

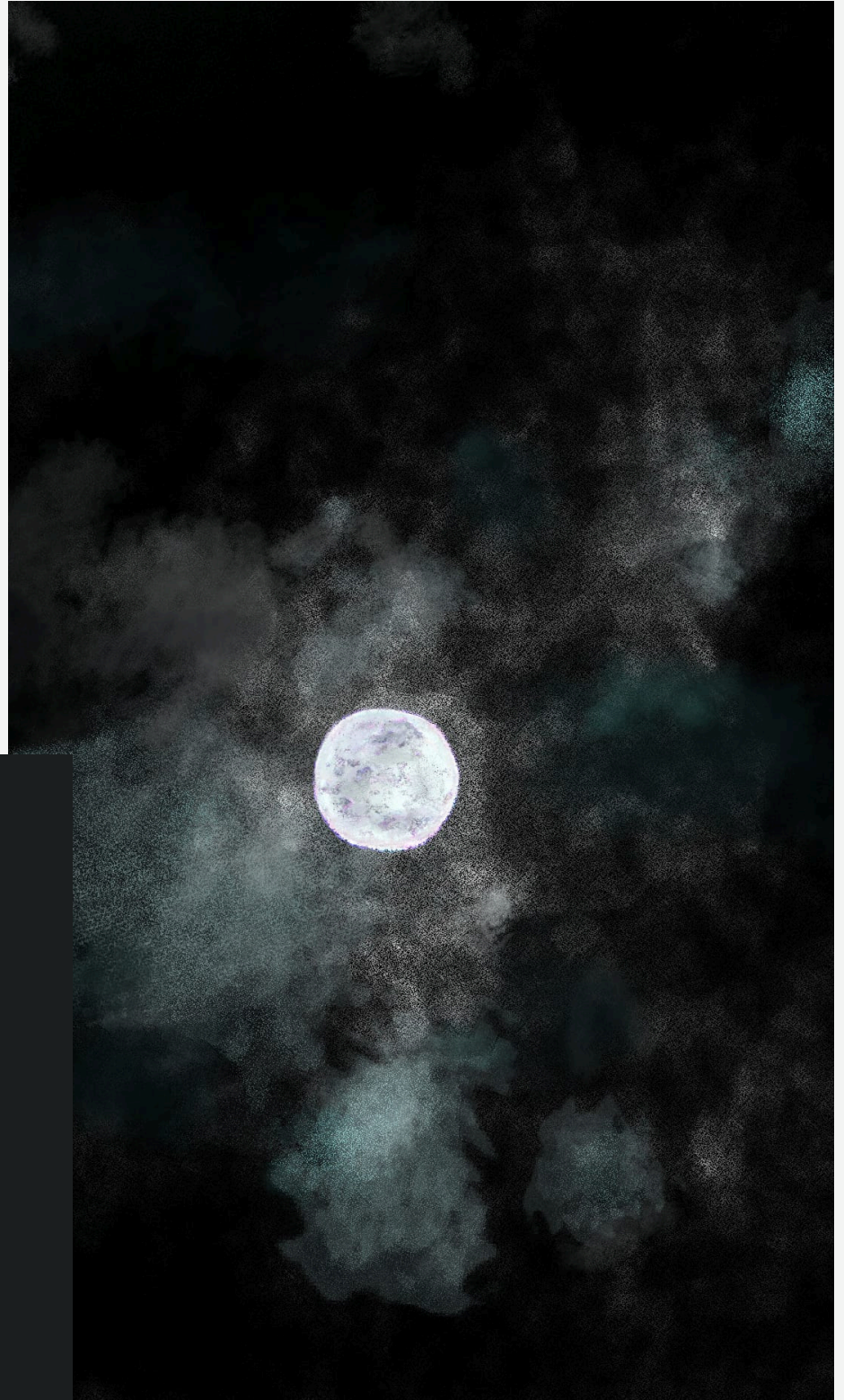
Virtue

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Publications

Western 

Essay, Poem, and
Fictional Exploration of
Virtue as Told by
Western Scholars



Scholar's Publications

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A Foreword From the Editor

When the publication team sat down last fall, discussing what theme to explore through this body of work, there were a number of ideas thrown out. To our team, and the young demographic of students we aim to give voice to, there is no one singular, specific motivation to our lives; however, there is a more summative one. Virtue, and all the traits it encapsulates, is that motivation. No two people, at least, to the extent demonstrated by this publication's contributors, prioritise the same traits in this space, but the poetry, fiction, and essays presented here evidence that virtue, through varied meanings, is a central value. It is incredibly hard to define these meanings, or to capture the meaning of its inner beauty to each person, in a single sentence. I will not define the term of virtue here—I hope the subsequent pages accomplish this for me.

Madeleine Szjallik
Editor-in-Chief

Morality

Nicole Castano Yepes



CRITICIZING DEVELOPMENTS *in Military Policies*

In 2011, the US ceased its “don’t ask don’t tell” policy, allowing LGBTQI individuals to serve in the armed forces. Subsequently in 2013, women were permitted to serve in front-line combat and other underrepresented groups were being given unique opportunities, favouring their inclusion in the military. Although it is believed that these developments are positive and progressive, many feminists are critical of why these changes occurred when they did, and how these underrepresented groups continue to be vulnerable to inequitable climates. This essay will analyze how these novel policies have not been set in place for the sake of equity, but rather to generate a facade of progressiveness, to meet the needs of present times, and to justify state-sponsored terrorism.

Feminists question whether the developments in the army allowing LGBTQI, women, and other minorities to serve in the military are meant to truly democratize or fabricate an illusion of egalitarianism. Allowing the inclusion of underrepresented groups in military forces and peacekeeping should simply stem from the need to promote equity and provide opportunities that encourage social mobility for all people despite their identity. It should be more strongly emphasized that the inclusion of women in peacekeeping is justified by the fact that they should be given this opportunity for the sake of equity, not solely to improve the conditions for women, children, and other vulnerable individuals who are affected by conflict. Additionally, it is ironic that the countries involved in promoting diversity in peacekeeping missions face their own gendered issues. Though Canada is highly enthusiastic about peacekeeping missions, it still fails to address its own sexual harassment epidemic within its armed forces. When women at home cannot feel safe, is there any progressive egalitarianism occurring? It is essential to consider these factors before identifying these developments as a gendered success or a public relations victory.

Feminists are critical of the temporal and situational conditions upon which policy developments concerning the inclusion of minorities in military forces have taken place. The US has been in active combat for the past 20 years, and without conscription, recruitment has been challenging. Coincidentally, the “don’t ask don’t tell” policy ended in 2011, and women were permitted in front-line combat in 2013, both times when recruitment was essential for the US to meet military national goals. It is challenging to discern whether the inclusion of minority groups in the military was motivated for the sole purpose of equity or the desperate need for recruitment. Would the same progressions have occurred if conscription was enforced or if no active combat was occurring? Universities with high populations with people of colour, Latinos, and first-generation immigrants tend to have military stations on campus to encourage their recruitment rather than other populations. These minority groups are more likely to join the army as they desire higher levels of social mobility obtained through free education and healthcare. Though providing these opportunities for visible minorities appears to be a positive change, one must be critical of why these individuals are being targeted and given higher volumes of opportunities in this specific period. Is it truly for the sake of equity, another tactic to appear progressive, or because these minority groups are the only feasible candidates?

Women, LGBTQI, and minorities, have been used and exploited by being scapegoats and to justify state-sponsored torture and terrorism. In the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, junior women were held accountable for torturing Iraqi prisoners. Although the actions of these women were not moral or just, they took part in these actions as a result of orders from senior levels of power, primarily men, who were not penalized for their involvement. The junior women were the face of the highly publicized trial, which brought close to no attention to the contributions of those in higher levels of power. Moreover, torture and violent acts carried out by women and minorities are more validated than those carried out by white men. The image of a black woman killing another black person is more easily justified than that of a white man harming a black woman. The growing participation of minority groups in the armed forces can be manipulated for the benefit of those at higher levels of power rather than the former.

Although this essay demonstrates how the growing participation of women and sexual minorities in the armed forces and militarized peacekeeping missions can be viewed through a criticizing lens, this is not suggesting that these developments should have never occurred. These are milestones to celebrate for women, LGBTQI people, and underrepresented groups. However, it is vital that the issues presented by these waves of change be addressed. There must be a shift in the way these policies are formed, so that they are developed and originate through the pure desire to motivate equity, diversity, and progression.

Sanaz Lordfard



THE *Party*

Steven Luo - Art By Nicole Castano Yepes and Sanaz Lordfard

“He’s so charming!” Martha gushed.

Her piercing voice could be heard over the tinkling of glasses and the murmur of distant conversations. Tonight, the Great Hall was hosting the annual reception of the Foundation for Environmental Preservation. The acclaimed novelist and chairman of the Foundation, Henry Grant, would be delivering the opening remarks.

The ladies of the local Rotary were seated near the stage, where they would have the best view of the much-anticipated Grant.

“You know, when John and I were returning home from the opera last week, our Bentley popped a tire, and I was wearing my nicest mink, you know, the one I bought in Paris, and it was raining dreadfully outside. But Henry, who was in a taxi behind us, made his driver stop, and insisted we take his car. He’s a true gentleman,” sighed Anne.

“And how devoted he is to the cause!” remarked Hannah. Hannah and her husband owned one of the largest petrol suppliers in the country.

Waiters in black ties and vests slipped elegantly from table to table, bearing champagne and assorted appetizers. A chandelier twinkled high above the assembled elite, and a handsome pianist played softly in a corner.

As the slim, well-dressed figure of Henry Grant took to the stage, the crowd burst into applause. Smiling, he waved modestly. As the noise subsided, he stepped up to the podium and cleared his throat.

“Thank you all for your presence here tonight,” he began. “I and the other council members are, as always, grateful for the chance to recognize your patronage.” He motioned to a group seated near the stage, not far from the honourable ladies of the Rotary.

“The Foundation has had another record year. With your donations and inexhaustible support, we have contributed to conservation efforts at home and overseas, and successfully lobbied for the cancellation of the government’s foolhardy highway plan, which would have cut up vulnerable forests. Credit for that is due in large part to the work of Dr. Frank Plum.

“I would also like to thank the Greenbaum and Shaw families for their exceedingly generous donations to our metropolitan office. We have since expanded our headquarters to ten floors of dedicated conservationists. The council and I have decided to rename the lobby in honour of their advocacy.”

“Did you hear about Helen Greenbaum and that banker?” Martha whispered to Anne, over the applause.

“Once again, thank you all for your support. I hope you have a wonderful evening.”

Grant descended the stage to general applause. The pianist struck up his tune, this time accompanied by an accordionist and bassist, and waiters reappeared. Carefully coiffed men and glamorous ladies took to the dance floor or stood up to converse with acquaintances. As always, a group collected around Henry Grant.

“Do tell us about your vacation in South America,” Julie Perry implored Henry.

“Well, it wasn’t so much a vacation as a research expedition,” said Henry. “South America is lovely. Such a beautiful culture, such beautiful people.” His listeners nodded emphatically. “Of course, not quite as beautiful as Miss Perry here,” he added, with a waggish grin. Julie fetchingly blushed.

A wide-eyed youth earnestly asked, “Mr. Grant, sir, is it true you always skipped your classes? I overheard the schoolmaster telling Mr. Edwards you did.”

A large, ruddy man pounded Henry on the back. “You should have known this devil when he was your age! I never met a cleverer man than our Grant. He didn’t need to go to class.”

“I do believe that, Jack, but I wouldn’t call the company you frequent at the racecourses intellectual, exactly,” Henry quipped.

As the group laughed good-humouredly, a solemn, bald man in slacks and a brown sweater joined them “Henry, I’ll be leaving now.”

Henry frowned. “Why, Frank, is it not your golden hour? Was it not you who convinced the premier to tear up that highway bill in front of his ministers, including that pig Swanson?”

“I have some work to do, and April is expecting me for dinner.”

“If you insist,” Henry said, feigning disapproval.

As Frank slouched away, the group huddled closer together.

“Such an odd fish, that Frank Plum!” one woman murmured.

“Can hardly fault him, though, do you remember his father?” An older gentleman said confidentially. “I swear to you, at his wedding, he looked like he was getting demoted.”

“Yes, well, not everybody has been blessed by your good looks, Carson, eh? And by the way, what of that bankruptcy deal you’re handling with Cooper?”

On his way through the throng, Frank Plum noticed an elderly woman sitting alone at a table. Hesitating for a moment, his coat half around his shoulders, he approached her. “May I sit here?”

The stately old woman looked up at him and smiled warmly. “Of course.”

Frank took a seat and folded his hands awkwardly. “Enjoying your evening?”

“Oh, yes, but I would much prefer to be at home. My daughter insists on bringing me to these silly functions. She thinks me lonely at home by myself. My husband passed away last summer.”

“I’m sorry to hear that.”

“It’s well alright. My husband could never stomach these parties. A pleasant night for us meant a visit to the children, or a quiet nightcap, just the two of us.”

“Most definitely. I’m on my way to see my wife. She’s expecting, though, so there’ll be no drinks.”

“Well! Congratulations. I’m sure you’ll make a great father; you seem like a very caring young man.”

“Thank you. I hope so as well.”

As his empty taxi peeled impatiently away from the rain-slicked curb outside the Hall, the party continued on.





1 – A COMPASSIONATE WORLD

2 – ECHOES OF COURAGE

3 – THE FOOTPRINTS OF A
COMPASSIONATE SOUL

4 – HISTORIC BRAVERY

POETICAL

Virtue

Sam Dabir

Art and Photography by Nicole Castano Yepes

In the soft soil of a world so vast,
Where shadows linger and moments pass,
There treads a soul, compassionate and kind,
Leaving footprints of love, a legacy defined.
In the quiet dawn of a brand-new day,
The compassionate soul begins its ballet,
Each step a dance of empathy,
A choreography of sweet humility.

Footprints etched in deeds so small,
Yet their impact resonates, touching all,
Like ripples on a tranquil pond,
Kindness spreads, a magic beyond.

With a gentle touch and a listening ear,
The compassionate soul banishes fear,
A simple smile, a warm embrace,
Transforming hearts, creating grace.

Through crowded streets and open fields,
The footprints wander, compassion yields,
A homeless shelter, a helping hand,
Building bridges in a divided land.

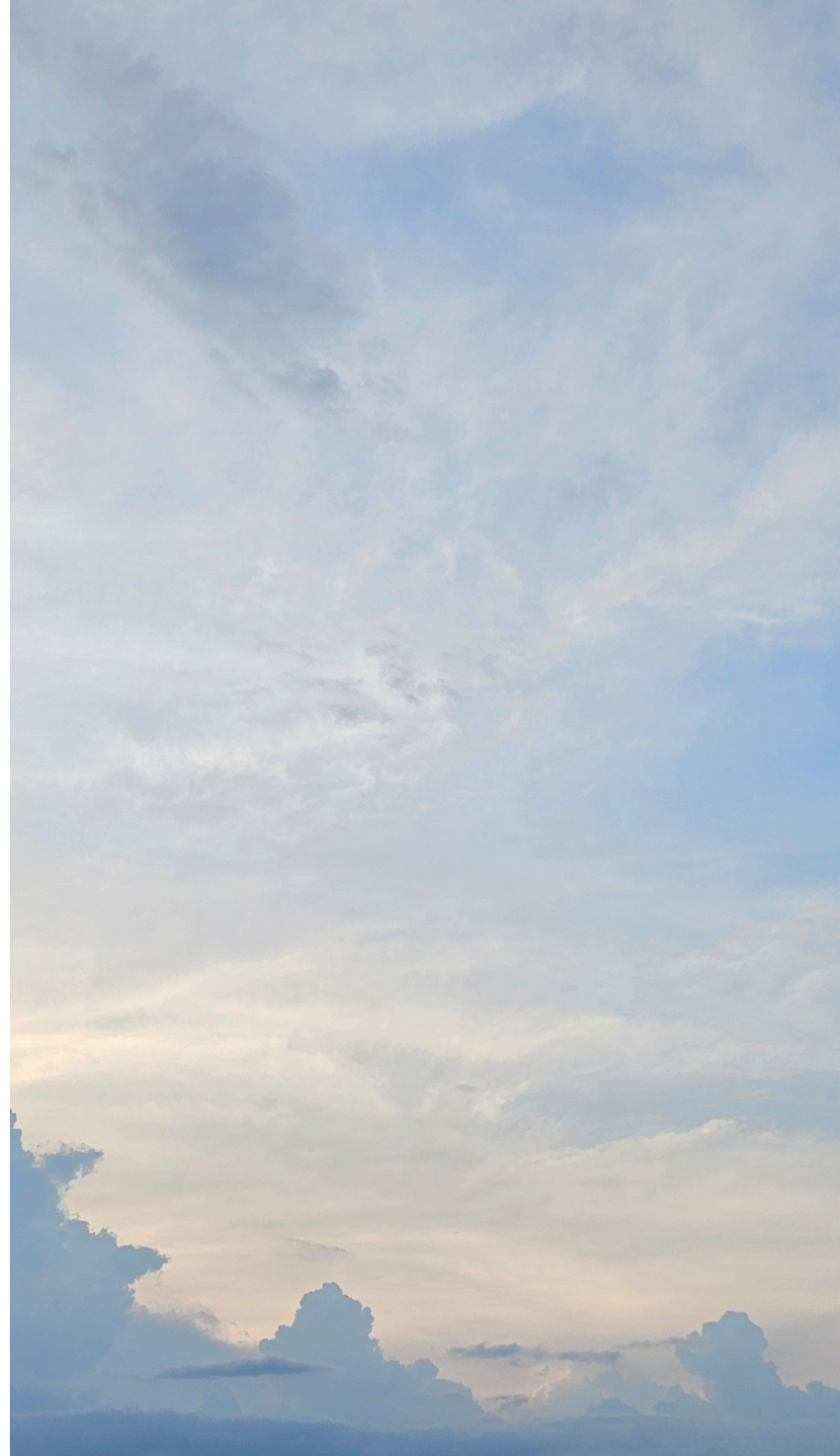
In hospital rooms where hope grows thin,
The compassionate soul steps softly in,
A word of comfort, a healing light,
Igniting hope in the darkest night.

In schools where young minds take flight,
Footprints lead, ignite insight,
A mentor's guidance, a teacher's care,
Nurturing seeds of wisdom rare.

Oh, the impact of these steps so fleet,
A symphony of kindness, sweet and neat,
A tapestry woven of threads so fine,
Connecting hearts, a grand design.

For in each footprint, a story unfolds,
Of compassion's power, of warmth it holds,
In the mosaic of life, each act, each part,
A compassionate soul leaves its mark.

So let us follow, in these steps divine,
Embrace the world with a love that shines,
For in the footprints of a compassionate soul,
Lies the essence of humanity's ultimate goal.



1 – A COMPASSIONATE WORLD



2 – ECHOES OF COURAGE

In the tapestry of ages, woven with valor's thread,
Echoes of courage, through time, widespread.
Heroes emerge, their stories untold,
Legends of bravery, in history's hold.
Behold the Spartans, a formidable might,
At Thermopylae, they stood in the fight.
Leonidas, a king with a lion's heart,
Defying the Persians, a courageous art.

Through the annals of time, Joan of Arc stands tall,
Maid of Orleans, answering destiny's call.
Amidst the flames, her spirit unfazed,
A warrior maiden, courage ablaze.

In the ink of independence, quills signed with might,
Founding fathers, in
Washington's valor, a nation reborn,
Freedom's echo, through history sworn.

Amelia Earhart, the sky's daring daughter,
In open skies, chasing dreams of water.
Breaking limits, through clouds she'd soar,
Courageous wings, forever more.

Rosa Parks—on a bus, she sat,
Quiet defiance, breaking the unjust pact.
Civil rights echoed, in a single seat,
Courageous steps, on justice's street.

Nelson Mandela, in prison's hold,
Apartheid's shackles, but a spirit bold.
Forgiveness echoed, a nation's grace,
Courage in chains, a lasting embrace.

Through trenches of war, where the poppies bloom,
Soldiers march on, in courage consumed.
Their sacrifice echoes in each solemn chime,
A symphony of bravery through the ravages of time.

In the heart of the struggle, in the face of despair,
Echoes of courage, resilient and rare.
Through history's chapters, the brave shall endure,
Their legacy echoes, forever pure.

So, as we tread through the pages of the past,
May the echoes of courage forever last.
In the tapestry of time, where virtues entwine,
Let the echo of bravery be a guiding sign.

They walk among us, unseen and unheard,
The compassionate souls who spread love
and hope,
They do not seek fame nor fortune nor
reward,
They simply act from their hearts, and
cope. – is there a different word that can
be used than cope? Bit of an awkward
sentence

They leave behind footprints of kindness
and grace,
Touching the lives of strangers and
friends,
They make the world a better and brighter
place,
Inspiring others to follow their trends,

They do not judge or hate or blame,
They accept and forgive and heal.
They do not play the power or fame game,
They serve and share and feel.

They are the heroes of our time,
The compassionate souls who shine.
They are the reason for this rhyme,
The footprints that we should, with our
own, align.

3 – FOOTPRINTS OF A COMPASSIONATE SOUL



They faced the odds, they fought the foes
They stood their ground, they did not yield
They spoke the truth, they broke the moulds
They led the way, they shaped the field

They are the echoes of courage through time
The historical figures who exemplified bravery
They are the legends of every climb
The role models who inspired many

They are the likes of Joan of Arc and Gandhi
The champions of faith and peace
They are the likes of Mandela and King
The advocates of justice and equality

They are the likes of Einstein and Curie
The pioneers of science and discovery
They are the likes of Earhart and Gagarin
The explorers of air and space

They are the echoes of courage through time
The historical figures who exemplified bravery
They are the sources of wisdom and rhyme
The echoes that we should embody

4 – HISTORIC BRAVERY



Photo by Sanaz Lordfard 13

THE 'TYPE 2' VIRTUES *of University*

Madeleine Zajdlik



It's cliché, but the learning one experiences at university is not just restricted to the classroom. Students set foot on campus for the first time fresh out of high school, teenagers, some not even yet 18 years of age, and leave as adults—albeit, young ones.

Going to overnight camp in Kananaskis as a teen, I learnt about an outdoors-based fun classification system. 'Type 1' fun was experiences immediately fun in the moment, and 'type 2' fun was experiences fun in hindsight. Type 2 experiences were often those more challenging, with aspects difficult to overcome, but came with a reward on the other side that made the prelude struggle 'worth it.'

University is beautiful, in the sense that it grants both types of experiences. Interpersonal connections and successes are easily accessible opportunities for type 1 fun. However, it can be said that the harder experiences, challenges both in and outside of the classroom, are those that will be looked more fondly upon in later years.

At its core, university is a balancing act, and what makes this act truly challenging is that it is one navigated alone. Although students have varying degrees of support from family, friends, and other mentors, the novel context of university and the bubble of campus requires students to navigate how to access and rely upon these supports anew. Still, there is inherent value in learning how to navigate this balancing act alone.

Students, in this removed space, have the opportunity to build significant integrity, determining what principles are important to themselves as they build relationships and a professional career. Autonomy is a trait developed in tandem with this. Self-discipline, or the development of it, is something students must develop in these years in order to limit their time and efforts in these areas important to them. To do so is crucial in understanding what one must look to take out of these post-secondary years in order to best triumph in those succeeding them.

Ultimately, adaptability is a critical virtue students must develop in these years. Despite what efforts one makes to understand and pre-empt the challenges each new semester will bring, novel struggles will arise, and virtues like critical thinking and initiative are crucial in identifying the best course forward in a complicated academic journey.

We often discuss virtues as traits that endow us to other people, traits that allow and motivate us to better serve the people and causes around us. Classically, this means restricting the concept of virtue to traits like kindness and selflessness. Although these are undoubtedly essential to our development as students in this space, as well as to our development as global citizens, we must focus on the development of these more self-centred virtues in the years we have in this space. It is like the old adage: one must focus on themselves before truly being able to focus on others. Self-efficacious individuals will be capable of creating time and space for themselves to develop in these interpersonal virtues.

But how do any one of us find the time to focus on personal development under a constant load of exams, papers and assignments?

To do so requires a step back, and a more critical lens of thinking. As discussed, it is within these academic challenges that can provide the genesis of this development. With a general drive towards achieving one's own definition of success, as well as the ability to critically reflect on the causes of failure along this journey, our virtual development will come.

Oftentimes, this development will even come without any conscious effort. Reflect on who you were at the start of your university journey. Have these past months, however many, not forced you to develop in ways mentioned to some degree?

Personally, reflecting on this development brings me happiness. Many challenges I have been through here were not 'fun' in the moment, but current reflection and my gratitude towards what I learnt puts them most certainly in the category of 'type 2.' I hope a similar reflection grants you, the reader, a more positive outlook on the challenges this academic journey brings, and lens to better better take advantage of these tribulations in the future.



Knowledge **IS POWER**

Sanaz Lordfard

The rapid surge in technology usage over the last three years, driven by online school periods during the pandemic and recent developments in AI compels us to pause and reflect on how this has impacted the academic realm. The mouth-opening applications of Chat GPT are a testament to the high degree of human intellect and ability that has led to these developments. Yet, does this tool potentially undermine our intellect instead? Does this mark the beginning of an endless road of intellectual regression or, more accurately, the destruction of Homo sapiens in general—given that our biological classification depends on our distinctly large frontal cerebral cortex, which gives us the ability to reason more than other animals.

It is likely that you, like me, are a university student. We often overlook the fact that we are learning at a top institution. As we learn, we are granted the power that knowledge bestows, and what we, as students, take home from our degree shapes the fate of society. Does that not make you feel a sense of responsibility, a desire to be most conscientious in learning from some of the best academics in our nation? Yet, in the last few years, we can observe how this sense of responsibility has perished from our conscience.

Consider, for instance, the increased rates of academic dishonesty in recent times. Canadian universities report a rise in academic misconduct cases in recent years, a trend exacerbated by the pandemic (cite). This should not come as a surprise to you; I am sure that you know somebody (perhaps yourself) who has cheated on a non-proctored online exam, shared answers about a take-home assignment, or faked a doctor's note to have more time to study for an exam. As someone who has never written a makeup exam, I was surprised to hear how easy it is to get a doctor's note and escape the stressful realities of an exam. You don't even have to fake a cough at the clinic! This is why I wasn't surprised a couple of weeks ago when I read:

"An unprecedented number of students are requesting to write their final exams in January, a month after they were regularly scheduled, Western University officials say. About 1,500 students are expected to make the request this year, accounting for 15 per cent of all undergraduate students."

But I can't blame this perished responsibility entirely on the individuals themselves. When a major student body representative [one I will not name] creates viral TikToks that suggest they are a proponent of academic dishonesty, it is no wonder that students do not feel that cheating is wrong.

When presented with any moral dilemma, where one must choose right from wrong, part of that decision is supported by foreseeing the consequences of unethical behaviour. To re-establish academic integrity within today's educational atmosphere, one must ask themselves: why not cheat, or rather, what would happen if I did?

We cheat out of desperation, a feeling of insecurity where we don't feel capable of performing independently. Hence, when one follows through with cheating, that feeling of insecurity persists within one's conscience. With each act of cheating comes a continuous lack of knowledge and, therefore, a lack of power. Why power? In aristocratic societies, people in power were among the few who received a proper education. Women fought for the right to receive education so that they could mobilise themselves in society and feel empowered next to their male counterparts. Children in third world countries, where education continues to be a privilege, dream of completing university degrees so that they can become powerful within society.

Yet, instead of embracing the vast learning resources at our disposal, many find themselves disengaged or dismissive of the transformative power that education holds. Why go to university if you don't want to challenge yourself through the process of learning?

So, let us not squander the privilege we have but instead embrace the gift of education. By doing so, we honour the struggles of those who fought for the right to education and continuously empower ourselves to bring forward a better future in the world.



Resilience

Nicole Castano Yepes







PHOTO BY SANAZ
LORDFARD

In Conclusion

I hope the previous pages, and the works contained within, answered questions about the meaning of virtue—at least, to some degree. If this body of work teaches the reader anything, it is that virtue is an incredibly deep concept, and that a single work almost does a poor job of representing its full meaning. More than anything, I hope that this publication demonstrates that virtue is key to how we are motivated to approach the world and the people we find within it. My own conceptualisation of virtue, in part evidenced by my essay on 'type 2' virtue, is varied from that of my co-contributors, and it these variations that are key to explore in understanding one another. These variations are infinite, and I implore the reader to explore their distinctions in a quest to fully understand the idea of virtue itself, and the importance of its utilisation in future years.

Madeline Zayidlik
Editor-in-Chief

Scholar's Publications, 2024

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