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Spring 1990

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Pittsburg State University Philosophical Society

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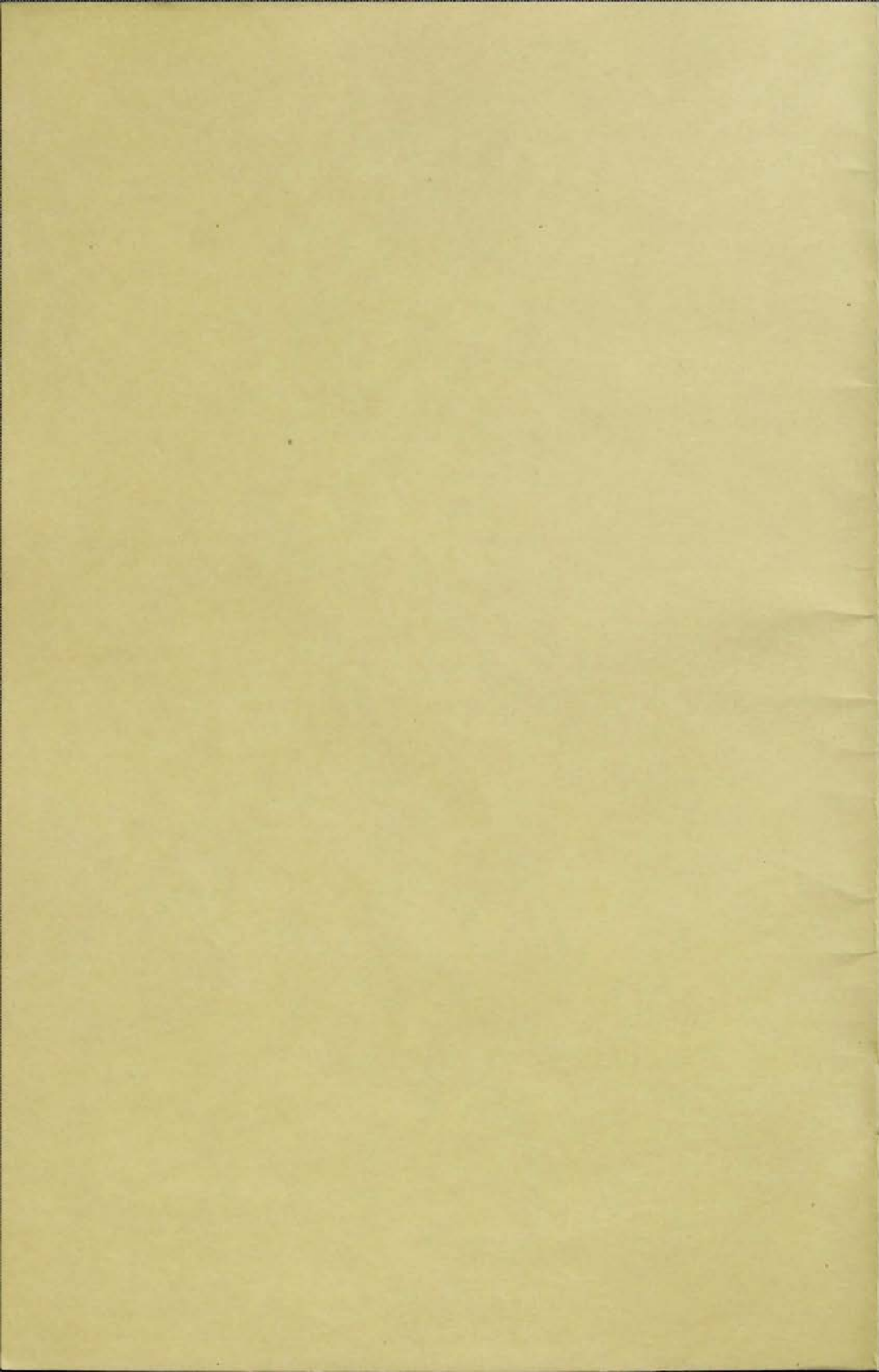
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spring 1990





Logos-Sophia

*The Journal of the
Pittsburg State University
Philosophical Society
Volume II, Spring 1990*

Board of Editors

Christy Bow

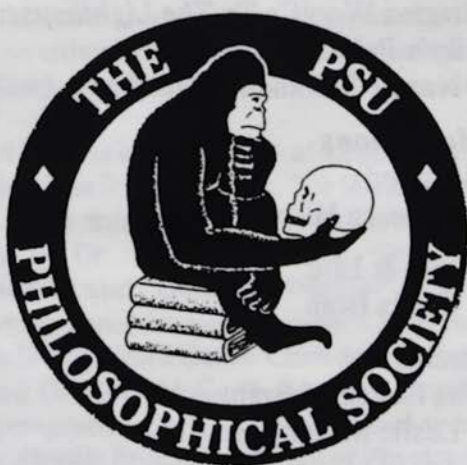
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CONTENTS

Introduction Donald Wayne Viney	3
Articles	
Philosophy: Is It Just Another Name For Atheism? Tametha Homan Gimlin	5
The Forgotten Religion Leslie Miller-Mangile	9
Goddess Religion and the Environment Stephen Carney	15
When Gorillas Do Philosophy: Philosophy at Pittsburg State University, 1912-1990 Donald Wayne Viney	17
Women's Study Papers	
It's a Bird! It's a Plane! It's Lois Lane! Allen Kratochvil	22
Virgina Woolf's <i>To The Lighthouse</i> : Lily's Painting as Plot Nancy Grantham	25
Meditations	
(Untitled) Rebecca Hisey	31
Death & Life Curtis Isom	32
Poems	
The Dance of Braham Leslie Miller-Mangile	34
The Shield Tametha Homan Gimlin	35

Introduction

Donald Wayne Viney

As the treasurer and faculty advisor for the Pittsburg State University Philosophical Society, I am happy to present the second volume of the Society's journal. Once again, the Society solicited works on topics of philosophical interest written in a variety of literary styles. In addition to works by PSUPS members this number contains the essays of the winners of the Women's Studies essay competition. Two essays were chosen, one by an undergraduate student (Allen Kratochvil) and one by a graduate student (Nancy Grantham). PSUPS is proud to feature these papers in *Logos-Sophia*.

PSUPS was involved in and/or sponsored several projects during the 1989 academic year. Following the tradition of years past the Society helped the Southeast Kansas Humane Society distribute straw to help protect pets from the cold. Equally traditional was the Society's Christmas project which involved distributing Christmas cards made by area school children to care homes in the Pittsburg and Frontenac areas. Some members of the society also sang carols at New Horizons of Pittsburg. A particularly delightful experience was afforded by the Society's participation in the KOAM Christmas project. During Homecoming, PSUPS teamed up with the Student Psychological Association and entered a float in the homecoming parade. Masterminded by Curtis Isom, the float was a chariot in which the homecoming queen candidate (Kyra Barbieri) was surrounded on either side by Socrates (Curtis Isom) and Sigmund Freud (Charles Mote). The float won third place in the competition.

PSUPS actively promoted interest in philosophical topics during 1989. This journal is a fine example of the Society's work. The Society also sponsored Philosophy Week, April 3 through 7. Lectures during the week included "Business Ethics" by Dr. Chris Fogliasso, "Feminist Philosophy" by Dr. Kathleen Nichols, and "Quantum Physics" by Dr. Bruce Daniel. The week ended with a panel discussion on the Creation/Evolution controversy, with Ron Skaggs from Ozark Christian College representing Creation Science and Dr. Gary McGrath from PSU representing a theistic evolutionary perspective. Serving on the panel were Don Smith, Campus Minister; Dr. Orville Brill, Department of Physics at PSU; Father Bob McElwee, Newman Center; and David Kyncl, Student Publications. In addition to Philosophy Week PSUPS welcomed Dr.

Barry Brown from Missouri Southern State College on November 29. Dr. Brown gave a public lecture on "The Case for Active Euthanasia" with special reference to the case of Nancy Cruzan. In October, Pittsburg State University hosted the Midwestern Regional Meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers and PSUPS members Theresa Reyes and Leslie Miller-Mangile helped with registration and with busing participants to the airport.

The office of President for PSUPS for 1989 was held by Nishua Bendt, until her graduation. John Alex was then elected to the post. Mr. Alex was the one who, in May 1987, first suggested the founding of a Philosophical Society. Curtis Isom has served throughout the year as Vice President. The office of Secretary was first occupied by Stuart Kelley and is now held by Theresa Reyes. Stephen Carney took over from Frank Kuhel the position of Creative Director. Mr. Carney and J. Todd Gimlin (the Society's first Creative Director) created the cover for this issue of *Logos-Sophia*. Todd and Tametha Gimlin are to be thanked for giving generously of their time to type the entire issue onto the computer to prepare it for printing. The logo for PSUPS printed on the cover page is Mr. Gimlin's handiwork.

Members of the Society wish to thank the Women's Studies Committee for its financial support of *Logos-Sophia*. In addition, a special note of thanks is extended to Ms. Ellen Harrington, a former member of PSUPS, for her continued financial support of the Society.

Philosophy: Is It Just Another Name for Atheism?

Tametha Homan Gimlin

In a time when the controversy between teaching school children the Christian Creationism Theory and Darwin's Evolutionary Theory exists, there are some who would point to biology, geology, chemistry, and *philosophy* and term them as forms of atheism. After all, philosophy encourages one to question how one originated instead of simply accepting it on faith - doesn't it?

Contrary to the beliefs of some, "philosophy" *does NOT* mean "atheism." From the Greek "philia" (love) and "sophia" (wisdom), "philosophy" is translatable into "a love for wisdom."

There Have Been Christian Philosophers.

True, there have been some noted philosophers who were atheistic (those who did not believe in the existence of a divine presence(s) (such as Nietzsche, Marx, and Sartre)) ; there have also been those who were agnostic (did not know if a divine presence(s) existed or not and, therefore, chose not to philosophize on the topic of religion but instead delved into other concerns (such as Huxley, Protagoras, and Spenser)); and there have been some, in fact many, who were theistic or pantheistic (they did believe in a divine presence(s) - for many, the Christian "God") - and tried to argue for divine presence(s) (God, etc.)'s existence through their philosophical arguments (such as Augustine, Anselm, Thomas of Aquino, Ockham, Leibniz, Kierkegaard, Lewis, and Plantinga).^{1,2}

Philosophy - A Tool to Open the Mind.

Philosophy is not a brainwashing tool to change one's beliefs from *for God* to *against God*.³ It is not a tool to close one's mind and heart to God. If anything, philosophy is a tool to open the mind. Centered around wisdom, reasoning, and creativity, it helps one consider a problem and/or a viewpoint from multiple sides. It is a bridge to understanding others' points-of-view. It teaches one to consider "what if..." and other possibilities.

Philosophy is Not "the Answer"; It's "the Question."

Philosophy does not answer one's questions, it forces one to examine one's beliefs. As you resolve each old conflict within yourself, your old questions give way to new questions. It is the constant search within yourself that causes you to be attuned to your beliefs and strong within them.

To Believe Without Question.

Is it right to believe in God without question? Or rather, without consideration? To believe in God merely because your parents do or without considering the importance of what your church says, what your pastor/priest/etc. says, what your Bible or other media says, is *not* faith - it's blind faith. If you have blind faith, you do not see with your heart and mind, you merely agree rather than disagree, go along rather than believe. How much better is it to believe in God after consideration rather than blindly?

What Have Others Believed?

In philosophy courses one can learn what others thought about God⁴ and what they believed to be arguments proving God's existence. Some believed that the universe is too complex and orderly to link together the way it has out of chance, thereby proving God's existence. Some believed that there are basic ethical ties between us that have always existed - that will always exist. Some believed that contingent beings (that which one can conceive of as not existing or having not existed), such as ourselves, must stem from a necessary being (that which contains in its essence the necessity to exist - to have always existed - to always exist), such as God. And there are others who believed that the best proof of God's existence is the combination of all of the arguments for God.⁵

A House of Faith.

In philosophy, one looks at one's beliefs critically. Like a house that is constantly undergoing alterations, so is faith. With a strong base foundation (such as "God exists"), one can replace a window or a door (such as details of what we can conceive God to be like) of the house without destroying the house.

Perhaps it is easier to understand if given an example: At one time I believed God knew every step of what would happen in the future, but I also believed that God gave us the power to choose our own paths; and, like a guiding parent, would want us to follow, but give us the choice. This mixture of determinism and free will had seemed for a long

time to clash with each other, but I was unable to find a suitable alternative that remained somewhat consistent with my views of God. Then I changed that "window" of my house. Suppose God knows all of what has happened in the past, all of what is currently unfolding, and knows what's in the hearts and minds of individuals. Because of this vast knowledge, God is able to predict with great accuracy what will happen in the future (though perhaps not to the exact day or hour) and also has the power to cause an event to happen, if the divine one chooses to intervene.⁶ This new window fit better within the montage of beliefs making up my faith. This modification did not weaken my house, but made it stronger. And if I were to even replace all of the walls of my house, the foundation would still exist to begin again.⁷ I am not patching my house, but strengthening it. And still one must keep an open mind.⁸ For, like striving to better oneself, one must always strive to strengthen one's religious faith and develop better ties with God.

Even though I truly believe that no one will successfully develop an argument *proving* to all that God exists - for this would eliminate the need for the step of faith that extends logic - one can make the effort to try to understand what God is like and the bond between God and ourselves. (I choose to believe that a bond does exist and would recommend to others the study of Charles Hartshorne's paper entitled "The Cosmic Drama: Why God has a World" as one possible reason for this phenomenon.) For however good those following God blindly may or may not be, how much better would it be for one to follow God - with faith - but with eyes wide open!

Philosophy/Atheism.

Is philosophy another word for atheism? No, philosophy is a love for wisdom: look before you leap, think before you blindly believe. There are no right or wrong answers in philosophy, only right and wrong ways to argue. "I believe God is a blue potato - just because I do" is not a valid argument. And there's nothing that says you must be able to successfully argue others into believing your beliefs for your beliefs to be true. Many believe in God because of personal experiences. If you are unable to prove God's existence to others on the basis of something you personally felt, it does not mean God doesn't exist, but merely that that particular instance may not be enough logical proof for another to be convinced of your claim's truth.

Certainly one need not be atheistic to have philosophical interests. And, believe it or not, some philosophers do find things other than religion to debate about!

Having an open mind; exercising wisdom, reasoning, and crea-

tivity; considering a problem and/or belief from multiple sides; expressing your beliefs in a sound argument; not atheism, but thinking before you blindly believe; not a lack of faith, but "a love of wisdom;" progressing with your eyes wide open - a never-ending quest to become responsible in your own decision-making and aware of your beliefs and what they entail. Philosophy is not atheism; it is a love of wisdom.

Notes

1. For the length of this paper we shall mainly discuss the Christian beliefs and the belief in one God.
2. It should be noted that many philosophers find no difficulty in mixing science and religion: So what if God created the universe by causing something like a "big bang" or if God created us to be a constantly-evolving species, as one planting an acorn later to obtain a tree?
3. Though I will note the quotation "A little philosophy leads to atheism; a lot of philosophy leads you back to God." (author unknown)
4. (along with their beliefs in other gods and many other issues)
5. Other arguments for God's existence also exist.
6. Note: But the divine may hasten to do so in order to keep the delicate balance already created (the universe, physical laws, etc.) flowing smoothly and for God's intervention not to become expected to resolve all of our problems. (If this goes against traditional "Christian" views, I can only say that I've never claimed to be a *traditional* Christian, though my beliefs are strong.)
7. Could the foundation itself be blown? Mine can't because of my faith. Perhaps one who believes God does not exist, may also have an indestructible foundation that "God does not exist."
8. Remember: A house without windows lets no light in and the inhabitants must live in the dark. Those who love wisdom fashion windows in their houses to not only see what is outside better, but also to illuminate what is within their houses (their beliefs). To disagree with another's belief after considering it with an open mind is quite a different matter than to not consider it at all.
9. As Spinoza expressed in the *Ethics*, it is morally right to have an intellectual love of God by understanding the principles God used to create the world; or, in other words, the more one expends his or her knowledge of how things exist (physical laws, etc.) the more one will develop an *intellectual* love of God.

The Forgotten Religion

Leslie Miller-Mangile

What is one of the oldest religions? There is a religion that dates from about 30,000 B.C. and still exists today. A religion which has been called myth, legend, or denied altogether. From the earliest times of human development people believed that women, like the land, were the primary source of life. Therefore, the first giver of life was envisioned as female - the supreme Creator. She has had many names and images which have changed not only through the ages but also with geographical areas. The Goddess has been honoured in sculptures, shrines, written tablets, and papyrus for untold centuries. Although the worship of the Goddess dates from prehistoric periods (a time frame that seems unreal to most people), it has been suppressed, outlawed, and hidden by patriarchal religions and almost totally ignored as one of the oldest religions of the human race. There is overwhelming evidence that Goddess worship has existed world-wide from antiquity unlike Christianity, Islam, and Judaism which all started in a small area of the globe and gradually spread. Unfortunately a great many ancient writings and statuary of the Goddess were destroyed because of the antagonistic attitudes of the patriarchal religions. Yet the Goddess, She of many faces, survives today. One has only to look behind the God.

"The evidence for the worship of the Goddess is multifaceted and veneration of Her through history is complex" (Berger 145). Tracing the Goddess image is difficult. Most dates are placed by archaeologists' findings of cave paintings, cult figurines, and many other artifacts which give a basic knowledge of these societies of centuries ago. Even after the beginning of the written word the Goddess religion is still very hard to trace as fully as the history of many patriarchal religions. "It is shocking to realize how little has been written about the female deities who were worshipped in the most ancient periods and exasperating to then find the fact that most of the material there is has been almost totally ignored" (Stone 13). Yet, with all these hardships one can form a chronological order of Goddess worship which dates from about 30,000 B.C. to a following of the Goddess today.

"In the upper Paleolithic societies, in which the mother was regarded as the sole parent, ancestor worship was apparently the basis of sacred ritual, and accounts of ancestry were probably reckoned through the matriline. The Concept of the creator of all life therefore took the form

of Women, the Divine Ancestress" (Stone 13). This notes the common belief that the humans of the remote past worshipped their ancestors, thus cultivating a very personal relationship with the diety. The family was traced only through the mother because of the lack of knowledge of the equal importance of the male and the female in the reproduction of life. Life came from woman; therefore, all life must have started with a woman. Societies in which the Mother was worshipped were widespread in the Paleolithic Age - 30,000 B.C. "Figurines that are often referred to as Venus figures, some seemingly pregnant, have been found in areas of Spain, France, Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Russia" (Stone 16).

Excavations of Neolithic cultures in Turkey, Egypt, and Costal Europe reveal evidence of Goddess worship in statues and shrines that date from around 9000 B.C. to 5500 B.C. "The Mother Goddess represented by figurines seems to have been the central figure in the Neolithic religion. The Goddess is shown in Her three aspects. As a young woman, as a mother giving birth, and as an old woman" (Stone 17). These aspects are also known as the Maiden, the Mother, and the Crone. In this time the Goddess was supreme; and "males occur only in subsidiary role" (Stone 24).

During the Chalothic period - lasting until 2500 B.C. - in the Indus Valley, China, and Egypt there were settlements which held a female Goddess as supreme diety.

"Though conquerors who infiltrated during late Chalolithic and early Bronze Age obscured much of the Goddess worship, figurines as well as cultic objects and shrines uncovered enable one to still find the idea of persistent Goddess worship" (Berger 8).

Sites from the middle Bronze Age through the early Iron Age have produced terracotta plaques impressed with the nude female holding plants and standing in such a position that she can be identified as the Goddess (Berger 12).

After about 3000 B.C. one starts to see a change in the worship of the Goddess and in the position held by women in society. "The incursion of nomadic hordes from the Eurasian Steppes into the Near East and Mediterranean brought a people who held a patriarchal society. Literature from 3000 B.C., recorded after the invasions, demonstrates the fusion of the Goddess and the God into one culture" (Berger 14). The last known temple dedicated solely to the Goddess is in the city of Ephesus. "The renowned temple of the Goddess in the city of Ephesus was the target of the apostle Paul's zealous missionary efforts. This temple...was not completely closed down until 380 A.D." (Stone 45).

The invasions continued over thousands of years and it is here

that one finds stories of dual worship. "The female religion appears to have assimilated the male deities into the older worship" (Stone 68). The Goddess and God are often seen as mother-son, brother-sister, and/or husband-wife.

"Archaeological, mythological, and historical evidence all reveal that the female religion, far from fading naturally away was the victim of centuries of continual persecution and suppression by the advocates of the newer religions which held male deities as supreme" (Stone 23). There seem to have been many reasons for this. First "the invaders viewed themselves as a superior people. This attitude seems to have been based on their ability to conquer the more culturally developed people of the Goddess" (Stone 64).

Other reasons were the patterns of descent for wealth, land, and social position. The patterns for descent followed two totally different lines, the mothers or the fathers. This is directly effected by the sexual customs. "Sexual customs which were so inherent and integral a part of the female religion, allowing for and possibly encouraging matrilineal descent patterns" (Stone 129). In the Goddess religion sexual customs often included the right for women to have sex with any consenting male (be she married or not) or even to marry more than one man at a time. It was also a practice of priestesses of the Goddess to have relationships with many of the male worshippers as a celebration of life and to honor the Goddess. This made descent through the mother the only reasonable line to follow.

In the patriarchal religion "the Levite laws of the Israelites, from the time of Moses onwards, demanded virginity until marriage for all women, upon the threat of death, and, once married, total fidelity, only on the part of women, also upon threat of death" (Stone 156). As one can see, these laws helped strengthen the lines of patriarchal descent. They also weakened the position of women in the social pattern by refusing her the same rights as the men and in a sense giving men control over the women.

Finally, economic power and the political position of the sexes was a reason for the suppression of the Goddess. The political position of the priestess was supreme within the Goddess worshipping society. The only power for a man was through the high priestess as her consort. "This was a major obstacle for the desire of the northern conquerors for a permanent kingship and more total control of the government" (Stone). The invading people slowly replaced the female based social system with their own institution of kinship so that the supreme power, economic, governmental and religious, was in the hands of their own hierarchy. "Upon the acceptance of the male hierarchy the woman was placed in a

subordinate status and the principle position in the religion was no longer held by the Goddess but the God" (Stone 28).

In the repression of the Goddess we find that she is subjected to rape and murder by the God whom she had accepted as son, lover, and husband. By the betrayals, the Goddess' place in religion was diminished and changed from that of supreme being to co-ruler to servant.

"But it was the last assaults by the Hebrews and eventually the Christians of the first centuries after Christ that finally suppressed worship of the Goddess" (Stone 68).

So it is in these most recent centuries that the patriarchal religions came into complete power. The Goddess, with her female values of life, and her religions which had flourished for thousands of years were slowly but methodically suppressed. The patriarchal religions in their quest for control and power made every effort to totally obliterate the Goddess. "Orders for the destruction of the Goddess religion were built into the very cannons and laws of the male religion that replaced it" (Stone 176).

The change was not just the obvious one of female Goddess to male God but went on to change the way everyday life was lived and thought of. The Goddess religion was very personal. Often it involved the ideas of being an aspect of the diety and of having sexual relationships with her. The God was put beyond the reach of common people except through the church and its priests.

"A careful reading of the *Old Testament* reveals extensive passages spent in continuous threat, at times veiled or hidden in symbolism, against the worship of the Goddess" (Stone).

God was put beyond the reach of common people except through the church and its priests. The other most noted change was the rights and lives of women. As was mentioned before, the sexual customs of these two religions differed greatly. Once the male religion was in greater control the position of women decreased even more. "Orthodox-Judaism held that women had no souls. Christianity removed from women the right to legally own anything including their bodies and destinies" (Stein 8, 9).

"The early Christian Church refused to accept a female whose power equaled or exceeded the God's, it took escalating violence and warring crusades to press Christianity on the world" (Stein 11). Even this could not wipe out the Goddess and the old rites. In folk pageants which celebrated the harvest the Goddess was clearly present. Finally, to become accepted the Christian Church gave the Goddess a new name and form. "The oppression of patriarchy, institutionalized as Church and sanctioned and enforced by governments and armies, were lessened and

made bearable by Mary as the feminine goddess of the Christian regime. It was only when Mary, against the stern decrees of the Church, was dug out of oblivion and became identified with the Great Goddess that Christianity was finally tolerated by the people" (Stein 13).

One would think that the male religion was finally secure. But there was one area in which the Old Religion could still be said to exist. Most health care came from knowledge gained in the Goddess religion. Women were still the main holders of the knowledge. This was especially true in the art of midwifery. "In the Middle Ages the Church became too threatened by the power of women and women's skills, it forcefully sought to end their existence" (Stein 11).

The knowledge of herbs, midwifery, and even the simple art of dealing with the ill could suddenly be called witchcraft. "The rising male medical establishment welcomed the chance to stamp out midwives and village herbists, their major economic competitors" (Starhawk 6). The inquisition lasted from the fourteenth to the eighteenth century. It was patriarchy's final and, in some ways, most violent push for the total destruction of the Goddess religion. During this persecution an estimated nine million people were burned to death, most of them women. In Sprenger and Kramer's *The Hammer of Witches*, the main Inquisition Bible, "it is stated that the very word for female femina, was to mean lack of faith and that women were viewed as the source of world evil" (Stein 12). While many of the practices of the Inquisition ended in the seventeenth century many of the laws remained. It was not until 1784 that the Calvinist Parliament of Scotland finally declared an end to witch burnings.

"After the persecutions ended, in the eighteenth century, came the age of disbelief" (Starhawk 7). The Goddess was forgotten by the masses and only a few remained who remembered Her worship. The word "witch" became stereotyped with the fairy tale hag who ate little children.

"Only in this century have Witches been able to come out of the broom closet, so to speak, and counter the imagery of evil with the truth" (Starhawk 7). Today the Goddess religion is being reawakened and women are the main force of this. "Since the decline of the Goddess religions, women have lacked a spiritual system that speaks to female needs and experience" (Starhawk 8). Today's Goddess religion teaches that women are human and are not the reason men fell from grace with God. It shows a more equal relationship between men and women, one of equal need and interdependence and, therefore, a relationship where each party is responsible.

The Goddess religion of today speaks again of ecology; "its goal is harmony with nature" (Starhawk 10). Balance in all things is one of the

main themes in this religion.

So we see that one of our oldest religions has been repressed until very few people view Goddess worship as a true religion. Much of the lore and the wisdom of the Goddess religion was lost through malicious persecution and bigotry. There is much in our past which invites more study. Perhaps this is one, especially for women.

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Goddess Religion and the Environment

Stephen Carney

In the past few years, we have been bombarded by news about the environment. Syringes wash up on New Jersey shores, de-forestation of the Brazilian rain forest continues at a devastating rate, and the hole in the ozone layer becomes increasingly larger.

It is no surprise, then, that there is a current revival of the religion of the Great Goddess. This is occurring mainly in college towns and metropolitan areas, but has strong grass roots applications everywhere.

The Old Religion, as it is often called, is perhaps the oldest religion existent in the West. Its origins go back before Christianity, Judaism, Islam - before Buddhism and Hinduism, as well, and it is very different from these religions. It is closer in spirit to Native American traditions or to the shamanism of the Arctic. It is not based on dogma or a set of beliefs, nor on scriptures or a sacred book. Goddess religion takes its teachings from nature, and reads inspiration in the movements of the sun, moon, and stars. The flight of birds, the slow growth of trees, and the cycle of seasons all have great significance.

In essence, Goddess religion is pantheistic. The Goddess is perceived not as a deity outside the world ruling it, but as being the world itself. All of nature is seen as being a manifestation of the Goddess. Cycles are seen within nature which mirror cycles in our own lives.

For the past two thousand years, symbolism in the major world religions has been overwhelmingly male. Feminist philosopher Mary Daly points out that the model of a universe in which a male God rules the cosmos from the outside serves to legitimize male control of social institutions. Men become mini-rulers of narrow universes. Men are also set up at war with themselves: in the West, to "conquer" sin; in the East, to "conquer" desire or ego. This unfortunately crosses over to man conquering nature. De-forestation is a prime example. Many alternatives, such as solar energy, have their research put on a back burner, while tragic happenings, pollution and dumping of nuclear waste, continue.

Therefore, you probably will not find Goddess-worshippers asking for plastic bags at the grocery store, but you will find them checking packages to see if they are bio-degradable, or buying roll-ons or pump

sprays to avoid aerosol cans. They are much more probable to support causes like Greenpeace, World Wildlife Foundation, and other political organizations. Their philosophy is one of responsibility, and what they are protecting, Mother Earth, is seen as sacred.

The symbols in Goddess religion, therefore, are important. When one sees the world or universe as divine, one treats it with the care and respect it deserves and needs. For instance, if we call the ocean "our Mother, the womb of life," we may take more care not to pump Her full of poisons. A picture of the earth from space, or a globe, becomes a mandala.

As Starhawk, a feminist, political activist, and priestess, states: "Our growing awareness of ecology, the impending environmental apocalypse, has forced on us a realization of our interconnectedness with all forms of life, which is the basis of Goddess Religion."

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When Gorillas Do Philosophy: Philosophy at Pittsburg State University, 1912-1990

Donald Wayne Viney

The gorilla officially became the mascot of Kansas State Teacher's College (now Pittsburg State University) in 1925. According to Gene Degruson, curator of special collections at PSU, "gorilla" was a twenties' slang for "roughnecks," and the mascot was meant to symbolize school spirit by evoking images of ferocity. The concept of the fierce gorilla was in keeping with popular misconceptions of the time. For example, in Edgar Rice Burrough's Tarzan series - into its tenth sequel by 1924 - "Bolgani" the gorilla is portrayed as an irritable bully of the jungle. In *Tarzan of the Apes* (1914), the young Tarzan is mauled by a gorilla and narrowly escapes with his life. Patient observation of gorillas in their natural setting reveals a different picture. The gorilla is a gentle herbivore whose apparent ferocity is mostly a matter of excitement and posturing. In terms of its actual lifestyle and behavior the gorilla is more pensive than it is violent. According to George Schaller, "Gorillas are rather amiable vegetarians."¹ Thus, while the stereotyped gorilla may be appropriate as a mascot for athletics (as it was originally intended), the actual gorilla is appropriate as a mascot for academics, which, contrary to another popular misconception, is the real purpose of a university. The student group responsible for promoting the gorilla mascot in the 1920s had stumbled upon a symbol the true meaning and propriety of which they could not have been aware.

The logo of the Pittsburg State University Philosophical Society - showing a gorilla contemplating a human skull - is congruent with the deeper significance of the university's mascot. PSUPS has been active only since May 1987. But philosophy, as a subject of study, has been part of the school at Pittsburg since 1912, nine years after the State Auxiliary Manual-Training School (as it was first called) was founded. If one makes the students, faculty, and staff who were at the school prior to 1925 "honorary gorillas" then one can say that gorillas have been doing philosophy for seventy-eight years. Let us touch on some of the highlights of this history.

A study of past catalogues reveals that the first courses in philosophy offered at the school were in 1912. The Department of Education listed a course in the History of Philosophy and the Department of History and Social Science offered a course in Philosophy of American History. By 1922 the Education Department had dropped the History of Philosophy but added the Philosophy of Education, a course offered to the present. In the same year the History and Social Science Department offered a course in Ethics. The extent to which these courses treated philosophical topics in a systematic fashion cannot be ascertained. For example, the Philosophy of American History may have had more to do with American History than with Philosophy.

From 1928 until the present philosophy has been taught from three different departments. From 1928 to 1946 philosophy was housed in the Department of Psychology and Philosophy. In 1947 the Department was restructured as Education and Psychology. In 1967 the philosophy courses, with one exception, were moved to their present location in the Department of Social Science. The course titled Philosophy of Education, now a graduate offering, remained in the Department of Education.

Philosophy first became a coherent focus of study under the tutelage of Charles B. Pyle (1872-1957) who taught at Pittsburg from 1924 to 1947, roughly the same period during which philosophy was housed in the Department of Psychology and Philosophy. Pyle did his undergraduate work at Ohio Wesleyan University and his graduate work at Boston University where he studied with the great Personalist, Borden Parker Bowne. Pyle also did considerable graduate work at Harvard, as the two universities practiced cross-enrollment. At Harvard he studied with some of the greatest philosophers of his day, including William James, George Santayana, Josiah Royce, and Hugo Munsterberg. In 1910 he published *The Philosophy of Borden Parker Bowne*. Before completing his dissertation (on the metaphysical implications of behaviorism) Pyle moved to Baldwin City, Kansas, and taught at Baker University. According to Prescott Johnson, one of his students, Pyle completed his dissertation only after coming to Pittsburg.² As Johnson relates the story,

He wrote [the dissertation] in the attic of his home, and he remarked how hot it was. E. S. Brightman was his dissertation director. I remember Pyle's telling me that after he had gone back to Boston and successfully defended the dissertation, the degree now being assured, Brightman said to him, "Now, you're made." And Pyle added, with a twinkle, what Brightman really meant was, "And I made you!"

Clearly, Pyle was adequately prepared to bring philosophy to Pittsburg.

Pyle was chairperson of the Department of Psychology and Philosophy from 1924 to 1942. Under his guidance, six new courses were added or joined under the heading of philosophy. Those courses were Introduction to Philosophy, History of Philosophy, Logic, Contemporaneous Philosophy, Moral Values, and Ethics. These courses, along with Philosophy of Education and Advanced Philosophy of Education, constituted philosophical studies for nearly twenty years.

Johnson's recollections of a class in Introduction to Philosophy (Spring 1946) provide a glimpse of the content of Pyle's courses and the style of his teaching. The text for the course was Patrick's *Introduction to Philosophy* with supplemental readings from three books by Eddington: *The Expanding Universe*, *Nature of the Physical World*, and *Philosophy of Physical Science*, Singer's *Mind as Behavior*, and Brightman's *Introduction to Philosophy*. According to Johnson,

We students would report a great deal of this material and Pyle would amplify and discuss our reporting of the material. This was his favorite way of teaching: having us read the material and, in his words, "report it in." He would then explain and clarify the material as we presented it. There was always opportunity for our own questions and contributions in the discussion.

Johnson took other courses from Pyle including Logic, History of Philosophy, Contemporaneous Philosophy, and Systematic Psychology. In each course there was a lot of "reporting in."

Johnson came to Pittsburg in 1945 and had a major interest in philosophy. With Pyle as his main teacher he took an A.B. in 1947 and a Master's degree in 1948, writing a thesis entitled "The Pragmatic Concept of Truth." Although Pyle had officially retired in 1947, he continued to be the director for Johnson's thesis. Johnson says he believes that he was Pyle's last Master's student and that he may have been the only student to have written a thesis distinctively in philosophy. In researching this paper I was unable to uncover any evidence to the contrary.

With the foundations provided by Pyle the future for philosophy at Pittsburg looked bright. From 1955 to 1973 a total of eight new courses in philosophy were added to the schedule, bringing the total to fifteen course offerings. One could study Metaphysics; Scientific Method and the Philosophy of Science; History of Philosophy (from Ancient to Contemporary); Theory of Knowledge; Social Philosophy; and Communism, Fascism and Democracy. There were also directed readings and seminars offered in philosophy.

During this period of growth, the faculty in philosophy increased to two, although there was little stability. From 1954 to 1975, eleven

persons (among them, one woman) taught philosophy. The woman, Judith Presler (1967), was the faculty sponsor for a philosophy club which published "The Student Journal of Philosophy." The journal saw only one issue, although the articles showed promise. Steven C. DeAlmeda, president of the philosophy club, wrote an article entitled "Blanshard's Defense of Reason in Ethics." Bruce McReynolds wrote an article entitled "Extensionality, Atomicity and Propositional Attitudes." In addition, there were book reviews of Newman's *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* and Jung's *The Undiscovered Self* by Gene L. Younger and Alan R. Mielke respectively.

From 1975 to 1984 there was no tenure-earning position in philosophy. Ironically, in 1979, shortly after the school began calling itself a university, five philosophy courses were dropped from the schedule. In 1984 I joined the faculty of the Social Science Department and became the first person at the University in nine years in a tenure-track position specifically designated for teaching philosophy. I did my graduate work at the University of Oklahoma and wrote a dissertation under the direction of Charles Hartshorne.³ Some milestones of my brief tenure as a gorilla include the reintroduction of the course Religions of the World, the reformation of a student philosophical organization, and the hosting of the 1989 Midwestern Regional Meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers. The Key-Note Speakers at the conference were Frederick Ferré (University of Georgia) and Marilyn and Robert Adams (both of University of California at Los Angeles). To the best of my knowledge, this was the first time in its history that the University had hosted a philosophy conference.⁴

By far the most significant development in philosophy at PSU in the past few years was the formation of the student organization, the PSU Philosophical Society. By organizing fund raisers, supporting public charities, sponsoring guest speakers, and publishing this journal, the members of the Society have made philosophy a visible presence both on campus and in the Pittsburg community. An example of the Society's work was Philosophy Week 1989. April 3rd through the 7th of 1989 was officially declared Philosophy Week by Pittsburg's mayor. During the week there were public lectures on business ethics, feminist philosophy, and quantum physics. The week ended with a panel discussion on the creation/evolution controversy. Through activities of this nature students in the Society have made unique and vital contributions to the history I have summarized.

Notes

1. George B. Schaller, "The Behavior of the Mountain Gorilla," in *Primate*

Behavior, Irven Devore, ed., New York: Holt, Rinehard and Winston, 1965, p. 365.

2. Quotes and information from Prescott Johnson are culled from a personal correspondence dated June 4, 1989.

3. Hartshorne directed the dissertation, mostly by correspondence, from the University of Texas at Austin. The dissertation was published as *Charles Hartshorne and the Existence of God*, Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1985.

4. Although the Pittsburg media effectively ignored the conference, the *Wichita Eagle Beacon* ran an article on the event (*Wichita Eagle*, Oct. 14, 1989, p. 8c).

It's a Bird! It's a Plane! *It's Lois Lane!*

Allen Kratochvil

For his fiftieth birthday, in 1987, Superman got a major exhibition from the Smithsonian, a \$74 million ad campaign from D.C. Comics, a T.V. special and his picture was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine. But what about the woman who's been with him from the start, Lois Lane?

Lois Lane may not be as celebrated as Superman, but she's a lot livelier and, in my opinion, more significant from a sociological standpoint. For a half-century of comic book life, Superman has remained stolidly unchanged. By contrast, Lois has been protean, reflecting at every step our culture's volatile opinion of what a woman should be.

In the 1930s *Superman* comics, the big guy with the blue black hair was the model of sexless rectitude, while newshound Lois was the spirit of ambition. Behavior of this sort was not unusual for a young woman in the decade before the depression when feminists had only recently won the right to vote and were seriously attacking woman's given social role. They drank, they smoked, they cut their hair, and shed their inhibitions. Females of the era urged that they be given the opportunity to compete in the world of men. Thus, Lois inherited a legacy of female independence. She was so professionally competitive that she once slipped a knockout potion into Clark's beverage so that she could do him out of a scoop.

When men went to battle in World War II and women went to work, Lois reported for duty in a boxy suit that looked like a uniform. After the war, returning soldiers were given back their jobs and women were fired or demoted in droves. As women's options narrowed abruptly, Lois followed the mode of the post war era. Faithful to the mood of the times, she let work slide beginning a trend of bungling most of her assignments and subordinating professional demands to her one romantic obsession, Superman.

The creators of D.C. Comics were men who, like most other men of the period, believed that women should return to home and motherhood and so Lois seemed to be refocusing her sights away from riveting to rocking the cradle. This return of "momism" meant that Lois could never challenge that it was a man's world she would compete in and that

woman's sphere was the home. This is the Lois Lane that most people are familiar with. It is also the stage of her development that lasted the longest and which, at times, can still be seen in her film incarnations.

The tendency to promote the integrated family continued into the 1950's when *Superman* became almost a love comic. In one memorable episode, after Ms. Lane parachutes into a flood, she gushes to her rescuer, "I'd like to be in your arms always, Superman! As your wife (sigh)."

Many such examples can be found in the comics issued during the late 1940s and 1950s, but Lois never does get a band of gold on the Man of Steel. Perhaps this is because Superman is thought to be a creature above adult concerns. He is thought to embody the purest qualities of that nebulous thing known as the American character. He is innocent in a way that Americans have sometimes been but more often have only imagined themselves to be.

That Lois was often the object of chauvinistic sport for her creators is evident in a 1950s *Superman* issue in which she inquisitively tries out a machine that turns her into a genius. Superman acts swiftly and dupes her into losing her newfound cerebral prowess. It was only for her own good, the reader is assured, as another character clucks: "How often her busy little brain gets her into scrapes where only the man of Steel can save her!" This is a ringing echo of the true balance of power prevalent between the sexes at that time.

A new concern with economic and social equality helped to start a revival of the feminist movement in the 1960s, but you wouldn't know it from reading *Superman* comics. By 1965 Superman has stashed in his Fortress of Solitude a Lois Lane robot; she could possibly have been the first Stepford Wife.

In the early 1970s comic books, Lois dons hot pants and starts deploring social injustice in a tardy tribute to the 1960s. It wasn't until about 1976 that Lois was reborn.

The latter-day Lois Lane is witty and charming, almost glamorous. A woman of independence, she wore a look of grim determination when, in 1982, she ends her relationship with Superman because, as she said, "It just doesn't seem to be working anymore." Happily, Lois and Superman are still friends. In fact, after a recent rescue, she offered him some wine and cheese. Lois has won a Pulitzer Prize and is dating none other than Superman's arch-enemy, Lex Luthor.

The harbinger of Lois' changes came in the form of a resurrection of an old idea. It was the newly activated sentiments of woman's freedom and equality of the 1930s that prompted Lois Lane to become, at the hands of her makers, a statement of defiance. And it was woman's reemergence into the public consciousness that caused Lois to take a new look at her

situation in the late 1970s and 1980s.

Still, Lois' new feminine assertiveness may seem odd considering that the average reader of D.C. Comics is a 19.6 year old male. Since most young males don't buy comics to be enlightened, one must wonder why any special effort is taken to produce anything but plot and character bare action stories? One explanation could be that Lois Lane's real life publisher is Jenette Kahn, who became the first woman ever to head a division of Warner Communications in 1981. Another explanation could be that the collective ideals of the writers and artists who create Lois have changed. People have a different female ideal in mind now.

Today Lois Lane is, if anything, more resourceful than she was when first conceived, more realistic, less wacky. She's competitive in a new way; she's much like the many working women of the 1980s. In her youth Lois was a girl Friday vicariously representing females in society. Nowadays, she's her own woman - at last.

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Virginia Woolf's To The Lighthouse: Lily's Painting as Plot

Nancy Grantham

One of the concepts introduced early in Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* is the importance of process as opposed to outcome, or, to put it another way, the importance of the means as opposed to the end. Woolf suggests a "fatal drawback" of her lecture on women and fiction will be that she can come to no conclusion. She can offer no "nugget of pure truth to wrap up between the pages of your notebooks" to be kept "on the mantelpiece forever"; she can only offer an "opinion upon one minor point - a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction" (Room 3-4). The distinction she makes, between reaching an opinion and conceiving a "nugget of truth," is based on her concept of objectivity. One cannot be objective on any "subject [that] is highly controversial - and any question about sex is that - one cannot hope to tell the truth. One can only show how one came to hold whatever opinion one does hold" (Room 4). The importance, then, "the truth," lies in the means used to reach the conclusion, not the conclusion itself. The emphasis is on "becoming," not what one becomes. She devotes her lecture to developing "in your presence as fully and freely as I can the train of thought which led me to think this" (Room 4).

Woolf puts the importance of the end result in perspective. She continues, "One can only give one's audience the chance of drawing their own conclusions as they observe the limitations, the prejudices, the idiosyncrasies of the speaker" (Room 4). Pure objectivity is non-existent; so pure truth, "the nugget" that is a product of that objectivity, is also non-existent. The conclusion, "the nugget," reached through any process is subjective, and, therefore, the validity of "the nugget" must be based on the process through which it is reached.

The concept of subjective process is reflected in the circular plot structure of *To The Lighthouse* in the completion of Lily's painting. The traditional concept of plot is linear. The plot moves from beginning point A, the exposition, to ending point B, the resolution. Even the terms used to define the parts of the linear plot suggest an outcome, an end. This type

of movement has a destination, the reaching of point B. Since all movement is in one direction towards a goal, it emphasizes the importance of the end, the conclusion. By emphasizing its importance, it implies the validity of the conclusion or the validity of the "truth" the plot should yield: "the nugget of truth" can be found. It is natural, then, that Woolf would reject this type of plot structure. She sees it as too distorted, to unnatural, too absolute. Instead, *To The Lighthouse* has a circular structure with the lighthouse and Mrs. Ramsay at its center. Movement revolves around these two images as opposed to the linear movement of the traditional plot. In other words, it moves from point A to point A, rather than from point A to point B. There is no defined destination to reach because the movement is circular; therefore, the emphasis is changed from the destination to the movement itself, the process. This movement is represented as Lily completes her painting.

Martin Gliserman suggests that the painting has three stages which he defines as emptiness, anger, fulfillment (83). Though Gliserman takes the relationship of the stages of the painting to the structure of the text no further, the three stages actually reflect the structure and central movement of the novel. The first stage of the painting (emptiness) is parallel to the proposed trip to the lighthouse. The second stage (anger) is parallel to Mrs. Ramsay's dinner party and leads into the chaotic period while time passes. The completion of the painting, the third and final stage (fulfillment), is parallel to Mr. Ramsay, James, and Cam's trip to the lighthouse. Lily makes the final stroke, the stroke that completes the painting, at the same moment Mr. Ramsay steps off the boat onto the shore.

While Gliserman sees the painting as "an abstracted androgyny" that "resolves the male-female conflicts" (70), other critics suggest the painting is a resolution of the mother/daughter conflict with which Woolf struggled (Rosenman 140). Lily cannot become an artist until she has broken the hold of Mrs. Ramsay, the mother figure. By confronting her "repressed longing and anger at Mrs. Ramsay and by [accepting] her loss," Lily breaks free of the "maternal obsession" (Rosenman 144-5). However, this does not take Mr. Ramsay's impact on Lily's painting into account. Maria Dibattista, on the other hand, sees the completion of the picture as the "'finding again' of the mother by the daughter. The mother...is reembodyed and brought back to life in the work of art" (185). In this view, Mrs. Ramsay is not released, but embraced. Both critics suggest a connection between Lily's creative powers and Mrs. Ramsay's "presence." Rosenman sees Mrs. Ramsay as a stifling force (144), while Dibattista sees "affinity between Mrs. Ramsay's fecundity and Lily's creative powers" (185).

Lily, from the beginning of the novel, has a vision of her picture, "Then beneath the colour there was the shape. She could see it all so clearly, so commandingly, when she looked" (*Lighthouse* 32). What she cannot do early in the novel, however, is transfer that vision to canvas; "it was when she took her brush in hand that the whole thing changed" (*Lighthouse* 32). The remainder of the novel deals with the psychological process involved in completing the painting. The concentration is not on the painting itself, but on Lily's inner awareness (her thoughts and feelings). Woolf tries to create ("as clearly as she can") "the train of thought" which leads Lily to paint the final images as she does. The movement, in terms of the painting, is circular. Lily begins with the vision clearly in her head, loses the vision, then regains it ten years later. The painting is completed in the exact spot it was begun in.

Similarly, the trip to the lighthouse is proposed, but not completed. It should be noted that the trip is *to* the lighthouse; the movement is linear, from point A to point B. This symbolic journey is closely related to the painting. The painting, in fact, is Lily's lighthouse. Yet, the movement of the painting has no destination point; it revolves around the canvas, from point A to point A. The completion of the painting is the movement; it is a non-linear process, and, thus circular. She cannot complete her circular journey until she understands her feelings toward Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay.

When Lily loses her vision in that "moment's flight between the picture and her canvas," the "demons set on her" (*Lighthouse* 32). The loss of the vision, of her picture, makes her feel "inadequate" and "insignificant." These feelings are immediately followed by her desire to turn to Mrs. Ramsay, the female center, for support. Lily fights

...her impulse to fling herself (thank Heaven she had always resisted so far) at Mrs. Ramsay's knee and say to her - but what could one say to her? "I'm in love with you?" No, that was not true. "I'm in love with this all," waving her hands at the hedge, at the house, at the children. It was absurd it was impossible (*Lighthouse* 32-33).

The hedge, the house, the children are all a part of the traditional female role, marriage. Mrs. Ramsay, a supporter of marriage, describes Lily as "an independent little creature" who "would never marry" (*Lighthouse* 29). Still, the strength of the traditional role is seen in Lily's reaction to failure. When she "fails" as an artist, she is drawn to Mrs. Ramsay, the traditionally role, for comfort. Yet, some part of Lily resists the desire to accept marriage as the best option for her.

When Lily confronts the first attempt at her picture, she finds "it

was infinitely bad! ...it would never be seen; never be hung even" (*Lighthouse* 75). Again, she comes "under the power of that vision which she had seen clearly once and must now grope for among hedges and houses and mothers and children - her picture" (*Lighthouse* 82). In the early stage of the painting, Lily is "empty" (in a sense). She looks outside herself (mainly to Mrs. Ramsay) for support and inspiration. Though inspired by Mrs. Ramsay, she cannot complete the painting (she cannot find the unity, the balance) until after Mrs. Ramsay's death.

Gliserman defines the second stage of the painting as anger. This period of development asserts "the heat of Lily's anger at Tansley and men in general; they deny Lily her power, she asserts it" (83). Tansley denies her talent, "women can't write, women can't paint" (*Lighthouse* 128). Lily asserts it, "In a flash she saw her picture, and thought, Yes, I shall put the tree further in the middle; then I shall avoid that awkward space" (*Lighthouse* 128). Though Lily asserts her talent, her power, she does not act on it. The picture is conceived, but the painting is not completed during this visit.

Ten years later, Lily stands "precisely...[where] she had stood ten years ago. There was the wall; the hedge; the tree" (*Lighthouse* 221). But Mrs. Ramsay is dead, "the step where she used to sit was empty" (*Lighthouse* 290). Lily reflects on the painting she never finished: "the question was of some relation between those masses. She had borne it in her mind all these years. It seemed as if the solution had come to her: she knew now what she wanted to do"; yet, "she could not paint" (*Lighthouse* 221). Mr. Ramsay's demand for sympathy angers her; it distorts her vision: "he prevailed, he imposed himself.... She could not see the colour, she could not see the lines" (*Lighthouse* 223). Before Lily can complete her painting, before she can find the artistic balance she seeks, she must realize her feelings for the Ramsays.

As Lily works through her feelings, she moves into the third stage of the painting's development: fulfillment. She realizes that she is angry at both Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay and begins to realize what the Ramsays are to her. She relates to Mr. Ramsay's work (writing) and feels "he had had doubts" (*Lighthouse* 232). She begins to understand him and becomes, once she has worked through her anger, sympathetic, wishing that she had given him some consolation. But it is too late. She thinks of Mrs. Ramsay, and then of order. "In the midst of chaos there was shape; this eternal passing and flowing...was struck into stability" (*Lighthouse* 241). Mrs. Ramsay is the center (the giver of shape) until this point in the novel. But, now, Lily must strike out on her own. She perceives "curves and arabesques flourishing round a centre of complete emptiness" (*Lighthouse* 266). At this point the old centers, Mr. Ramsay and Mrs.

Ramsay, have changed; they have been transformed. The center is completely empty; Lily needs meaning, a way to explain it all. Eventually, her painting will give "shape" and "meaning" to chaos, becoming the center. It is from this emptiness that the new center, the androgyny of Lily emerges.

Lily releases Mrs. Ramsay, "Yes; she realized that the drawing room step was empty, but it had no effect on her whatever. She did not want Mrs. Ramsay now" (*Lighthouse* 290). And she releases Mr. Ramsay: "whatever she had wanted to give him, when he left her that morning, she had given him at last" (*Lighthouse* 308-09). Finally, after she has let go of her repressed feelings, and as Mr. Ramsay reaches the lighthouse, Lily completes her painting.

There it was - her picture...its attempt at something. It would be hung in the attics, she thought; it would be destroyed. But what did that matter? she asked herself, taking up her brush again. She looked at the steps; they were empty; she looked at her canvas; it was blurred. With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the centre. It was done; it was finished" (*Lighthouse* 310).

Lily's painting is recognized as "one of the central thematic motifs of the novel" (Gliserman 70). It completes the circular plot structure by paralleling the arrival at the lighthouse. It also joins Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay by merging the male and female centers of the novel together. The initial vision comes from Mrs. Ramsay and the final stroke, connecting the extremes (male/female) is Mr. Ramsay landing at the lighthouse. The process that Lily goes through while painting is, in Woolf's opinion, more important, more valid than the end result. The androgyny of her painting, the "truth" of the merging, can only be judged in terms of movement towards the androgynous artist. Woolf argues for this movement when speaking of Mary Carmichael, her fictional author in *A Room of One's Own*. She suggests that a true artist has "that curious sexual quality which comes only when sex is unconscious of itself" (96). Rather than concentrating on Lily's painting or her vision, Woolf emphasizes the psychological revelations that Lily experiences by ending the novel as the painting is completed. She explores and clearly defines the "train of thought" that leads Lily to her vision.

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(Untitled)

Rebecca Hisey

After suffering through a seemingly endless month of uneventfulness and stagnation, I was neither emotionally nor physically prepared for the events that transpired. My mind has been searching for an outlet for expression, nearly every day reveling in the thought of finally freeing itself. Don't constrain me. Don't hold me back. No longer will I conform to some mold that others have made for me. I know now, what I am, and who I am, and where I am going. Or do I? It's hard for a manchild, or an adult as I am now named, to know. Let me see, who shall I be? Conqueror of all around me? Or perhaps the last hope for a dying world? Should pain and suffering mold who I am to be? Or, do I let the joy that fills my spirit bend and twist my psyche into an ever-changing void of non-reality?

Do I want to go back to my childhood? Why would I want to go back, when I know all of the dangers that surround, engulf, and nearly crush my soul? Why? Because it is safe. I know what to expect, and how to deal with what I am handed. Yes, but doesn't the uncertainty of the future lend a certain air of mystery and intrigue in life? True, but in the same sense, it offers only danger, heartache, and trouble. Uncertainty can truly be ominous. Where exactly is the Alpha, and who determines the Omega? All of these questions of life will surely remain unanswered. Who is there to tell me the truth? Others, with the same questions as mine? Oh, but they hide behind their uncertainties and wear their masks to make you think that they are wise and untainted by life. I will never know the answers to my questions. This only deepens my sadness, and makes my quest for the truth harder, yet there is this undying loyalty to myself that I must uphold. I can quit trying as long as there is life in my bones and breath in my body, "For in truth lies wisdom, and only through wisdom is a man truly free..."¹

Notes

1. Taken from the film *Dead Poets Society*

Death & Life

Curtis Isom

Death is more than someone passing away. Death should leave an impression on those who view it in a way that should make us reevaluate our priorities in life. Makes us realize that really nothing, except God, lives forever.

Most people, though, don't deal with death until they have to; then it becomes a duty that they want to deal with in as little time as possible so they can continue their lives. And that's sad because they're not really dealing with death like they should. Death isn't something that comes along once in a while, death is everywhere, all the time, and lasts forever.

Death is not only an end, but a beginning because it allows life to continue on this planet. But I have observed that most people don't look at it that way. Like I said, they only deal with it when they need to. For instance, I was at a funeral once where most of the people weren't talking about the deceased, but about fashion, vacation trips, new cars, or other trivialities. Two people even made a date! It's like they gathered for some cocktail party, not a funeral. That's not right! The dead deserve more consideration. I'm not saying dwell on death, just give it the reflection it demands. You can't ignore death, but of course, this is how I see it.

I have found, though, that how we handle death is reflected a lot in how we handle life. The reason I say this is that there are people out there who go through life caring about nobody else but themselves. The problem is society reinforces that in its promotion of the "look out for number one" idea. And with that attitude in mind, people make money and success their number one priority. They don't take the time to get to know one another, unless it's for some personal gain.

Look at the world in its present state. If people cared more about one another, the world wouldn't be as it is now. Yes there are programs created to help people, but aren't they more or less "token gestures" because those in charge always want their "piece of the pie"?

How will the world solve it's problems? I don't know. But short of the Second Coming, I'm really not sure if the world will ever right itself. Life is meant to be an enjoyable experience that benefits everyone, not just the selected few. People should take the time to get to know one another because, in doing so, you gain so much about what's going on around you.

This allows people to learn and grow more. And as this learning process continues, the knowledge gain is fantastic from the exchange of ideas, thoughts, emotions, and experiences. Again, there's so much that life has to offer, and it's meant to be shared with everyone, all the time. All we're asked to do is open ourselves up more and be more honest and loving with each other.

And that's why those who take the time to examine death fully get more out of life in that their outlook becomes one of better understanding and treatment of others. Because as we go through life, we gather pieces of history. And when someone dies, they take irretrievable pieces of history with them. And sometimes more.

The Dance of Braham

Leslie Miller-Mangile

The dance of Brahman
creates all.
Throwing life and light
death and darkness.
Spinters that are the individual soul.
The Brahman whirls
the other way.
All things return
And we are whole.

The Shield

Tametha Homan Gimlin

As I gazed across the room,
 Into the dark, into the gloom,
 I thought perhaps there might be something there.
Rising up into the night,
 Filling all with instant fright,
 Its shadow loomed on the wall next to the chair.
My heart was beating faster
 As I sensed the nearing disaster:
 "Child killed by monster in her room."
I had no weapon with which to fight
 And then my eyes glowed sparkling bright
 As I recalled a way to save me from my doom.
Quick as a flash,
 Drawn from my stash,
 Appeared the shield I had aptly named "My Faith."
As I hid behind my shield,
 My faith abruptly strong and steeled,
 I thought, "Lord and Savior, would you stop this wraith?"
I promised I'd be good for God;
 I'd learned my lesson, just save my bod;
 I'll be faithful so I can live 'fore I'm made dead.
Then a voice rang out at last,
 Not the expected epitaph,
 It merely said, "Get up for school, sleepy-head!"
I stared across my day-lit room,
 No longer resembling my tomb,
 And thought how silly I had been the night before.
Secure at last, I lay down my shield;
 The dreaded monster now revealed
 As the shadow of a plant - no less, no more.
The birds outside had taken wing
 And, with them, my heart did sing,
 Forgetting all about the sleepless night.

And the shield, its job now done,
Though battle after battle won,
Lay suffering within its endless plight:
For though remembered in fear or pain,
It's left unattended through joy and gain,
Forgotten until we're trembling once again.
Still on the floor, that shield does sit,
Waiting at last for us to commit
And to think of it more than just "now and then."

