History 19). Critics claim that political cartoons predispose a reader to a political side. Defenders of the art assert that an “implicit appeal to do something political” must inherently exist in the reader (Press 13).

Perhaps, the simplicity of political cartoons contributes to their success. They are distinguished by their highly biased, superficial, and unsubstantiated arguments: "The cartoon is incapable of complex argument or fine distinction" (Lewis 27). Cartoon parameters leave "no room for explorations of character or nuanced discussions of motive" (Lewis 30). Rather they embody a whole stance on an issue in a single unique moment, usually with a lasting appeal. Emphasis on the single moment is the culmination of a political cartoon. Also, the addition of humor can make even the most serious events easier to understand: "Laughter warms the coldest heart and lends perspective to serious issues and events" (Herblock's History 16). As Herbert Block himself said, they make "it a little easier for the medicine to go down" (Herblock's History 16).

Many characteristics separate the good cartoons from the less effective ones. The actual art in a cartoon is not of paramount importance (Press 18). Rather, cartoonists would agree that only those who intrinsically believe in their art can produce a good cartoon: "In a good cartoon the aroma of genuine sentiment seems to be floating about in the air somewhere, instead of the more pungent stink of false emotion or false political morality covered with cheap perfume" (Press 19). The legends, Nast and Herbert Block, were passionate crusaders for their respective political/social causes. If they were simply "mercenary" freelancers, nobody would remember them. Certain factors determine if a cartoon will ever be considered merited. The one important circumstance is whether the subject of the cartoon will have significance in the future, and this often means that the times produce the important cartoons and cartoonists rather than the contrary (Press 23). Even the classic cartoons somewhat garble the transmission of their messages. Analyzing an old cartoon may be difficult due to lack of contextual knowledge and social conditions. Also, imagery and colloquialisms that were used in the past are usually obsolete or even take on completely different meanings in our day and age (Press 29).

One important aspect of political cartoons is that their growth was proportional to the growth and development of technology (Press 33). The technology imperative caused four important effects. The advent of the printing press enabled accurate, mass production at a faster and cheaper rate (Press 34). The artist himself also was affected by such an innovation. Chiefly, these were determining the potential audience and the artistic and political limitations of the artists in light of social, economic, and political conditions (Press 35). In the late 1890's, advances in photoengraving removed the cumbersome forms of engraving and etching, and more importantly made the cartoon a daily feature of the newspapers. Photoengraving also helped growth in the field. Hometown papers found an increasing demand for cartoonists: "The impact of this change was to make the cartoon in the daily newspaper first a novelty and then a necessity" (Press 47). Lead cutting, which was durable and easy to transport around the

country, paradoxically decreased the number of smaller newspaper cartoonists. Instead, national syndication of the important cartoonists became the new trend (Press 47). Hence it is interesting to note that the increase in technology had many interesting implications.

Political cartoons have been around in America since the beginning of the American Revolution. Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790), the “most versatile of Americans” has been deemed the pioneering political cartoonist in America (Hoff 31). His political cartoon is probably one of the most famous cartoons ever (Appendix I). Actually drawn in the beginning of the French and Indian War in 1754, Franklin’s figure of a cut up snake with the caption “JOIN or DIE” would circulate in 1765 and once again in 1776 (Hoff 31). Each piece of the cut up snake represented a divided colony that would only become strong if united, but Charles Press explains a deeper meaning of the cartoon: “One gets the point even if he or she has forgotten that old wives’ tale which says that a snake joined before sundown will grow together again and keep living” (29). Franklin’s contributions to early political cartoons would eventually be eclipsed by possibly the two greatest political cartoonists of American history: Thomas Nast and Herbert Block.

Thomas Nast (1840–1902), a German immigrant, “was destined to become the greatest political cartoonist of the Civil War, and probably in all of American history for that matter” (Hoff 68). He is “the gold standard for generating action” that later cartoonists would compare themselves to (Marschall 6). Called a “congenial ruffian, Nast found a craft dominated by other ruffians and hacks and made it respectable” (Lewis 28). He was said to have disciplined American cartooning (Lewis 28). Early in his career he went to Italy to cover their unification movement, and then returned to a war-torn U.S. He came back to a spot on the staunchly pro-Union Harper’s Weekly. By now the railroad and telegraph created almost instantaneous communication and allowed the nation to follow the war in “real time” (Lewis 28). Nast was the true liberal of his day. He fought for racial equality for the Chinese immigrations in California, for the Blacks in slavery, and for the Sioux nation in captivity (Hoff 70–72). Interestingly enough he also created the modern graphic representations of Santa Claus in 1870 (Appendix II), the Democratic Donkey (Appendix III), and Republican Elephant (Appendix IV) (1870 and 1874) (Lewis–28). Also, his representation of the modern Uncle Sam is still used today (Press 220–222, 227).

Nast will be forever remembered for his style. He was “the fecund inventor of graphic symbols, or props,” exemplified by all of his contributions to pop culture (Lewis 28). He was also labeled “America’s greatest” in the “emblematic style of the old fashioned allegory” (Press 244). Nast’s style was a testament to the technology, or lack thereof, in his time. Works first had to be etched into wood engravings before being printed. His style utilized linear images, was curvaceous, and extensively shaded. All

three masteries “played to Nast’s strengths, including his great feel for physiognomy” (Lewis 28). Nast’s drawings of facial structures in particular could elicit a multitude of emotions and responses, “from furious outrage to mock pathos to elegiac grandeur” (Lewis 28). Nast is the most important contributor to American political cartooning. Ironically, he associated the cartoon with “anti-establishment politics,” yet also “brought the political cartoon into the establishment” (Lewis 28).

Nast became a cartooning legend for his campaign against Tammany Hall in the early 1870’s. The head of this political machine in New York City from 1857 to 1871 was “Boss” William Marcy Tweed. Tammany Hall will always be remembered for the “flagrant dishonesty” of its party bosses (Hoff 74). Boss Tweed’s corruptions in the political process were too numerous to even be named. In 1870, Nast “was ready, and at hand was Tammany Hall’s Boss Tweed” (Press 246). In a little more than one year Nast uncovered the majority of the corruption of the “Tweed Ring” and also raised the subscription of his magazine, *Harper’s Weekly*, threefold (Press 246). Boss Tweed who rightly became worried about his political life, offered to silence both *The New York Times* for \$5,000,000 and Nast for \$100,000 (Marschall 2). But in late 1871, Tweed was found guilty and sentenced to 12 years in prison. After fleeing to Spain, he was allegedly caught because someone recognized him from a Thomas Nast cartoon (Hoff 77–78). When asked about Nast, Tweed responded, “I don’t care what they print about me, most of my constituents can’t read anyway—but them damn pictures!” (Hoff 77). Nast’s cartooning efforts and moral uprightness in light of bribery and other forms of threats led to the conviction of Tweed, who had been discovered to have “bilked” the people of New York City of \$200,000,000 (Hoff 77, 78).

Sadly, Thomas Nast’s success was short lived. Throughout his career, and even after his rise to artistic acclaim, Nast was “checked” chronically by his editor George William Curtis (Hess 53). Nast was a genuine and honest artist, refusing to support ideas he opposed in his cartoons. However, after the fame he won over the Tammany Hall scandal, he began to lose his audience to different up and coming artists. After irreconcilable differences, Nast left *Harper’s Weekly* in 1887 and started his own *Nast’s Weekly* in 1890, which failed after only five months (Hess 57–58). Nast’s success would never reach the levels of the early 1870’s again.

After Nast’s decline in popularity, for nearly 50 years, not one of his successors came even close to his greatness until Herbert “Herblock” Block (1909–2001): “In the fifties he became the most influential American political cartoonist since Thomas Nast” (Press 301). Herblock, as he was always known was also one of the most prolific and sturdy cartoonists; he was nationally syndicated in 1933 and worked until weeks before his death in 2001 (Lewis 28). He won a total of four Pulitzer Prizes in 1942, 1954, 1973, and 1979 (Herblock’s History 7).

Herblock was an official 20th century Liberal: “His perennial targets were

Republicans and the “money interests” (Lewis 28). Herblock started his career in FDR’s New Deal Era, where his “mental universe remained” (Lewis 28). As a true progressive, he believed that big government was the protectorate of the American people: “There was no social problem that could not be remedied if government were not made just a little bigger” (Lewis 28). Just as Nast was credited with symbolizing Santa Claus, Herblock was famous for coining the term McCarthyism, which made his career (Herblock’s History 8).

From an artistic point of view, Herblock was a poor artist. Many of his drawings looked like they were from the same mold, and critics found his metaphors “perfunctory” and superficial (Lewis 28–29). Ironically his cartoons were not considered funny, but instead as being “polite, bland, and easily digestible” (Lewis 29). In his defense, Herblock followed a consistent formula that proved successful enough throughout his career.

Still, Herblock was a pioneer: “‘Out of disciplined modern technique, a new cartoon tendency emerges. In the rigorous simplicity of semi-abstract and mechanized symbols...artists seek to get to grips with issues instead of ridiculing persons’” (Press 302). Herblock’s cartoons truly illustrated this, which was termed abstract symbolism. Over time as his popularity continued to grow, “Block had developed par excellence the ability to telegraph the ridiculous cue as no cartoonist had done so well since Thomas Nast” (Press 302). Block’s growth in skill allowed him to manufacture great ideas and gimmicks. What these various gimmicks in his cartoons did was actually “telegraph” the political character of what he was intending to draw (Press 303). Thus, he raised the political cartoon to a new level.

Herblock’s greatest political successes came in the 1950’s while combating Senator Joseph McCarthy, the head of the anti-communist hearings in the United States. At this time, Herblock became linked with the Washington Post: “He and the Post were in agreement on the excesses of the ‘anticommunist era’ and the damage caused by the reckless opportunism of McCarthy” (Herblock’s History 14). There are even accounts that Senator McCarthy was found to be shaving twice a day, because of one of Herblock’s cartoons (Herblock’s History 16)! He was truly a defender of the little guy, in terms of social reform: “‘My feeling was best expressed in a statement by a Republican President, Abraham Lincoln, that the object of government is to do for people what they need to have done but cannot do at all, or cannot do as well for themselves’” (Herblock’s History 14).

Herblock was admirably resistant to change, but it curtailed his popularity. The 1970’s were a much different time from that of FDR’s New Deal America: “By the 1970’s, labor and capital, the power blocs of New Deal America, were no longer the chief players in American political life, and a cartoonist who continued to treat them as such—Herblock...was perpetuating an anachronism” (Lewis 29). Many editors and

readers criticized Herblock's obsolete philosophy and style, but none could harm the gloriously stubborn cartoonist's spirit. "Herb Block has invariably demurred, standing by his work and upholding his now legendary reputation for editorial independence" (Herblock's History 15). For this distinctiveness, Herblock will always be remembered. When asked about his method, he said, "Take one issue at a time and one administration at a time and deal with it the way you see it" (Herblock's History 15). Although he moved out of the limelight in the later years of his career, Herbert "Herblock" Block will always be remembered as the greatest American political cartoonist of the 20th century.

The death of the great Herbert Block has left a vacuum in the field of political cartooning. Also, as times have changed, so have values and culture. Today's cartoons are much different from those of the past: "Some students of the art see contemporary political cartooning as illustrated stand-up comedy" (Marschall 4). The subtleties and complexities of witty personalities like Nast and Herblock are for the most part extinct. Today's cartoons create a cynical and humorous situation on the surface but often contain no political agenda. Thus, they have a lot of style but no substance.

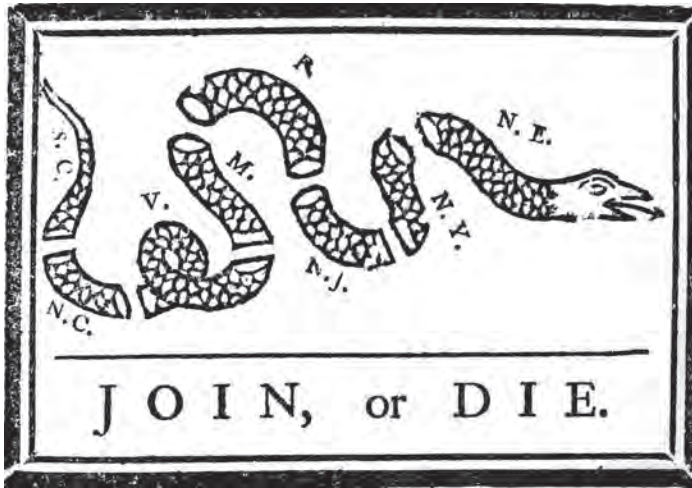
Modern cartooning faces many problems. Ted Rall, who drew a highly controversial cartoon after September 11th, believes that "the best cartoons work by making fun of sacred cows, in trying to inflict the uncomfortable" (Lewis 27). Rall asserts that cartoons must challenge the status quo, which today many fail to do: "Ours, however, is the age of political correctness, and the range of permissible symbols has been vastly constricted" (Lewis 30). Many cartoonists, such as Rall, state that there is a double standard in cartooning today: "Ted Rall's rule...suggests that vicious stereotypes are permissible, so long as they are the right cows" (Lewis 30). Many artists of the trade see the age of political cartoons coming to its end due to the "hobbling factor" of political correctness (Lewis 31). Further, the "plinth" of syndication is a "mixed blessing" in the eyes of many cartoonists (Marschall 5). Although the work of artists is being spread internationally, growth in the field is stymied because syndication is more cost effective for the newspaper. Also, an editor can "pick and choose" cartoons to the interest of the paper's own views, which is what "is taken largely for granted" with regard to professional integrity (Hess 57). Many cartoonists believe that the field will not outlast the 21st century, due to our "media saturated century", where political opinion immerses us in our television and on our computers (Marschall 6).

In Western society, cartoonists are endowed with many different liberties nonexistent in other nations. In India, the government brutally controls the news media. In one incident a political cartoonist who had mocked the government's leaders was later carjacked and tortured to death (Duin 1). With regard to violent censorship and threats to life, we find "such situations incomprehensible...in the West, where press freedom is given and heads of state are routinely caricatured" (Duin 1).

All around the world, most cartoonists are freelancers and many are not considered professional journalists, so they are not protected. This too contributes to the potential end of political cartoons. Although an American artist does not worry about the ramifications of drawing a cartoon, the epidemic of political correctness still exists. Our reluctance to express possibly offensive views is a passive form of fear. Thus, Ted Rall may very well be foreshadowing the end of cartooning.

Political cartoons give many people entertainment as well as important information, albeit slanted, on the global and national scale. But beyond the small appreciation of a cartoon that really makes you think, the world of the political cartoon is infinitely complex. The history of political cartoons is extremely rich, and they have contributed greatly to American politics in particular over the past 200 years. Cartoons have become a cornerstone of any magazine or newspaper, thus allotting them a significant niche in political analysis. Still, the future of political cartoons is tenuous, as many factors have led them to where they are today.

Appendix I
Benjamin Franklin, "Join or Die" (1754)



Appendix II
Thomas Nast, "Merry Old Santa Claus" (1881)



Appendix III

Thomas Nast, "A Live Jackass Kicking a Dead Lion" (1870)



Appendix IV

Thomas Nast, "The Off Year" (1877)



Appendix V

Thomas Nast, "Nay, Patience, or We Break the Sinews" (1877)



Appendix VI

Thomas Nast, "The Brain" (1871)



Thomas Nast, “The Tammany Tiger Loose” (1871)



Thomas Nast, “Tweed-Le-Dee and Tilden-Dum” (1876)



Appendix VII

Herbert Block, "It's okay—We're hunting Communists" (1947)



Herbert Block, "I have here in my hand . . ." (1954)



Herbert Block, "National Security Blanket" (1973)



Appendix VIII
Ted Rall, "Terror Widows" (2002)



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THE DESTRUCTION OF NATURAL ORDER IN *KING LEAR*

by Lauren Holze

Shakespeare's play, *King Lear* presents all forms of "ruinous disorders" (I.2.113). The natural order within the court and within the family unit are destroyed when

love cools, friendship/ falls off, brothers divide; in cities, mutinies; in countries,/ discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond cracked/ 'twixt son and father...there's son against father...there's father against child.
(I.2.106–111)

When such bonds are broken, when authority is undermined and power is usurped, everything that was once understood to be tradition and regarded as Truth is inverted, creating chaos. The villains in the play, Goneril, Regan, and Edmund, clearly upset the balance and natural order within the kingdom by reversing the roles of the king with his subjects, the father with his children, and legitimate with illegitimate son.

Nature itself mimics the occurrences in the kingdom with "these late eclipses in the sun and moon" (I.2.103). During an eclipse, the earth comes between the moon and the sun. The earth therefore blocks the sun from allowing its rays to shine through the moon onto the earth's surface. In this situation, the sun and the moon, usually the earth's sources of light, cannot serve their purpose, allowing darkness to envelop the earth as if it were conquered. This image of the eclipse represents the authority of *King Lear*. He too used to be the source of power, light, truth, and guidance for his family, and his court and was regarded with the utmost respect. A man who had once been the leader of a kingdom, surrounded by loyal subjects, creating edicts, and enforcing

laws, is conquered and treated as either an incompetent old man or helpless little boy by his daughters, Goneril and Regan.

He is blind to the reversal of roles that has occurred between father and child, authority figure and subject even though the consequences of these reversals are evident throughout the play. The Fool conveys such truths using his logic and wit and emphasizes the reversal of nature by declaring that, “When thou [Lear] clovest / thy crown i’ the middle, and gavest away both parts, / thou borest thy ass on they back o’er the dirt” (I.4.155–157). Here it is evident that Lear has given away his fortune to the two shells, Goneril and Regan, the insincere, duplicitous, illegitimate daughters, and not the meat, the one with substance, Cordelia. Furthermore, there is a direct criticism and a clear destruction of natural order in this statement, saying he carries the ass on his back instead of riding it (I.4.155–157). He abdicates his authority, surrenders the scepter symbolizing his power to Goneril and Regan, making “thy daughters thy mother; for when thou gavest them the rod, / and put’st down thine own breeches” (I.4.167–168). Goneril and Regan have essentially reduced their father to nothingness; he no longer has any influence or impact on the kingdom that was once in his control. It is he, the King, who is treated like the Fool in the play—merely someone in the court who is there for comic relief, who holds no power, authority, voice, or influence of his own. Natural order is in complete disarray. His daughters refuse to warrant Lear the one hundred servants he requests despite the fact that he has given them all of the land within his kingdom. They relentlessly humiliate him and dismiss his authority, claiming he is senile and rash in his dotage:

O, sir you are old; / Nature in you stands on the very verge / Of her
confine. You should be ruled and led / By some discretion, that
discerns your state / Better than yourself. (II.4.143–148)

For the King to be virtually dethroned from his place of glory is like the loss of light during an eclipse. It is “most savage and unnatural” (III.3.7). The earth, representative of earthly desires such as avarice and greed, blocks light, Truth, and tradition from touching the lives of those within a society, ultimately destroying the natural order of the kingdom and the family unit.

Another character in *King Lear* who clearly upsets the natural order of society is Edmund, Gloucester’s illegitimate son. Even though Edmund is indeed the eldest of Gloucester’s two sons, the fact that he was not conceived within the bonds of marriage renders Edgar as the rightful heir. In Edmund’s soliloquy, his villainous intentions to mar Edgar’s current relationship with Gloucester and ultimately usurp his brother’s inheritance, his father’s title and fortune, are revealed when he declares:

Edgar, I must have your land./Our father’s love is to the bastard
Edmund

/as to the legitimate.../Well my legitimate, if my letter speed/And my invention thrive, Edmund the base/shall top the legitimate. (I.2.16–21)

Edmund, emphasizing his own “baseness” (I.2.10) and illegitimacy, inverts the conventions within society that promote the inheritance law as he seeks to seize power and dominance over the legitimate. The fact that the base, the lowest of the low, endeavors to rise and take control of the land that belongs to the worthy and lawful heir, defies natural order.

The fabricated letter Edmund presents in his soliloquy bears Edgar’s name along with erroneous statements that incriminate him of disloyalty, ingratitude, and disrespect, saying, for example, that “sons at perfect age, and fathers / declining, the father should be as ward to the son, and / the son manage his revenue” (I.2.73–75). The letter and its contents that reduce a man who once had authority and power to that of a helpless, incompetent child are a catalyst to a breach, a rift, in Gloucester and Edgar’s relationship, as well as a breach in the contract that binds the father, the current property-holder, to the heir, the first-born son. Edmund manipulates his father into believing that, not he, but Edgar is the “unnatural, detested, brutish villain,” (I.2.77) the illegitimate son, essentially turning the natural order as the audience knows it upside-down. Even though it is Edgar who is disowned, it is in fact Edmund who is led solely by his avarice and greed and does not have any loyalty or compassion for his father. It is Regan who calls Gloucester on his ignorance and reveals that he “call’st on him that hates thee” because “it was he [Edmund] that made the overture of thy treason to us” (III.7.91–92). Edmund has blinded Gloucester, both literally and figuratively, throughout the play. Edgar, all along, has been the true and legitimate son.

Goneril, Regan, and Edmund, clearly destroy the delineated natural order that exists within the kingdom and the family unit. The roles of the king and his subjects, the father and his children, and the legitimate and illegitimate son are reversed in the play. All forms of “ruinous disorders,” (I.2.113) are indeed the order of the day in *King Lear*. The King becomes the Fool, the incompetent elderly man, the helpless child while his daughters take control of his kingdom; and Edmund becomes the legitimate son and heir of Gloucester’s title and fortune while Edgar is treated as the “unnatural, detested, brutish villain,” (I.2.77) and disowned by the father he adores. At this point, the kingdom is conquered, defeated, and left in the hands of the conniving and avaricious Goneril, Regan, and Edmund, the true illegitimate children and villains within the play.

THE MAST-HEAD

by Samuel Adams

In *Moby Dick*, there are two kinds of information. There is solid information, made from wood and rope and flesh, and there is abstract information that can be gripped as tightly as fists can clench air and water. The solid facts take form in the accounts of the words and deeds of these whaling men. This information is hard and factual, apparent and graspable as the ship's boards. However, all of the solid realities are endlessly afloat upon an ocean of information of another sort. Melville's watery knowledge has a tendency to drip through the fingers of sailor and reader alike, leaving only a moist trail of what was in hand seconds before. The wet and elusive ideas are those that are most wont to be sought. It is the natural human tendency to chase after what escapes us. Marvel at Melville's genius! He has structured his whole book to be a reflection of that human instinct, with the whale hunters unceasingly chasing a great mysterious legend. These men are bound to their solid ship, gripping tight to the sides, but they meander across an infinite space of unknown and uncontrollable water, in search of things even less tangible.

Moby Dick is a voyage etched into flat leaves. The adventures upon the Pequod fit together with the human imagination like cogs of clockwork, and slowly begin to churn together inside the reader with a harmony that surfaces only out of works of genius. The readers of *Moby Dick* find its flat pages as deep and full as the oceans they describe. Melville, with an astonishing control of language, has constructed a work that provides deep philosophy swimming mere inches beneath the surface of an exciting narrative. The themes of Melville's book are as bountiful and diverse as ocean life itself. There are some themes as pronounced as the whale's back and others that flutter momentarily just as minnows in a sunlit pond. Like the long intertwining arms of the

squid, Melville's inner meanings all stem from the impressive and mysterious fleshy center to weave and mingle among each other. Throughout this book, each of those long arms is isolated and stretched out for display and the consideration of the reader. Chapter 35, *The Mast-Head*, stretches out many of the book's more pervasive themes, and freshly illuminates them with discussion of the mast-head. Some of Melville's themes are emphasized in this particular chapter, but they are also found littered across the deck of this entire story.

Chapter 35 is a prime illustration of the allegorical nature of the Author's ship, the *Pequod*. Melville describes the mast-head as a physical component of a boat. His description, however, clearly develops into an analogy for human behavior. The mast-head is described as being a high place where many men find themselves with heads more than literally in the clouds. The beauty of the sea rolls beneath their high position, and they cannot help but become absorbed in their own thoughts and reveries. Even though very few of us have been mast-head-standers, we can all understand the feeling of peaceful contemplation detached from our worldly worries. Standing on the mast-head thusly transforms from a simple nautical action into a symbol for a universal habit of man. To emphasize his analogy, Melville (early on in the chapter) accounts how manning the mast-head is an occupation that has long been a part of our history. In this we find a frequent trick of the author, effectively giving a long human history to anything and making it more integrally personal.

Melville uses allegorical descriptions of physical whaling or whaling duties all throughout the book. In Chapter 16, *The Ship*, Melville describes the *Pequod* by comparing its components with a list of various vessels that have travelled throughout many regions and times. This shows the *Pequod* to be built from a compilation of all of man's time and space, reinforcing the universality of the ship. He even builds into the ship our struggle for domination of the indomitable by sticking the whale's teeth into the bulwarks. In Chapter 36, *The Quarter-Deck*, the doubloon stuck into the mast-head stands for the constant reminder of purpose and fear that is ever present in the minds of men. When Stubb hurls harpoon after harpoon into his whale in Chapter 61, *Stubb Kills a Whale*, readers are reminded of man's gallant effort to achieve victory, characterized by the spears cast like God's triumphant thunder. Another human trait is alluded to in Chapter 72, *The Monkey-Rope*, where the rope that connects Ishmael and Queequeg stands symbolically for the ties that bind men and brothers together. When Queequeg has built a coffin upon his illness, readers see our own coffins represented in this wooden symbol for death. Just as the glistening upon a swimming fish's scales blur in their frequency and multitude, so do the numerous examples of this theme overwhelm the observation of the reader.

Chapter 35 relates the mast-head to man's life in two stages. Firstly, Melville endows the practice of mast-head standing with a long pervasive role in history. As

mentioned before, this brings a simple ship's duty closer to the eternal nature of man, as though the standing of mast-heads is an inborn activity of the human being. Indeed, Melville even describes the origins and predecessors of mast-heads with the tale of Obed Macy and the New Zealand whalers. Following the Author's chronicles of the practice, there is a description of the nature of mast-head standing. The nature of mast-head standing is described so that the reader turns his thoughts inward, relating the discoveries of his own observation to his own life. The reader, upon reading the meditation provoked by the sailor's high position, sees seas of his own memory and remembers the sensation of floating on thoughts high above duties that lay below. In this element, another of this chapter's themes can be found—the shirking of duty in favor of elevated sensation.

Melville compresses not only one layer of meaning into his depiction of the mast-head, but includes several. As the reader remembers his own experiences in the mast-head's "thought-engendering altitude," the text also makes reference to man's tendency to forget proper purpose as he becomes lost in the air. Ishmael confesses to his habit of slipping off the sailor's leash once he ascends to the top gallant-mast. "Let me make a clean breast of it here, and frankly admit that I kept but sorry guard. With the problem of the universe revolving in me, how could I—being left completely to myself at such a thought-engendering altitude,—how could I but lightly hold my obligations to observe all whale-ships' standing orders, 'Keep your weather eye open, and sing out every time'" (Melville 172). He goes on, in a somewhat self-abasing way, advising captains not to hire lads as inclined to philosophy as he is. The readers are pleased, at least, that ships carried men like Ishmael. Still, the reflective Ishmael is determined in his dreamer-bashing. "Absent-minded," "hopelessly lost to all honorable ambition," and "short-sighted" are what little philosophers are made of. The philosophic sailor will make a poor worker, since he will be so pleased with the glorious sea view and his own cognitive bubbleblings that spying for whales will seem a base chore. Rare it is that the Captain can accurately read the thoughts and eyes of the man on the mast, allowing much more freedom than will keep the seaman bound to his task. If we examine the rest of the book, however, we find that young Platonists are not the only breed of men ill apt at striving toward duty.

Whenever a character asserts his own interest, it causes a departure from the common duty and disrupts the process of achieving the ship's goal. At the end of Chapter 40, Midnight, Forecastle, the Spanish and the Nantucket sailors slash words and fists at Daggoo, both colors busy circling one another. These fighters are focusing only on their petty fight, but are sharply reminded of their duty once they hit bad weather. The needs of the ship trump the needs of the brawlers, and there is no hesitation as they rush back to their posts. In fact, the end of their row is similar to the student snapping his eyes and attention back to his half-completed page, after

the looming due date surfaces amidst his selfish reverie. In similar fashion, Queequeg revives himself from his near-fatal stupor in Chapter 110, *Queequeg in His Coffin*, once he spontaneously “recalled a little duty ashore.” Queequeg is no deliberately introverted thinker or proud and egotistical fighter, but rather demonstrates the epitome of dutiful devotion by turning off his selfish path toward death. Chapter 96, *The Try-Works*, contains an example of the trouble that could be caused by the thoughts of a single man. Here again, Ishmael’s inverted dreams and reckless swooning hands relieve him of the worry of his duties. Admittedly, upon the mast-head a bit of careless self-indulgent behavior will save a few whales, while in this instance Ishmael nearly kills the ship and her men, but the essence is the same.

Keep a wide eye and a steady hand upon the present task! But even Captain Ahab has the habit of walking his own path, and not the one he is obligated by occupation to obey. Why, Ahab is the worst offender of all, for he becomes no mere deserter but also tugs a whole crew of men behind him as he marches toward his fantasy. Melville flashes the word “monomaniacal” whenever the Captain comes onstage. Ahab’s selfish purpose is constructed in Chapter 36, *The Quarter-Deck*, where he proclaims his dissidence from the common whaler’s mission as he hammers the doubloon to the mast. Mr. Starbuck points out, “How many barrels will thy vengeance yield thee even if thou gettest it, Captain Ahab? It will not fetch thee much in our Nantucket market” (Melville 177). The problems caused by the Captain have grown. In Chapter 46, *Surmises*, Ahab is threatened by the tug of duty pulling him from his own purpose. The rest of the ship is nearly ready to turn their dutiful hands and eyes back to the task of collecting their fees, at the expense of Ahab’s monomaniac quest. Still, Ahab now has a duty (if only to himself) and will not allow any dreamy distractions. Just as any Captain might scold the thought-laden mast-head wanderer, Ahab deals with obstacles that individuals may provide to his personal purpose. For one thing, the *Pequod*’s Captain refuses any gam, lest it assist his cause. For another example, turn to Ahab’s monologue to his mad young friend in Chapter 129, *The Cabin*, and see how Ahab fears even his own empathy, lest such base and loose dotage shake him from the sense of duty that pounds determinedly in his heart. Whether the duty be the Captain’s or the *Pequod*’s, there are numerous times that Melville weighs the ways in which individual matters may override the true aim of the quest. For Chapter 35 the philosophers take the roles of the rebels, yawning off their tasks as they ponder high above ambition. The reader may find it somewhat ironic that Ishmael will admonish these elevated thoughtful sailors, since he confesses membership with ranks in the same passage.

Ishmael does not harbor too much guilt for his nasty shirking habit. Although he admits that searching for the answers of the universe and searching whales are activities that thrive only in the absence of the other, he frequently makes the discerned choice

to pursue the more abstract prey. The entire narrative is sodden with this constant search for ever elusive meaning. This theme is just as pervasive as the idea of the microcosmic Pequod, and the constant reflections of human nature found in its facets. Ishmael and Melville, in the same breath, pursue meaning and truth at every step of their adventure, taking every occurrence on their journey as an omen for some larger universality. The topic is blatantly presented in Chapter 1, Loomings, and such an early entrance is a fairly good indicator of importance. “Yes, as every one knows, meditation and water are wedded for ever” (Melville 4). Ishmael explains why he turned to the sea—why so many of us feel compelled to live among endless deep and hidden waters. “It is the image of the ungraspable phantom of life; and this is the key to it all” (Melville 5). Melville’s entire work is centered on the voyage of man’s knowledge, the eternal struggle to wrap our mortal hands around wisdom itself.

Moby Dick in itself is a search for meaning, but there are times when that theme is discussed in an admirable display of meta-literature. The references to this theme are endless, but some of Melville’s explorations of the idea are certainly meant to stand out. Apart from Ishmael, who is utterly unrelenting in his own obsessive search for any form of truth, Stubb too shows a distinct intention to comprehend. Why, Stubb is so contemplative a man that if it wasn’t for the speed at which he can toss his darts deep into the rubbery flesh of a whale, he may come close to being ranked among the airy thinkers that so indulgently ponder at their post. For a strong example, consider Stubb’s state when scorned by Ahab in Chapter 29, Enter Ahab; to Him, Stubb. Stubb appears quite stumped, so he performs a monologue to consider the meaning behind the events that cause distress to his understanding. Stubb will search for the meanings of his environment, usually in the form of a rant. He is often found to be busily verbalizing his internal debates, scratching the walls of his mind for scraps of truth on the topic at hand whether it be the demonic nature of Fedallah, or the secrets beneath his foreboding nightmares, or the cosmic journey of mankind through the paved road of the Zodiac.

The introduction to Chapter 3, The Spouter-Inn, contains a very memorable image, which effectively keeps the message painted in the back of the reader’s mind for the duration of the tale. The inn contains a painting, “a boggy, soggy, squitchy picture truly...” (Melville 13). It turns out that the painting depicts a whaling boat fighting a hard storm that obscures it from crisp view. Men cannot find a clear view of meaning any easier than they can view past the dark strokes to behold the painted boat if one takes this allegorically.

Rarely is truth plainly visible to human beings. Captain Ahab displays his solid grasp of this fact as he informs Starbuck of the deceptive appearance of all things. “All visible objects, man, are but as pasteboard masks. But in each event—in the living act, the undoubted deed—there, some unknown but still reasoning thing puts forth the

mouldings of its features from behind the unreasoning mask” (Melville 178). For the Captain, killing the White Whale will rip down the masks obscuring deeper truth. Admire this as well—as the Captain speaks of hidden meaning he speaks with hidden meaning, for his description of meaning’s layers reflect the depth that Melville shapes his own descriptions. And as Ahab speaks, that is Melville speaking through him to add another layer to emphasize the depth of this novel. It is safe to assume that Ahab would release an appreciative smile reading the pregnancy of Melville’s words.

There are times when Ahab is denied the meaning that he seeks, which is Melville again expressing the importance of our search. In Chapter 52, *The Albatross*, Captain Ahab makes his usual request of information from a passing ship. However, there are strong winds that blow the answers out of comprehension, just as the strong painted winds concealed the true subject of the Spouter Inn’s lobby artwork. At the end of this chapter, Melville again blatantly points out the innate “tormented chase of that demon phantom that, some time or other, swims before all human hearts; while chasing such over this round globe, they either lead us on in barren mazes or midway leave uswhelmed” (Melville 259). Meaning is the one hunger our curiosities will seek to feed even until death, yet it is the one flavor that we so scarcely have tasted. The Sphynx, Chapter 70, traces the circles that Ahab paces as he vainly turns and faces all directions to seek the places where truths hide. Ahab speaks to the hanging head of the Sperm whale, because he knows that the recently deceased eyes of that Leviathan have seen all the deep elusive secrets that our vast waters hold. But Ahab, of course, receives no answers. No one does. But there are people who will continue to seek out the answers, as long as there remains a void inside them that longs for truth. “To any monomaniac man, the veriest of trifles capriciously carry meanings” (Melville 258).

At the end of Chapter 35, Melville has many young lads standing high on mast-heads, serenely floating above the ocean, peacefully contemplating the mysteries of the earth. The high view of the wide sea provides the perfect environment for wispy and wandering thoughts to blow through the thinker’s mind, just as the soft warm air blows through his hair whilst he cruises. Down below the mast-head-standers, Melville embodies their “elusive thoughts” in the shuddering shapes of fish beneath the waves. The mast-head-stander “takes the mystic ocean at his feet for the visible image of that deep, blue, bottomless soul, pervading mankind and nature; and every strange, half-seen, gliding, beautiful thing that eludes him; every dimly-discovered, uprising fin of some undiscernible form, seems to him the embodiment of those elusive thoughts that only people the soul by continually flitting through it” (Melville 172-173). Although the submerged aquatic shapes are refracted and distorted, the image that Melville provides is a clear personification of the meanings that avoid our grasps by remaining below the water’s ceiling. At such high languid heights, the mast-head-stander will be far removed from the true form of the thought-fish that

swim below, occasionally peaking up their back to reveal a portion of themselves. The meditating man on the mast is unable to do any more than observe what he may observe, and allow imagination and theory to shape what he does not see. The peaceful, eternal, futile search for meaning occurs at any location where a human being stands, especially when the human being raises himself up to behold as large a scope of the world's deep mystery as his eyes will allow.

These themes are some of the larger fish in the school, but they are vastly outnumbered by the overwhelming number swimming throughout this book. Melville's abstract opinions and assertions leap out from the action of this narrative at every turn of the page—only some of them make a larger splash when they fall into the reader's consideration. Chapter 35 contains reflections of some of these more massive and impressive fish, and it manages to spear a few of them and hurl them up on deck for closer examination. Whatever fish the particular reader finds most striking depends entirely upon his own reactions to the opinions that arise, but no reader who turns a serious glance toward the teeming school of thoughts can deny its magnificence.

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KURDS AND FLEMINGS: A NATIONAL STUDY

by Molly Mann

“Iraq’s Kurdish community, repressed by previous Iraqi governments, has become a major force in post-Saddam Iraq.”—Kenneth Katzman and Alfred B. Prados, Specialists in Middle Eastern Affairs: Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division.

The most urgent issue that faces the rebuilders of Iraq is the fate of the Kurdish nation. This group seeks autonomy under the new Iraqi constitution because of its unique language and traditional culture. They have, at times, enjoyed political freedom, but it has consistently, and often violently, been revoked. What would now be the consequences if Kurds are denied their independence as a nation-state? Perhaps the answer lies with a nationalist group of similar experience, the Flemings. Rather than being granted respect for their distinct identity during the building of their host country, Belgium, they were merely expected to assimilate and conform to their francophone government. The tension resulting from Flemish resistance to assimilation continues today but has been eased by granting Flemings status as a federal faction. Therefore, their example presents a guide for the treatment of Kurdish autonomy in post-Saddam Iraq.

The Flemings, like the Kurds, have their own language that distinguishes them from the rest of their host country. Since the Netherlandish rule of William I of Orange was overthrown in 1830, Belgium has been a francophone state. French, as an

international tongue, was considered the language of the educated elite (Strikwerda 36). Thus, the upper class who formed the government of Belgium used it accordingly, even though Flemings have outnumbered the francophones 55 to 45 percent throughout the modern history of the country (Strikwerda 35).

In other words, 55 percent of Belgium's citizens speak a language completely dissimilar from the national tongue. Flemish is closely related to Dutch, a remnant of William I's rule, but differs dialectically. Thus, whereas French is a Romance language, Flemish belongs to the Germanic tongues, whose harsh rhythms and abrupt accents were derided by francophones. Whereas Flemish was spoken by the northern provincials, who were overwhelmingly of peasant and tradesman stock (Clough 56), those who had the financial means to educate themselves in French considered it "the language of real culture, a world language, and that Netherlandish [Flemish] was only fit for the vulgar" (Clough 31). Because of this attitude, Flemish speakers were treated with condescension and disregarded by the government.

Efforts to assimilate the Flemings into francophone culture were met with resistance. In 1832, two years after the Belgian revolution, as the government was being formed, a 20 page leaflet originated with P. Blommaert of Ghent and circulated throughout Flanders, declaring:

Nothing, asserted Blommaert, is so implanted in the foundations of a nation as the language of the people. It is language which diffuses the same manner of thinking through all ranks of society, which distinguishes various peoples, and which consequently determines nationality. Therefore it is the duty of the administration of the fatherland to give the language of the people due consideration. (Clough 57)

The Flemish have persistently pushed for this "due consideration" for centuries. The conflict has only abated since a series of reforms in 1970, 1980, 1988, and 1993 established Belgium as a federal state and gave Flemings some autonomy (Clough 93). There are still advocates of confederalism, particularly the *Vlaams Blok* or right-wing Flemish party, who do not consider themselves to be Belgian citizens at all (Clough 96). However, the polarization of language seems to be alleviated by Belgium's current respect for linguistic differences in regard to government, education, and business.

The Kurds' demands are quite congruent with those of the Flemish. "They simply desire to live as Kurds, speak the Kurdish language, read and publish books and newspapers in that language and not to be assimilated as Arabs, Persians, or Turks" (Elphinston 91). Kurdish, a branch of the Irano-Aryan group of Indo-European languages, is spoken by over twenty million Kurds throughout the Middle East (Blau 1). Like Flemish, it is dialectical; it varies among the host countries of the Kurds so that

each community's speech is distinct (Blau 1). The Iraqi Kurds are therefore different from the Kurds of Turkey or Iran. The objective, however, is the same. The Kurds have always desired linguistic recognition. For that reason, upon the entry of Iraq into the League of Nations in 1932, they formally requested that:

in the predominantly Kurdish [regions] of Mosul, Erbil, Kirkuk and Suleimania, Kurdish should be recognized as an official language together with Arabic [the national language of Iraq], and that officials appointed to these [regions] should be Kurds or Kurdish-speaking. (Elphinston 99)

Furthermore, in 1990, Kurds were outraged when the Iraqi regime sought to curtail the use of Kurdish media (Zubaida 40). Throughout their tumultuous history in the Middle East, the Kurds have adhered to their language much as the Flemish have. Just as the Flemish continue to demand autonomy based on language, one can reasonably assume that the Kurds will not suddenly be content with assimilation under the Iraqi constitution.

The importance placed on language by both Kurds and Flemings extends to education. In Belgium, in 1840, the Flemish began petitioning Parliament to allow the use of their language in primary and secondary schools (Fitzmaurice 31). A child growing up in a Flemish-speaking household would have difficulty adjusting to lessons conducted in French. The Flemings feared their children would fall behind francophone students in the rest of the country. Their petition was not granted, however, until a series of laws in 1883, 1890, and 1914, which gradually instituted the use of Flemish in northern Belgian schools. Subsequently, the Flemish pushed for an establishment of a Flemish university, collecting a list of one hundred thousand signatures in its favor (Fitzmaurice 32). Their request was interrupted by the onset of World War One, but was granted in 1916 when, under German occupation, the University of Ghent was declared a Flemish institution (Fitzmaurice 35).

This victory was compounded 40 years later, as student revolts swept across Europe. They gave a younger, more aggressive voice to the Flemish university movement. At that time, the Catholic University of Leuven in Flanders was split into two language sections—French and Flemish. The Flemish students demanded the expulsion of the French-speakers whom they saw as a threat to Flemish autonomy, a renewed trespass of the francophones into Flanders. Through tumultuous revolts against the University administration and government in 1966 and 1968, the Flemish students achieved their end—the French section was moved south and the Flemish autonomy in Leuven was reaffirmed (Vos 92–93).

Kurds, too, want the liberty to teach their children in the Kurdish tongue, according to their customs (Elphinston 91). Rather than be assimilated into greater

Iraq, they seek to preserve their culture through Kurdish education. Hence, a priority on their list of demands is the autonomy of schools: “The freedom which the Kurdish Nationalists most desire is freedom to educate their children in their own language and traditions...in Iraq adequate facilities are lacking” (Elphinston 91). If the new government were to deny Kurds this freedom, young Kurds would be forced to assimilate into Arabic culture and would eventually lose the language of their ancestors. Such an act would be the equivalent of a death sentence for the unique Kurdish tradition.

The Kurdish parallel to the Flemish Catholic University in Leuven is the University of Sulaymaniyya. Whereas Sulaymaniyya (As Sulaym_n_yah) represents the cultural capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, the University was moved during the 1980’s to Erbil (Arbil) (Zubaida 40). Here “its Kurdish character, administration and student body [were] diluted with an influx of non-Kurds” to the discontent of Kurdish nationalists, who see a Kurdish university as a great asset to their cause (Zubaida 40). Universities are cultural centers, fostering literature and political movements. Therefore, just as the Flemish students wanted to ensure the impermeability of their hub in Leuven in Flanders, so do the Kurds.

In addition to language, the Flemings and Kurds have comparable situations regarding geography. For example, one can see how Flemish speakers are concentrated in the north of Belgium (Appendix, Figure 1). This division between north and south has been traced back to the barbarian invasions of the early Middle Ages. During the fifth century, A.D., the Roman Empire pulled its troops out of the northern regions of Europe in order to combat the Goth invasion. This left the area containing Belgium and the Netherlands, known as the Low Countries, open to Frankish invasion from across the Rhine. The Salian Franks settled the area north of an imaginary line running from Maastricht to Boulogne, south of Brussels and Lille. Throughout their territory, they established their Low German tongue, which would evolve into Netherlandish by the sixth century A.D. South of the conquered lands, however, the Gauls retained their Latinized culture and language, which would evolve into modern French (Clough 3–4).

This north-south distinction has enabled the Flemish to form a cohesive national movement, for which autonomy is geographically feasible. Were they scattered throughout the country, they would not be able to petition for rights as a community. As a federal state, however, Flemings can achieve freedom and distinction from their countrymen. Since an amendment in 1970, the Belgian constitution provides for three Communities and three Regions, organized along linguistic and geographic frontiers, respectively. While the Communities are concerned with cultural welfare, the Regions are responsible for economic and political affairs (Vos 93). Although, as previously mentioned, not all Flemings are content with this muted independence,

the compromise is comfortable when compared with the total disregard for Flemish speakers that previously existed under the completely francophone state. This degree of success ought to be taken into account when considering the future of Kurdish autonomy.

Like the Flemings, the Kurds also occupy the northern region of their host country (Appendix, Figure 2). The Kurdish nation crowns Iraq, abutting the states of Syria, Iran, and Turkey. Kurds enjoy sufficient demographic concentration that they may easily form their own regional state as the Flemish have done. Numbering over four million in Iraq, Kurds account for about 23% of the population, almost a quarter of the country (Hassanpour 3). Despite a series of ethnic cleansing campaigns in the 1960's that pushed Kurds further northeast, they have been reclaiming territory since the beginning of the Iraq war in 2002. In the province of Erbil, approximately four hundred Kurdish villages have been reestablished (Tavernise 1). Thus, the Kurdish region is being fleshed out, resulting in economic expansion, as well.

The Kurds historically occupy the "poorest, least developed areas [of their host countries], systematically marginalized by the centers of economic power" (Hassanpour 3). Yet today, "Kurds are emerging as the most influential force in the political soup of Baghdad... They have a functioning economy in their independent zone, while the rest of Iraq has foundered" (Tavernise 2). Despite the disadvantages that come with being in a landlocked region, Kurds have been in the process of negotiating relations with these countries in anticipation of a possible secession from greater Iraq (Tavernise 2). Fortunately for Iraqi Kurds, they have fellow nationalists in the adjacent countries of Syria, Turkey, and Iran, with whom they might establish favorable relations. Thus, the Kurds, like the Flemish, are geographically positioned so that an independent national state is a feasible objective for them.

The efforts taken in Belgium toward federalism have all served to ease the tension between the two national groups in that country. One can reasonably assume that some degree of autonomy for Kurds, perhaps in a similar form of federalism, would have the same result. Granting Kurds the ability to control their own language, education, government, and business would alleviate the conflicts over these issues. As the Flemings' federal state has rendered them mostly comfortable, giving them a degree of separation from Belgium, so would federalism aid Kurds in greater Iraq.

Indeed, only the current federalist system has had any measure of success in Belgium. The primary constitution drafted during the birth of that country evaded any responsibility to Flemish speakers. Although Article 23, which addressed the language issue, is seemingly tolerant, stating, "The use of the languages in Belgium is optional. This matter may be regulated only by law and only for acts of public authority and judicial proceedings" (Clough 50); the latitude is only superficial. In reality, all government officials were educated, francophone, members of the upper

bourgeoisie. Allowing them to conduct business in whatever language they pleased made French the de facto official language of Belgium (Clough 51).

Consequently, only French was used in the publication of official documents and government proceedings. In 1831, neither *Le Bulletin Officiel des Lois et Arrêts Royaux de la Belgique* (Official Bulletin of Laws and Royal Decrees of Belgium) nor *Les Annales Parlementaires* (Parliamentary Annals) were printed in Flemish so that Belgian citizens of Flanders might understand their own laws. The sense of exclusion was reinforced with Parliamentary Acts of 1831 and 1845 that declared only French-language versions of parliamentary and royal documents official texts (Fitzmaurice 31). Furthermore, it was the sole language employed in the army so that Flemish recruits were drilled and commanded in a language not their own (Clough 51). The most tragic result of the Flemish exclusion came from the exclusive use of French in the law courts. Not until 1873 were criminal assizes permitted in Flemish. Previously, Fleming defendants were sentenced to death in French, alienated from trial proceedings because of difficulty understanding the language (Fitzmaurice 31).

Fortunately, in response to Flemish activism, called “Flamingantism” (Strikwerda 36), the rights of Flemings achieved some acknowledgement during the middle of the nineteenth century. In the 1870s, the first steps toward linguistic equality were taken as parliamentary proceeding began being printed bilingually. The movement really gained ground, however, after 1893 with the advent of universal male suffrage in Belgium (Fitzmaurice 31). This meant that the lower, provincial classes of Flanders now had political equality with the wealthier francophone landowners and could directly advocate their own rights within Parliament. Indeed, the first Parliamentary election under universal suffrage, in 1894, inundated the legislature with Flemings who quickly moved to pass an 1898 law declaring the equality of French and Flemish in Belgium (Fitzmaurice 31–32). As previously discussed, however, the struggle for the recognition of Flemings as a nation was not fulfilled until the establishment of Belgium as a federalist state.

Flemings, through persistent campaigning, have gradually achieved acknowledgement as a distinct group under Belgian law. As it stands today:

In 1980, further constitutional reforms led to still more autonomy of the Regions of Flanders and Wallonia, and for the Flemish and French Communities, including self-government...A completion of the federalization agenda followed in 1988 and 1993 so that the Communities and Regions basically now have jurisdiction over all matters with the exception of national and economic and monetary policy, justice, defense, foreign policy, social security, and the police. (Vos 93)

The conflict does not, unfortunately, end here. Extreme Flemish nationalists like the

Vlaams Blok, still push for complete autonomy with jurisdiction over matters that are currently left to the national government in Brussels. Undeniably, though, the tensions have considerably eased as the Flemings have been granted a measure of the independence they so fervently desire. Ardent causes like that of Flemish must be appeased rather than merely contained.

Might the same reasoning apply to Kurds? There is no evidence supporting the imminent extinction of Kurdish nationalism, for it “emerged as an ideology long before the formation of the Kurds as a nation.” (Hassanpour 3) This means that between the 16th and mid-19th centuries, Kurds lived in prosperous and independent principalities. They united against Ottoman and Persian incursion on their sovereignty, forming a politically conscious and self-preserving nation (Hassanpour 3). This desire of the Kurds to protect their own autonomy is at the root of the current issue in Iraq. Indeed, such an enduring demand is not easily quelled.

The first modern effort to establish a Kurdish republic came in 1942, after the principality system was overthrown and the Kurds were divided among Syria, Iran, Iraq, and Turkey. The Society for the Revival of Kurdistan, or Komala (Kurdish for society), was based in Iran but contained many members from Iraq. It evolved into the Kurdistan Democratic Party in 1945, and reached its crowning achievement a year later when it accomplished its main objective—a Kurdish Republic (Hassanpour 4). Kurds reveled in the glories of statehood:

Although it did not claim independence, [the Republic] had a president, a flag, a cabinet, a national army, and Kurdish was the official language... Although formed within the borders of the Iranian state, hundreds of Iraqi Kurds took an active part in the military and civil administration... The national anthem was a poem composed by a Kurd from Iraq. (Hassanpour 4)

Unfortunately for the Kurds, Britain and the United States saw their Republic as a Soviet threat, since the area was under the influence of Russia at the time. Consequently, in 1946, not even a year after its founding, the Kurdish Republic found itself in opposition to the shah of Iran and the western nations who supported his effort. The Republic was terminated, but its memory lingers fondly in the minds of Kurdish nationalists:

Kurds throughout the world still celebrate dûy rêbendan (January 22), the foundation date of the republic; its anthem has been adopted as the national anthem; portraits of Qazi Mohammad, the head of the republic, today decorate public and private spaces in areas controlled by the Regional Government of Kurdistan in Iraq. (Hassanpour 4)

In other words, the spirit of nationalism in the Republic was kept alive in the Kurdish Democratic Parties throughout Kurdish host countries, including Iraq.

If this overwhelming sense of national pride alone were not enough to fire the Kurdish movement, the oppression they faced in Iraq led Kurds to demand separation from that country. For example, after 1975, Iraq led an ethnic cleansing campaign against Kurds, seeking to create a “security belt” along its borders. The government felt threatened by the Kurds, who overlapped into neighboring Iran, Turkey, and Syria, and whose allegiance was not entirely Iraqi. As a prophylactic measure, government forces resettled Kurds in southern camps, destroying villages in their wake. Similar campaigns continued in one form or another into the regime of Saddam Hussein (Hassanpour 6). In one attack, on March 16, 1988, five thousand Kurds were killed when Iraqi forces launched lethal gas into the town of Halabja (CRS 2). Acts like this, on behalf of the Iraqi government, made it clear that Kurds were not a respected group.

In 1992, a weak Regional Government of Iraqi Kurdistan was established to give some measure of self-rule to the Kurds. Although it was “economically besieged and function[ed] very much at the sufferance of a Western military umbrella” (Hassanpour 3), any degree of autonomy and freedom from persecution was welcomed with open arms:

In Iraq, many Kurds view the Regional Government of Kurdistan, with its elected parliament and authority over law enforcement units, as an edifice of genuine autonomy. The experience of the Regional Government is important; elections and the relative freedom of political expression and association have been politically invigorating. Many Kurds insist that they prefer the excruciating economic deprivations they [endured] to any return to [Iraqi] rule... (Hassanpour 7)

As these lines emphasize, the Kurdish experience under the Regional Government is more encouraging than federalism for the Flemish. While Flemings seek to push further for complete independence, the Kurds seem content with just a muted version of autonomy. Thus, any provision for some degree of independence that is made in the Iraqi constitution would have significant success in easing the national conflict. The new Iraqi government ought not be regressive by denying Kurds the freedom they enjoyed under Regional Iraqi Kurdistan. Rather, it should progressively recognize them as a nation once and for all.

Similar to Flemings, the Kurds maintain cultural differences that separate them from the rest of their host country. They ought therefore be allowed some degree of independence from or within that state, rather than be submerged within the affairs of greater Iraq. W.G. Elphinston of Chatham House, one of the world’s leading organizations for the analysis of international issues, supports this conclusion. To

resolve “The Kurdish Question” in his article by that title, he resolves, “if there is any conclusive lesson to be learnt from Kurdish history, it is that assimilation is impossible” (Elphinston 103). Therefore, distinction ought to be the objective. Kurds, like Flemings, should be granted the right to determine the language they speak in government affairs, schools, and internal business matters, a right necessary to the preservation of their culture.

Regardless of whether men like Elphinston agree with the Kurdish nationalist cause, Kurds are undeniably a force to be reckoned with. Over 80% of Kurds demand an independent nation-state from the new Iraqi government (Tavernise 2). Khasro Goran, the deputy governor of Kurdish Mosul, articulates their appeal: “We have the same economy, language and future. For the rest of Iraq, it’s up to them, but for our part, we will govern ourselves” (Tavernise 1). As evinced by the Flemish example, the only possible way to appease the Kurds is to grant them the autonomy they desire. Just as Flemings could not survive unrecognized by their francophone rulers, the Kurds will never be content under the Shia government nascent in Iraq. Therefore, “the realistic objective is recognition of Kurdish national rights, cultural expression and some measure of administrative autonomy” (Zubaida 41). While rebuilding Iraq, the responsible officials ought to recall the deep tensions that remain from the attempt to assimilate the Flemish into francophone Belgium, as well as the comparative success that the federalization of that country has brought.

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Appendix

Figure 1

Linguistic Map of Belgium (Source: [brussels.usembassy.gov/ about_belgium.html](http://brussels.usembassy.gov/about_belgium.html))

Figure 2

Ethnic Map of Iraq (Source: www.pbs.org/.../ lessonplans/iraq/ethnic.html)

WEEKEND LOST

by Dan Mazzella

Paradise Lost by John Milton begins in good epic fashion, that is to say, right in the middle of things. Satan and the damned angels have fallen through chaos like shooting stars against the night sky into the bowels of Hell, and then further upon its fiery floor where they are chained and writhe in astonishing anguish. This is our first view of Satan: defeated. An ignominious beginning for one who is the star of the poem, but such is entirely appropriate for him. Satan's journey, his rise, fall, attempted re-rise and second "fall" is one marked by the utmost ignominy by virtue of his key quality: ignorance. This trait manifests itself in every speech given and action taken by Satan and this primary quality gives rise to his false pride, his masterful (though flawed) rhetoric, his recalcitrance, and, by virtue of its recession, his character's development.

In the first speech by Satan (the first of the poem) everything that is near and dear to the heart of Satan's character is established. Satan's first ten lines spoken to Beelzebub constitute a grand admission of ignorance. First, Satan did not realize the consequences of his actions and is only now getting an impression of the obvious changes in appearance and state: "If thou beest he [Beelzebub]; but O how fall'n! how changed" (Book I, Line 84). Second, Satan had no knowledge of the extent of God's power: "...so much the stronger proved / He with his thunder: and till then who knew / The force of those dire arms?" (Book I lines 92–95). Thirdly, and most importantly, is the implicit admission in this line that Satan and the fallen angels had no knowledge of the extent of their own power; they did not know themselves. It is because of this ignorance of their own strength that they chose to wage war in heaven.

Ignorance admitted, Satan continues his speech and establishes for the reader

two key qualities arising from his ignorance that control his actions:

...Yet not for those,
 Nor what the potent victor in his rage
 Can else inflict, do I repent or change
 Though changed in outward luster, that fixed mind
 And high disdain, from sense of injured merit,
 That with the mightiest raised me to contend,
 (Book I lines 94–99)

The first and most obvious quality evident in this quote is his recalcitrance, which will subsequently inspire him and the others to stand eternally in defiance to God and do only evil. From whence exactly this rigidity of rebellion flows is an interesting matter and it would appear from the context of the passage that it is at least partially borne out of emotion, not reason. After all, how can it ever be reasonable to rebel against something that is almighty and has already painfully demonstrated this fact? Demonic emotion of this sort (usually hate) will taint much of Satan's internal logic and rhetoric in his logic-perverting manner throughout.

The second is his pride referred to as "injured." By this time Satan has felt the full force of God and his false pride in believing himself to be mightier than God has been more than slightly dented. The injury to his merit at this point forms a parallel to his "impairment" upon seeing The Son after his elevation to the position of Number One Son. In both cases it is his proud notion of the extent of his might based on his ignorance that is damaged and spurs his rebellion. After the fall this very injured pride will be, along with emotion as described above, one of the key factors in the quick development of his recalcitrance.

In Book II at the end of the infernal council in Pandemonium it is resolved that they, the fallen angels, shall attempt to corrupt (and therefore win for their side) the residents of the new world just created. The journey to find this mystery world is a risky business and Satan alone quickly volunteers to do the task. At first glance it would appear that he is in effect "taking one for the team," but in reality this is simply an expression of his pride cloaked in clever rhetoric. He volunteers not out of altruism, but out of an interest to see his personal glory expanded and his rank as king among the fallen safeguarded. His audience, however, perceives it otherwise and lauds him for his bravery as their king. This stands in stark contrast to the voluntary and purely altruistic offer of service by The Son to redeem mankind at a later date. The key difference is in the motive, love. The Son's love is projected outward as opposed to Satan's love, which is proudly projected inward.

While within our solar system, Satan literally hops about and gives a rather

long introspective soliloquy. This speech is interesting because it illuminates a new dimension of his character. Throughout the speech he is still proud, unrepentant, his mind is still immutable, and he continues to blame God for his fall (“O had his powerful destiny ordained / Me some inferior angel, I had stood then happy;” Book IV Lines 58–59) rather than himself as he rightfully should, but at the same time he feels a certain degree of remorse and shame for what has transpired. He explicitly states that Hell is within him wherever he goes—a sort of inner guilt and shame for what he has wrought dogs him continually. However, though he may feel and know such emotionally, he cannot clearly annunciate or accept it. Ultimately he rejects it flat out:

So farewell hope, and with hope farewell fear,
Farewell remorse: all good to me is lost;
Evil be thou my good; by thee at least
Divided empire with heav’n’s King I hold
By thee, and more than half perhaps shall reign.
(Book IV, Lines 108–112)

By virtue of this rejection he reinforces his pride by believing that he may come to rule more than “half,” as if he truly rules anything at all presently. At the same time by casting off hope and therefore also fear he is effectively stating that though he recognizes that there will always be consequences to his actions, he simply does not care and will proceed with demonic abandon toward his evil goal. Additionally, while he rejects hope he then, four lines later, proudly hopes to rule more than half of God’s universe. This apparent contradiction is obviously a product of his terribly conflicted emotional state, signified by the continually changing expression upon his face.

After Satan succeeds in causing the fall of Adam and Eve, he does not remain in Eden very long to enjoy his victory. Rather he escapes back to Hell upon seeing The Son mete out the punishments to the various guilty parties:

...But when he saw descend
The Son of God to judge them, terrified
He fled, not hoping to escape, but shun
The present, fearing guilty what his wrath
Might suddenly inflict.
(Book X Lines 337–341).

This represents a definite change in Satan’s knowledge of consequences. Whereas he had previously not known of them, or at best simply not cared about them, now he is fully cognizant of his guilt, and fears punishment. Likewise, while escaping back to

Hell he meets Sin and Death and greets them like a father (which creates a perverse trinity) and a conquering hero, embracing them and spurring them onward. This is entirely unlike his first meeting with them when he and Death basically had what amounts to a standoff with guns drawn and ready. This underlines the fundamental change in his understanding of the consequences of his actions.

Satan's pride however, remains entirely unchanged, or rather, is even augmented. His speech before his devilish compatriots detailing his successes in the other world is fraught with ego boosting lies and ultimately ignorance. His first lie is to claim full credit despite Chaos' help in finding Eden. His second lie is to state that he seduced not Eve, but rather Adam, the target perceived to be much harder. His third lie is borne out of his continuing ignorance. While he does recognize that there should be consequences for his actions, he boldly claims that he has successfully dodged them and has therefore won for Hell a new verdant land at no cost. This is of course a remarkably naïve, ignorant and proud statement and is proven to be such mere moments after he completes his speech. Milton provides a delightfully ironic and fitting speech ending and ensuing punishment:

...Ye have th' account
Of my performance: what remains, ye gods,
But up and enter now into full bliss."
So having said, a while he stood, expecting
Their universal shout and high applause
To fill his ear, when contrary he hears
On all sides, from innumerable tongues
A dismal universal hiss, the sound
Of public scorn.

Book X Lines 501–509)

At the moment of his greatest triumph, just when he expects to be applauded and loved by all, he is completely and utterly shot down by the very wrath of Heav'n he believed he had dodged.

Satan is obviously the pivotal character of *Paradise Lost* and any dramatization will be forced to spend enormous amounts of time and effort to fully realize his character. Even the preceding only scratches the surface of what is an exceedingly complex character. Literally every speech he gives can be dissected to reveal some new thing about his inner workings. Even if everything were dissected down to the final syllable of the original grunt that gave rise to the Latin and Hebrew root words, one would still be hard pressed to understand and present a comprehensive and consistent character profile. But then again, perhaps Orson Welles could.

Paradise Lost: THE FILM

Directed By: Cecil B. DeMille

Produced By: Samuel Goldwyn

Screenplay By: Daniel Mazzella

Tagline: Become LOST in the PARADISE of DeMille's Grandest Epic Yet!

Cast:

Satan—Orson Welles
God—George Burns
The Son—Clint Eastwood
Abdiel—James Stewart
Michael—George C. Scott
Gabriel—John Wayne
Adam—Humphrey Bogart
Eve—Ingrid Bergman
Sin—Bette Davis
Death—Robert Mitchum
Beelzebub—Fred MacMurray
Raphael—Jack Lemon
Belial—Sidney Greenstreet
Uriel—Henry Fonda
Moloch—Joe Pesci
Mammon—Claude Rains
Mulciber (Vulcan)—Alec Guinness
Chaos—Lon Chaney
Time—Burgess Meredith
Chance—Alfred Hitchcock
Old Night—Vincent Price
Other Angels—DeMille's Hordes of Epic Extras
Scene: **Meet the Parents**

[A flat rock outcropping, suspended high above the dark and fiery seas of Hell. An obscenely strong looking adamantine gate emitting a pleasant blue glow about the edges and from a large keyhole located just to the right of the center of the gate. This glow is in stark contrast to its darker surroundings and is found in the background at the far end of the outcropping. To the far right of the outcropping is a dark cave, the lair of SIN and DEATH et al. SATAN and DEATH are engaged in another Mexican

Standoff with DEATH standing a few paces from the gate and SATAN standing a few paces from the edge of the outcropping directly across from DEATH.]

SIN [From the cave.]:

Stop!

Luk—er...Lucifer, if only you knew the power of Death...

[She emerges from the darkness, stands between SATAN and DEATH.]

Did The Father ever tell you what happened to your family?

SATAN:

I know enough! I have no family!

SIN:

No. **We** are your family.

SATAN:

No... No! That's not true. That's impossible!

SIN:

Search your feelings. You know it to be true.

SATAN:

Nooooooooo!

[SATAN's shriek lasts for several seconds. Include fancy camera angles, consult William Shatner.]

SIN:

Are you quite done?

SATAN:

Yes. Could you open the gate, please?

SIN:

Okay.

[DEATH steps away from the gate. SIN opens the gate with a large key taken from one of her pockets. All Hell breaks loose. Cue: wildly expensive special effects.]

END SCENE

Scene: **The War In Heaven**

[A pure pastoral landscape with pockmarks and craters yet still smoking from the morning's battles. In the distance SATAN and FALLEN ANGELS are visible dressed as evil banditos from "Treasure of the Sierra Madre." SATAN wears a gold colored sombrero. Enter in the foreground, THE SON wearing a white poncho, Stetson hat and Levi-Strauss jeans. He draws Magnum Revolver, fires several times in the general area of SATAN and the FALLEN ANGELS plunging large portions of their ranks into Chaos. SATAN, now alone, moves forward with his canon. Mexican Standoff Ensues.]

THE SON:

Ah, ah, I know what you're thinking. Did he fire six shots or only five? Well, to tell you the truth, in all this excitement, I've kind of lost track myself. But being as this is a .44 Magnum, the most powerful handgun in all of God's Creation, and would blow you straight into Chaos, you've got to ask yourself one question: 'Do I feel lucky?'

Well, do ya—punk?

SATAN:

Oh, #*(\$!

[Shaking, fumbling to fire canon.]

Boom

[Cut to Satan falling through Chaos and wildly expensive special effects. Overlaid with narration by RAPHAEL.]

END SCENE.

Scene: **The Fall**

[TREE OF KNOWLEDGE in the background, before it stand ADAM and EVE. EVE hands ADAM the forbidden fruit and implores ADAM to partake of it.]

ADAM:

Oh to eat this apple. What if I don't eat it? I'll regret it.
Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, but soon, and for the rest
Of eternity.

S Y M P O S I U M

EVE:
Oh Adam!

ADAM:
Here's looking at you, kid.

★Chomp★

SATAN [In the Background]:
Woohoo!

[Cue: great winds, Earth shrugs, other wildly expensive special effects.]

END SCENE

POEMS

by Tiara Rea

...into which most organisms are divided

Mother never let me climb trees
but I could hit a baseball so hard—
over the car, past the front drive.
Dad was proud of me,

called me *My Little Homerun*,
and I boasted to best friends
about my masculine strength.

I imagined myself his son—

think picnics and wiped sweat,
leather-hide gloves and tight
bear hugs, pats on the back that
stood in for love. The threat

of girlishness never felt so imminent
as when I saw in the mirror the face
of a female, body of a boy. Fragile
femininity embodied in scents

of lavender and rose that dad bought
ten years after the first homerun ball

fell into my outstretched hand, accidents
 I cannot remedy, my Gordian Knot—

but dad thought gifts bred paternity.
 They do not, did not, will not, except
 I love when he tried. Remember the slow
 red-pink corsage, my virginity

sinking in the mattress? You wouldn't.
 I never told you, can't tell, never will,
 but I do long for soft imitations of childhood
 baseball, though I shouldn't.

Broken Ode

To Missouri: a toast to bottled sexuality,
 orange wine, and king-size dreams of big cities.

Muffled into the fluffed belly of CamBear,
 I tried to carry my voice to you; instead left it laying there, naked on the bed. Out the window
 superfluous sunsets shrank along bellied-up whims—
 sunrise afforded the best chance to scream through tightened chests and choked throats.
 On top, we snuffed fears beneath blankets. I was too afraid to wake.
 Under the bed, you hid a box. In it,
 rolled-up desires resigned themselves to shadowed futures.
 In it, you forgot me like our tangled Mississippi.

Gethsemane

In the garden, where the palm fronds droop like roofs,
 two boys stand alone together on a sun-soaked shore.
 “My brother, where have you been?” one asks,
 the other boy's heart beating, unsure.

Two boys stand alone together on a sun-soaked shore
without speaking much at all. The one cannot know how
the other's heart goes on beating, unsure,
afraid to complete his eternal vow

without speaking much at all. The one cannot know how
to stop the inevitable—that is his Father's creed –
and is afraid to complete his eternal vow.
The other weighs his heart against his greed;

“To stop the inevitable? That is *your* Father's creed,
used to fill me with fear. I want no part of it anymore.”
The first weighs his heart. Against one's greed
the other feels nothing short of sure,

uses it to fill him with fear. “I want no part of you anymore.”
When faith brings nothing but passing time,
Judas feels nothing. Short of sure
freedom, a kiss is his crime.

When faith brings nothing but passing time,
both boys feel terror for sins they can't name,
like freedom. A kiss is one's crime,
and religion becomes his shame.

He feels a terror for sins he can't name.
For all the things he never sees,
religion becomes his shame,
a noble try, a terrible disease.

In the garden, where the palm fronds droop like roofs,
“My brother, where have you been?” one asks.

To Isolate Her Out of the Loud World*To Quentin*

When the weight of the world
 splatters on the bottoms of
 white cotton panties,
 the dirt is irrevocable,
 and the sound and fury of a
 lame notman's bawling
 balls up in the ribs of the soil,
 compressing, constricting, contracting,
 exasperated by trivial shadows
 passing over grandfather clocks
 that chime once-twice,
 destroying responsibility,
 birthing phantom destruction out of the
 falling leaves as she stirs abovehead,
 smelling like trees and
 the wisteria vine tangled round your ankle holds
 you back with
 biting twice-bloomed snaps.
 Do you look up to see your
 notfuture and notpast and notanything
 or do you change your Southern routes
 and look North, for hope?
 Is either better or
 are both worse?
 You can't control these moments,
 nor can you snap off the minutehand
 and claim to have more time—
 to go back and do what? Is
 there anything worth saving
 besides muddy drawers
 and a few golfballs that remind you
 of incest and greed and bitterness and
 is any smashed watch going to do you
 any good?
 Because of being Southern by notchoice—
 to go back to that tree and
 look noplac at all.

I have committed incest I said Father it was I
 every time you looked at
 Caddy or thought about your mother laying
 relinquished concupiscent wasted incorporeal in bed or
 little Quentin begot by demons and sin or
 Jason with his steel eyes and perfunctory heart,
 cold as Caddy's notdead but dead face
 when she smelled like a woman—
 nothing ever happens once and is finished—
 and you share his fate
 when all you want to do is
 slap her with Benjy's howling,
 make her understand that Time
 is the multitude of sins;
 not her or her sex or women at all—
 it was Time and Time did it all reducto absurdum.

From the Fisherman's Granddaughter

I was introduced to mortality
 on your black spring birthday,
 when lilacs lit the hall and aisle.
 Our invisible family sat in denial,

spilling conversation and tears
 over pictures yellowed by years
 alone in black, shadowed attics,
 surviving moths and nicks
 from trembling fingers' scissor slips.
 I watch moving lips, mom grips
 your wife's slender hand—
 I find it hard to believe God planned

to treat life this carelessly,
 to force us to see your papier-mâché
 façade, fixed to be so dull and gray.

You are not yourself today—

gone are your ear-tugging smiles,
the bashful tales of watered miles
down ancient creekbeds, rivers, lakes.
A glance at grandma is all it takes

to allow true regret to penetrate.
I know it is a few months too late,
but I love you and will remember
the last day I knew you, in December.

Don Axinn Award for Poetry 2006

WEREWOLVES AND COURTESY IN MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

by Rachel Kaufman

The werewolf myth goes back to the ancient Greeks, if not farther. Ovid tells us how King Lycaon was punished for his insolence toward Zeus by being turned into a wolf. This story of man-into-beast persists into modern times, so even though nobody believes that a man can really turn into a wolf or vice versa, the thrilling stories of “what if” still capture our imaginations. What does it mean to be part man, part beast? In the Middle Ages, writers were struggling with the same questions. Though the Bible was the more traditional source to address the question “what is a man,” courtesy books and werewolf stories played an important role in the medieval period’s answer.

Courtesy in the Middle Ages was an important concept. Then, as now, politeness—knowing the right things to say at the right time, following the right rules—was “a veneer over the violence latent in human affairs, [. . .] [acting] as a restraining force between a violent thought and a violent act” (Nicholls 118). In other words, courtesy on some level is about keeping Plato’s “wild beast within us” at bay.

In the Middle Ages, when describing model behavior, physical traits appear in close proximity to the accepted mental or spiritual ideals of the day. In “The Romance of Sir Orfeo,” the eponymous hero is described as “Large and courteys” (line 28). Courtesy and largeness, even “greatness” (for in a way the words are synonymous) both hint toward Orfeo being a good king. In a set of instructions for table manners at the Syon monastery, the monks’ hands should be “up on the table or godely before them; ther eres to the legister, and ther hertes to heuen, and charities to ther even christen. Also they schal sytte up ryghte [. . .]” (Nicholls 200). Here the writer moves effortlessly between instructions for physical habits and spiritual ones, hardly even

distinguishing between the two.

One final example can be found in a c. AD 1000 service book explaining the rituals used when inducting a knight—the first five out of ten steps have little to do with knighthood as we think of it. There is nothing about donning armor or swearing to protect damsels in distress until steps six and seven, respectively, and the *coleé*, or blow from a hand or sword, was “not considered essential during the age of chivalry” (Byles 195). Instead, the knighting ceremony consists of a ritual bath, the dressing in the special knightly clothes, and so forth (Hearnshaw 24). The message is clear: to be a good knight, one must look the part as well as act it. After the bath and the donning of the symbolic clothing, the knight undergoes a twenty-four hour fast, including an all-night vigil in the chapel, followed by confession and mass. Assuming that kings, monks, and knights were supposed to be exemplary human beings, these sets of instructions apply not only to kings, monks, and knights, but to all humans. These writings are a recipe book for a medieval human.

What is a man, then? A man is clean and clothed, unlike an animal, which does not bathe and runs around naked. A man has good table manners, unlike a wild beast, which devours its food without even cooking it. And a man is spiritual, exercising self-control over bodily urges by fasting and praying to God, which an animal does not do. These books clearly define what it means to be human, drawing a sharp if unspoken line between “us” and “the rest of the world.”

Werewolves not only cross that line, they rip it to shreds.

The werewolf appears in a number of stories in the Middle Ages: Marie de France’s *Lay of the Werewolf*, *Arthur and Gorlagon*, *William of Palerne*, and a short tale in Gervaise of Tilbury’s *Otia Imperialia*. Unlike the modern werewolf, portrayed as a man who loses all sense and becomes a mad killer at the sight of the full moon, medieval werewolves (excepting Gervaise’s) are men cursed with the shape of a wolf while retaining their human reason. The werewolf is usually doomed to wander the earth until a condition is fulfilled; for example, in *Arthur and Gorlagon*, Gorlagon must be touched with the branch of a magical tree and commanded “Be a man, and have the understanding of a man” before his curse is lifted. It should be noted that there is something inherently monstrous about a werewolf, though medieval writers seemed not to care most of the time, treating the werewolf with interest rather than fear. According to the biblical account of creation, on the fifth day God created three categories of animals: *iumenta* (usually translated as “cattle” but closer to “useful, domesticated animals”), crawling things (pests, vermin, etc) and wild beasts. There is no room in this account for a creature that can shift from beast to man and back— and anything not created by God in the initial seven days must be the work of the Devil, hence the monstrousness of the werewolf. The Fiend himself, after all, was often portrayed as a mixture of man and animal (Thomas 36–37). The werewolf should be an object of terror. It isn’t. Why not?

Gervaise of Tilbury's werewolf is the most monstrous, certainly, and probably the most terrifying. This story, however, reads more like a moral lesson than a tale intended to thrill and terrify. Gervaise writes: "[A nobleman] became a wanderer and a fugitive, and alone, like a wild animal, wandered in lonely places: one night, perturbed by too much fear, with his mind alienated, he turned into a wolf. . . . In wolf's form he devoured infants, but he tore old people into wild beast's morsels. He was gravely wounded by a woodcutter, when a blow of an ax cut off one of his feet, at which time he immediately resumed human form" (Hinton 143–144). In this case, the werewolf exhibits antisocial behavior while still a human. His transformation simply occurs with no logical stimulus. This story combines the wolf/rampant killer, the monstrousness of the transformed, and a warning about people who do not conform to the group. Living a solitary life in the woods is, even now, looked upon as abnormal. Here Gervaise makes the madness physical, easier to see, by literally turning a lonely man into a beast.

The longer werewolf stories give a much more interesting picture of these "monstrous" creatures and how they fit into the idea of humanity. The werewolf in William of Palerne is enchanted by his wicked stepmother; in *The Lay of the Werewolf*, the creature is trapped when he cannot recover his clothes; and in Arthur and Gorlagon he is cursed by his treacherous wife. Each of these werewolves retain human reason despite their beastlike appearance, so that those who look closely see the man beneath the beast. Even though "the standard indications of monstrosity are speech, diet, abode, and clothing" (Friedman 25), reason is the trump card. A creature can lack speech, eat "prey and roots" (Otten 257), live in the woods "as naked as a Beast" (257)—but if it exhibits reason, it is considered human. Of course, these werewolves all have to prove themselves before being admitted to the ranks of the human; those with human shape have a "free ticket" in, so to speak. Luckily for these werewolves, it is usually not long after some observant courtier determines the rationality of the creature that he is returned to human shape. In a reversal from the courtesy manuals, these men have the function first, and then the form. However, there is still the matter of Bisclaveret's clothing in Marie de France's werewolf tale. A man removed from his clothes equals a beast—or, in other words, if you dress up a beast, does it become a man? This question had consequences reaching far beyond dividing man from beast. Could dress or other external symbols divide class from class as well? "If certain gestures or accoutrements confirmed one in a particular social role or social order, what would happen if a person simply copied those gestures [. . .]" (Yamamoto 58)? By raising the question of dress, the werewolf myth attacked all areas of convention.

Arthur and Gorlagon explores the boundaries of humanity in an even deeper way. In this tale Arthur journeys to learn "the heart, the nature, and the ways of women" and is told a tale of a king betrayed and turned into a werewolf by his wife. This werewolf fled into the woods, and after two years, fathered a pair of wolf cubs by

a she-wolf. He took these cubs into the city and met his ex-wife's new twin sons, fathered by her new husband. A fight ensues and in the course of two days, the wolf cubs, the baby sons, and the adulterous queen's brothers are all killed. Clearly medieval writers realized that we rational humans are no less capable of destruction, for the werewolf responsible for these murders is certainly rational; he is called "the human wolf" (Otten 240) and Gorlagon, when relating the tale, reminds us three times in two paragraphs that "he was still possessed of his human understanding" (240). At the end of the tale, we learn that the treacherous queen's punishment was to "always have the head of her paramour before her" (250), which she must kiss every time the good king kisses his new wife. Gorlagon says without a trace of remorse: "And I had the head embalmed to keep it free from putrefaction" (250). A human, not a beast, devised this grisly punishment.

However, the writer challenges belief in more ways than one. The framing device of the story is a conversation between King Arthur and King Gorlagon. Before Arthur meets Gorlagon, he encounters two other kings, both of whom entreat Arthur to sit and feast before they will tell him what he wishes to know. Wishing to be a good guest, Arthur agrees, but when he has finished eating he is sent packing.

When Arthur reaches Gorlagon's castle, he is again asked to eat. Arthur refuses. He even goes so far as to swear an oath that he will not eat until he has gotten the information he seeks. Gorlagon begins to tell Arthur his story, but constantly interrupts himself, saying, "Arthur, dismount and eat, and afterwards I will relate at greater length what remains" (239). Arthur's continued refusals grow almost rude. "You are like a harper who almost before he has finished playing the music of a song, keeps on repeatedly interposing the concluding passages without anyone singing to his accompaniment," (248) he says, annoyed. Not the most concise of insults, perhaps, but certainly not something to say to a king who has shown hospitality. Only by refusing to "play by the rules", by doing exactly what Gervaise warned against, does Arthur get the answers he has looked for. And yet Arthur is not portrayed as a bully or a loose cannon; he's a good king who just wants to learn. The *Arthur and Gorlagon* tale proves that humans can retain essential humanity even if they are vicious and savage, or even just rude.

If the werewolf stories undermined the stable rules of society, they recognized it and helped to build them back up, reassuring the readers of these tales that all was well. The four infants killed in *Arthur and Gorlagon* could have proved troubling—two illegitimate princes and two half-breed wolf cubs. If the cubs were sired by a creature with human understanding, would they, too, have reason? Could a creature that is quarter wolf, three-quarters man exist? The author neatly resolves this problem (and the potential problems of the illegitimate princes) by killing off all four children in one paragraph. Of course, the werewolf had been a "kind and gentle master" (248) when he had been king, and the evil king who has usurped his place causes the

country to “groan[. . .] under [his] intolerable tyranny” (248). Since the bad king is so awful, it is not disturbing that he is condemned to death or that the wicked queen must treasure his severed head. (Incidentally, this pair get off easy. Another adulterous couple in the story meet their ends by flaying, hanging, drawing-and-quartering, and burning.) Even better, the king remarries after being restored to the throne. What could be more comforting than the institution of marriage?

There is no such marriage in *William of Palerne* or *The Lay of the Werewolf*, but both tie up the loose ends neatly in their own ways. The lord in *The Lay of the Werewolf* is gifted with fine treasures while the wicked queen and her lover are banished; Alphouns in *William of Palerne* is knighted, and everyone lives happily ever after. Even Gervaise’s wolf is restored to normality, missing a foot, but otherwise safely lodged in the world of the “normal.”

In this way werewolf tales are at once illuminating and frustrating. Controversial and shocking while at the same time reassuring, the medieval werewolf tales ask difficult questions while conveniently ignoring others. At the very least, the werewolf causes humans to look closer at themselves. If the werewolf symbolizes humanity one moment and anti-humanity the next, at least we can be comforted by the knowledge that that’s what shapeshifters do.

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CHURCHILL'S BATTLE WITH SIR EDWARD HALIFAX: IMPLICATIONS FOR WORLD WAR II

by Georgi Panterov

Most people think that the study of history is memorization of dates and battles. For many, history is a dry subject. Yet, when one reads about the stormy days of May, 1940 one sees why history is the pearl of the humanities. The story of Churchill in 1940 is an epic story of a triumph of good over evil that is almost too good to be true. It is interesting and at the same time frightening to see how close Britain and Western Europe came to being dominated by a militaristic Germany. And it is inspiring and at the same time hair-raising to see how much depends on an individual being in the right place at the right moment. However, many would disagree with using the "Great Man" theory of history to explain Churchill's success. There are those who say history is written by the victors; there are the determinists who say events occur according to Fate; there is the Nietzschean who attributes cynical motives and the "will to power" to a leader such as Churchill. There is also the Marxist who explains everything in terms of capitalist greed and there is the Machiavellian who argues that history is the result of political calculations and the race for domination. Maybe every group is right about Churchill in its own way but rarely has the fate of a civilization hinged so exclusively on one man as it did in the summer of 1940.

The sun was slowly setting on the Western horizon in the 1930's and the old, aristocratic Europe was giving way to a new and virile Germany. The vigorous

Teutonic state was firmly united behind its charismatic leader Adolph Hitler, and was ready to follow him anywhere. Hitler's expansive ambitions were now aimed at Belgium, Norway, Denmark, France and Britain, and Hitler's uninterrupted string of military victories made him look invincible in the eyes of the Germans and foreigners alike. In May, 1940 Hitler came very close to his ultimate triumph—the establishment of a German hegemony in Europe. But there was one obstacle in his way—Winston Churchill. It was the duel between these two that largely influenced the subsequent development of the war and, in the end, made the German defeat possible. This is not to say that Churchill won the war in 1940 but, to quote John Lukacs, “he did not lose it” (2). With the recent opening of the cabinet papers of the British government from the decisive days of that May, it became clear that Churchill's success in the “duel” with Hitler was contingent on overcoming the opposition at home. The Foreign Secretary Edward Halifax and Churchill clashed over the ways of waging the war against Germany.

In order to appreciate the gravity of the atmosphere and the importance of the historical moment in May 1940 one has to understand the seriousness of the threat that Germany constituted. Germany, with Hitler at the helm, had once again become the state with the most powerful land army in Europe. The real revolutionary of the 20th century was not Marx or Lenin, Che Guevara or Castro, it was Hitler. He gave the German people hope that they could rule over Europe, that they could regain their once lost greatness. He convinced them that their blood and discipline were superior to everyone else's. Hitler exploited the anti-war sentiments in the Western Democracies to enlarge his Third Reich. France and Britain made little or no opposition to the addition of Austria to the German Empire, the remilitarization of the Rhineland, and the annexation of the Czech Sudetenland. In a way, the British and French statesmen, due to their inaction and blindness to the danger that Hitler posed, were complicit in making Germany territorially larger and Hitler an omnipotent leader. Hitler then invaded Poland and signed the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact on the 23rd of August. At least for a while now Hitler could “turn his back” on the Soviet Union and summon the extraordinary military resources of the new Germany and aim them towards Western Europe.

The resources Germany had were truly remarkable. National Socialism had proved to be an economically sound political system that created a good environment for the flourishing of German industry and especially the war sector. The memory of Versailles, revived by Hitler, infused every layer of German society with resentment and anger at the West. The German people at last had the strong-willed leader who, they believed, could improve their lot and fulfill their ambitions for European dominance. The army had amazing high morale and discipline; Hitler often boasted that one German soldier was twice or three times better than a British or a French one. The

sad realization is that he was not far from being right. The Western Democracies had to confront a potent, united, very ambitious and angry Germany.

The quiet years between the two world wars had witnessed the political strategy of appeasement of giving in to a variety of demands with the hope that eventually war would be avoided. The last war had been so devastating that people thought anything would be better than a repetition of the horrors of 1914–1917. Britain did not want to fight. She was not concerned with territories at the other end of Europe; besides the territories that Hitler annexed from other countries had been populated by Germans! There was the widespread sentiment among the Western Democracies that Germany had been cheated in Versailles. Therefore Hitler was only righting the wrongs of the shortsighted and greedy statesmen of the past. The horrors of the gas chambers had not yet begun and people were willing to give Hitler the benefit of the doubt and to accept his anti-Semitic policies.

There was only one voice of reason in the wilderness of stupidity. Churchill had all along, since Hitler came to power, warned against the serious danger that was looming. Churchill was trying to increase the defense spending and to rearm the Royal Air Forces. He even modified his attitude towards the Soviet Union, realizing that Britain needed allies against Nazi Germany. In a famous speech before the House of Commons he said that if “Hitler invaded Hell I would at least make a favorable reference to the devil” (*Churchill's Papers*: Online Archives).

On the 10th of May, two historical events took place. Hitler invaded France, but more importantly Churchill, despite the opposition within the Conservative party, became the Prime Minister. He established a Coalitional Government. The War Cabinet of Britain, the body that was responsible for the important military and political decisions during a time of War, consisted of the two Labour Leaders, Atlee and Greenwood, the ex Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, the Foreign Secretary Edward Halifax and Churchill himself. The inclusion in the cabinet of the discredited arch-appeaser Chamberlain, was a typical act of Churchillian magnanimity and tenderness. In addition to the grim European situation, Churchill also inherited serious domestic opposition. Churchill's position in the political life of England was very precarious. He was not loved by the Labour Party and the Liberals (the latter he had deserted and the former he had been castigating). Although he was a member of the Conservative party, the Tories distrusted him and considered him a reckless adventurer. His main opponent in the cabinet—Lord Halifax, was still the most influential member of the Conservative party. Although Churchill's relationship with Chamberlain had improved, it was not clear with whom the ex-Prime Minister would side—the more political minded and moderate Halifax or the “adventurer” Churchill. Churchill could not rely firmly on the support of the two Labour leaders, who, despite their dislike of the “blue-blooded” Halifax, were young, untried war time politicians,

capable of being persuaded either way by the tide of war time diplomacy.

A new strategy of fighting Hitler soon emerged in a frightened Britain. It was a form of a new appeasement espoused by the foreign secretary Lord Halifax. Instead of openly confronting Germany, Britain would gain some valuable time by making a deal with Hitler. Halifax did not deceive himself that Hitler would stop and honor an eventual peace treaty. He wanted merely to gain some valuable time in order to prepare Britain militarily. Britain, the Foreign Secretary thought, was not ready to fight Germany in May 1940. Halifax hoped, by engineering some ephemeral peace agreement, to gain some time for rearmament. He always emphasized that he would consider negotiations with Hitler, only if the terms guaranteed British independence. This was essential to Halifax. He was ready to sacrifice some territories outside of Europe if that meant fighting the war with Hitler later on better terms. And although he did not know what terms Hitler would propose, he was ready to wait at least until the proposal came. If it was unreasonable, he would reject it. Negotiations would have also pleased the French. Britain and France had an agreement not to sign a separate peace with Germany. To many, this seemed a moderate and safe strategy—typically English some would say. Halifax and others in the government could not understand Churchill's stubborn refusal even to consider this policy. Halifax looked with contempt at what he thought was the "romantic blustering" of the Prime Minister glorifying "death in battle." Halifax thought that Churchill's determination that "we shall never surrender" was foolish especially if there was a better way of fighting Hitler. In any event, the success of Churchill's policy was contingent on the eventual American intervention in Europe. This would undermine the role of the British Empire in the post-war world.

But Halifax was wrong. As often happens in life, when one tries to accomplish too much one does very little. The moderate Halifax attributed Churchill's "warmongering" to his impetuous character. Halifax did not perceive the merits of Churchill's policy. He did not realize that it was based on calculations and not on a romantic desire on the part of the Prime Minister to fight. Had Britain accommodated herself to Germany, this would have had disastrous effects on British morale. In a time when grave danger loomed over the British Isles, the public needed strong and resolute encouragement. Negotiations with Hitler would have produced the opposite effect by showing how uncertain and afraid the British government was. Moreover this fear would have trickled down and permeated the masses and especially the Army. The mere attempt to negotiate with the Nazis would have sent a telling message to the Americans that the Anglo-Saxon brethren across the ocean had given up the fight. Churchill had to be especially careful about the way Britain was perceived in America, since the American Ambassador to London, Joseph Kennedy, who was a defeatist, was trying to persuade Roosevelt that Britain was lost and there was no need

to come to her aid. Instead, the U.S.A. should concentrate on improving its relations with the emerging new power on the old continent—Germany. Churchill, by his intractable refusal to approach Hitler and ask for terms, avoided all of these, possibly fatal, counterfactuals.

Churchill fought bitterly in the War Cabinet against any proposal to approach Hitler for an armistice. He believed that this would have been disastrous to the British morale. A proposal to Hitler would have jeopardized the American entry into the war. Hitler would have demanded that Britain cease its re-armament and probably surrender her fleet—conditions which no British government could have accepted. Britain then would have had to leave the negotiating table humiliated. This would have, on the one hand, slackened the confidence of the British people and, on the other, increased the determination of the Germans. About Halifax's seemingly reasonable pleads of "let's just try and see," Churchill thought that the mere attempt to approach Hitler would have already done the damage. Churchill understood Hitler like no one else—he knew that acceptable peace terms could not be expected from Hitler. Therefore an attempt at negotiations would have been futile. It would have been, to use Churchill's wording, "the beginning of the slippery slope" for Britain (Lukacs 189).

Churchill stayed the course, despite the enormous opposition he had to overcome. In a moment of hardship he did not hesitate to take the difficult path because he believed this was the right one. He had to mobilize the country and the politicians behind the idea to fight Germany come hell or high water. One of the most powerful weapons which Churchill had in his arsenal was his ability to weave words into splendid speeches. He was truly one of the greatest wordsmiths of the 20th century. Often mesmerizing, his speeches were able to unite and encourage the British public. They inspired the much needed confidence in the British people during the insecure days of May, 1940. Churchill's oratorical abilities served him on two levels—he was able to unite the country behind him and to win support within the government. One cannot downplay the importance of his phrase-making in view of the precarious domestic situation in England. Churchill was so successful because he appealed to the hearts rather than to the minds of his listeners. Drawing on the British people's sense of moral decency, he portrayed the battle with Germany as good versus evil. In times of war, the people need a strong leader who can be a source of stimulation and support. Churchill's personality and speeches provided exactly this source. In the time of the greatest peril for England, Churchill was able to invigorate the British people like no one had ever done before. He delivered his speeches in a non-hysterical manner (exactly the opposite of what Hitler did!), relying on the effect of the content of the speech rather than on the way in which it was delivered. Churchill's speeches swayed public opinion and popular sentiment from indecision and insecurity of what course to adopt, to the firm resolve to oppose Germany in any direction. The presence

of a strong-willed leader is crucial. If Britain did not have Churchill she could have shared the fate of France. Britain might have taken “the easy way out” of negotiations with Germany and began to “slide on the slippery slope” of an ultimate defeat.

The final showdown between Churchill and Halifax, between standing up to Germany and settling for an armistice, came on the 28th of May. This was Churchill's finest hour. During the late cabinet meeting that Tuesday, Halifax, growing impatient, openly confronted Churchill and inquired whether the Prime Minister was ready to consider any negotiations with Germany. Churchill adjourned the meeting and asked the members of the War Cabinet to reconvene at seven o'clock in the evening; the discussion would then include the Outer Cabinet (every minister as opposed to the only five members of the War Cabinet). On that Tuesday evening, before the entire British Cabinet, Churchill made clear his determination not to compromise the issue of a possible approach to Hitler: “it was idle to think that, if we tried to make peace now, we should get better terms from Germany than if we went on and fought it out” (Lukacs 189) and Churchill declared that if such negotiations were taken, the terms Hitler would offer would amount to making Britain “a slave state... under Moseley or some such person” (Lukacs 5). Churchill's resolve had a remarkable effect on the members of the government. Churchill himself labeled the reaction of the politicians that day as “emphatic.” Relying on the cabinet papers from May, 1940 and on the individual accounts of some of the political actors from these days, we now know that the Outer Cabinet reacted ardently to Churchill's speech. Witnessing this, Halifax realized that there was no opposing the PM's views.

The adjournment of the war cabinet and the decision to invite the other ministers in the discussion was a brilliant political maneuver. Had Churchill continued the session of the War Cabinet, Halifax would have felt more confident and would probably have tried to persuade the rest of the members to consider the merits of his proposal more seriously. Although closer to Churchill than to Halifax, the Labour Party leaders were very inexperienced. There was the possibility that, prompted by Halifax, they would lose their confidence in Churchill and yield to their fears, remaining neutral or even siding with the more moderate Foreign Secretary. The ebullient support of the Outer Cabinet for Churchill's policies disarmed Halifax. When Churchill pronounced the words “If this island story of ours is to end, let it end, not through surrender, but only when each of us lies choking in his own blood upon the ground” the game was up. One of the ministers, who was at this meeting, Dalton, recalled the attitudes of the cabinet members: “No one expressed even the faintest flicker of dissent” (Jenkins 608). Seeing that most of the government was with Churchill, Halifax now had to confront not only the PM but also the rest of the cabinet. It is one thing to threaten to resign before an uncertain cabinet of five members and completely another to abandon your country before the rest of the government who enthusiastically supports the policy of

the Prime Minister. Partly pressed by the sentiments of the rest, and partly beginning to see the merits of Churchill's policies, Halifax gave up the fight. With the benefits of hindsight, we can now say that he was right to do so.

What would have happened if Britain did not fight in the Second World War? What would have happened if she settled for some peace agreement with Germany? This is an interesting counterfactual question. Britain's absence in effect would have sanctioned the German dominance in Europe for several years. What if Hitler had somehow managed to diplomatically maintain this situation? It is not too difficult to imagine. The United States were isolationists. We now know that Stalin was not preparing for a war with Hitler. An armistice between Britain and Germany could have been the *fait accompli* for Hitler, the crowning achievement. Even then I think it is fair to say that there would still have been progress in sciences, arts, music and in every conceivable field. A Europe, dominated by Hitler's strong hand, would have retained its competitive spirit and its thirst for innovations. The social climate, however, would have been different. Democracy *per se* would not have been the same. Despotic governments with strong leaders would have emerged in every European state. The way of peaceful compromise would have yielded to powerful politicking. Civil liberties would have been thrust into oblivion as weak-kneed practices and the way of words and oratory would have given way to the less subtle ways of "blood and iron" and the will to power. Because of Churchill this did not happen. It was he who did not hesitate in the moment of peril. It was he who with strength of character, resolute determination, courage, charm and tact embarked on the right path. It was the thorny path that led to triumph.

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ALEXANDER BLOK AND THE TRAGEDY OF SLAVIC POETS

by Bobbi Chernev

Forward

Throughout the history of Slavic poetry there have been numerous cases of tragic destinies, which at first glance defy logical explanation. A number of reasons, ranging from political climate to extreme emotions peculiar to the lands occupied by East and South Slavs, contributed to the untimely deaths of many highly-talented poets such as Alexander Pushkin, Mikhail Lermontov, Alexander Blok, Sergey Esenin, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Peyo Yavorov, Hristo Smirnenski, Dimcho Debelyanov, Nikola Vaptsarov, and Petya Dubarova. An integral aspect of what is sometimes termed the 'Slavic well of despair', these circumstances shaped the lives and work of these poets in a unique way. Alexander Blok (1880–1921), one of the most loved and influential Slavic poets of all time, is an outstanding example of this phenomenon. The following paper and poem are a tribute to him, and to all the above mentioned poets.

Slavic Poets

They came
 Out of
 misty swamps,
 Dark forests,
 grey cities.
 They did not ask anyone
 If they could come.

They were
Revolutionaries,
Drunks,
Romantics,
Nihilists.

They glorified
Freedom,
Beauty,
Love
Like no one else
Amidst such barbarity
and cruelty.

But these lands,
These
 miserable lands
 of despair,
Thrown
 under
 low
 grey skies
Shrouded in
 black rain,
Populated by
 wild beasts,
They did not tolerate
 their noble children.
These lands
 made them
 suffer
For their spirits,
For their belief
 in a brighter future,
Whose bards
 and prophets
The poets were.

And the poets did suffer.

One
 hanged himself
 in a hotel room,
Having written
 in his own blood.
Another
 shot himself.
Yet another
 was shot
 by the government.
And the greatest,
 the most brilliant
Of them all,
 fell
 in a pathetic duel.

They all perished.
And now
 there are no more

Slavic poets.

There are only
Grey cities,
 dark forests,
 misty swamps.

**И СТАЛО БЕСПОЩАДНО ЯСНО
ЖИЗНЬ ПРОШУМЕЛА И УШЛА*.**

Alexander Blok, 1909

Alexander Alexandrovich Blok was born on November 16, 1880 in St. Petersburg, the son of Alexandra Beketova and Alexander Lvovich Blok. His parents separated soon after his birth, and the infant was raised by his mother at the family estate of Shakhmatov between Moscow and St. Petersburg. Blok had an extremely happy childhood, wandering among the green fields and forests of the countryside. Shakhmatovo bordered on the estate of Dmitry Mendeleyev, the great chemist. Thus it happened that Blok was introduced to Mendeleyev's daughter Lyubov Dmitrievna Mendeleyeva, his future wife, at a very early age. He first started writing poetry when he was five, and became a serious writer when he was eighteen. Blok's first cycle of poems, entitled *Ante Lucem, Before the Light*, shows his great potential and features a number of remarkable pieces. Already at this early date, dark shades are visible in his poetic vision. The theme of *Hamlet* and *Ophelia* is present throughout the collection, while the most remarkable (and also opening) poem is a premonition of misfortunes to come:

Let there be moonlight—night is dark.
Let life bring happiness to people—
The fiery sadness of my heart
Will not give way to springtime's love.*

(1898)

Blok did not earn himself instant fame with *Ante Lucem*. It was his second collection, *Verses to the Beautiful Lady*, written between 1900–1904, that made him renowned throughout Russia. Before we move on, however, we need take into account the literary scene in Russia at the turn of the 19th century.

In her biography entitled *Aleksandr Blok: A Life*, Nina Berberova, Professor of Russian Literature at Princeton University, writes that “at the end of the nineteenth century no purely literary grouping existed in Russia, no group had been formed to defend and illustrate a new aesthetic. The great writers of the period didn't belong to any school. After the *pleaide* of the 1820s—1840s, Pushkin's era, the first group to demonstrate a sort of community of effort, to establish a real literary school, were the Russian Symbolists” (Berberova, 11). The *pleaide* Berberova refers to is the group that dominated the so called Golden Age of Russian poetry. This period witnessed the sudden blossoming of the talents of Pushkin, Delvig and Lermontov among others, which is why it is seen as the highpoint of Russian poetry. It is only natural that such

¹And it was mercilessly clear
Life had blossomed and gone by

*All poems bearing the asterisk have been translated by the author of this paper.

a peak would be followed by a decline; in the following decades it was prose that caught the imagination. Russia began producing poets of world importance again at the beginning of the 20th century. Bryusov, Merezhkovsky, Balmont and Gippius, all of whom appeared on the literary scene shortly before Blok, stressed different aspects of poetry and headed different currents within Symbolism. Blok, never a strict formalist, created a gathering of his own called *The Argonauts*. Its aesthetic basis were the writings of the philosopher Vladimir Solovev and its other members—the poets Andrey Bely and Sergey Solovev, Vladimir's nephew. Solovev's idea of *Sophia*, Divine Wisdom and the Eternal Feminine, became central in *Verses to the Beautiful Lady*. She was an ideal, which permeated every experience of the lyric hero and formed his understanding of life. Her image was enveloped by an air of mysticism and almost religious devotion and piety:

I walk into the darkened shrine;
 Perform the humble ritual,
 Awaiting the Beautiful Lady
 Amidst flickering red light.
 In the shadow of high columns,
 I shiver at the screech of doors,
 While looking at my face
 Is Her hallowed image, a mere dream.★

(1902)

Verses to the Beautiful Lady received a warm reception in most literary circles, where Blok came to be regarded as a promising, talented young Symbolist. The image of the Beautiful Lady won instant recognition. At the same time *The Argonauts* could boast that in spite of its mysterious nature, this image had a terrestrial resemblance—Blok's wife, Lyubov Dmitrievna. The two were married in 1903, settling in St. Petersburg. Blok was 23, and he had discovered the love of his life. Even though the marriage would go through a number of difficult stages in the following years, Lyubov would remain with him until Blok's dying day, serving as the inspiration for a large number of his poems. In addition, 1903 and 1904 were among the happiest years of the poet's life. And yet he was heading for a moment of change. "That mysticism, that romantic poetry attached to Her, on which Blok had lived for several years, was now consumed. He was at a new turning-point in his life by the time the *Verses to the Most Beautiful Lady* were issued by Griff [in 1904]" (Berberova, 36). There was something inside the poet that did not let him, like many others, stop his poetic progression at the first sign of fame. He was not afraid to leave the past behind and readily plunge into the unknown. Simultaneously, Russian history was at a major turning point, as socio-

political life was about to leave its first mark on Blok's imagination. In the year 1905 the Revolution made its stunning debut on the stage of the Russian Empire.

The Revolution broke out on "Bloody Sunday," January 9, 1905, when Imperial Cossack guards fired at a peaceful demonstration heading towards the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg, killing and injuring unarmed civilians. In the next months the whole country plunged into violent disorder, which was most intense in the Imperial capital. Blok was profoundly affected by these events. The Soviet critic Antokolsky writes that although the poet was far from the life of the common people, he was quick to feel compassion for the revolution and see a common path with the populace (Antokolsky, 9). Berberova also states that "Blok had no doubts: the people would liberate themselves, without the help of chattering politicians, without the timorous, conservative bourgeoisie..." (Berberova, 42). The critics have a point in singling out the 1905 Revolution as the single most important factor in Blok's social awakening. From this moment on, the poet abandoned and sometimes even scorned the mysticism of his first period. Images of uncontrollable blizzard and darkness, of the grievous drunk Russia that would permeate *The Twelve* made their first appearance in Blok's poetry:

Who lured me to this well-known travel?
Who smiled in my prison window?
Or—attracted by the dreary road,
Was it a pauper singing psalms?

No, no one called for me to go.
The earth will not be soft to me.
Listening to the drunken voice of Russia,
I shall rest under a tavern's roof.★

(Autumn Will, 1905)

There was something extremely painful in Blok's social awakening. On the one hand, he firmly believed in the ideals of the revolution and urged the intelligentsia to side with the people. On the other hand, he feared that Russia was doomed; he was sensing a huge catastrophe ahead. In a February 1914 poem he wrote "Ah, if you only knew, children,/ The cold and shadows of the days to come!" Most did not know. The poet was a lone seer in his own right, which in turn condemned him to the outside world's misunderstanding.

Before he arrived at such painful realisations, however, Blok had to pass through his second artistic period. The cult to the Beautiful Lady was dead. She was replaced by the Stranger, an unknown and alluring image of a strong-willed, ruinous woman, who frequented pubs or travelled with the gypsies:

And every evening (or am I imagining?)
 Exactly at the appointed time
 A girl's slim figure, silk raimented,
 Glides past the window's mist and grime.
 And slowly passing through the revelers,
 Unaccompanied, always alone,
 Exuding mists and secret fragrances,
 She sits at the table that is her own. ★

(*The Stranger* vv. 25–32)

Many of the poet's early admirers expressed utmost displeasure with the new decadent Blok. Others, like Bely, blamed him for having abandoned the high ideals of Symbolism and the Pure Virgin for a vulgar, cynical approach towards life and poetry. The poet, who had never fallen to the level of the petty critics, did not pay any attention. He was evolving. His fair hair was losing its golden sparkle. He talked less and less and smiled very rarely. He was drinking a lot, finding solace in vodka. The happy years of his early twenties had inevitably elapsed.

There was something ominous in the air and Blok could sense it. "Now everything was changed. The Virgin of the Rainbow, the Unknown Woman of seedy cabarets, disappeared. He knew that the City [St. Petersburg]—the ghost town...with its quays and marble, its tsar and terrorists—was only a mirage, indeed the whole country was a mirage, and that he himself, with his despair, his dreams, his sickness, was merely a ghost...perhaps the last of this period in Russian history" (Berberova, 102). Blok was writing less, but the diminishing quantity was compensated by outstanding quality. His poems became simpler but more powerful, evoking clear and lasting images:

Night, street, lamp, drugstore,
 A dull and meaningless light.
 Go on and live another quarter century—
 Nothing will change. There's no way out.
 You'll die, then start from the beginning,
 It will repeat, just like before:
 Night, icy ripples on a canal,
 Drugstore, street, lamp. ★

(1912)

The image of Russia and its path became central in Blok's oeuvre. His third poetic period is considered by most critics to mark his highest achievement. The poems look natural and have an easy flow, as if they had come effortlessly (which, of course was not the case) and can be compared to those of Pushkin, the undisputed

master of Russian verse. At the same time they express infinite sorrow and pain, the loss of the self in an ephemeral city in an ethereal country. St. Petersburg did in fact seem to be a highly superficial city. In 1703, when Peter the Great ordered that a new Russian capital be built on land recently conquered from the Swedes, he chose the weirdest of places. Situated far to the north in the Gulf of Finland, it was a wild misty swampland, uninhabited save for occasional Karelian fishermen. Blok felt that this city, along with the entire country, was bound to disappear and revert back to obscurity and darkness. It was his city nevertheless, for he truly loved it. He felt his fate was intertwined with that of Petersburg.

By 1915–1916 Blok was already suffering from deteriorating health. He opposed the war and its disastrous consequences on humanity, but no one really paid any attention to him. While many poets believed that the Great War would be the last war, Blok sensed that the smouldering fire of the Revolution was about to be reignited with new vigor, and that it would bring increased suffering to Russia. Yet he would stand by the Revolution, for he firmly believed that in overhauling the tsarist regime, which was flawed and antiquated, the Revolution would bring justice and happiness to the common people. And it was the common people that the poet identified with his beloved Russia. “In the years 1917–1918 he believed unconditionally in the nobleness and greatness of the people, which was enforcing its will in the social revolution. He was delighted by the revolutionary order ruling in Petrograd...delighted by the forgiving proletariat” (Antokolsky, 16). The Soviet rhetoric taken away, these words describe the way Blok felt at the time accurately. As Berberova keenly notes, Blok understood that the intelligentsia had to accept and support the October Revolution, which he did in his article “The Intelligentsia and the Revolution,” published at the end of 1917 (Berberova, 120).

The Revolution had an impact on Blok’s writing as well. He understood that he could not write about it within the old conventions. The style of “The Twelve,” Blok’s most famous and controversial poem, written in 1918, combined the crude language of the street, the traditional *chastushka*, and revolutionary slogans into what became the stunning first reaction to the October Revolution. Various critics have interpreted the poem in different ways, both as acceptance and as denial of the Revolution, and there is ample evidence to support both opinions. In many ways “The Twelve” was the culmination of Blok’s work during the previous ten years. The motif of the blizzard now reigned supreme, as twelve Red Guards marched through the snowy streets of Petrograd in the winter of 1917–1918, bestowing revolutionary judgement. Terrible winds were sweeping the city amidst the barking of dogs, as the bourgeoisie and the clergy were shivering in the cold. At the end of their journey a most ominous spectre appeared to be leading their way—Jesus Christ. The symbolic figure of Christ, just like the entire poem, is still open to interpretation. It is most probable, however, to

see “The Twelve” as accepting the Revolution, and at the same time revealing its intrinsic dual nature. Either way one thing can be said for sure—“Blok immortalized revolutionary folklore in “The Twelve” (Berberova, 123). Shortly before writing “The Twelve,” Blok published “The Scythians,” another poem of great importance, which explores aspects of traditional Slavophile thought. The imagery of “The Scythians,” extremely evocative and rich, adds to the forceful language in issuing a message of warning to the West. Many Russians find the poem to be relevant even today.

“The Twelve” and “The Scythians” comprise the bulk of Blok’s post-Revolutionary work. In the years 1918–1921 the poet did not write anything else. There were several reasons for this. For the first time in his life, he had to earn a living. His ailing health was made even worse by the food shortages. Finally his acute sensitivity told him that the Revolution was beginning to abandon its ideals. Overcome by all this misery and deeply disillusioned with life, Alexander Blok finally died in excruciating pain on August 7, 1921 from a mysterious disease which lasted several months and which doctors could neither diagnose nor cure. “To Pushkin’s House,” written a few months before he died, became Blok’s poetic will. In the poem, he paid his final homage to Pushkin’s house, which symbolised an ideal creative freedom of the spirit that was already being taken away by the very Revolution that should have spread it the world over. And in the speech he delivered along with the recital of the poem, Blok said that “the poet dies because he has nothing left to breathe: life has lost its meaning” (Shkolnikova). Old Petersburg, Blok’s beloved city, survived the demise of its bard by a mere three years. In 1924, having lost its status as the capital along with almost half of its population, it was renamed Leningrad by Soviet authorities.

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HOMAGE TO OLD AGE AND LOVE: *MEMORIA DE MIS PUTAS TRISTES*

by Katherine Herrera

Life and Death are at the heart of most poetry and literary fiction, but the theme of old age and the aging process is less central to many works. What are the implications of being old, and when does one become old? In our postmodern era, we expect the elderly to behave in a calm manner and to exhibit the qualities of “grandparents.” But don’t older people feel the desires of passion and love? Most societies have made this aspect of the lives of older people taboo, but the Japanese and Colombian Nobel laureates, Yasunari Kawabata (1899–1972) and Gabriel García Márquez (1927–) have written works that illuminate this part of life with new perspectives and fundamental questions.

Kawabata revolutionized the literature of his age by exploring, in a melancholic manner, love and sex in the life of the elderly in his 1967 novel, *The House of the Sleeping Beauties*. The main character, “old Eguchi,” a lonely 67 year old man, finds love and passion in a brothel in Okinawa, Japan. Undoubtedly, most readers would view Eguchi as an old, perverted man who wants to satisfy his desires with young girls, but Kawabata illustrates that no matter how old people are, they still have desires and dreams. He shows the reader the other side of Eguchi and the other elderly men who go to the “house of the sleeping beauties.” All the virgin girls are put to sleep before the older men arrive, and the madam of the house has very strict rules about what the men are allowed to do to the naked, sleeping girls. Kawabata’s novel is so much more than a story about the seemingly perverted desires of old men:

He was not to do anything in bad taste, the woman of the inn warned old Eguchi. He was not to put his finger into the mouth of the sleeping, or try

anything of that sort....The man who had told Eguchi of the house was so old

that he was no longer a man. He seemed to think that Eguchi had reached the same stage of senility. Probably because the woman of the house was accustomed only to making arrangements for such old men, she had turned upon Eguchi a look neither of pity nor of inquiry...he had no intentions of breaking the ugly restrictions, the sad restrictions imposed upon the old men. (Kawabata 13–17)

After Eguchi's first night, the madam of the house tells him that most of the old men who sleep in the house say they have good dreams, and others say they remember how it was when they were young. Eguchi soon realizes what the older men who frequent the brothel already know—that only when lying beside a young girl who has been put to sleep could he feel most alive, for it was “the pursuit of a vanished happiness of being alive” (Kawabata 59).

Márquez's 2004 novella, *Memoria de Mis Putas Tristes* (*Memories of My Melancholy Whores*), pays homage to Kawabata's novel. Márquez found his greatest inspiration for writing in the stories of the lives of his maternal grandparents and the other elderly people who live near him. What makes Márquez's book fascinating is that it is the memoir of a 90-year-old man (Márquez was 77 when he wrote the book) while Kawabata was 68 (he died 6 years later) when he wrote about the 67-year-old Eguchi.

Set in the 1960s in a Colombian coastal town, the nameless character in Márquez's novella is an “ugly, shy, and anachronistic” (4) man who plans to die one day in the same house and city where he was born. Although he has devoted his life entirely to writing, he does not consider his profession worthy of praise. When he was much younger he had planned to marry, but it never happened and as the story begins, he is living entirely alone. With brutal honesty, the man tells the readers that he has never had unpaid sex, although for many years now he has not had sex at all. Similar to the beginning of Kawabata's story, Márquez's opening sentence “the year I turned 90, I wanted to give myself the gift of a night of amor loco (crazy love) with an adolescent virgin” (3) seems outrageous. At closer inspection, the reader should be aware that “crazy love” with an adolescent doesn't mean “wild sex”—it means adolescent “senseless love.”

The old man tells us that he wants to document “the beginning of a new life at an age when most mortals have already died” (Márquez 5). Márquez is not only writing a novella named *Memoria de Mis Putas Tristes*; he is also writing a new phase in his own life, one in which his past accounts and habits are old, but his body and mind are rejuvenated. His “new life” is a light that has illuminated his once dark and sad life; he has experienced the life-altering experience of falling in love. The old man goes

to the most well known brothel of the city, which he calls “the theater of our night,” (Márquez 22) where the madam, Rosa Cabarcas, has sedated the virgin girl that the old man will spend the night with, since she is “dying of fear.” The turning point of his life does not consist in waking on the morning of his 19th birthday after a night of “crazy love.” In fact he does nothing that first night but contemplate the fresh, young body of the sleeping beauty:

Her newborn breasts still seemed like a boy’s, but they appeared full to bursting with a secret energy that was ready to explode. The best part of her body were her large, silent-stepping feet with toes as long and sensitive as fingers... The adornments and cosmetics could not hide her character: the haughty nose, heavy eyebrows, intense lips. I thought: A tender young fighting bull. (Márquez 26)

After this, the daily custom of the old man was to arrive at ten at night when the girl was asleep and to leave at five in the morning before the girl awakened.

Interestingly, most societies in our postmodern world would consider that an old man looking at and lying down next to a naked young girl is morally much better than actually violating the girl’s body; yet, they would still consider such behavior suspicious at the very least, and socially unacceptable. Readers may develop different interpretations of the man’s reasons for his new behavior, but the simplest and most poignant is that the old man is in love for the first time, which, according to Kawabata and Márquez, is always a possibility no matter how old one is.

Furthermore, different individuals fall in love with a person or with the idea of being in love in very different ways. Márquez’s character for, example, does not fall in love with the relationship he develops with the girl, but rather with the experiences he is able to create in his mind by observing the sleeping girl whom he names “Delgadina” (which literally means skinny one). The sleeping girl’s body movement in bed is the medium by which his thoughts of love are inspired. Kawabata’s character Eguchi, felt that the youngest of the “sleeping beauties,” age 16, was his “Buddha” or muse in order to remember his own melancholic and comforting memories of the women he once loved but who cannot return from the past (Kawabata 32).

In his article “He Wants to Die Alone, But First...,” Michiko Kakutani argues that Márquez “makes little effort to make this man remotely interesting—as either an individual or a representative figure,” but quite frankly, this author read the plot’s surface and did not bother to dig deeper. Despite the fact that these are postmodern times, interestingly some aspects of life are universally timeless and ageless—as Jorge Luis Borges would agree. Ironically, one of these is the process of aging. One day we may look at ourselves in the mirror and see that our physical body is old, since that is how the world perceives us. But the mind and soul may still be young and fresh with

adventurous dreams. One could argue that at the deepest level, the fictional character of Márquez's story is the memory and imagination of Márquez's grandfather Nicolás. Márquez's last memory of his grandfather dates from when he was a small boy and his grandfather was in his seventies; now that Márquez is in his seventies he can look at himself in the mirror and say how much he looks like the grandfather of his memory. *Memoria* is a "glorification of old age," (Márquez 8) a tribute to his grandfather and to Márquez's own life. Additionally, Márquez's character tells us that "it is a triumph of life that old people lose their memories of inessential things, though memory does not often fail with regard to things that are of real interest to us. Cicero illustrated this with the stroke of a pen: No old man forgets where he has hidden his treasure" (Márquez 10).

Furthermore, Kakutani states that "worse, we receive no insight into why the narrator has led such a libertine but lonely existence, no insight into why he has never examined his inner life." But again, this author does not see the light that fills Márquez's writing. One thing that Kakutani forgets or maybe does not know is that Márquez's literary style is one where much is left for the reader to interpret and put together. Another interpretation of the novella, according to the article "Memories of My Melancholy Whores: Client of the Year" by Terrence Rafferty, is that this old man's account is "like Humbert Humbert's, an ironic apologia, a literary game whose object is to catch the speaker out in his evasions and self-deceptions." In any case, the old man tells us that his mother always did everything for him and helped him out when he was in trouble. His father, on the other hand, was a man of rigid principles and would not allow mistakes. Perhaps this suggests that since the old man was raised in a household with opposing viewpoints, his ideals throughout his life were conflicted. One can also assume that his loneliness can be attributed to the fact that he lived the life of a writer and music critic, where solitude is in fact necessary with little time left to invest in "human-relationships," a conclusion Eguchi would agree with (Kawabata, 38). Thus, many writers might go to brothels to compensate for their lack of physical contact with women. The fact that Márquez's old man decides to write his memoir speaks for itself; he is indeed "examining his inner life."

His account is a confirmation of the redemptive power of love: "the invincible power that has moved the world is unrequited, not happy, love." He had in fact changed—his newspaper column became devoted to composing love letters; he opened his heart to a homeless cat and shared his favorite works of art as well as his favorite books with the Delgadina. The old man even thinks of joining a student revolt and carrying a placard saying: "I am mad with love."

The question of morality in the novella haunts not only the reader, but also the old man; hence, Márquez's characteristic quiet irony resonates throughout the story. One time, in the middle of the night at the brothel, the old man wakes up (or is he

dreaming?) and sees (or imagines?) a message written on the mirror by the sink that says “el tigre no come lejos” (“the tiger does not eat far away”) (Márquez 56). This is an old Colombian folk saying that most likely represents the confused state of the old man’s consciousness. Another time he encounters a local gypsy in the city who foretells that the girl will one day happily marry and have children with some other man. Perhaps he realizes that it is better to have the “sleeping” girl than the “awakened” girl. He might have to accept the fact that the girl may not love him in return if she is fully aware of who he is and thus, all his lovely memories of her would be shattered.

The old man also meets an old friend, Casilda Armenta, a prostitute, and tells her about his new life and love for Delgadina. His friend advises him to quit “grandfather’s romanticism” and just make love to the girl because he should not die without knowing that love and sex can actually go together. In other words, his old friend knows very well that the unlikely relationship that he has with the sleeping girl is not a mature and healthy relationship. The old man only contemplates making love to the girl, but he is afraid of what might happen. He knows too well that Delgadina is but an abstraction of the “painful, idealizing, narcissistic romanticism of adolescence” (Rafferty). Furthermore, in the article by Michael Wood “The Dying Animal,” Wood argues that *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* tells two stories: one is a simple and sentimental tale about a man who finds true love very late in life, and the other is a bitter but still tender narrative about a man who exchanges one type of solitude for another. The man fancies the second type of solitude and he names it “being in love.” Wood agrees that the interesting moment occurs when the two stories intertwine or start talking to each other.

Wood concurs with Márquez’s reason for writing his new fiction: life itself, not creativity, invents stories like this one. Consequently, Wood believes that the old man in the story wants crazy love because “anything that makes us foolish can also make us young,” and this idea is also illustrated by Kawabata’s character. Overall, the entire story for Wood is just another way of saying that age has “nothing to do with being old,” to which I believe García Márquez would add: there is not a specific age for falling in love. Therefore, one may argue that the old man’s desires were in fact fulfilled because at the age of 90, his birthday gift was a new chapter in his life when he became crazy in love.

Moreover, *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* connects to Márquez’s his earlier works (“One Hundred Years of Solitude,” “Love in the Time of Cholera,” “Of Love and Other Demons”) with his use of amorous epistles, prostitution as the requirement for the “crystallization” of love, and the theme of regenerative love. In his article “Dying for Love,” John Updike argues that the works of Márquez contain a vast deal on the theme of love, depicted as “doom, a demonic possession, a disease that, once contracted, cannot be easily cured...not infrequently the afflicted are an older

man and a much younger woman.” (Updike 140) Updike uses the famous fictional character, Aureliano Buendía, from “One Hundred Years of Solitude” and makes the point that when Aureliano visits a very young mulatto prostitute, he is overwhelmed with the pitiable conditions of the girl and falls in love with her, since he feels the need to protect her and love her, much like a grandfather wants to love and protect.

By comparison, the old man in *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* feels for the girl’s pitiable life—she is exhausted by her day job and must still work at night as a whore in order to help her poor mother and siblings, and must be sedated because she is just a child who is “dying of fear” of bleeding to death when losing her virginity. Since the old man never had children of his own, it is unlikely that he has developed fatherly or grandfather-like qualities, but somehow, he is moved by the girl’s purity and youth.

Updike also picks up on how old people’s sense of reality “keeps slipping... sometimes into a startling loveliness,” and how the old man’s love depends on the “subaqueous refractions of memory” (Updike 141). One can imagine that the instinct to memorialize one’s loves is not peculiar to nonagenarians and those even older. For instance, the old man describes the “phosphorescent perspiration” of the girl as the light he senses when he sees the naked girl for the first time. Furthermore, the old man’s sense of reality is converted into magic realism when he says that “the full moon was climbing to the middle of the sky and the world looked as if it was submerged in green water,” and also when he dressed Delgadina according to the changes of his mood when he imagines her as “a novice in love at 20, a parlor whore at 40, the queen of Babylon at 70, a saint at 100” (Updike 141–142).

In our postmodern world, many governments are trying to stop prostitution and child trafficking. Also, governments and both public and private schools are educating girls and boys to abstain from sex to eliminate the possibility of lethal diseases and non-recoverable life-changing events. Though these problems have been targeted for many years, prostitution still plays an important part in the income of many poor women of the world. Many feminists and humanists might protest that Márquez asks his readers to accept prostitution and understand the old man’s behaviors. On this view, the morally conflicting aspect of the novella still is the fact that the old man even thought of de-flowering a 14-year old girl. But the counterpart of this is the fact that sexual behavior in elderly people continues to be unmentionable in most postmodern societies.

Such moral concerns are irrelevant to Márquez’s character who experiences the rebirth of love and its torments in a body that was thought free of such concerns. The madam, Rosa Cabarcas, preaches to the old man that morality is a question of time. Perhaps this is Márquez telling us that in order to consider the morality of an action or situation, one must first understand the conflicts and under what circumstances

these conflicts might or might not be resolved. Márquez's novella is a love letter to "the dying light"—what Updike calls older people's dreams of finding and falling in love. Márquez's old man now enjoys a newly acquired wisdom:

When I awoke alive on the first morning of my 90s in the happy bed of Delgadina, I was transfixed by the agreeable idea that life was not something that passes by like Heraclitus' ever-changing river but a unique opportunity to turn over on the grill and keep broiling on the other side for another 90 years. (Márquez 108)

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