

Out of the Cave

Out of the Cave

A Student Journal

Summer 2019 Edition

Created by

The Students of John Paul the Great
Catholic University

Out of the Cave

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Moana: Story of a Soul	Copyright © 2019 Elizabeth Miriam Negri
Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep	Copyright © 2019 Catalina Rojas
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The Pop	Copyright © 2019 Kevin Paul Reeve Stutzke
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Don't Let Go	Copyright © 2019 Sarah Marie Huckins

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Opening Prayer

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

Lord, as this academic year at JPCatholic comes to an end, we thank you for keeping us safe and for bringing great fruits from our studies and friendships. In the face of recent trials, we ask for an increase in the virtues of charity, humility, and justice—and for the ability “to interpret insofar as possible [our] neighbor's thoughts, words, and deeds in a favorable way” (CCC 2478).

We ask you especially to bestow your graces upon the graduating class of 2019, enabling them to find good work, to take on the responsibilities of adulthood, and, most of all, to stay firmly rooted in you as they live among a confusing and divided world. Please remain present with them throughout their lives, and continue to be with all the alumni who have gone before them. We also ask you to be with the incoming students who will be arriving in the fall, to keep them safe in their travels, and to open their hearts and minds to all the growth you may wish to bring them through our university.

Be with us as we create, keep us from sin as we create, and help us to create something good.

*Jesus, the Perfect Communicator, have mercy on us.
Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us.
Pope St. John Paul II, pray for us.*

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Letter from the Editors

John Paul the Great University is full of young artists and thinkers who are eager to make their mark upon the world. Some of those students are already sitting down and working on honing their craft, be it photography, poetry or philosophy. We, the editors of Out of the Cave, have collected the works of the students and selected those in this book as being of exemplary value.

Out of the Cave

“Next, then,” I said, “make an image of our nature in its education and want of education, likening it to a condition of the following kind. See human beings as though they were in an underground cave-like dwelling with its entrance, a long one, open to the light across the whole width of the cave. They are in it from childhood with their legs and necks in bonds so that they are fixed, seeing only in front of them, unable because of the bond to turn their heads all the way around. Their light is from a fire burning far above and behind them. Between the fire and the prisoners there is a road above, along which see a wall, built like the partitions puppet-handlers set in front of the human beings and over which they show the puppets.”

—Plato

From *The Republic of Plato*,

Translated by Allen Bloom,
(Basic Books, 1991), 193.



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A Part of a Whole

Kevin Paul Reeve Stutzke

You know why college is hard?
Because it makes you feel like you are a single stick
standing under the weight of your
textbooks,
student loans,
new homes,
and the pressure of a life “about to begin.”

I don’t want you to see this as foolish.
It’s almost like this time in life is designed
to make you feel like you’re snapping.

Although it’s not just college that causes this trapping feeling;
it’s being alive in a cyclone of change—it’s any force that has the power

to rearrange the
landscape of your life.

A loss of a loved one.

A new child you can’t afford.

It doesn’t have to be a hoard of the unknown
It can be the tree beside the house that you grew up in

Starting to uncoil, stretching its roots,
through the top soil and breaking the bones

Of your home.

I’m not trying to write a sacred tome.

Out of the Cave

I'm attempting to write a poem saying.

We aren't fools.

Life gives us things we can't handle,

But it's to remind us of the tools by our side—of the people that those
shadows in life

tend to swallow up and hide.

During a moment of these quakes,

I hope for all our sakes that we can remember that we are a part of a
whole.

No hole is too deep that can consume this body, no weight is so strong
it can break this

body, nothing and nobody has the enough power to break this body
when it stands

as one.

Shadows are temporarily cast.

The world turns fast

And the sun will come past

To show what's truly present

A part of a whole.

A Part of Us

Cassidy Van Vooren

It's a part of us,
the art inside of us.
Boiling down to certain things,
we try to put ourselves in boxes,
and explain how we're uncomplex beings.
But there's so much in a single soul,
there's a whole world that we'll forever withhold.

An Old Man's Musings

Anthony Cooper

In a silent stream, in the mountains misty morn
An old man tranquil, wise fished in the silent dawn.
A rustling breeze through the trees created
Singing whispers in a symphony of nature.
The old man stares intent on his prey,
Calm and slow he primes his hook.
A pastime it is, an escape from daily life.
Life is like a stream, the old man ponders
It meanders as it flows, rushing one minute, calm the next,
then, into violent falls it grows.
The whispering of the breeze, as sunlight filters through the trees
Calms the restless heart and soul
as in his search through rippled hole the man put his bait.
A splash, a pull, a fish is hooked and as he retrieves his prize
The man is struck by revelation rare, and as he reels his finny fare
He ponders temptation.
The worm I placed upon the hook became a trap with tasty look
That you my finned friend hath took
and ripped away from your former life have now become my dinner.
The man continued as he trekked homeward from the stream,
His spoils a poignant display of fate
Seeming like a heavy dream as he served it onto his plate.

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Temptation, the old man noted is like my hook,
and I the wary fish, but tasty that bait does look
So hard is that decision whether to live and swim alive,
Or to take it, and gamble away my soul, and leave my life behind.
Sad the old man pondered and to sleep he soon retired,
To dream of all that happened that day to start anew tomorrow.

Better

Cassidy Van Vooren

Life is not a waste,
nor is death something to chase
He plastered this slogan on the wall
Days were not made to be endured,
they were made to be used and utilized for something more,
He believed this to be true all in all

The pat, pat, pat, of his heartbeat,
the lag of the pat, pat, pat, when the day is through

He knows his shoulders and they are tired now,
yet he doesn't know his own mind and that scares him somehow

The wine that must be drunk,
the new creations we must make
The day is young and the world is open,
so run to the things you know you can change

Buy Me Roses

Cassidy Van Vooren

buy me roses,
sing me to sleep,
buy me a diamond ring,
and give me a sip of your drink to drink,
we'll dance along to tune after tune,
and I'll write about how I'm finally coming to,

Don't buy me roses,
don't sing me to sleep,
just let me trust you,
and we'll bake a cake to eat,
I won't ask for much,
since you've given all you are,
I'm already awake,
and the light is making me see that things are never subpar,

I have a name,
and you have a song,
I've not heard you sing,
but I'll be playing that tune all night long,
I am who I am,
and I've met who I'm not,

I've resolved and failed,
and you keep lifting me up,

a cottage on a hill,
all grassy and blooming,
the place I go to still,
to watch the sun set and the moon beam,
I'll go there and meet you,
I'll climb the hill and part the fog,
I'll chase the dreams of my heart,
and please do keep singing your song,

the meadows caught in the middle of the forests,
they prove that nature does have a florist,
modern people try to inspire and propel what they think is new truth,
but there's only one thing so old as time that can always be renewed,

Bring me back,
to the place where my heart sings,
take me by the hand and help me to untangle these strings,
I'm a waterfall of emotions, and a typewriter under an almond tree,
bring me to that place and we'll begin,
how can my heart belong to a place I've never been,
we'll lift the boulders,
and perfect the wall,
now long past is the life I lived in which I felt so small,
don't let me go it alone,

unless you promise me that we'll share a home,
I'll follow you like a stray cat,
just lead the way to the place you call your own,

peacemaker,
let's keep the peace,
there's history in a stone,
blood spilled out on a road,
and tears preserved on a page,
it is the inheritance I've been bequeathed,
it is the story I'm to safeguard,
the joy was at first hidden but is now an overwhelming heap,

is it something I can find,
or something I can see,
home inside a cottage,
a cold winter with children and round rosy cheeks,
music playing beside the firelight,
a still soft familiar tune,
a quiet and beautiful countryside,
nights with a bright star sparkling view,

Entrance

Teresa Doherty

Pardon me

a moment

as I slip

inside; deeper pools immersing oil-ink
Cerulean shimmer reflected white-glint
Inner deeply mirrored, a voice cries out

Silver moonbeam walk stretches out into sea
Summoning dots of white-light stark odds
Stygian fourth dimension of black-space

Nereids, tell me how to walk the path
of the land of, “lonely but never alone”
Lily white hands dipped into the blue quick

Catch a sparkling star; lungs breathless race
Legs, hopeful to glide on the moonlit walk

But for all star-struck eagerness your gift
is a shivering spine; the oceans smiles
But keeps her secrets quiet

Forgetting

Karen Case

I say I'll never forget,
That your names and faces
 Will live forever
 In my memory.
I say I'll always remember
 The laughs we had
 The games we played
 The tears we cried
 But these are lies.
I want them to be true,
But they are falsehoods,
 And I know it
 I am still young
So much of my life to live
 I have so many years
 So many faces
 So much love.
 I am also old.
I have loved so many
 Cried for many
 Promised them too
That I'll never forget.

Names run together
Faces reduced to shadows
Playing on the edge
Of my dreams
How long until you too,
you who I love so dearly now,
Join their ranks?
How soon until
The sound of your name
Doesn't make your laughter
Echo in my ear
Or your touch
Reach me through the space?
So this I promise,
For I know that it is true.
I may forget your faces
But I won't forget your love
I may forget your names
But the lessons
you have taught
Will guide me through my years
take comfort in this
Assurance of change
You have made me better.
And that is who I am
Even if
I forget.

Goodbyes

Karen Case

We stand by the front gate

 Holding friends

Refusing to let them go

 until the last second.

 We say I love you

 To people who

 two months ago

We would have passed on the street

 Without a second glance

 People who we now

Can't imagine being without

 "I'll see you again,

 We'll visit sometime"

 We say

Pretending for a second

 That these trips

 Aren't just words

But that there is a chance

 That they will happen.

 Fooling ourselves

 Into a happy ending

Out of the Cave

Just long enough
to make it
Till the car turns the corner

We've spent seven weeks
being under each other's feet
Living with personalities
Laughing at quirks
Learning from life stories
So different from our own
We have shared everything
Our room
Our clothes
And our hearts.

How can we walk away
Knowing that this is forever
That in saying goodbye
We leave the comfort
Of those that we have grown with
Those who understand
What this life is like
In a way no one else can
No matter how many stories we tell.
We can't face the truth
Don't want to see it
Not now

Out of the Cave

Not yet

So we say
“I’ll see you later,
We’ll visit sometime”
Pretending for a second
That this isn’t real
So we can
numb the pain
And Dull the ache
Holding our hearts together
Just a little longer

July 20, 2018

Karen Case

A boy died today
No more than a child
He was trying to leave his gang.
In leaving that life behind
He ended it instead.
Broken and bruised
Dumped on his mother's doorstep,
A surprise left for morning
A warning.

A shame, teacher says,
But no pain in her tone.
The shock wore off years ago
This is life here,
Part of every night.
Where gunshots
Are children's lullabies
And mothers sleep under beds
Holding babies close
Praying if they stay low enough
They won't get hit by bullets
That rip through sheet metal walls

As easily as the intended flesh.

A child died today
No more than a boy.
Friends sent to kill him
In a world where the ties of gangs
Are stronger than those of love
And in trying to fix his life
He was condemned to die
This is life here.
That baby who cannot walk
The boy grinning in the sand
The girls who plait my hair
This is their future
Punished for where they were born
And given no options.
With nowhere to turn
They give birth to babies
while still babies themselves
Hoping that maybe
Through the grace of God
Their prayers will be heard
Their face will be seen
Their lives will be saved

A boy died today
No more than a child

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A mother opened the door
Her baby lay
Bruised and broken
Delivered to her
In a shopping cart
No respect shown for the dead
After all,
He tried to leave his gang
He was just a warning

Lonely

Teresa Doherty

one day at the Brighton museum
i made a friend upon a whim,
an old felt hat about his head
old hands traced a mosaic cat,
i neither, could touch the colour.
and so we bonded just like that;
over rose tea and warm lattes
we both sat in my bright kitchen
to munch on crunchy granola
and Swan-Dive into brighter minds
we bit icy lemon slices
till acid started to corrode
taking sugar as a chaser
as we stepped out into the sun
rays crisped our face, crunchy dry;
Yellow.

“tell me of the blue,” he pressed
and so i indulged my friend
he probably wanted to know
what made his blank eyes so pretty,
i said it would take a long trip

and so we picked a crisp morning
to run the sandy beach mouth open
and taste the clouds of foggy mist,
we jumped into the cold ocean
our thin clothes still on our backs
our bodies shivered on the beach
but we took ice cubes from our drinks
and let them melt into our hands;
Blue.

fire roaring we swapped stories
same heart-breaks, when our chests ached
and quaking our teeth bit our lips
till we tasted warm metal blood;
favorite movies, old theaters
(same story—neither one could keep her)
stale carpet pocked with popcorn;
we ate the marshmallows burnt black
once upon a long time ago
our fathers made the best chili
we missed sashaying flamenco;
i poked the fire; dying on sand
when all shared waned in the warm glow
quiet part, searing; calm rebel.
Red.

Passing By

Joshua David MG

One... two... three... four...
Seconds seem slower than before.

Five... six... seven... eight...
Minutes pass at a dreary rate.
It feels like everything is late.

Nine... ten... eleven... twelve...
I stack the hours on the shelves
To count them as, like little elves
They scurry by, all by themselves.

Thirteen... fourteen... fifteen... sixteen...
Days go past, me in between,
I'm feeling jumbled like a bag of mixed greens,
I'm confused, like a movie missing six scenes,
Time becomes irrelevant, I don't know what it means.

Seventeen... Eighteen... Nineteen... Twenty...
It feels like weeks have gone by me already,
I'm nervous, hopeless, nobody's beside me,
The world is spinning, I'm getting thirsty,

I haven't eaten, I'm getting worried,
Time keeps going by. Man, what's the hurry?

I feel the weeks passing me by,
I feel the days passing me by,
I feel the hours passing me by,
I feel the minutes passing me by,
I feel each second, and every second,
As slowly, quickly, they pass me by.

“Hi!”

A greeting from her to me.
“Hello,” a greeting from me to her.
She starts to talk, I start to linger,
It's been so long since I had seen her.

“How are you?”

“Good, how've you been?”
“I'm doing as well's I've always been.”

So, with all small talk aside,
I try to speak; I'm petrified.
I say nothing, she says goodbye,
And just like that she passes me by.

“Goodbye,”

Whisper I.

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I sigh.

One... two... three... four...

Seconds seem slower than before...

The Pop

Kevin Paul Reeve Stutzke

I was protected,
connected to a loving family
that gently placed me inside a bubble.
I stayed there till my jaw line was strong and covered in stubble.
I thought I was ready to face any struggle.
I was a man, although I didn't quite understand
why that, like many other things I know, had a different definition.
No admonition could have prepared me.
I was sure nothing could scare me. Until I
opened my eyes and looked at the world.
I saw the cruelty that swirled
not chaotically but systematically,
not sporadically or spontaneously,
and suddenly a shatter rang out in my heart.
I had no idea where to start
how to help or what to believe.
How could I relieve
some of the strain
on my world's shoulders—
some of the pain
on those crushed by boulders
of depression, oppression, racism, sexism, poverty, bullying, starvation,

Out of the Cave

and war. Now

I'm tore

because the love I received

when I was young wasn't naïve,

but how was it absent of all this grief.

Should I surrender more to or abandon my belief?....

A Day in the Life of Rue Zeitgeist

Joshua Peck

“I didn’t know what to write. The blank white of the page felt suffocating to me as the ticking of the clock behind me grew louder and louder with each passing second. I could feel myself getting older, more desperate and exhausted as the hands spun yet another hour away.

It was unfair really. If you really sit down and think about it, that sort of a question is just unfair. No, it’s mean, vindictive, oppressive even. Who in their right mind would think that anyone could even answer such a question? BOOM, BOOM, BOOM BOOM BOOM

There was the pounding again, a deep heavy sound that rolled in through my window from the construction site across the street. Hearing it again felt like someone hit me on the head with a hammer. Like my skull was one of those gongs they ring at speed dating places. The noise echoed around my thoughts and settled into a slow aching throb right behind my eyes.

I pushed back my chair and stood in a fit of frustrated fury. Yeah, I was angry, and why shouldn’t I be? I wanted to go to college, not spend yet another session on Dr. Freud’s couch. This was just the kind of s--t she’d pull. Somewhere between her ink blots and dream examinations she would lean forward on that awful plaid chair of hers and ask,

“What kind of person do you want to be Rue?” Well, isn’t that cute? I’m glad to see she is taking an interest in my wellbeing. I thought she was supposed to have the answers, not just poke at me and build up little cage walls around me like some f--king zoo animal. Answers, that’s what I was promised, after all, isn’t that what Mom pays her for? Answers!

I flung my eyes around my room looking at my phone, my camera, a smattering of unopened textbooks, and a pile of concert tickets. I’m not really sure what I was looking for, but I didn’t find it. So, I went back to my desk, not quite ready to sit down, I leaned over my chair and stared at the blank page again like I was interrogating a serial killer. One minute, nope; two minutes, still nothing; three minutes, “The hell with this.”

I flung myself over to the window and leaned my head out in the chill air of a modern autumn. The air was full of noise: cars, helicopters, and construction sites all coalescing into a maddening cacophony that marched around my thoughts, as if some great giant had put down his puppet strings long enough to beat out a tattoo directly into my cranium. Yet, all that was only the background music to all the voices, all the people who just kept on talking: the strangers on the street, my teachers, my ‘friends,’ Dr. Frueb, Mom and whoever her boyfriend for that week was, oh, and I better not forget that ex of hers she always goes back to, that guy Protag; what kind of a name is that anyway? But in the end, they were all the same, not just the boyfriends but everyone, all of them, all those people and their words. They all just kept talking, and worse still, they expected me to listen, even to care. Why should I? They are just the brass section trying to

drown out the boys over in percussion. Speaking of the percussion section, I took the opportunity to flip off the construction workers who were demolishing a museum across the street. Once I felt satisfied that at least someone over there knew how I felt about them, I slammed the window shut and pulled the curtains closed. This did quiet the percussionists outside, but the sonic imbalance shifted so that the woodwind section was now audible through the thin apartment walls.

This was the sound of Mr. Smith and Ms. Doe's rival TVs. These two neighbors of mine insisted on turning the volume on their flatscreens all the way up so that hopefully their rival could hear some of the "good ideas" which blasted forth from either Mr. Smith's Fox News or Ms. Doe's CNN. It was a constant frustration to them both that their weaponized soundwaves always failed to land a direct hit upon their opponent's well-defended eardrums. However, they never suspected that this failure was the result of a third party, mainly my room, which stood like a bombed out no man's land between their opposing trenches. But they were dug in now, and there was no armistice in sight.

Flinging myself on the bed, I pulled the pillow over my head and screamed into the bedding, hoping this would release some of the pressure building up between my ears. No one heard me of course, and the pillow did little to dampen the sounds around me. But, 'lucky' for me, now that my ear was pressed against the bed I could hear what was going on in Crystal's apartment downstairs. This was a whole different kind of pounding, but it broke in on my thoughts just as shrilly as all the other sounds. It wasn't so bad now, but just wait till the sun went down and that would change. I'd have better luck sleeping during a

hurricane, then to try and get some rest at night with Crystal and her “guests” downstairs. In those hours when I most needed peace, when I wanted an escape from all the other noise my world was suddenly invaded from below by that incessant pounding, but I suppose that is just the way the world is.

I got up from the bed, rejecting the string section just as I had all the others. Sitting down at my desk once again, I closed the blank word document and replaced it with some music. I could feel my mind calming and my heart slowing down as the earbuds nestled into their familiar places. I was finally able to think now that the world was utterly drowned out in music. That wretched orchestra was gone, now only I remained. Oh, and I guess the music too.

“Okay, Rue, you got this.” I gathered myself, and two clicks later I was once again looking at the essay prompt for my application to The Academy. My eyes flicked past the incidentals about the length and formatting of the essay and rested on the prompt itself. I read it slowly and deliberately, as if this would somehow make things clearer to me: “Tell us about—”

—One of my earbuds fell out, and for a moment, I heard the orchestra playing their dirge once again before I replaced the earbud and continued reading. “...yourself. Who are you? What do you enjoy? Why?” I felt sick rereading the question. For some reason, the sensation only got worse as I continued to read the prompt and each question filled me with a cancerous doubt and anxiety.

Part of me became outraged once again, felt suffocated by the quiet ticking of the clock on the wall and lamented the unfairness of it all. Yet, another part of me was filled with an even greater sense of

horror because I knew somewhere deep down that I didn't have an answer at all. In truth or lie, there was nothing I could say to such an accusation as the one on that screen.

So, I did the only logical thing there was to do. I slammed the laptop shut and flung it out the window.

For a second all I could hear was the sound of shattering glass, one united whole, broken and scattered to the wind. Then the orchestra came rushing back. My earbuds had been plugged into the laptop, but now they hung lifelessly from my ears. But for whatever reason, the orchestra didn't bother me that much anymore.

To be honest, I didn't think much of the laptop at the time. I didn't even get out of my chair to throw it; I was still just sitting there when you knocked on my door. I think I was waiting for something to happen, something... Well, something bad I guess, something that made more sense than all the noise. Anyway, I heard a knock, I opened the door to the apartment and found you two there.”

Officers Eliot and Soren were rather taken aback by this story which poured out of the petite teenager in front of them. Their first instinct would have been to get a hold of the kid's parents, but they had found the mother passed out in her room with a man that the kid didn't recognize. The kid was 'technically' old enough to be questioned without the parent's presence, so they brought him back to the station. Now that they had finished listening to her, the two of them looked at one another with a kind of puzzled interest. Her story, despite its strangeness, felt vaguely familiar, but they couldn't quite remember from where. Officer Eliot spoke first,

“You know you hit someone with your laptop, it struck and killed a pregnant woman.”

“Well, how was I supposed to know that would happen?” The officers exchanged another look. They weren’t quite sure what they were expecting, but that wasn’t it.

“You were sixty stories up,” Soren said, “what did you think would happen?”

The boy only shrugged and looked at her reflection in the one-way mirror.

Soren shifted uncomfortably in his seat, and Eliot spoke up in an almost embarrassed tone, “We are going to need you to stay here; we are going to call your psychologist Dr... Freud, that is her name correct?” He received a disinterested nod in response, so he continued, saying, “Well then we will give her a call and have a talk with her. Then we will see where to go from there.” Both men got up and left the room.

Alone once again, Rue leaned back in her chair and rolled his eyes.

“Here we go again.”

I'm Probably Going to be Alone Forever

Joshua David MG

I popped out my great, big, bright yellow umbrella, stepped out into the rain, and closed the door. I locked it behind me and then turned out to face the world. It was dark, wet, gray, noisy, cold, and most of all, strikingly beautiful. It's the kind of beautiful that makes you think, rather than just admiring it blindly, so to speak. The darkness of a rainy day is fascinating in that you know it's the middle of the day – you can always be sure of that – but nevertheless, it is dark. It's probably the brightest darkness there ever is; it is a darkness you can see. The wetness of the rain is lovely in that it causes the dull ground to reflect the colors all around it, and it creates a wonderful smell. The gray of a rainy day is, perhaps, my favorite color. Everything looks the same, but desaturated. It creates a more somber tone which many people despise, preferring the bright hues of a sunny day. For me, it makes me happy. The constant noise of the rain is spellbinding, drowning out the hate and despair of the world, and creating a clean slate with a blanket of white noise. The chill of the wind in the rain is my favorite temperature. There are few things more comfortable than bundling up on a cold day. I don't know how anybody could dislike the rain, but I feel sorry for them. I only wish that they could see it how I see it.

I began to walk. I had nowhere to go, nowhere to be, nothing to do, nothing to distract me from simply walking, looking, thinking,

and being. I live in a gated community; quite private and with little traffic, creating the perfect environment for me to walk through the street without fear of being hit by a car. Walking in the middle of the street just has a better aesthetic appeal than walking on the sidewalk. It kind of makes me feel like I'm in a movie, or how I feel when I see it happen in a movie.

As I walked along, I let my eyes wander, and I let my head think whatever it felt like thinking. Sometimes, my gaze would fall on some random object, and I would get caught staring at it, either because it made me think of nothing, and my mind slipped away from reality, or because it reminded me of something. I saw a bush, and I thought of the time I crawled in the bushes to get a picture to pretend like I was hiding from somebody. It was a popular post on my Instagram. I saw something on the sidewalk, and I thought of the trail of pink paint I once found stretching along the sidewalk for miles. I still don't know where that ends. I saw a door, and I stopped and stared, and it reminded me of the person living inside. Of course, as I looked, someone came out the door. I couldn't pretend I wasn't looking, because that proves that I was completely aware of where I was looking, so I simply kept looking. She opened up her much more ordinary, black umbrella, stepped out into the rain, and closed the door. She locked it, and then turned around, happy because of the rain, as every person should be. She saw me standing several yards away in the middle of the street and waved cheerfully, calling out, "Good morning!"

"Good morning," I returned.

"How are you doing today?"

“I’m doing fine. Better now that it’s finally raining again.” She laughed a little. It was funny... people often thought it amusing when I said things like that, as if I wasn’t depressed all last week because it was the middle of November and we hadn’t gotten any rain yet.

“That’s good. I’m glad it’s raining again, too,” she said.

“Where are you off to?”

“I have a class coming up, but I’m meeting up with someone to get coffee first. How about yourself?”

“Coffee sounds like a nice idea today... I might make some later. Right now, I’m just taking a walk. Walking, thinking, just enjoying the experience of being alive, stuff like that.”

“That sounds delightful. If you’re not going anywhere, you could always walk with me.”

“I suppose I could, but that would interrupt my thinking, I think.” She laughed again.

“And what are you thinking about?”

“Right now, I’m just thinking about the rain. And love. Love and the rain.”

“Is that it?”

“That’s the gist of it.”

“Well, what exactly are you thinking about, if you don’t mind me asking?” I thought for a moment, not really sure exactly what I was thinking, since it was just a thought, after all. I hadn’t planned on putting it into words. She stared at me, still several yards away, but it felt so close.

“I’m thinking... that I like the rain. I don’t really know how to describe it... it’s not something that I can just put into words. If you

don't see it yourself, it'd be hard for me to say anything that could change your mind."

"Try," she challenged, with a smile. It's a funny thing, I think, that people like to be convinced of something they already believe. I like to convince myself, too, though.

"Well, if you have the time," I began. "Let's say... if I had a girlfriend, I wouldn't kiss her. I've never kissed anybody before, not really, so I don't imagine it would be quite so strange. Maybe I was just nervous. We'd get along fine just the same. We'd spend all of the hot summer days together, doing things together, being in love together. Then, one day, it would rain. I'd get out my umbrella and walk over to her house. I'd ring the doorbell, expecting her to answer the door, but her roommate would come instead. My girlfriend wasn't home. Her roommate would ask if she could deliver a message. I would say I'd wait. She'd offer to bring me a cup of hot chocolate. I'd politely refuse. I'd stand at the door waiting in the rain, thinking in the rain. An hour would go by. Eventually, my girlfriend would come home. She wouldn't have an umbrella. It's Southern California, after all; nobody ever thinks that they'll need an umbrella. She'd carry a coat over her head and walk briskly to the door to get out of the rain. She'd see me standing there in the rain, and she'd say, 'What are you doing here?' but I'd just smile at her until she got up to the door. She'd stand under my umbrella so she wouldn't get any wetter, and I'd look her in the eyes. She'd smile back at me; a confused smile, but happy nonetheless. After a few moments, I'd step very close and whisper, 'I love you,' and then we'd kiss. It would be the most beautiful thing I'd ever experienced. Maybe she'd be breathless; out of shock or love, I don't know, but it wouldn't matter. It

would be everything I had thought it would be. When we'd finally part, she would be too stunned to say anything. I'd smile, she'd almost laugh, and I'd start walking back home. She'd put her coat back over her head and turn to watch me leave. After a few paces, I'd turn back and say, 'See you tomorrow,' and then I'd see her tomorrow. I imagine we'd get married someday, but even if we didn't, we'd never forget that kiss in the rain."

She laughed a little at the complexity of my little dream. It's understandable, though. I laughed a little, too.

"That probably didn't help much," I started after a few moments, "it's just what I was thinking. That story, or, the feeling, I guess, is how I feel about the rain. Maybe it doesn't make any sense." She smiled in agreement.

"Maybe not. To your credit, though, it is quite the complex scenario you've put together."

"Yeah, well, nobody ever got anywhere by dreaming small dreams."

"Did you come up with all of that right now?"

"I suppose I've thought about it abstractly for a while, but yeah, I just came up with all the words right now."

"Well, I think it was really beautiful. Maybe somebody will kiss me like that someday."

"I doubt it. You have an umbrella. You can't kiss if you both have umbrellas, because..." I made a motion with my hands kind of like bumper cars. She laughed.

"Well, maybe I'll just have to wait on his doorstep, then."

"Or you could just start forgetting to bring your umbrella when

you go out.” She laughed again, and obviously, she had to leave.

“I’ll see you around,” she said with a smile. I waved back.

I followed her away with my eyes. My gaze shifted at last back to her door. I sighed. It was quite the dream I had come up with. I’m almost a hundred and ten percent certain that it will never happen, but it’s fun to think about. Or it’s depressing to think about. Or maybe it’s fun because it’s depressing. Or maybe it’s depressing because it’s fun. I don’t know. What I do know is that I’m a hopeless romantic. There’s no chance for hopeless romantics in world, that’s why they’re called hopeless. I see the world in a way that makes it out to be far more beautiful than it is. If the world was as beautiful as I thought it was on a rainy day, I think life would be practically perfect. I try not to be such a romantic sometimes. I pull myself back to reality and tell myself that none of my wild dreams are ever going to come true. I really wish they would, though. Maybe, if I tried hard enough, they could.

Probably not.

Selected Journal Entries of Sergeant John Ordway

Nancy Gossin

14th of May, 1804

We set out today from Camp Dubois and hope to arrive in St. Charles no later than the seventeenth. I have been permitted to join this expedition with the understanding that I will take it upon myself to issue provisions to the other members, keep the records and registers in order, and appoint the guards to their appropriate posts.

Who knows exactly what we will discover? It may be treacherous at times, I do believe that will be so. Nevertheless, I consider it among my greatest honors to be a part of this, what I believe will be, historic journey.

Though I have been given a worthy duty, I am, in my heart, jealous of those members of the expedition whose sole purpose is to discover and record the plant life. Thus, in addition to my appointed tasks, I will also take it upon myself, in any time that I have to spare, to search for and record them here, if I am blessed enough to catch sight of them at all. For though they are not plants entirely, they are not entirely insects either, and I much prefer plants to insects. Therefore I have concluded to categorize them with the like, though anyone who has seen one would admit they are far superior in curiosity to plants, and I dare to say superior in beauty and in goodness as well, though

that point may be of dispute.

To you, my dear friend, and to you alone will I entrust this secret motive of mine. You alone, my companion, will hear of my findings of these extraordinary creatures. The ridicule I fear I would endure if the expedition were to be made known of my belief and desire to know these creatures would be fierce, as I have known it to be always in my youth. Only one was there present in my life who saw them as I did, and sadly she is now gone. So, it must be you now, who will see them as I see them, for in you will I write of their beauty with fascination and admiration.

7th of July, 1804

Rejoyce! I have found one at last! My excitement I could barely contain, my friend, as I did my best not to run through camp attracting unwanted attention from the others, to tell you the tale.

I had finished supper and was inclined to take a walk in the last hour or so of the evening. I walked no more than fifteen minutes when I found a single, great Bur Oak tree resting on an ever so slightly raised plot of earth. I sat to recline at its thick base, under its enveloping canopy to watch the dazzling sun set over the horizon. The wind made the tall grass sway and twirl, as if the two were dancing a duet. The last rays of the sun bathed all that could be seen in its glory, as if the grass, the tree, and even the sky had been dipped in a rich, shimmering gold. I, myself, being so warmed by its soft rays, felt as though I may have turned to gold.

Perhaps that is why I could not see her at first, for she was entirely the color of pure gold herself. I was able to recognize her

finally when she floated close enough to me so that I could distinguish her eyes. Ah! How can I express the rich feeling that sparked inside when I was able to see her entirely! The closer she came the more I was able to follow the swirls of her long hair, the more I could watch her gown sway, the more I could see the tenderness and wisdom in her eyes that were locked on mine. She was not much taller in height than my hand, from tip to base, and she was slender and graceful, like an angel. She descended and sat upon my knee, which was propped up from my sitting position. I gazed at her. She smiled.

She extended her lovely hand out to me. Anxiously, hesitantly, and in awe I began extending my finger to meet her hand. I feared that if I touched her tiny hand I would touch nothing and realize I had been dreaming. My finger finally met her hand and my fear released hold of me when she continued on.

Light, my dearest friend! She was made of pure light! Soft, sweet, and golden she was, in the last minutes of the day. Moments felt like hours as we sat together, her on my knee, and watched the sun set lower and lower every second.

Just before the last rays of the sun disappeared under the horizon, she turned once again to look into my eyes. Neither of us said a word yet we still spoke. What we communicated exactly I could not say. Maybe it was warmth, maybe it was joy, maybe it was the wisdom of time gone by. Maybe it was love. I have not the ability to express it, only to attempt to do so.

At last the sun slipped below the straight horizon. In the dim light that lingered for a few minutes on the horizon sky, she began to slowly fade and lose form. As she faded and lost form, she melted from

golden to yellow and slowly to a dazzling white. She shone like a diamond! Brightness was all I began to see. I squinted and saw, for the last time, her eyes. I looked as long as I could but the light began to burn my eyes, and they began to fill with tears. I blinked so that I could disperse the water and see clearly, but when I opened my eyes again she was gone.

I sat alone in the peaceful darkness for quite some time. I closed my eyes and committed to memory her smile and the sparkle of her eyes. I knew it was time to return to camp, and I was overjoyed at the thought of telling you, my friend, of my discovery. I got up and walked out from beneath the canopy. I gazed up into the night sky and saw billions upon billions of brilliant stars piercing the darkness. They shined like diamonds. They shined like her.

22nd of May, 1805

At last, I have once again been able to observe closely one of these rare creatures! As you know, my close companion, I have seen glimpses of various types in the leaves, in the creeks, in the winds, even in the rain, but have not gotten the opportunity to learn them in detail since two months short of a year ago.

Our expedition had come to a temporary halt around midday. We had been following the “Milk River,” as the natives call it. Captain Lewis called for some of the men to further explore the river for a short amount of time, though I am not entirely clear as to the reason for such an order. I did not mind, though. I decided to take the opportunity to rest, for we had been journeying without rest since dawn. In the air there was a slight chill. I sat on a rock near the edge,

with the forest behind me, and looked down at the valley below me. I was amazed at the array of colors before me! The green grass was accompanied by a vast amount of luscious flowers. Flowers of purple, yellow, of blue and pink, of violet, orange, and red. They climbed up the slope of the hill and came close enough to me so that I could see their shapes and sizes. Some were small and dainty, their petals round and their leaves short and thin. Others were big and broad with petals of an oval shape and leaves that twisted around the stems. As they came closer to the rock, they began to become scarcer and clustered together more.

I saw one, some ten feet away from me, to my left. It was not standing erect, reaching to the sun, but laid on the ground, as if it had been plucked by a bird or animal and then thrown to the side. For a moment I felt sad. As I continued to look upon it I became aware of its stem. It was not green, like most, but a light color, a pink or peach color almost. I assumed this discoloration was due to the decomposition process. Its petals were short and thin, and there were many of them. They were of a dark violet at the tips and faded to a vibrant purple as they reached the center. Something black, it appeared, covered the floret of the flower. I thought it to be a bug of some sort, feasting upon the dead flower. Although it is unusual in my character to interfere with nature and her course, I felt drawn to put an end to the desecration of such a beautiful artwork. I slipped off the rock and walked over to the flower and quickly grabbed the bug. I had planned to relocate the bug to another area where it could be quite comfortable, but when I picked the bug up the entire flower came with it. Much to my surprise and astonishment, as I raised it into the air its stem split in

two and simultaneously two more stems sprouted from either side of just below the floret. The four stems began moving ferociously in all directions! I felt something quite light and airy rapidly beating against my fingers. All of this happened so unexpectedly and within the same moment that I did not know quite what to think or what to do. I was a bit afraid to be quite frank with you, dear friend, so I decided to drop the thing, whatever it was. I expected the thing to drop to the ground, where I would take a closer look at it, but the moment I let go the thing flew upwards and straight to the nearest tree, where it took refuge under a leaf.

It was then that I realized what I had stumbled upon and oh! was my heart eager to see it again! I ran over to the tree and stood under the branch, looking up. I hoped with all my soul that it had not flown further away, that I had not lost it to the mystery and vastness of the forest. For a minute or two I earnestly surveyed the different branches and leaves of the tree with sharp eyes, but alas, I did not find it. Suddenly, out of the very corner of my eye, I spotted a splash of purple fly from one branch to another. I had found it! I walked over to the branch with gentle and soft steps, to ensure I would not frighten it away. Once under the branch I sat and looked ... and waited.

I had almost given up all hope of its reappearance and my heart began to sink when I heard a soft flutter and saw the color purple slowly reveal itself from behind a leaf. It was shy at first and would only take short glances at me before returning to the safety of the leaf. It was if we were playing a game of hide and seek. I waited patiently for it to come down.

Finally, it fluttered down and hovered just above the reach of

my hand. I was able to observe her well from this distance. She was only but the height of my third finger! The stem was not a stem at all but her legs! The purple flower petals, for indeed they were flower petals, formed a sweet skirt that gathered around her waist. The black bug I had picked up earlier was not a bug at all, but in fact her dark hair. It was not of wonder in the least that she reacted so violently to me in the beginning, given the manner in which I had picked her up - by her hair! She looked at me with curiosity.

I reached my hand out to her and extended a finger upon which I invited her to perch upon. She flew back a few inches at the invitation and seemed a bit afraid. I continued to offer my finger. Hesitantly, she came closer and closer until at last she sat upon my finger. I looked at her, fascinated. She furrowed her quaint brows together and quirked her head ever so slightly to the side. Her short black curls hung just above her shoulder. She looked at me, puzzled. She looked so innocent and darling I could not contain my joy and a light laugh escaped my lips. Frightened, she gripped my finger tight and clenched her eyes together at the sound of my laugh. She remained in this manner for no longer than a short moment before she opened one eye, ever so slightly, and looked at me. I smiled. Her face immediately relaxed and she smiled back at me, with playfulness. She began to swing her short legs to and fro below my finger. I made a comical face at her, and she scrunched her button nose up and laughed. Her laugh was a harmony of sweet bells! Oh, how sweet was the sound! It is a sound I had not yet had the pleasure of hearing in my lifetime, and I have not heard a sound like it since. Doubtless I will never hear it again, for it was quite magical.

In the distance I heard the voices of men, and I knew I would have to make my way back to the expedition. She heard the voices, too, and in an instant she darted, with astonishing speed, back to the branch and behind the leaf. I looked at the leaf and hoped she would appear again. I did not have much time to wait, however, as I could hear the men preparing to set off once again. I waited a moment longer, but when she failed to reappear I turned and began to make my way back to camp. Just before I was far enough away from the tree to lose sight of its detail, I turned once again and found the branch on which she had taken refuge. To my utmost delight she had come out from behind the leaf and was watching me leave. She looked at me with youthful eyes, smiled the sweetest smile, and waved her tiny hand goodbye. My heart warmed, and I felt the chill of the air no longer. I smiled and waved back. She turned then and fluttered off into the forest. I turned and continued to walk towards camp, whistling a cheerful tune all the while I went.

27th of November, 1805

Truly I have been sent a blessing from above, dear friend. So rare is it to catch a single sighting of these wonders of God's creation, and yet here I come to you again with glad news of another sighting.

As you know, companion, from my previous entry, we had reached our destination—the Pacific Ocean. Oh, what a sight to behold! How strong, how vast, how deep she is! What mysteries and secrets she must hold. To look upon her beauty, sparkling and deep, to fear her force, destructive and demanding, to hear her voice, loud, crisp and clear, and to feel her breeze, gentle at times yet overbearing at

others—it is an experience I believe few have had the great privilege of, and it is my among my greatest hopes and dreams that many will come to have it.

It was on my third escapade from camp to gaze in awe at her sight when I beheld him. He stood at the tip of a fir tree branch and gazed out at the powerful waves that crashed loudly against the rocks and cliffs of the coast. Although he could not have been much taller than the full height of my hand, he stood with such nobility, majesty, and strength that I thought him to be as tall as the white-capped mountains. He was a young man, yet his hair was a misty grey that resembled the grey of the storm clouds above us. He was broad-shouldered, and from behind his shoulders broad wings rose high above his head and curved in to a thin point at its tip. I stared at him for some time. He noticed me not.

Then, after a while longer, he turned his head and looked directly at me, as if he had known I was there the entire time, watching him. His light green eyes commanded my attention and I obeyed, for I did not desire, nor in truth did I have the power, to turn away.

For a moment we shared together the sea, the crashing waves, the piercing wind, the bleak sky, the comforting fir trees...but for a moment only. I tore myself from his gaze and once more turned to look upon the great Pacific. So far could I see that I supposed I may be able to see the end of the earth. I turned back to him; his eyes were still fixed upon me. I bowed my head to him in thanks for his permittance of my presence as his guest. He bowed his head to me in acceptance. I turned and entered the forest, making my way back to camp, leaving him to reign in his domain.

Out of the Cave



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Fasten Your Seatbelt, Ma'am:

10 Lessons I Learned About Adulthood From Airplane

Etiquette

Anna Livia Brady

It's twelve-thirty AM in the LAX airport. I'm lounging in one of the highly uncomfortable chairs when it's announced that "All passengers on flight 349 to Ohio are now boarding." I shake off the grog from drifting off while reading *Pride and Prejudice* and start boarding with the rest of the passengers. I straighten my back, smile, and look the flight attendants right in the eye despite my fatigue. While I put my luggage in the above-head compartment, a larger man sits in my assigned seat. I politely but lucidly say, "Excuse me, sir, but I think that may be my seat." After the flight, we arrive in Cincinnati, where I spend three days with my aging grandparents.

For twenty-year-old me (the age I was when I took that Cincinnati trip), all of these little mannerisms are second-nature, but when I made my first solo trip at seventeen, I hadn't a clue how to interact properly with adults on my own, or just how responsible I was for my own safety and that of others. I had been on plenty of family trips, but my parents had taken care of everything, including passports, tickets, packing, and everything in between. Through three years of travel, social interactions, and general observations, I've learned so much about what it means to be a poised, confident adult. Just by going

on planes, I've experienced perhaps unintentionally fundamental canons of adult life.

Here are the ten lessons I learned about being an adult from the etiquette used while in the air.

1. **LEARN TO PART WITH THINGS.** When on a tightly packed aircraft, there's a high likelihood, even with your perfect packing skills and research, that you may be asked to check your carry-on bag. There are two possible responses to this scenario: you could protest, demanding someone else take your place. Alternatively, you could graciously comply, knowing that like any other endeavor in life, there is a slight risk involved, but placing your trust in a professional authority anyway.

Lesson: Learning to let go of your possessions, even for a short while, is an experience that proves the grown-up duty of prioritizing your possessions (ie, keeping your phone, wallet, keys, and other necessities for your well-being) and detaching from things that you swear are necessary but in reality can live without (we're looking at you, giant succulents!).

2. **BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS.** In the seemingly unnecessary (key word: seemingly) safety demonstration before the take-off, you're told to be aware of your surroundings, know where the exits and parachutes are, and keep the aisle free whenever possible. The plane's a whole unit filled mostly with passengers just like you who want to get where they're going in one piece. Chances are, you all will. But in the event something should happen, it's good to know your options to keep yourself and others safe.

Lesson: As a child, you rely on older people to navigate the

world for you and know what to do should anything ever happen. As an adult, the responsibility for your own safety (and sometimes the safety of others) rests on you! Luckily, you probably won't need to employ the emergency exits (such as defending yourself from an attack or an earthquake), but it's so crucial to be aware of these strategies should disaster ever occur. Even amongst the pleasant hoods of everyday life, the majority of personal safety revolves around being aware of surroundings (think stop lights and the like), avoiding potential dangers, and asserting an air that says "I know what I'm doing, and I'm not afraid."

3. **PUT YOUR MASK ON FIRST!** Did you ever hear the Bible verse, "The Lord helps those who help themselves"? The philosophy of serving oneself first before, say, a child (in the plane's case, putting on your oxygen mask) may seem selfish to those among us who are used to putting others' needs before our own. But if we're not in a strong enough state to help, we aren't giving them what they truly need.

Lesson: Be aware of your own limitations (we're all human!) and take care of yourself. Get those eight precious hours of sleep before that exam or business presentation before consoling your friend over drinks. Both you and your peers will be better off.

4. **NECESSITY IS THE NEW LUXURY.** When in close confinement to others on a three-hour flight, you're not exploring all of your fine dining options. You're just grateful when the snack cart comes your way and make the most of your ginger ale and peanuts.

Lesson: As an adult, you'll have the freedom to decide lots of things, but sometimes it's just better to go with the flow and be content. Don't get me wrong, a steak dinner is awesome, but a delivery

pizza with your sister could be great, too!

5. THE BEST FUN IS THE KIND WE MAKE

OURSELVES. On board, Wi-Fi isn't always the best. What's worse, there may not even be movies! Whatever the case, if you've flown within the past couple of years, you may have re-introduced the practice of pleasure reading, meditation (or even prayer), or just looking outside the window at the clouds. It's so funny what kind of creativity a few hours in a quiet place can spark.

Lesson: Technology is great. But for personal fulfillment and enjoyment, you don't always need it! Swap a trip to the park for a trip to the movies, read that classic you've been putting off, or just set aside time to philosophize.

6. WE'RE ALWAYS COMMUNICATING—WHETHER

VERBALLY OR NOT. There's more to learn about human body language on an airplane than anywhere else (except for maybe a therapist's office, but this is the next best thing). If someone's trying their best to sleep, they may not want to hear about your cat's kidney infection. That kid who's kicking the back of your seat? Maybe he just wants a bit of human interaction (a quick hello will usually quell the situation).

Lesson: Learn to read a room. Would something you could do make people uncomfortable? You only get one shot at first impressions. That being said, you also have a right to feel safe and comfortable in any place, even a public one. People usually have enough common sense to read your nonverbal cues (such as scooting slightly away if someone's leg is too close for your comfort), but you have the right to use your words if you need to. Which brings me to the

next lesson...

7. IT'S POSSIBLE TO BE BOTH POLITE AND ASSERTIVE. You've got two things in common with the others on this flight. First, as touched on before, you want to get where you're going with as little trouble as possible. Secondly, you scheduled the flight, paid for your ticket, got through a terrifically long security line, and have every right to be on here. If anyone makes you feel as if you don't, you should feel confident enough to stand up for yourself. Let's take the example brought up in the last lesson, only the kid kicking your seat doesn't respond to your smile and polite "Hi.". You tell him first, "I know this trip seems long, but you'll get to rest your legs soon!" Luckily, if he doesn't take to subtlety, a parent will be there to guide his actions, and you'll be left in peace.

Lesson: Be pleasant, not a pushover. You've worked hard to be wherever you are, and no one should feel like they have to make things difficult for you. Be patient and optimistic when confronting difficulties, but also remember your dignity as a human being and approach grievances when necessary.

8. DON'T BE STINGY WITH BATHROOM TIME. There are only a couple dinky bathrooms on the flight, and nearly everyone's taken advantage of the complimentary drinks. The facilities on the plane are to be used with the stealth of a marine; go in, do your business, wash and go. There'll be plenty of time between landing and luggage retrieval to touch up your makeup in the airport bathroom.

Lesson: Whatever your situation, you will be interacting with others at some point in the day. Part of having good manners is not being stingy with others' time or access to resources (such as a single-

stalled bathroom). Consideration is key!

9. **TURBULENCE IS INEVITABLE. YOUR HYSTERIA IS NOT!** Even on the world's safest airliner, wind currents are only so predictable, and a bit of joltiness is to be expected. This occurrence may be disarming, but it's most likely harmless, and you could either cling to your arm rest and audibly state your will or take a deep breath and know that it will pass.

Lesson: Life is unpredictable, even scary. You can't control your gut emotions, but you can control your external response. When you're a passenger on a flight, you're not driving, but in real life, you are! Steer your wheel, avoiding the perils you can and dealing calmly with the shakiness you can't.

10. **LEAVE ON A HIGH NOTE.** This one's not exactly airplane canon law, but it's nice even after the flight has ended to apply all of the courtesy tricks you've subconsciously learned within that time. Sound tricky? All you gotta do is stand up straight, look people in the eye, allow those who need to (think moms with infants) to exit the plane first, then assuredly grab your things before heading out on your adventure. Bonus points? A big thank you to the crew and a firm handshake with the pilot.

Lesson: Parting doesn't have to be such sweet sorrow. With your grace and conduct, it may just be sweet.

Like an Encyclical Letter of His Studious Taylor T. Williams on Solving the Various Forms of Poverty

By Taylor T. Williams

Huxley's Stance

1. In 1932, Aldous Huxley wrote a novel titled Brave New World. Its contents encapsulated a possible future for the world, a dystopian reality that Huxley wanted to discourage his readers from inclining towards. Over twenty years later, he wrote Brave New World Revisited as his perspective on the world in relation to whether or not his novel was prophetic. Something he mentioned in the latter work is his belief in the problem of overpopulation. He hypothesized that this cause for unrest has been allowed to fester because it is easier in the modern age to prevent an early death and much more difficult to regulate births. As a result, there are too many people on earth to ensure the necessities for everyone living.¹

This lack of quality, Huxley argued, results in a desire among societies to liberate the oppressed from the injustice, a consistent reality that communism claims to solve. This solution is appealing to the underdeveloped countries because they lack the resources and

¹ Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World Revisited*, (United States of America: HarperCollins Publishing, 2006), 5, 9-10

established government to ensure their basic needs are met. If they allow this type of government, Huxley proposed it would mean the end for all remaining countries, in particular America and Europe: “if the normal flow of raw materials from the underdeveloped countries were deliberately interrupted, the nations of the West would find themselves in a very bad way indeed.”²

In conclusion, Huxley argued that if the problem of overpopulation were to be solved, both underdeveloped and developed societies would not have to be worried about totalitarian intervention because the needs of all countries would not be so demanding.

Further Discussion

2. Huxley offers value to the conversation of modernity but may have misdiagnosed the problem underlying the injustice between developed and underdeveloped countries. He believes overpopulation is causing the inability for the needs to be met. Although overpopulation cannot necessarily be excluded from the conversation of potential solutions, other possible diagnoses can stem from the Catholic notion of love.

Pope Benedict XVI, in his encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, refers to, “[i]dem velle atque idem nolle-to want the same thing, and to reject the same thing”; the phrase recognizes “the authentic content of love”, uniting “thought and sentiment” according to “the way proclaimed by...Jesus.”³ This love, in relation to the topic at hand, believes in ensuring all have “a dignified life”: “no one ought to go without the

² Huxley, *Revisited*, 11

³ Peter A. Kwasniewski, *A Reader in Catholic Social Teaching: from Syllabus Errorum to Deus Caritas Est*, (San Bernardino: Cluny Media, 2017), 510

necessities of life.”⁴

3. With the importance of solidarity firmly established in Catholic social teaching, the obvious difference in quality of life between developed and underdeveloped countries should be addressed. If Huxley is honest in his perception of underdeveloped countries, it follows that there is an injustice because countries are truly struggling for the necessities of survival while more developed countries have the means to support them yet remain in a state of superior wealth. This wealth does not appear to be simply the necessities of life either: there is a significant amount of choice and freedom involved in the life of the average consumer in developed countries. The question that developed countries need to ask is whether they can accept their superior life, in relation to underdeveloped countries, while continuing to refuse to lower their expenditures for the sake of those who do not have the necessities of dignified living; what may be happening here is a denial of human dignity as spoken in *Deus Caritas Est*.

A Counter-Argument to the Before-Mentioned Role of Developed Countries

4. This call to serve is not a call to pander, though. Excerpts from the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, written by Pope Leo XIII, can be used to expand on one of Huxley’s claims about the role of the State in the life of the worker. In *Brave New World Revisited*, Huxley closely intertwines the State and the worker when there is economic strife: “Whenever the economic life of a nation becomes precarious, the central government is forced to assume additional responsibilities for

⁴ Kwasniewski, *Catholic Social Teaching*, 514

the general welfare.”⁵ Although this may become the necessary action, it is important to implement *Rerum Novarum* and its concept of the worker to particular circumstances as a counterbalance against State involvement: labor is intrinsically connected to the exercising of one’s rights. This can be inferred through the repeated insistence of the human’s right to private property as the fruits of their labor.⁶

5. The matter of the work ethic of these underdeveloped countries must be addressed to ensure that those living in these countries are exercising their role as a human and are therefore called to work. Simply giving to underdeveloped countries may not be, in every case, the solution to the problem at hand; if these underdeveloped countries refuse to work then they must first be instructed in their human dignity. Giving resources without this instruction would be an offense against the principle of subsidiarity because it would not be the role of developed countries to serve as such; although goods are being transferred, their value significantly diminishes because of the potential harm that is caused to both countries involved.

6. As further inquiry into this matter, the role of developed countries could be argued as their involvement in the cultural and scientific flourishing of underdeveloped countries; it is possible that these underdeveloped countries have the resources to support themselves, to both survive and thrive, but do not know how to utilize these resources. This would both support the notion of solidarity and subsidiarity because what is being shared is what is actually supposed to

⁵ Huxley, *Revisited*, 10

⁶ Kwasniewski, *Catholic Social Teaching*, 95, 96

be shared, benefiting all countries involved.

Conclusion on Huxley and Transition into the Problem of Spiritual Poverty

7. Although Huxley concludes his analysis on economic strife in underdeveloped countries as a problem of overpopulation, there are other possible solutions that are worth considering. The first mentioned, the possibility of a lack of solidarity on behalf of the more developed countries, demands careful thought because, “a most strict account must be given to the Supreme Judge for all we possess.”⁷ It is important to recognize as well the potential fault of underdeveloped countries and the possibility of their guilt in their own undoing. Together, these hypotheses ensure a strong foundation for a continued dialogue and intellectual inquiry and, quite possibly more importantly, a call to action in living out Christ’s hope for all of humanity.

8. This topic of conversation is important for everyone to both consider and act upon but may not be the most serious poverty of the time. Another poverty affects countries, in particular developed countries, in a debatably more harmful way than material poverty: it is a spiritual poverty that is rooted in the abuse of material goods. This is alluded to in depth and with clarity in both Huxley’s works and the encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, written by Pope St. John Paul II.

9. In his commentary on overpopulation, Huxley notes the shift from the content of his time, “the disorderly world of liberalism”, to the possible future of Brave New World: “[where] perfect efficiency

⁷ Kwasniewski, *Catholic Social Teaching*, 102

left no room for freedom or personal initiative.”⁸ The shift that Huxley perceived could happen ended up manifesting itself in Communist Russia, a major topic of conversation in *Centesimus Annus*. St. John Paul II does rightly affirm communism’s misdiagnosis of the problem it perceived, “the commercialization and alienation of human existence”, but states that there still remains “alienation...in Western societies”, brought on, in part, by “consumerism[:]...a web of false and superficial gratifications.”⁹

Brave New World offers commentary on the issue of consumerism in the form of phrases that are ingrained in the minds of the citizens, often as early as their formative years. These sayings include, “[t]he more stitches the less riches”, and, “[e]nding is better than mending”, among others.¹⁰ They also take *soma*: a drug that’s used to take mental holidays whenever they please. Other forms of consumerism include sex as fundamentally for enjoyment and the use of games and other forms of entertainment to pass the time when one is not working.¹¹ There are also “feelies” which are films that utilize the senses of sight, sound, and touch to portray, at least in the case of the one spoken of in detail, action, suspense, romance, and propaganda.¹²

It is not difficult to look at modern society and see the parallels between Huxley’s vision and modern life: fast fashion, materialism, drug abuse, pornography, recreation, and entertainment are all direct comparisons to the aspects of society, particularly integrated in some

⁸ Huxley, *Revisited*, 1-2

⁹ Kwasniewski, *Catholic Social Teaching*, 303

¹⁰ Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*, (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2006), 51-52

¹¹ Huxley, *Brave New World*, 55-56

¹² Huxley, *Brave New World*, 168-169

way within the realm of economics, that Huxley believed could negatively influence society.

Although there is debate as to whether or not developed countries are truly more liberal or more like Huxley's dystopia, the aspects of society within Brave New World are integrated within the economic structure of modern day developed countries and therefore must be analyzed properly so as to understand their effects on individuals and society at large with particular consideration towards the spiritual poverty of these developed countries.

Solutions to Spiritual Poverty

10. St. John Paul II, in the encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, does not attempt to totally solve all the issues that Aldous Huxley covers within Brave New World but makes an effort to illustrate a foundation of basic living, a framework to incline families away from falling within the traps that Huxley foresaw as upcoming realities. He claims it begins with the family, “[where] someone receives his first formative ideas about truth and goodness, and learns what it means to love and to be loved, and thus what it actually means to be a person.”¹³

From this foundation, families are able to interrelate in a way that results in human flourishing while maintaining human dignity. This is termed by him as, “a society of free work...controlled by the forces of society and by the State...so as to guarantee that the basic needs of the whole of society are satisfied”; without proper regulation and education, consumers will not be able to correctly understand the

¹³ Kwasniewski, *Catholic Social Teaching*, 301

importance of responsibly exercising their “freedom of choice.”¹⁴ A major question for developed countries, to be considered in relation to the spiritual poverty that has in part been a result of economic factors, is whether time, talent, and treasure should be directly or indirectly invested in promoting material goods, entertainment, and recreation to the degree that they are now. This also includes more grave issues like direct or indirect promotion of pornography and drugs.

11. With proper discussion and action taken against inordinate consumption, humans living in spiritual poverty will be able to understand more clearly the repercussions that result from trying to substitute a heightened spirituality, a love for God and man, with anything else. A mature conscience in this sense will also give developed countries a greater understanding of their role in the problem of material poverty, and in many cases a form of spiritual poverty, that exists in underdeveloped countries. Attending to the solutions for both material and spiritual poverty empowers humanity to combat the evil understood within Huxley’s works so as to deny it the ability to manifest itself within modern societies.

¹⁴ Kwasniewski, *Catholic Social Teaching*, 297-299

The Art of Mumford & Sons' Babel

Shayla Millman

In order to evaluate the quality of art, I believe that there are four standards to which a work should be judged: technical excellence, communicated truth, universal meaning, and emotional impact. When evaluating a piece of art, it is necessary to identify if the work is well done. Is the art aesthetically pleasing? Is there some sort of beauty in the art? I define beauty as a pure expression of truth that is not necessarily pleasant-looking. Technical excellence doesn't mean the work has to bring pleasure to the viewer but is intentional in its design. The beauty of the artwork originates in the truth communicated through it. Truth is a crucial component of art; it validates the imitation of reality that the artist presents. Truth comes from the artist and establishes the meaning of the work for both the creator and the viewer. The meaning, whether of a positive or negative viewpoint, is made valid by each individual's interpretation of the work. I don't believe that there is an invalid interpretation of a work of art—that interpretation is that person's opinion—however, an artist's intention must be taken into account when evaluating the meaning of a work. If the artist successfully exhibits powerful emotions in his art that are relayed to the audience, then the artwork can be considered better than another.

Art is an undeniable constant in human history. Art and humanity have coexisted together since the Creation. Even before

mankind, God possessed an artistic characteristic that sparked a new creation, the work of art that is nature. Because we are brought into being by a Creator, we are also called to create. The most divine act a human can do is form a new creation. We give praise to God through our art by using what He has created and making something of our own. That is art's purpose—to be an act of creation that gives praise back to God for all that He has created.

My definition of art is this: an expression of truth through creativity and originality that is perceived by the senses. Good art is not without truth. Finding the means of expressing that truth is where creativity and originality come into play. Art is uniquely personal and reveals information about the artist that would have otherwise been left in the dark. The opportunity for originality and the natural desire for creativity inspire truly good art. The mediums through which art can be done are unable to be definitively counted or known. New art forms are being created every day. Anything from soap carving to sand painting are art forms that can be judged, experienced, and felt profoundly. However, there are practices that proclaim themselves to be art but have no worthwhile value to humanity. The pornography industry, for example, twists the art of the human body and human sexuality into a greedy, destructive business that feigns artistic integrity. True art does a service to humanity, whether revealing a deep-seated human struggle or praising the goodness of life.

My rubric for judging art evaluates what I believe are the most impactful, prominent features of a work. Excellence, truth, meaning, and emotion cover all that art should embody. All of these aspects coexist in an objectively good piece of art. It would be difficult to

defend a piece of art that is of poor aesthetic quality, lackluster in effort, disingenuous, and meaningless. If a piece of art is proficient in any of these standards of judgment, then it can be considered to be of a higher caliber. While some people's standards ask if the work has beauty, I have grouped beauty into the category of truth since truth begets beauty, not visually but emotionally. Other viewpoints may also conclude that an artist's intended meaning should have no impact on the quality of the work, but I disagree. Context matters, and the creator of the work should have some influence on the way the work is received. If the artist unsuccessfully presents his intended meaning, then that can lower the quality of the work. An artwork's meaning is lost without powerful emotion; there is no beauty without truth, and there is little impact without intention. This rubric for art focuses not only on the appearance of the art but on the various meanings and truths that are embedded in every piece of art.

The Mumford & Sons album *Babel* was released in 2012, three years after their debut album *Sigh No More*. *Babel* maintains the same sound as the previous album and builds off of the allegorical and narrative nature of those songs. While *Babel* draws further from the British folk influences that drove *Sigh No More*, the lyrics, delivery, and instrumental arrangement are enough to put Mumford & Sons' sophomore album on par with the debut album. Even though I personally prefer *Sigh No More* over *Babel*, I consider both two of the best albums released in the past ten years, and I would put Mumford & Sons in my top ten favorite musical artists. I do prefer the deluxe version of *Babel* because of the three additional songs, which includes a beautiful cover of Simon & Garfunkel's "The Boxer."

In interviews, Mumford & Sons members Marcus Mumford, Ben Lovett, Ted Dwane, and Winston Marshall have named such influences as Bob Dylan, the *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* soundtrack, Shakespeare plays, and classic literature. There are several lyrical references to Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, John Steinbeck's novels *Of Mice and Men*, *East of Eden*, and *The Grapes of Wrath*, and the Bible. There is a strong spiritual element in songs such as "Below My Feet," "Broken Crown," and "Lovers' Eyes." While Mumford & Sons is not a Christian band, there are many Christian themes that focus on the ideas of grace, love, forgiveness, sin, and redemption. We can observe how Mumford & Sons has utilized these interesting influences to create an album born out of truth, originality, and creativity.

An important aspect of the artistic power of *Babel* is rooted in the band's ability to portray Christian themes in a way that is not explicitly Christian. I don't believe that Marcus Mumford or any of the other band members are necessarily Christians, but it is evident in their lyrics that faith and religion are things with which they have struggled. Anyone who listens can relate to the universality of these struggles and emotions. Mumford sings of grace and choice in "Babel" and "Broken Crown," love in "Ghosts That We Knew," "Lovers' Eyes," and "Reminder," sin in "Whispers In The Dark" and "Lover Of The Light," and hope in "Not With Haste" and "Hopeless Wanderer." The themes of forgiveness and sin as they relate to love are especially prevalent. Mumford is extremely aware of the tempting draws of sin in relationships and consistently writes about repeatedly falling into temptation. Because of the album's universal meaning and appeal to

anyone in love, struggling with sin, or seeking hope and forgiveness, *Babel* successfully encompasses the meaning standard of my rubric.

Meaning comes from the truth of the artist, and Mumford & Sons portrays a particular truth about how they view reality. The gritty emotion behind these lyrics from “Hopeless Wanderer” shows the artist’s struggles with truth himself: “I wrestled long with my youth / We tried so hard to live in the truth / But do not tell me all is fine / When I lose my head, I lose my spine.” It is especially difficult in youth to figure out how the world works and what the complex nature of reality is, and it is obvious the speaker is still struggling with the truth of reality as he grows older. Mumford & Sons write openly about the difficulties and complexities of life, and listeners are inclined to believe that these songs are valid imitations of life. The relatability and honesty of the songs give way to the intrinsic beauty of what Mumford is singing. There is nothing superficial in the lyrics or the music that discredits the heartfelt truth of the album. Because of the immense truth of the artist that is put into this album, it is truly a work of beautiful art.

The combination of truth, meaning, and beauty gives way to a powerful emotional impact on the listener. Whenever I listen to *Babel*, there are several points when I get the chills. The dramatic builds and drops throughout the album always make me stop what I’m doing to listen to the bitter, raw emotion of the music. Anytime Marcus Mumford breaks into his aggressive, harsh singing voice, I am immediately drawn to the pure passion behind his words. Some of my favorite songs on the album are “Broken Crown” and “Hopeless Wanderer” for this very reason. The first half of the songs are quiet and

acoustic and build up to a point where the music intensifies and the vocals are harsh. The emotional vibes of these ups and downs tell a story, one that switches back-and-forth between anger, love, sentiment, and frustration. When coupled with the lyrics, the music becomes fodder for emotional response. Whether it's a beautiful harmonization or an elaborate instrumental arrangement, every note is an intentional choice to provide an emotional experience. Listeners can relate to the feelings of love, lust, guilt, temptation, hope, and discontentment. As I listen to the album, I resonate with these themes and empathize with the speaker in the songs. The feelings of empathy and introspection that this album draws from its audience make it an emotionally impactful work of art.

As emotionally powerful and profoundly true as this album is, *Babel* is also technically excellent. Each instrumental and vocal arrangement is perfectly crafted to the artist's intention. Marcus Mumford's powerful vocals paired with the masterful playing of guitar, piano, banjo, and bass create a recipe for an incredible folk rock experience. Because there are so many songs that I love on this album, it is difficult for me to have a single favorite. Each of the fifteen songs on the deluxe album has its place and its turn in the flow of the song list; *Babel* is not an album to listen to on shuffle or skip around in the song order. Part of the artistic excellence of *Babel* is how each song smoothly and beautifully transitions into the next. The songs work as a unit to create a unique listening experience that leaves one wondering when the previous song ended and the next one began. The transition between "Babel" and "Whispers In The Dark" is so natural, it seems like the two songs are one being. There is something extremely

impressive and artistic about not only writing individual songs but a cohesive album that flows neatly through the sixty-three minutes of music. Because of the arrangement of the songs in the album and the technical beauty of the songs themselves, *Babel* can be considered technically excellent regarding my judgment of art.

Babel surpasses my four standards for judging artwork, and I personally believe it to be one of the greatest albums of the past ten years. The valid truths from the artist show the beauty of the album. This beauty evokes an emotional response from the audience and leads them to contemplate the intended meaning of the music and what that meaning provides for them. In regards to my own rubric for evaluating art, *Babel* is undoubtedly a piece of high quality artwork.

The Role of Women in Civilized & Family Life

Shayla Millman

I. Introduction

Women have always been regarded as a necessary part of mankind, whether it is for reproduction and motherhood, the survival of the species, or the care and nurturing of others. Women are certainly more than their reproductive systems, and many historical accounts from ancient to modern times have testified to the power of women and their ability to influence men in their actions and character. In the Book of Genesis, men and women are created to be complementary of one another; the world is incomplete with just a man in it. In the Epic of Gilgamesh, the prostitute Shamhat and the tavern keeper Siduri are necessary female figures to introduce weakness and reason to the male characters. As for more modern ideas about women, Friedrich Nietzsche understands the challenges and hardships that come with love and marriage and paints women as valuable playthings for man's own diversion. The ancient and modern views on women's roles in civilized life all reflect certain truths of woman's relationship with man.

II. According to Genesis

In the Book of Genesis, God creates everything in the universe and sees that it is good. The last thing created is man; God "formed

man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.” Man is given a purpose by God to till and keep the land, but God sees that it is “not good that man should be alone.”

According to Genesis, man’s purpose is to work, but that cannot be all he cares about and puts himself towards; man was made for more—that being family and community. Eve is made of Adam’s bone, which demonstrates how women rely on men, complementing man’s need for woman to be created in the first place. After seeing Eve, Adam proclaims that she is “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh,” an indication that goes deeper than the literal sense. Being of one flesh, as in marriage, suggests an unbreakable unity between two people. Initially in a family, “a man leaves his father and his mother” and the two “become one flesh.” After the two become one flesh, they establish a family community that grows and expands with children—all of which are of the same flesh. Men and women require one another to create these communities, and each one has their role in caring for it. As Genesis posits, man’s purpose is to work and protect the family, while woman’s purpose is to be a “helper” who completes what man cannot do alone, whether it is survival, protection, or reproduction.

After the Fall in Genesis, God curses mankind, causing a rift between men and women. Men must undergo hard labor to provide for himself and for his family, while women must endure intense pain in childbirth. Each of these curses hinders mankind’s ability to carry out their purpose given by God. Eve’s role as “the mother of all living” becomes compromised as bearing children became a source of pain, sadness, and distress for all women after her. Because Eve is the first woman, she acts as an example for why women were created. Man

alone is incomplete and cannot fully live his purpose without woman. While women were not solely created to tend to men, it is important to note how much the two rely upon one another; it is not a one-way street, or at least it shouldn't be. Before original sin, fulfilling familial roles was much more clear and easy, but now with the added hardship and adversity, there is more room for selfishness to permeate a relationship, leading men and women to resent or ignore how they should act in a relationship. Genesis emphasizes the importance of the unity between men and women and demonstrates a certain reliance the two have upon one another.

III. According to Gilgamesh

In the ancient *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the wild man Enkidu is taught how to be civilized by the prostitute Shamhat. Using her womanly sensuality, Shamhat arouses Enkidu and fills him with “her delights” (Tablet 1, Line 195). After “six days [and] seven nights” of Enkidu “flowing into Shamhat,” (Tablet 1, Line 194) he tries to return to the wild steppe from whence he came, but he finds that he is weakened and slow, his body limp. Shamhat is able to civilize Enkidu and give him bread, beer, and clothing, turning him into a real man instead of a beast. By showing Enkidu that he can be weak, Shamhat humanizes him—something all women should do for men. There are men who act as Enkidu did; there are men who are animalistic, inhumane, and self-serving. However, women can act as an impetus for men to change their ways. While Shamhat didn't exactly make it difficult for Enkidu to grow and change, women have an amazing ability to touch men's hearts and appeal to their humanity. In the hunter's father's plan to tame

Enkidu, he says, “Let her prevail over him, instead of a mighty man,” (Tablet 1, Line 141) indicating that women have a powerful influence over men and are able to impact their actions and decisions. There is something special about a woman in regards to stirring up emotions inside of a man, a feeling that is deeply humanizing and humbling.

The *Epic of Gilgamesh* also commands a certain level of respect for women. A powerful female character is introduced near the end of the epic: the tavern keeper Siduri. She states the theme of the epic in her speech to Gilgamesh and reveals that his quest for immortality is in vain. She tells Gilgamesh that “the work of mankind” is to “look proudly on the little one holding your hand, [and] let your mate be always blissful in your loins” (Tablet 10, Lines 89-91). The message of Gilgamesh is to rejoice in the importance of family and being a part of a community—that is what true humanity is rooted in. Siduri’s role in the story is to help Gilgamesh see reason and realize that mortality is an essential aspect of being human. Again, we see a female character enlightening a male character about acting civilized and understanding the things that make someone human. In the case of Gilgamesh, Siduri has to show him that as a man, he cannot act as gods do; furthermore, in Enkidu’s case, Shamhat has to show him that as a man, he cannot act as animals do. There is an important balance in maintaining the divide between beast, man, and god. Siduri and Shamhat both exemplify what women must be for men—a voice of reason to keep them grounded in humanity, not yearning for the pride of gods or the simplicity of animals. Men struggle, as all humans do, with balancing their pride with humility and can fall into self-deprecation and self-importance. Women complement this by helping to keep a man’s ego in check, making sure

that his goals, beliefs, and mindset are reasonable and noble. As the women in *Gilgamesh* demonstrate, all women should not be afraid to speak up and call men out when they are not acting sensibly or practically. The *Epic of Gilgamesh* does a commendable job of giving power to women who are able to substantially influence the mindsets, decisions, and characters of men.

IV. According to Nietzsche

Thousands of years after the writings of Genesis and *Gilgamesh*, Friedrich Nietzsche proposed his own beliefs about the role of women in society and how the relationship between men and women should be treated in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Nietzsche's views on women are quasi-oppressive, but he makes several solid points about how women should be treated by men and vice versa. He states that men only want two things: "danger and diversion." Men tend to seek out risk and pleasure, therefore, men want women "as the most dangerous plaything." The word "plaything" suggests an objectification of women as toys to be used by men for their own entertainment, but Nietzsche later clarifies that the plaything is "pure and fine like the precious stone, illumined with the virtues of a world yet to come." Because "man is more childish than woman," women should "discover the child in man" and allow themselves to be used as recreation. While this sentiment comes across as sexist—and it certainly may be—Nietzsche understands that when women allow themselves to be open to a relationship, their love is so powerful that they will make any sacrifice for their man and regard everything else as worthless. He claims that women have a frightening ability to "love more than [they] are loved"

and be incredibly mean to those they hate. Because women have such a large capacity for emotion, it can be said that “with women nothing is impossible.”

With regards to marriage and family, Nietzsche has firm beliefs that marriage should only take place between people deserving of one another and who qualify in virtue to raise a child. Nietzsche is especially vehement about superfluous marriages that end up being disappointing to the children who result from them. In these unfortunate circumstances, Nietzsche asks, “What child hath not had reason to weep over its parents?” His definition of a good marriage is “the will of the twain to create the one that is more than those who created it.” In marriage, the man and woman should be virtuous enough to recognize that their child is their first priority—they should be trying to raise the Overman. Nietzsche believes that a man and woman’s love is often veiled by stupidity and delusion, and even the best love contains bitterness. Most men and women are unable to raise the Overman, either from a lack of virtue or a lack of drive to do so. Nietzsche’s approach to the relationship between men and women places more responsibility on each partner to be their best self for the other person and for their children. When any person is considering marriage, they should ask if they are entitled to do so. Only after one has mastered his passions and virtues can he think about getting married and having children. This is a very intense view to have about marriage as it leaves little room for growth within the marriage. If both the man and woman are victorious self-conquerors before they get married, there is less reliance and dependence between the couple, and all they have to focus on is helping their children be better than themselves. The energy

typically spent helping their partner grow can be used on their child. This belief does imply that Nietzsche thinks women are fully capable of mastering virtue and ruling their passions; they are complex and rational, not simply empty, lifeless shells. Nietzsche's more modern take on raising children increases the importance of man and woman working together as a virtuous unit to raise even more virtuous children.

V. Conclusion

In all three viewpoints about the role of women in society and relationships, women are painted as impactful, powerful creatures with more than just an ability to reproduce. The ancient beliefs place more emphasis on women's particular characteristics in regards to their interactions with men while the modern take emphasizes the power of a woman's emotions in her relationships. In Genesis, Eve serves as the ultimate completion of God's creation. Being made from Adam's rib, Eve becomes one flesh with him, as man and woman should be in marriage. They care for each other and help provide for themselves and their family. In *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, the strong female characters bring humanity to the male characters. They keep the men grounded and show them how to act as civilized human beings in a community. Friedrich Nietzsche emphasizes the need for women to love their man to the fullest extent and raise their children in virtue and excellence. All three accounts point to common truths about women: they are strong, compassionate, reasonable, tender, resolute, loving, and brutally honest. They care for their partner and their family with passion and zeal and do not shy away from confronting adversity and enlightening others.

Out of the Cave

From ancient times to modern day, women have been regarded as providers of support, honesty, and unconditional love.

The Theology of Brown and Benedict XVI

Taylor Williams

Introduction

There is confusion in the modern age within the Catholic Church about the relationship between theologians, Sacred Scripture, and the Magisterium. This issue has made the mode for interpreting scripture difficult to universally define and to thereafter synthesize into a common standard. There will be two prominent positions mentioned on this issue: one is the historical-critical method, which is written about in Raymond E. Brown's *The Critical Meaning of the Bible*, and the other is the hermeneutic of faith, found in Pope Benedict XVI's (Joseph Ratzinger) *The Nature and Mission of Theology: Approaches to Understanding Its Role in the Light of Present Controversy*, and Scott Hahn's summary of Benedict's thought, *Covenant and Communion: The Biblical Theology of Pope Benedict XVI*. Although Brown offers valid and important statements in his book, statements affirmed as valid and important by both Benedict and Hahn, it falls into error and cannot be considered as wholly true. The interpretation Benedict offers, and Hahn affirms, ties Sacred Scripture together more sensibly and coherently around Christ and His Bride, the Church. Therefore, Benedict's method is has more value despite Brown's own intelligence and coherence.

Raymond E. Brown

Brown layers his understanding of the historical-critical method by propagating clearly his intention and reasonings, offering what he believes are the opposing viewpoints, and revealing the deeper issue behind most of these viewpoints: an injustice committed by Church authority. He first elaborates on the “human error” he claims to have found in scripture and then lists the arguments against the historical-critical method and how they ultimately point towards on the oppressive nature of the Magisterium and the restrictions it places on the theologian. In his discourse on these parts, Brown gives reasons that demand introspection on the part of modern Catholic theologians.

In the first chapter, Brown writes, “my chief concern is [to know] the extent to which the inspired Bible is a time-conditioned word, marked by the limitations of human utterance.”¹⁵ Earlier, he elaborates on an important aspect of this argument: “if God did not actually speak words (external and internal)...every word pertaining to God in the history of the human race including the biblical period, is a time-conditioned word, affected by limitations of human insight and problems.”¹⁶ If these statements by Brown are true, that the Bible is not literally the Word of God but rather the strongest attempt at reaching the Divine through words, it would necessitate the shift that is being offered to the Catholic world by Brown and other supporters of this new method. This shift would include a diversion from the before-understood a priori perception of scripture and towards knowledge

¹⁵ Raymond E. Brown, *The Critical Meaning of the Bible*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), 15

¹⁶ Brown, *Critical*, 4

received a posteriori; now scripture is incapable of being considered wholly and entirely true until it is subjected to the theologian's examination table and properly dissected to ensure it is, in fact, wholly and entirely true.

What Brown offers to support this claim is his belief in differentiating between what the Bible means and what is meant: what it means, Brown argues, is what the Church's authority, the Magisterium, has interpreted it to mean while what it meant is Brown's term for the authors' actual intention when they wrote it.¹⁷

Distinguishing these two terms forces discussion within the realm of asking what the Church is able to actually say is true about scripture; if the Church has not yet revealed fully what scripture means and what it meant, in that they have not yet implemented the historical-critical method to its full effect, the theologian should as a result diverge from the Magisterium to find answers. This would give the theologian autonomy in a way that Brown would consider as "freeing the theologian."

Brown later proceeds to offer the viewpoints which opposes the historical-critical method, categorizing them for the sake of clarity: the first objection claims the method is unimportant because scripture is unimportant, the second believes it is not useful, the third affirms that it is of little importance compared to other forms of interpretation and the fourth suspects it is too dangerous.¹⁸ All but the first objection can in some way be attributed to what the Church's perception of the interpretation of scripture is. This reveals who Brown's opponent is:

¹⁷ Brown, *Critical*, 37

¹⁸ Brown, *Critical*, 24-25

the tradition that came before him. Therefore, Brown's mission is ultimately to prove how the Church has been incapable of uncovering the most effective process in interpreting scripture until the arrival of the historical-critical method. He even goes so far as to say that Church authority attempts to "bind scholars to internal obedience" with regards to keeping theologians within the realm of what She approves of.¹⁹ This furthers Brown's case for the need to ensure this method is being argued properly and with zeal; if this method is going to retain validity and be treated with seriousness, the Church authority must be proven wrong in this case so as to liberate the theologians from unfair regulations.

With the historical-critical method there arises a push against the lasting conception of Church authorities determining the validity of the theologian's intellectual endeavors. Brown distinguishes the terms "means" and "meant" as a rebuttal against the Church's authority on certain issues. If this method can be verified as true, theologians like Brown can rightfully ask to be "freed" from the Magisterium.

Pope Benedict XVI

Alternatively to Brown, Benedict believes it is important for the theologian to be subservient to the authority of the Church and denies that the historical-critical method is the most important way to interpret scripture. In affirming the Church's primacy over the theologian and denying the power Brown wants to give to the new method, Benedict attempts to draw the conversation towards a hermeneutic of faith. Benedict hopes to refute the historical-critical method for a more

¹⁹ Brown, *Critical*, 38

serious and comprehensive understanding of interpreting scripture.

Benedict's defense against Brown's claims on the suppression of the theologian by the Church begins with the relationship between reason and faith and how they work together to seek a freedom that is ordered towards truth; Benedict calls this "'academic' freedom."²⁰ When discussing reason and faith, Benedict explains that faith advances philosophy, "when it professes the existence of God," because it fulfills the purpose of the reasoning faculty by wholly answering the question it has been searching for.²¹ Reason compliments faith as well, according to Benedict, "because it [faith] needs man who questions and seeks."²² These two aspects, which intertwine throughout the human condition, reveal the yearning of man towards the fullness of truth. Benedict believes the necessary way to facilitate this craving of man is through the Church's authority, the Magisterium. To him, the Magisterium serves as a guide towards discovering truth in the most effective way and anyone who denies the Magisterium would be mistaken in their judgment, "for in its absence theology would enjoy no greater certainty than any of than any of the liberal arts...the certainty of hypothesis, which may be the subject of debate but which no one can stake his life on."²³ Therefore, it would be the theologian's job to serve Magisterial teaching to widen its reach towards truths that build on what has already been established and not to approach the Word with skepticism. The mentality that Benedict offers to theologians, a defense against the historical-critical method, allows them to work off of the

²⁰ Joseph Ratzinger, *The Nature and Mission of Theology: Approaches to Understanding Its Role in the Light of Present Controversy*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), 37

²¹ Ratzinger, *Nature*, 24

²² Ratzinger, *Nature*, 29

²³ Ratzinger, *Nature*, 46

validity of past intellectual insights to clarify or enhance Magisterial teaching.

In addition to validating Magisterial teaching, Benedict affirms some aspects of the historical-critical method but refutes Brown's attempts to place it above Benedict's hermeneutic of faith. The hermeneutic of faith rests on this basis: instead of treating scripture as a "static collection of ancient texts" like Brown would, Hahn writes about how Benedict believes the relationship between the Word and the Church is, "a living dialogue in which the Church constantly listens to the Word addressed to her and responds to the claims the Word makes on her through her preaching, teaching, doctrine, and liturgy."²⁴ If the Word and the Church are strengthening one another constantly through a dialogue, they remain ever present and relevant to modern times. They also incorporate tradition to ensure the fullness of their relationship is represented; this point is made valid because books of the Bible were determined by the Church because of tradition. If theology is based within and flows from this relationship, it follows that for Brown to claim theologians should be "freed" from the Magisterium is really him saying that theologians should be freed from being Catholic theologians. The historical-critical method is defined by a "hermeneutic of suspicion," according to what Hahn draws from Benedict's works, and although there is validity to understanding scripture in this way, Benedict believes the position is unwarranted because too much suspicion will inevitably lead to a departure from the root of theology: Christ's marriage to the Church.²⁵

²⁴ Scott W. Hahn, *Covenant and Communion: The Biblical Theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, (Michigan: Brazos Press, 2009), 51

²⁵ Hahn, *Covenant*, 69

As an opposition to the historical-critical method, Benedict offers a hermeneutic of faith that is grounded in a relationship between faith and reason as well as Christ and His Church. Although Benedict affirms validity to Brown's method, he displays the superiority of the theology he has developed through his writings. As a result, Benedict gives a compelling case to structure theology around a hermeneutic of faith despite the modern push towards using the historical-critical method.

Conclusion

Two positions on the interpretation of scripture are Brown's historical-critical method and Benedict's hermeneutic of faith. Brown attempts to explain why his method is important for the future of theology and claims that this future must involve a divorce between the theologian and the Magisterium. Benedict refutes this claim when he argues that the role of the theologian is to serve the Magisterium and compliment the affirmed teachings of tradition. Although Brown's hope for theology is valid in some respects, Benedict's hermeneutic of faith is a more important and substantial way to unite the Church to Christ.

A Theology of Sacrifice

Christ's Expiation for our Sins in the Liturgy

Timothy Rodriguez

The classical Greek philosopher consider religion to be a moral virtue by which we give to God what is due to Him and in the process “binds ourselves back” to Him. The etymology of the word ‘religion’ supports this claim since *religare* means “to bind together.” Further, Augustine says in *De Vera Religione* 55.113, “May religion bind us to the one Almighty God.” Religion is, in fact, the most exalted aspect of the moral virtue of justice, by which we give to each one his due. With this in mind we must consider the question, “What do we owe to God, our Creator, Lord, and Redeemer?” The noblest things that are due from us to God are spiritual acts such as praise, honor, gratitude, obedience to His command, faith, hope, and charity. In addition, when we sin, contrition and the desire to make reparation are also due to God. These spiritual acts are a kind of sacrifice or gift of self to God. This is the heart and virtue of religion, which is the constant attitude of seeking glory to God.

There is no religion without sacrifice because religion is the ordering between God and his creature. Sacrifice can thus be described as God bending down towards man, and man thus climbs up towards God; by his taking it and passing it into his possession, God makes the sacrifice holy and consecrates it. If the offering is stained with sin it is

thereby not suitable; it must be purified to make the sacrifice properly acceptable. Without bloodshed, there is no forgiveness and no sacrifice offered behalf of sinful man. The sacrifice made pure by reparation can find its way up to God.

A Theology of Sacrifice

The word “sacrifice,” which corresponds to the Latin *sacrificium*, comes from *sacrum facere*, to make something sacred or to consecrate to God. An object is made sacred when something is done to it that removes it from ordinary human ownership and dedicates it to God. The same is true for making a person sacred. Sacrifice thus includes two aspects: (1) it is offered to God as an oblation, which means subtraction from man’s ordinary use and being given over to divine worship; and (2) it is somehow changed to sensibly manifest God’s exclusive dominion, as when an animal is immolated. Sacrifice, therefore, is an oblation offered to God, in which transfer of dominion to God is sensibly manifested by some change. St. Thomas explains:

A sacrifice, properly speaking, requires that something be done to the thing which is offered to God, for instance animals were slain and burnt, the bread is broken, eaten, blessed. The very word signifies this, since sacrifice is so called a man does something sacred [facit sacrum]. On the other hand an oblation is properly the offering of something to God even if nothing be done thereto, thus we speak of offering money or bread at the altar, and yet nothing is done to them. Hence every sacrifice is an oblation, but not conversely. First-fruits are oblations, because they were offered to God, according to Deuteronomy 26, but they are not a sacrifice, because nothing sacred was done to them. Tithes, however, are neither a sacrifice nor an oblation, properly speaking, because they are not offered

immediately to God, but to the minister of divine worship.²⁶

Placing the victim or oblation on the altar, expresses the divine dominion and acceptance of the gift, showing the transfer of dominion of the sacrificial offering to God. If the victim is an animal, the transfer to God's dominion is expressed by the outpouring of blood, which represents the life, and/or by burning it in fire. The word "sacrifice" can be applied to the action of the sacred offering or to the victim that is offered. St. Isidore writes: "The sacred is the victim and anything burned or placed on the altar. Everything given to God is either dedicated or consecrated." What is offered in sacrifice represents the life of the one offering. This offering of nourishment and blood represents several things at once. It represents our dependence on God as the source of life and our need to offer what is highest in order to give thanks and supplication, to make satisfaction for sin, and represent the complete gift of self, what we are called to make back to God. Finally, the sacrifice of that which sustains life, together with the lifeblood, most perfectly represents the sacrifice of Christ, whose blood was poured out for our redemption in order to win us a share in His divine life.

Christ's Expiatory for our Sins

Thus, we understand the importance of an appropriate sacrifice but also come to the conclusion, that mere man cannot make satisfaction for an infinite evil, since man is both finite and rendered unworthy by sin. Therefore, it is appropriate that Christ became man in

²⁶ *ST II-II*, q. 85, a.3, ad 3.

order to be able to offer an expiatory sacrifice to satisfy for all human sins in perfect justice. It is necessary for God to be incarnate into His creation as to be sacrificed for our sake due to the gravity of sin and man's inability to offer fitting reparation. This is because every mortal sin involves a rejection of the Law of God and, hence a rejection of God, who is the author of that law and infinite Good. Every mortal sin involves an infinite evil, a denial of our infinite God to whom we owe all honor and reverence. Therefore, the gravity of sin is proportionate to the honor of the offended party.

The value of satisfaction, however, is determined by the dignity of the party who makes reparation. God therefore chose to make satisfaction Himself in our place by taking on a human nature in order to suffer and die in it to expiate the sins of all men. Other men are born to live, but Christ was born in order to die for us. St. Thomas speaks of Christ's work of redemption as offering to God something more excellent than all human sin is offensive. The life of the Word Incarnate, offered in His passion with infinite charity for all men, atone for sin by being more pleasing to God than all human sin together - both that of Adam and that of all his descendants - is displeasing.²⁷

Christ, however, as mentioned above, wished to mysteriously "perpetuate" that supreme moment of His life and make it sacramentally present every day on every Catholic altar. His Paschal mystery is a real event that occurred in our history, but is unique from all other historical events. The Catechism of the Catholic Church further explains. "the Paschal mystery of Christ, by contrast, cannot remain only in the past, because by his death he destroyed death, and all

²⁷ *ST III*, q. 48, a.2

that Christ is - all that he did and suffered for all men - participates in the divine eternity, and so transcends all times while being made present in them all. The event of the Cross and Resurrection abides and draws everything towards life.”²⁸ The Eucharist therefore, “contains” the expiatory sacrifice of our redemption. It is mystically that very sacrifice because Christ Himself is the immolated Victim who becomes present on the altar through the ministry of His priests. The priest thus act not on his own accord but acts in Christ’s Person and His Blood which leads to the sacramentally poured out for the living and the dead. In the Eucharist, Christ’s sacrifice has been given to the Church to be her perpetual sacrifice. We can see this in the very words with which Christ instituted the Eucharist during the Last Supper, calling it “my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matt 26:28). This means that the offering of Christ in every Eucharist glorifies the Father more than all the combined sins of history offend God’s goodness.

The Liturgy

The Fathers of the Church and the early liturgical texts see the Eucharist as the fulfillment and realization of the prophecy of Malachi 1:11, “the pure oblation offered among the Gentiles.” The liturgy as described in the Catechism of the Catholic Church is an action of the whole Christ, *Christus totus*.²⁹ However, liturgy is much more complicated and can be simplified into three nuances. The first nuance, “liturgy is the work of the people,” denotes the human effort present in

²⁸ Catechism of the Catholic Church 1085

²⁹ Catechism of the Catholic Church 1136

the liturgy. The second nuance, “liturgy is the work of Christ done on behalf of the people,” signifies that it is Christ Himself as the principal liturgist doing the work for the people because they themselves cannot fulfill it. Lastly, the third nuance, “Liturgy is the work of God in which the people participate,” means that by imitating God we are best worshipping Him. Therefore, within Christian liturgy certain rituals, prayer and the Paschal mystery establish a pattern for worship that best praises God.

The sacrificial nature of the Eucharist is a common patrimony of the Patristic Age and is affirmed many times in all of the Eucharist Prayers. Especially in the anamnesis, in which, we remember His Paschal mystery, the “bread of eternal life and the chalice of everlasting salvation”³⁰ are offered to the Father. The Fathers and the early Eucharist Prayers affirm the oneness of the Mass with the sacrifice of Calvary. This sacrifice however, represented in the sacrament, is bloodless and “spiritual worship,” according to Romans 12:1. Further, St. John Chrysostom’s commentary on Hebrews 9:24-26 explains how the sacrifice of Calvary and the Mass are one because the same Victim is offered and the same High Priest offers:

“For we always offer the same Lamb, not one now and another tomorrow, but always the same one, so that the sacrifice is one . . . As then while offered in many places, He is one body and not many bodies; so also [He is] one sacrifice. He is our High Priest, who offered the sacrifice that cleanses us. We now offer that victim which we then offered, which cannot be exhausted.”³¹

³⁰ Eucharistic Prayer II (*RM*, 653)

³¹ John Chrysostom, *In Epistolam ad Hebraeos Homilia* 17

In other words, the Mass is a sacrifice because it is a sacramental representation of the sacrifice of Calvary. The sacrifice of the Mass is unbloody because Christ is now in His glorified state. But the heart of sacrifice is the voluntary, total offering of oneself to God. Christ makes this voluntary offering in every Mass, signified by the separate consecration of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of the Redeemer. The end of purpose is the same, namely to give glory to God, to give what is owed and, thus, obtain His mercy and to ask Him for our needs. But, as we have seen, whereas on Calvary Christ obtained for us our salvation, it is through the Mass that He now dispenses the riches of His saving grace.

Moana: The Story of a Soul

Ella Negri

When Disney released *Moana* in 2016, the fanfare surrounding it was that of diversity and positive body image. While many appreciated the unique cultural attributes, it was also oddly familiar to almost all viewers in its relatability. This is because, at its core, *Moana* is the story of every soul and its vocation.

The very first line of *Moana* is “In the beginning, there was only ocean, until the mother island emerged.” This is automatically reminiscent of the first line of Genesis: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” (Gen. 1:1). From the first moments of the film, a parallel is set up: in this film, the Ocean will represent God. It absolutely surrounds everything in the film—the islands, the characters—everything is within the Ocean.

Moana’s grandmother, who is our narrator at the beginning, continues the story with the tale of how the “heart” was stolen from the island Te Fiti by Maui, a shapeshifter. As a result, a terrible darkness has begun to spread through the world, until someone restores the heart of Te Fiti.

Soon, an eager baby *Moana* is revealed, listening excitedly to the story. It is reflective of young children hearing Bible stories for the first time—enthralled by their elders telling them the stories of the past and their place in it in the present.

Moana then waddles down to the beach. Here, as a baby, we see

her first encounter with the Ocean (God). It lovingly plays with her, leading her gently closer and closer to it until it wraps her carefully in its waves and gives her shells and a flower. Only when her father comes and snatches her away from the water, saying that it is “dangerous” does Moana grudgingly obey and leave.

What follows is one of the most interesting songs in Disney history, not because of the cultural differences, but because of the message. This is the song of Moana’s discernment. Her growth as a young woman progresses during the song and so does the battle in her heart between her options in life.

Moana’s father is the chief of the tribe, and through the lyrics he tells Moana that the safety and security of their tribe is where she belongs. It is her duty to lead the people well as their chief, and to stay away from the ocean. Moana, however, continually feels a pull towards the edge of the water. Throughout the musical number she continually goes back and forth between the two. She seeks advice from everyone—her father, her mother, and her grandmother. The former of these train her towards one vocation: the latter, the grandmother, is clearly closer to the Ocean than anyone else in the island. Everyone thinks she is a little strange and unusual for their safe little island, but Moana goes to her anyway. Standing in the shallows of the Ocean, her grandmother sings her this: “I like to dance with the water...the water is mischievous, ha! / I like how it misbehaves...you are your father’s daughter...mind what he says, but remember / You may hear a voice inside / And when that voice starts to whisper / To follow the farthest star / Moana, that voice inside is who you are.” In this one small bridge, we see that the grandmother and the Ocean are old friends at

this point. In her age, wisdom, and closeness to the Ocean, the grandmother is more able to clearly aid Moana in her discernment.

And yet, even after this, Moana chooses to stay. She decides to become chief instead of disobey her father and run away across the water, singing the true message of the song which is one too many forget: “Every path leads you back to where you are / You can find happiness right where you are.” Moana has heard a call from the Ocean, but she has also discerned that the right thing to do is to stay where she is. And, interestingly, the film never does anything to disprove this decision.

As a matter of fact, it is later proven that she was correct to stay. Not soon after her choice to remain with her people, the sickness from Te Fiti has begun to spread and food is harder to find. Moana suggests that they fish further out to sea - to which her father flatly refuses and does not let anyone else either.

Moana’s rebellious side takes over, and she steals a boat and goes out anyway. However, it is her anger at her father that fuels this decision, and the waves quickly overpower her and she nearly dies before making it back to shore. She did not have the right boat or mindset to journey out.

Confused and upset, Moana learns then that their ancestors (let’s call them “saints”) DID have the right boats/tools and mindset to journey with and across the Ocean. She confronts her father but again he refuses, and Moana learns that her father once was like her and tried to cross the ocean, but it resulted in the death of his best friend.

Moana’s father is an example of someone whose attempts at life resulted in something that caused bitterness and a fear and anger.

Moana's father blames the Ocean for what happened and tries to dissuade anyone else from following that call. Moana is confused yet again.

Then, two tragedies strike. Food becomes even scarcer, and Moana's grandmother dies. When she does, her soul immediately returns to the Ocean (almost as if it has reclaimed her from this world) and Moana is entrusted with the heart of Te Fiti. She feels the call more strongly than ever and decides to go out across the ocean again.

There are several things to note in this decision. First, Moana makes this choice not based on rebellion or anger, but rather through desperation and need. As a matter of fact, Moana's chosen vocation—chief—requires her to make this decision for the good of her people. Before, she was not ready. Now, it is her time. Secondly, she is not alone. Moana's mother supports her in this choice. Thirdly, Moana goes to those who know better—the ancestor/saints—to get the correct help to make the journey. A stronger, more solid boat, though she doesn't even know how to sail, and the risk is great (incidentally, if Moana's father had taught her how to sail in the Ocean, she would have been even better equipped for the journey. Raising children in the Church is important.)

Moana's mission is not one to simply find fish for her people: it is to get to the root of the evil, the core of the problem, so that more than just her community will be healed: to break the "heart of stone" that has been placed inside of Te Fiti and restore the true heart. If she does this, then the whole world will begin to recover from the disease that is spreading.

Moana's entire journey represents every vocation of every

member of the Church. To walk (or float) with God in an attempt to restore His light to those who have fallen away and are spreading darkness to the world.

But she cannot do it alone. Humans are social creatures, and “it is not good for man to be alone.” On one of her first nights out, a storm arises and despite Moana’s pleas to the Ocean to rescue her, it does not seem to respond and instead her boat is flipped and Moana is carried away. Suddenly, the Ocean is not just a happy, loving friendly entity, but terrifying and powerful and disruptive to the way that Moana feels everything should work. Both she and her boat are washed ashore on a seemingly deserted island.

When Moana wakes up, she is furious at the Ocean, whom she trusted to carry her where she needed to go rather than nearly drown her for answering its call. It is only after looking more closely at her situation that she realizes that the storm took her exactly where she needed to be. It is there that she meets Maui, the person who will help her in her journey.

Maui represents every kind of person that a man or woman will meet along their journey towards God. At times he is tricky, cruel or crushing to Moana’s attempts to follow her call, and at times he is her rescuer, helper and friend. In the beginning, it may seem as if Maui represents the Devil for stealing Te Fiti’s heart, but in reality it is not the Devil directly but rather fallen humanity that steal each other’s hearts for the worse. When Maui makes this choice to steal Te Fiti’s heart, he loses his hook—his “power” —and it is taken control of by Tamatoa, who is the film’s representation of the Devil. Now, with his power in the literal claws of the evil one, Maui is selfish and alone.

But Moana, despite her fear and uncertainty, is determined in her call and offers to help Maui take his power back from Tamatoa if he will then help her right his wrong and restore Te Fiti's heart. Maui shows a glimmer of the beginnings of redemption by agreeing. Several times he tries throwing Moana off of the boat, but the Ocean steps in and always carries her back. This is the first example of the Ocean aiding Moana only in situations where it would be impossible for her to do it herself.

Maui shows Moana the way to the realm of monsters where Tamatoa lives. On their way, Maui begins to shake the heroine's resolve with the following exchange:

"I'm just trying to understand why your people sent...you."

"My people didn't send me, the Ocean did."

"The Ocean? Makes sense. You're what, eight? Can't sail? Obvious choice."

"It chose me for a reason."

"If the Ocean is so smart, why didn't it just take the heart back to Te Fiti itself? Or bring me my hook?...but I'm sure it's not wrong about you..."

If any of that sounds familiar, it's because it is the doubts that every Catholic has throughout their life: why me? Can I do it? If God is all powerful, why can't He just fix everything?

Moana's doubts are never directly answered, but she continues anyway with faith, and they descend into the realm of monsters.

Here, we see Tamatoa has amassed the treasures of thousands of creatures to make himself brighter and more glorious. Tamatoa is the representation of the Devil: falsely adorned with gold that is not his but

that attracts other creatures so that he can either eat them or add them to his fake light. He sings a song for Moana about temptation called “Shiny,” which includes the following verse and refrain:

“Did your Granny say “listen to your heart / be who you are on the inside? / I need three words to tear her argument apart / Your Granny lied! / I’d rather be shiny / like a treasure from a sunken pirate wreck / ...just a sec / don’t you know / fish are dumb, dumb, dumb / They chase anything that glitters / and here they come, come, come / to the brightest thing that glitters / Mm, fish dinners!”

In metaphorical translation: “Did your saintly wisdom tell you to follow God? Well, that’s a lie, it’s better to be beautiful and shiny like me, even if it’s stolen brightness. People are so stupid, they’ll go after anything that’s glitzy and glamorous. And then I’ll eat them.”

Eventually, Moana and Maui escape having regained Maui’s power hook. They go through some adventures, ups and downs, and Moana learns that Maui has known a difficult life without the aid of the Ocean and this has embittered him. It also explains his entrance song of “You’re Welcome” where he craves the praise of humans and what the world can give him; and not only that, but he feels entitled to it. This is a typical fallen human outlook, and it is no wonder that it is Maui who poisoned Te Fiti.

The duo reaches Te Fiti, but before they can get to the island they must pass the dreaded lava monster Te Ka. Unfortunately, they fail and Moana is turned around. Maui’s power is shaken and he abandons Moana in the middle of the ocean.

Here, Moana finds herself in the midst of desolation. Her journey is seemingly impossible and she is alone. The Ocean

approaches her and she gives it back the heart of Te Fiti. The Ocean doesn't tell her she is wrong to give it back, or that she has to complete the journey. It merely accepts her decision and allows her to give up.

After this, Moana's grandmother appears to her. What follows is the most inspirational part of the movie: the difficult but worthwhile climb from the confusion and desolation that every soul experiences at least once in their life. Moana's grandmother sings words of gentle encouragement, including: "Sometimes the world seems against you / the journey may leave a scar / but scars can heal and reveal / just where you are / The people you love will change you / The things you have learned will guide you / And nothing on earth can silence / That quiet voice still inside you / And when that voice starts to whisper / 'Moana, you've come so far' / Moana, listen / Do you know who you are?"

These are words every Catholic should reflect on in dark moments: they are the bare bones of life's road map. Reflection on the past, drawing strength from the people around us, learning and applying what we have learned, and self-knowledge, and most importantly, the fact that nothing on earth can fully silence God's voice within us.

Moana takes her grandmother's words to heart and meditates on her call (the sea...it calls me), on the division that she has felt (I am a girl who loves my island/and a girl who loves the sea/It calls me), on her ancestors/saints who found their way across the Ocean before her (We are descended from voyagers / Who found their way across the world / And they call me), and how no matter where she is or what she does she still hears that call (I delivered us to where we are...I am everything I've learned and more / Still it calls me).

She then bursts forth with the simple but beautiful revelation of where our vocation resides and of the seasons of our lives: “And the call isn’t out there at all / It’s inside me / It’s like the tide / Always falling and rising.” She turns to her grandmother, a spiritual guide in her life, and sings “I will carry you here in my heart / You remind me / That come what may / I know the way / I am Moana.” She has been called—by name—to be who she is, and she knows the way no matter how difficult that way may be.

Moana then goes and retrieves the heart. She decides to try and fight Te Ka all alone, and Maui returns and helps her. This time, armed with her faith and confidence in herself, Moana is able to pass Te Ka and the Ocean helps (once again, only stepping in in moments where Moana is humanly incapable). But when she passes Te Ka, Moana realizes that Te Fiti has disappeared. Without her heart, she has been fully consumed by the darkness, and became Te Ka.

In this moment, Moana’s realization of the fulfillment of her call fully comes over her. She is filled not with fear, but with a deep sorrow and compassion. With confidence in her job (as a Catholic), she approaches the violent and terrifying Te Ka in one of the most exquisitely animated scenes in recent history. Holding out the heart, she sings:

“I have crossed the horizon to find you / I know your name /
And they have stolen the heart from inside you / But this does not
define you / This is not who you are / You know who you are.”

These are the words of God towards every sinner, and it is the universal mission of each of His people to extend them to His children who have fallen away. And with this, Moana returns Te Fiti’s heart to

Te Ka, replacing the stone heart. The rocks crumble and life explodes once more on the lava, returning it to its island form. Forgiveness is exchanged, flowers bloom and there is much rejoicing from every character.

Moana then returns home, where her relationship with the Ocean has reconciled her ability to be both a chief and a voyager. Not only this, but she guides her people through the Ocean as well, as she spreads that faith and knowledge to them as a community.

In conclusion, *Moana* is the story of every soul as it struggles to follow God's call in its own unique way. The themes of hearts, identity and journeying are universally applicable to everyone, but just below the surface is an even more universal theme: the call of God and how our vocation plays into that. *Moana* is, truly, the story of our souls and how God uses us to bring others back to him while fulfilling His plans for our own lives.

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Photography

A Flower, a Fish, and a Doll

Pg. 116

Anna Livia Brady

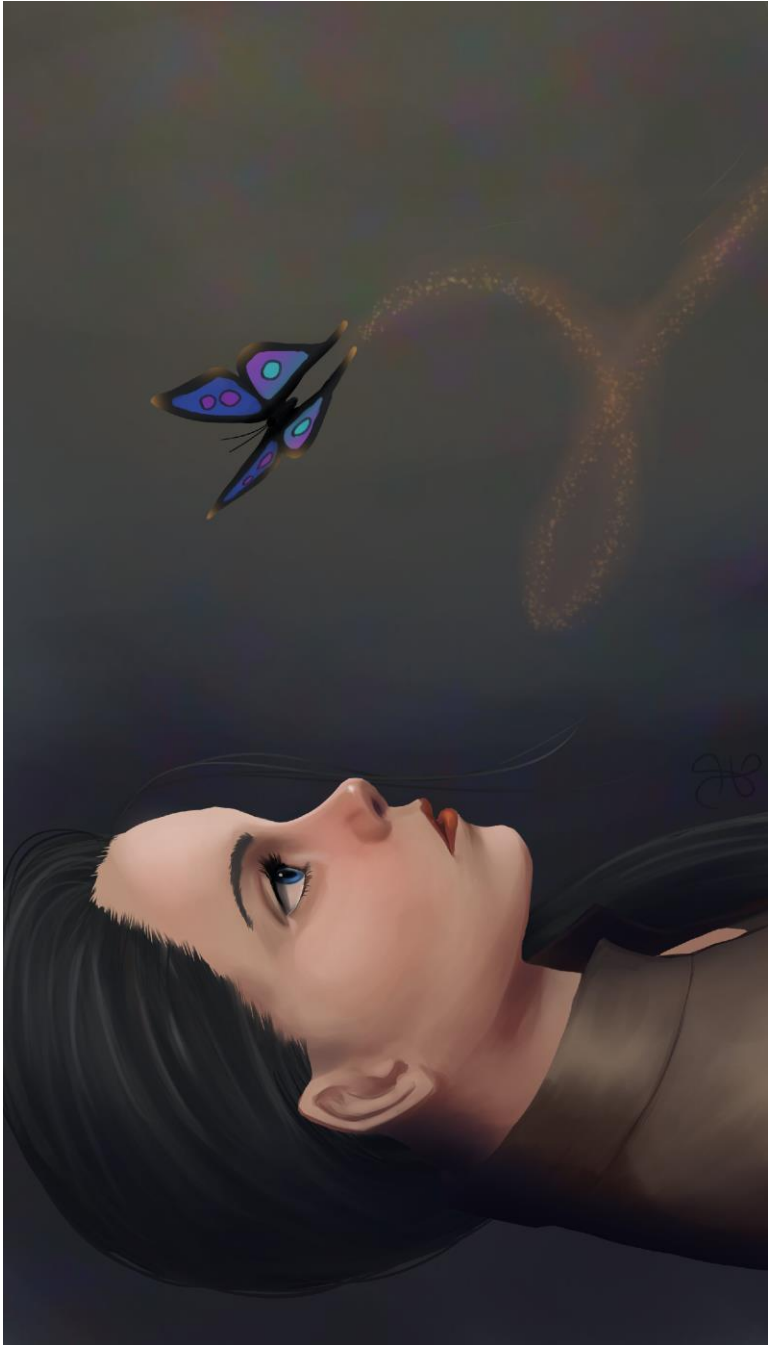
Stacks and Swirls

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Kevin Paul Reeve Stutzke

Following Dreams

James Pio Bilot



Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep

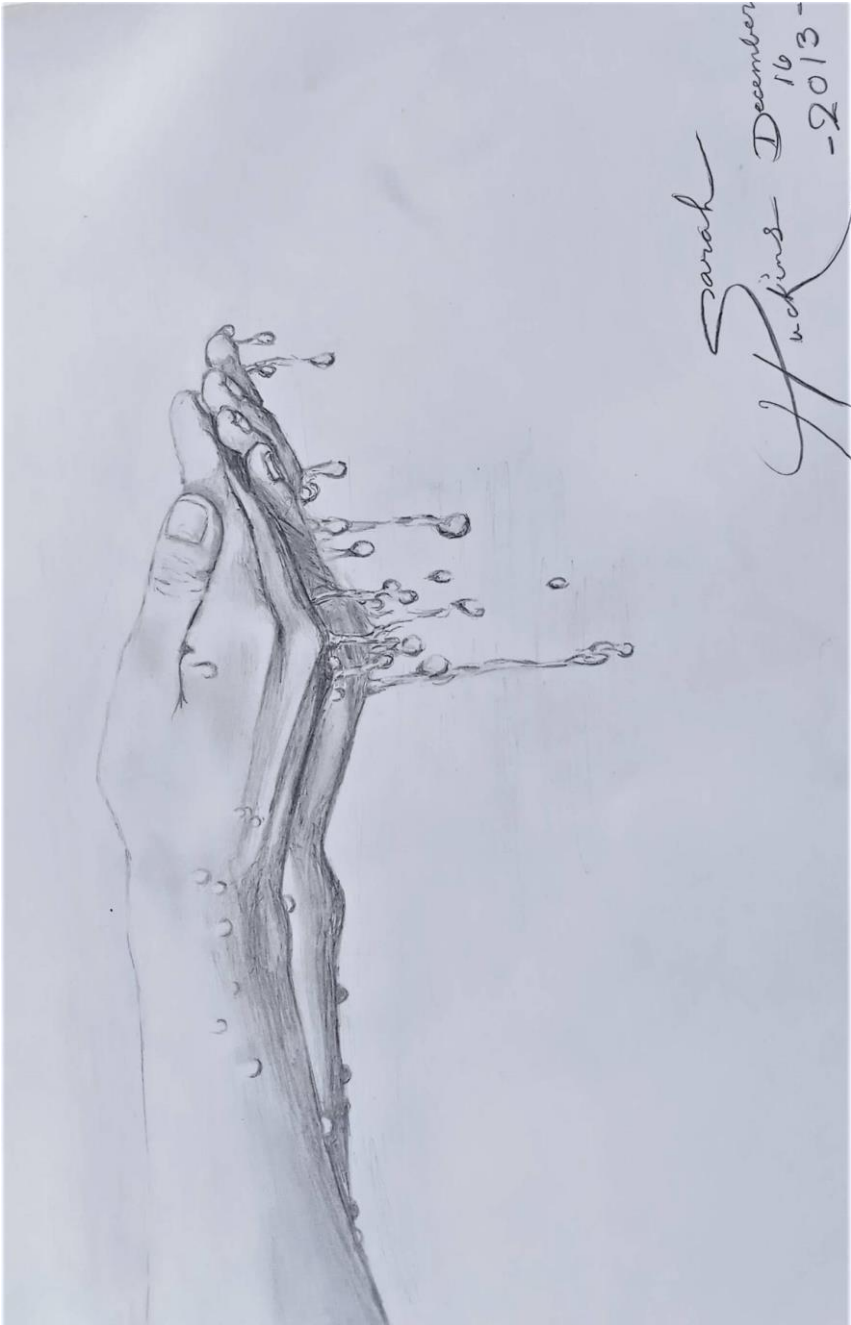
Catalina Rojas



This piece was created as a concept piece for a potential JP Catholic Student Film by the same name.

Don't Let Go

Sarah Marie Huckins



Bumble Bees

Sarah Marie Huckins



Cherry Blossoms for Teri

Catalina Rojas



A Flower, a Fish, and a Doll

Anna Livia Brady



These photos are from a volunteer trip to the municipal art gallery in Escondido.





Stacks and Swirls

Kevin Paul Reeve Stutzke



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About the Artists

Anna Livia Brady

Author of *A Flower, a Fish, and a Doll* and *Fasten your Seatbelt, Ma'am*

Anna Livia is a twenty-year-old college student who strives to portray the truth in the best light possible (hence the pursuit of freelance photography and magazine editing as a profession). She strives to reassure people of their worth as God's children by friendship and acts of kindness but still has a lot to learn. She looks forward to what the future holds!

James Pio Bilot

Author of *Following Dreams*

James Bilot, commonly known as Pio, is a young illustrator striving to make a difference in the world through visual art. His focus has been digital art, and he is pursuing a degree in illustration at JPCatholic, but he has many interests including film, creative writing, cinematography, post-production, and others. Family life was busy as he was raised on a small farm in Illinois with 9 other siblings. This encourages him to push harder to make an impact with his artwork in a big, wide world.

Karen Case

Author of *July 20, 2018, Forgetting, and Goodbyes*

Karen Case is currently a junior and is studying to get her degree with an emphasis in acting. She lives in Oregon, but the dry side that no one ever acknowledges, so don't ask about Portland, she doesn't know anything about it. Her patron saint is Joan of Arc, and everyone who knows her says that it suits her, so that says a lot about her personality.

Anthony Cooper

Author of *An Old Man's Musings*

Anthony is a self-taught musician, poet, and story teller. Anthony studies communications media with an emphasis in animation and directing. Anthony likes to write in the style of Ernest Hemingway and Edgar Allen Poe.

Joshua David

Author of *I'm Probably Going to be Alone Forever* and *Passing By*

Joshua David is a senior at John Paul the Great Catholic University currently studying screenwriting. In his free time, he enjoys writing stories, composing music, being sad, and writing stories and composing music about being sad.

Teresa Doherty

Author of *Lonely* and *Entrance*

Teresa Doherty is a native of New Mexico, studying Philosophy and Theology. She enjoys writing, spending time with all animals—especially horses, and the great outdoors. Teresa hopes to pursue a Master's degree after graduating from JPCatholic.

Nancy Gossin

Author of *The Journal Entries of Sergeant John Ordway*

Nancy is a Theology/Philosophy major and a minor in business who will be graduating this September and moving back to her home state of Virginia. She hopes to teach at the Catholic high school she attended, St. John Paul the Great Catholic. As a kid she traveled across the country with her family and closely followed the Lewis and Clark expedition. This piece was inspired by that family trip.

Sarah Marie Huckins

Author of *Bumble Bees* and *Don't Let Go*

Sarah grew up in Northern California, in a little town nestled up close to the Sierra Nevada Foothills. She is the third of seven children and has a soft spot for family, home and the mountains. She has spent the past 5 of her 23 years discerning the Religious Life and is currently discerning with the Carmelites of San Diego. She likes coffee, cold showers and getting up with the sun.

Shayla Millman

Author of *The Art of Mumford & Sons' Babel* and *The Role of Women in Civilized & Family Life*

Shayla Millman is from northern Colorado and is currently a junior and post-production major at John Paul the Great University. She works as the university's writing tutor and has a burning passion for the Oxford comma. She enjoys editing, writing, and spreading joy through comedy. She hopes to do at least one of those things professionally after she graduates in 2020.

Elizabeth Miriam Negri

Author of *Moana: Story of a Soul*

Ella is from a small Michigan town, and ever since she was small, she knew that she wanted to make movies, write stories and create art. She took two gap years between high school and college to make enough money to move to California, and between her three jobs she would watch anywhere from three to six movies a week and write countless stories in her room. She loves looking for deeper, hidden meaning in film and stories, reading books that were recommended to her, praying with friends and eating junk food after a day of working hard.

Joshua Peck

Author of *A Day in the Life of Rue Zeitgeist*

Joshua Peck is a junior studying Humanities in the hopes of becoming an author and teacher. He has already published one short

story through a national contest and is currently working on two short novels which he hopes to finish within the year. He is an outdoorsman and a regular hiker in addition to his writing career. He writes mostly fantasy and realistic fiction and enjoys weaving complex themes from philosophy and theology into his stories.

Timothy Rodriguez

Author of *A Theology of Sacrifice*

Timothy Rodriguez is a current Humanities student attending John Paul the Great Catholic University. His passions include Campus Ministry, Ministry, and Bible Study. He plans to pursue further studies in Theology in the fields of Biblical and Systematic Theology. His other theological interest includes Liturgical, Sacramental and, Church History. His patron saints are Pope Saint Pius X; Pope Saint Paul VI and Oscar Romero.

Catalina Rojas

Author of *Cherry Blossoms for Teri* and *Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep*

Catalina Rojas, an animation major at JPCU, loves illustrating and painting. She also practices art through other mediums including special effects makeup, costuming, and playing music. A die hard Disney and coffee fanatic, Catalina would like to continue pursuing her art in her future career.

Kevin Paul Reeve Stutzke

Author of *The Pop*, *A Part of a Whole*, and *Stacks and Swirls*

Kevin Stutzke is an artist. He doesn't believe in limiting himself to one form of expression. If he has a story to tell, he will seek out whatever medium can best convey its message. Some mediums that he has fallen in love with and will return to are poetry, film, theater, and sculpting.

Cassidy Van Vooren

Author of *A Part of Us*, *Better*, and *Buy Me Roses*

Cassidy Van Vooren hails from Long Beach California, where she grew up hoping she would one day become a Jedi. She is a student at John Paul the Great Catholic University, and hopes to work in church ministry after she graduates. When she has free time she loves to write songs, and read anything she can get her hands on. Cassidy also likes to pretend she can write poetry.

Taylor Williams

Author of *On Solving the Various Forms of Poverty* and *The Theology of Brown and Benedict XVI*

Taylor is a senior at John Paul the Great Catholic University and receiving his Bachelor's Degree in the Humanities if he manages to graduate. His relationship with coffee is complicated and lately he has been enjoying The Book of Sirach.

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"Now consider," I said, "what their release and healing from bonds and folly would be like if something of this sort were by nature to happen to them. Take a man who is released and suddenly compelled to stand up, to turn his neck around, to walk and look up toward the light; and who, moreover, in doing all this is in pain and, because he is dazzled, is unable to make out those things whose shadows he saw before. What do you suppose he'd say if someone were to tell him that before he saw silly nothings, while now, because he is somewhat nearer to what is and more turned toward beings, he sees more correctly; and, in particular, showing him each of the things that pass by, were to compel the man to answer his questions about what they are? Don't you suppose he'd be at a loss and believe that what was seen before is truer than what is now shown?"

—Plato

From *The Republic of Plato*,

Translated by Allen Bloom,
(Basic Books, 1991), 193.

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