

WashPub Volume 4

Serving Up Intellectual Drivel Since...Well....a Few Weeks Ago



Literary Gods and Their Editors

Keith White

Sarah D'Adamo

Tanim Islam

Meg Olson

Amy Hawkins

Evan Stewart

THE WASHPUB QUEST FOR THE GRAIL



From Ritual to Romance: Chapter IX. *The Fisher King*

Surely the effect of this cumulative body of evidence is to justify us in the belief that Fish and Fisher, being, as they undoubtedly are, Life symbols of immemorial antiquity, are, by virtue of their origin, entirely in their place in a sequence of incidents which there is solid ground for believing derive ultimately from a Cult of this nature. That Borrow's Fish-meal, that the title of Fisher King, are not accidents of literary invention but genuine and integral parts of the common body of tradition which has furnished the incidents and *mise-en-scène* of the Grail drama. Can it be denied that, while from the standpoint of a Christian interpretation the character of the Fisher King is simply incomprehensible, from the standpoint of Folk-tale inadequately explained, from that of a Ritual survival it assumes a profound meaning and significance? He is not merely a deeply symbolic figure, but the essential centre of the whole cult, a being semi-divine, semi-human, standing between his people and land, and the unseen forces which control their destiny. If the Grail story be based upon a Life ritual the character of the Fisher King is of the very essence of the tale, and his title, so far from being meaningless, expresses, for those who are at pains to seek, the intention and

object of the perplexing whole. The Fisher King is, as I suggested above, the very heart and centre of the whole mystery, and I contend that with an adequate interpretation of this enigmatic character the soundness of the theory providing such an interpretation may be held to be definitely proved. (page 128-129)

Mission Statement:

WashPub stands as a beacon of discourse- through commentary, prose, and work. It strives to bring thoughtful, amusing, and creative thoughts to the University Community- particularly to members and visitors of any duration of the Washington Literary Society and Debating Union. In short, this publication wishes solely to serve as a conduit for all those who wish to express themselves through the pen (or to be strict ink spurted onto paper that comes out of a printer in someone's messy room).

**Sincerely,
WashPub Editorial Board**

To contact us with comments or works:

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Table of Contents

Judo Man vs. the Red Russian Machine – Evan Stewart

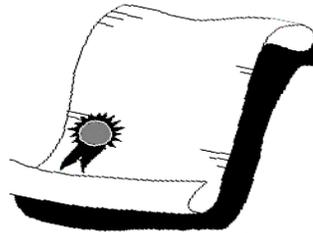
All great institutions need epic stories. These mythical narratives allow us to come around the rotting table of our society and breathe vitality back into our lives. And now WASHPub has found its creation myth! With some Battle Pope and a duel between JudoMan and Stalin, not only have we found the roots of our creation, we have brought you access to one mighty glorious story.



Washpub: 'Man that dude likes his statue in his mouth!'
Editor C: 'Do we really need this picture, people think we're weird enough already.'
Washpub: 'Doubt not the powers of WASHPub; within me is the manifold experiences of human existence and you cannot silence me ever! Unless you buy me that pretty pink dress'
Editor B: 'You are physically incapable of wearing it!'
WashPub: 'But I can't sing 'I'm so pretty' unless I have the dress!'

Academic bulimia nervosa or my american dream – Amy Hawkins

With the leviathan of Midterm-period now breathing its last breathes for most, WASHPub brings to your door a timely piece of academic digestion. While the writer of this caption has never attempted to chew his Physics notebook, he is sure that it would taste both bad and present some Uncertainty principles to his mind as well.



What the f@#! is up with the thrill of honesty violation in our fine academical village? So asks this probing editorial on the critical condition of integrity in interpersonal relationships. Can it really be that our postindustrial society can only find moments of liberating bliss in deceit? Don't be a liar I say! Don't be a liar! Oh wait, I am a liar too! Ha-ha-hoo-hoo. – Sarah D'Adamo

Why Don't You Eat Your Own Vomit? -- Tanim Islam

Well...this is pretty axiomatic. So instead WASHPub wishes to Sing you all its song of happiness. 'I am so happy; I am so happy; My vomit is like swiss chesse, oh I am the big cheese. You read me, I know you do! But little do you know that I am really reading you! Silly humans, you are nothing more than that infant on the cover, bowing to my supreme and supra-inhuman will! <Note: WASHPub has now been tied up...sorry for any inconvenience>



A Black-facing of Adorno: A Defense of Henry Louis Gates, JR.—Keith White

A short, terse and strange piece assaulting the misconstruing of an African-American literary theorist. Why? Our bet is on an over-watching of Mr. T videos. Or perhaps just to rank and make no sense. We apologize, but perhaps there are a few good points- in the copied biography.

Judo Man vs. the Red Russian Machine

Nestled in the high mountains of Montana exists the successful metropolis of Gentle Way. Like many cities, Gentle Way has restaurants, a movie theater, and shady merchants selling knock off watches at a third of the standard price. Below this veneer of normalcy lives a seedy underbelly of crime and hatred. Corrupt men of diabolical intentions plot to harm the innocent citizens of Gentle Way. When evil crawls out from the alleys, only one person can stop its terrifying assault.

JUDO MAN.

We begin our story on a normal sunny morning. The birds sing a melodious tune as the happy people start their day. Parents grasp their excited children in vain hopes of getting them to the bus on time as paperboys hurry to deliver their cargo. But all is not well, for as soon as the last *Jigaro Gazette* hits the last welcome mat, an ominous rumbling envelops the town. The concerned populace rushes out to discover what new mischief attacks their fair city. To the shock and horror of all, countless tanks appear on the horizon. Planes darken the sky while burly soldiers march in sickening unity. Those too frightened to run away, notice one more thing, these monstrous invaders fly a crimson flag with a yellow hammer and sickle. Holding this flag is the man himself, the loathsome, the terrible, the destructive, Joseph Stalin.

"THE RED RUSSIAN MENACE HAS ARRIVED!!! WHO WILL SAVE US???" cry the people.

"Only one can stop their terrible onslaught! Commissioner! Call Judo Man!" orders the mayor.

Acting quickly, the police force rush to the top of Gentle Way police station and project the Tori signal into the sky. The Tori signal, a beacon of justice and light, calls forth the mighty defender known as Judo Man.

"Your armies stop here, Stalin." declares Judo Man.

"Not so, my little g'd avenger. We shall march forward and spread the Iron Curtain across THE WORLD!!!! MWA HA HA HA HA HA!!!!" Uncle Joe laughs cruelly.

"Never! Your Iron Curtain of Corruption shall be replaced with the Venetian Blinds of Truth and the Window Sill of Justice!"

"We shall see! Arrggggghh".

And with that deafening wail, Stalin charges towards his foe. Yet Judo Man waits. The powerful dictator picks up speed, raging with blind ferocity. Yet Judo man waits. The Russian of Destruction then lets loose his formidable fist in an attempt to fell our hero in one swift blow. The ever-patient Judo Man uses his superior position and training to swiftly throw the Soviet goliath. Stalin lands squarely on his back, soon writhing in pain.

Judo Man laughs and says, "Perhaps if you had practiced your form instead of invading Poland, you might have learned how to take that fall."



That bold savior of humanity still had much more to teach the King of Gulags. With a quick fall, Judo Man pins Stalin to the pavement. Working his way around the pin cycle, the Martial Arts Avenger uses all his skill to contain the Russian.

Unbeknownst to our hero, Iron Joe had studied the ways of Judo and deception. Stalin bridges, rolling Judo Man away. With a quick dash, Stalin grasps his hidden knife and stabs powerful protector of Gentle Way. The Towering Pillar of Communist Might looms over the Fallen Savior and prepares the final blow. Just then, Judo Man shoots out his hand and puts Stalin in an armbar. The Evil Russian flops helplessly to the ground. He knows he has lost. Then an evil smile crosses Stalin's lips.

"You may have defeated me, but with that wound there's no way you can stop my armies from destroying your whole city!!!!"

Judo Man sinks in despair, for the demon spawn of Russian Radicalism speaks the truth.

CAN NO ONE SAVE THE INNOCENTS????

But then, as if by magic, sanctified horns sound across the battlefield. Joy enters the hearts of the fearful for they know that sound. It is the battle cry of John Paul II, more commonly known as BATTLE POPE!

"God, nor I, fear you, Iron Joe. It is time to end your reign of terror. Go, my faithful protectors! Go!"

From behind the Sultan of Sanctification comes a swarm of the elite Swiss Guard. The gleaming halberds and feather-capped helmets frighten the heartless Soviet drones. The savage Reds turn tail and run with the merciless Swiss in hot pursuit.

Judo Man turns to Battle Pope and says "Thank you, your Grace. Your protectors have saved us all."

"No," John Paul exclaims, "it was the way of Judo. Continue your noble work, and be proud of your skills."

And with those powerful words, the two Titans of Humanity leave us.



The End.

Academic bulimia nervosa or my american dream

Undergraduate education is a cheap buffet
aisles made of shiny sticky food
tepid under heat lamps and professors' wavering attention
while they write their books and grants and journal publications
collections of powerpoint slides growing stale
lectures slopping out of a slotted metal spoon
to hit a hot chipped white china plate
please bring a clean one each time you return
because you will

Looking across the steam,

the tired aproned clear plastic gloves
carrying stainless steel vats gluey casseroles
who quiver with quiet, malicious anticipation
see a slow enthusiasm on the faces of midwestern relatives
who judge yep worth crumpled dollars and 95 cents
or credit card balance shifting month-to-month
stacking plates and tightening waistbands is to see over and over ad nauseum

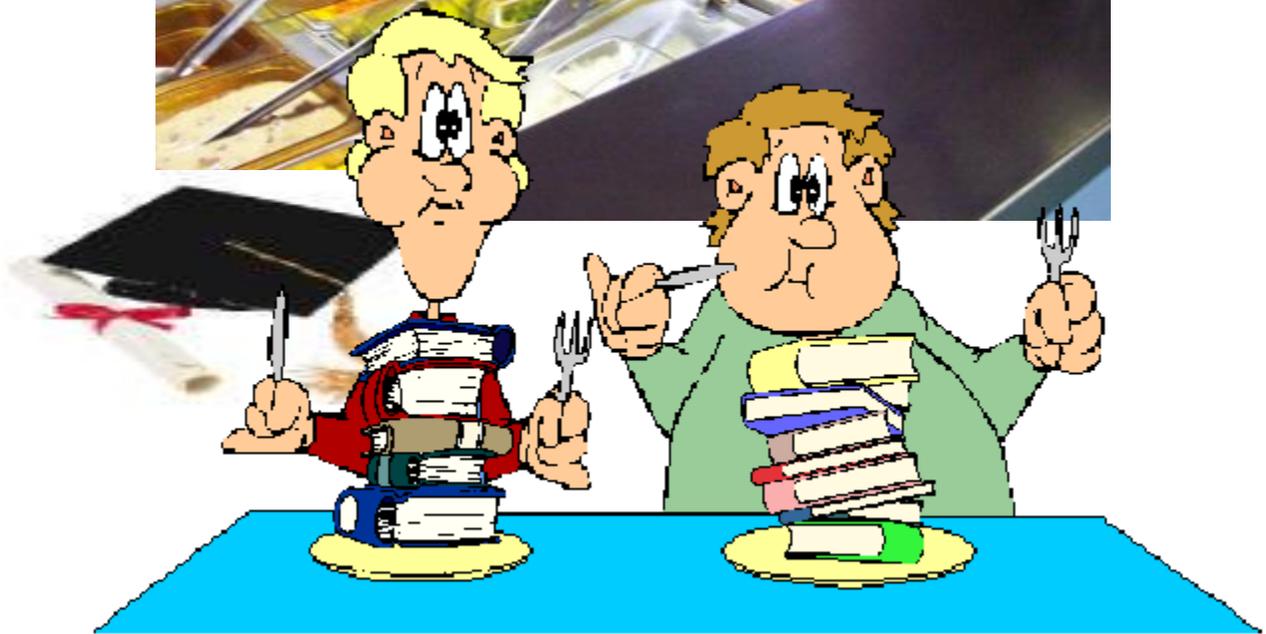
your kids are not hungry
that you are not hungry
like you were; and this is a hard thing to forget

in front of a plate of nourishment
or a buffet, full of senior discounts, in a failing midwestern suburb

But back to the university
where i sit in a dim auditorium
damp from the rain, ink bleeding through college-ruled notebook paper
scribbling down arrows reactions kicking off the hydrogen to make a water molecule
17, 18, 19 credits each semester shoveling it down
stacking classes, stacking part-time lab jobs on my transcript on my cv to is see
again

that any children I have can, will be grateful for such opportunities
that I will not be ignorant
like they were; and this is a hard thing to forget

while i sat quietly
teasing my fork across my wilted lettuce
grandparents and grandaunts having a satisfying chew at the buffet,
at the young people these days who think they know everything
babies having babies and abusing them
and nobody respecting nobody about anything.



An Elegy for Honesty

There are plenty of things that deserve elegies, like letter-writing, Latin, chivalry (unless you are a genuine good ole boy from, say, Montgomery, Alabama) and the national surplus. Why, out of all of my choices, you may wonder, do I choose honesty? I do feel a sense of loss for the deaths mentioned above - especially letter-writing, if you are wondering - but lately honesty has been reinforcing its death to me vociferously and disturbingly, and I think it's about time we mourn.

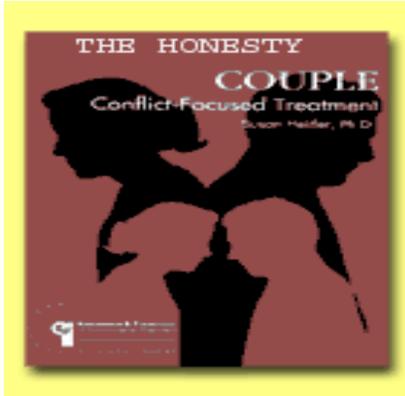
I do not intend to speak of honesty in the Honor System, or honesty in the White House; if you want to talk about those things, please respectively go to a Hoos Against Single Sanction meeting or cast your vote on November 2. I will be discussing interpersonal relationships, and more specifically, it seems, those of a romantic nature, despite possibilities of treading on dangerous ground.

I recently was informed of an appalling, relevant situation. This couple I knew from high school dated on and off for six years, the last two and some change years being serious (having matured enough by that point) and thought to be exclusive by at least one member of the relationship at any given point. You see, these two kids went to different high schools, and so it turns out that the entire time, and I mean the entire time, the girl was engaging in hookups, other extended relationships, and other sex on her own turf- and secretly, of course. Now, my rant about cheating is that if you are able to recognize your desire to cheat on your significant other (which we may hope you are at least 95% of the time, with some perhaps undeserved grace for usage of illegal drugs), then you **always** have enough time to stop yourself, remove yourself from the cheating situation, go break up with your beau/girlie,

and then go back and hook up. It is just never so dire as to trounce possibilities of showing respect for your significant other and their expectations, the expectations, might I add, that you have agreed upon mutually. Never. But this plot is thicker than all of that - a) because she did it so many times, apparently guiltlessly, and b) because she has cystic fibrosis and is going to die before she is 30. This is complicating; is she now able to consider herself conscience-free and entitled to an extreme case of moral relativism because time is precious and she must prioritize her actions according to her immediate desires while she still can? Or perhaps it is better to ask, is it fair of her to engage in the pretense of a serious relationship in the first place, and lead that other to such investment and hope?

Now, this case study may not be extremely relevant to the death of honesty, because of the special case that sub-point b provides. But it does point to that common behavior that I have been noticing: people are obsessed with this little *thrill* they can get from secrets, from lying, and can only get through those things. It's as if true and earnest thrills are no longer interesting, or maybe they never have been. Recently, a highly respected professor of our fine university spoke wisely about adultery, and you have may have heard him. Examining the question of why adultery has been such a fixture of literature throughout the years, he concludes that, and I'm paraphrasing, adultery is the most focused, intense way in which the desires/needs of an individual collide head on with the community and social codes. So this is just another way of going against the grain? Why doesn't Sarah Miles just divorce her husband already, goddammit, like she knows she wants to, and go off with Bendrix? Yet, we cannot complete the picture until we connect that this very professor had a famous, very public affair with another professor within the

English department. It's that thrill again. And he wasn't even lying about it – at least not to the department, maybe to his wife. It's warped, and it scares me.



Another example – in the Drama department's recent production of *Private Lives* by Noel Coward, two reunited ex-spouses discuss their jealousy-ridden past marriage, and Elyot, the husband, brings up how Amanda had let some other man, one very much in love with her yet clearly not her husband, kiss her and how could she not think of how this would affect him? She responds, "If you hadn't been so suspicious and nosy you'd never have known a thing about it." Whoa, what? Why is this okay? Why does the question "Hm, if my partner knew about this, would they flip their shit?" not enter into people's heads? Or does it, but they just cling to the thrill and the then guise of secrecy? I can't decide if people are just lazy, or scared, or if it is merely unfashionable to be up front about one's actions. For, sure, we all have secret thoughts, sometimes ones that perhaps we ourselves don't even approve of and ones that should not all be shared, but the point at which they are on the verge of moving into the secret action category indicates that something needs to be re-evaluated.

I cannot exhaust or encapsulate this topic; there will always be supporting evidence and counter-examples. Perhaps honesty has been at least partially dead all along, and I'm only just suddenly hearing about more and more – which still provides no comfort. But I think the line is fine and the tightrope unsteady that determines whether lying can spare hurt feelings (and whether that avoidance is even okay at all) and whether it is simply a failure. Either way, honesty just don't get no respect.

Why Don't You Just Eat Your Own Vomit?

A few years back I used to edit a college publication at Caltech, called the "B. F. D." This was a complete waste of our undergrad dorm's money, so the job of "editor" meant that I had to write all or nearly all the articles in it. Big mistake. Among other things, I helped to foster discussion on important topics of the day; topics like "why do all these white people have so many divorces," "is Colt 45 the shittiest or best brand of 40-oz malt liquor available," and whether Ben Matlock is quite possibly the greatest defense lawyer ever to matriculate from Harvard Law School. Armed with bottles of Boone's Farm and boxes of Franzia, each week I would string letters into words, then words into sentences, in the hope that some of them would be funny. Here's one that most people thought didn't suck:

Have you ever seen a pig eat its own poo-poo? How about a dog? I just saw something the other day: a dog ate vulture poo. Metal shavings might have more nutritional value, but it's a bit of a toss-up. In light of this, here are reviews of some of the most awful places I have ever eaten for money. I won't, for example, talk about the time I drank a sip of Bengali stall-water and then a few hours later I thought I would die.

McDonald's

I've been to McDonald's at the corner of California and Del Mar a few times, and I've seen people who eat there regularly. Maybe these people should have a sign around them that says that "I elect drug companies to perform medical experiments on me without pay because I am just that stupid." I mean, Jesus fucking Christ, I'm giving you a little list of things I am too cynical to think you wouldn't do: 1) eat your own vomit, 2) run naked through traffic, 3) light your farts on a dare? There are things for you that are worse to eat. Here are some of them: 1) molten lava, 2) dead babies, and 3) fermented squirrel parts. But I wouldn't want to give you any ideas now! Suffice it to say, their food is BAD. I have seen cats and dogs spit out hamburgers and Big Macs and then go back to eating what they found in the garbage. There's always fewer strays around when a McDonald's sets up shop. But do what you want – if strapping your baby to the hood of your car, setting yourself on fire to get "closer to Jesus," or drinking fried pork lard get you through the day, then by all means eat here...

Hi-Fi Pizza

I once made a comparison of Hi-Fi Pizza's "food" to that of a better place, Cinderella's Pizza. They said Hi-Fi wasn't so bad. I said comparing food from Cinderella's to Hi-Fi was like comparing what goes into your mouth to what comes out of your ass. I walked around by there to class, and I always had to cover my mouth with a chunk of sweater, shirt, or coat to keep from gagging and/or vomiting from the alley behind the place – full of, I am sure, rotting food, hobo corpses, demons, and unspeakable matter. But that's not even the worst of it! It smells worse inside! Their food should only be eaten on a dare, and only for money – like getting frat boys to drink horse diarrhea. Once you see your pepperoni squirm around the pizza and off your plate, you aren't going back. And another thing: I don't think they've ever hired a single person the whole time I was at Caltech. My theory is there is a warlock who, for lack of a better name, I will call the "manager." I think he just animates some of the unmentionables from the back alley and covers it over with the skin of dead hobos. There is nothing to recommend this place, except if you wanted to kill your boyfriend or girlfriend slowly, from the inside and working its way out.

TFM (Total Food Management)

TFM is the company that operates Caltech's cafeterias, and this being California, they exclusively hire illegal immigrants and criminals. For example, Pol Pot works at TFM; so does Yoda, after he was accused of improprieties with young boy Jedis. Their bacon is pretty good, but I think it's because they use (healthy) people. What can I say about them that hasn't already been said? Their vegetarian chili has the highest concentration of meat I've seen in any chili, their sushi tastes like manatees and blue whales, and don't try their cherry cobbler – the food coloring is made with sugared human blood! Here's a fun tip for bored assholes: after lunch or dinner, yell out "This is an INS raid!" to see the workers scatter. For the longest time they didn't care (remember the boy who cried "wolf?"), but after a raid this past year (1998)...they've been paying a little more attention, just in case.

A Black-facing of Adorno: A Defense of Henry Louis Gates, JR.

Gates is the W.E.B. Du Bois Professor of the Humanities at Harvard and director of the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for Afro-American Research there. Educated at Yale and Clare College of the University of Cambridge, he taught English literature and Afro-American studies at Yale and at Cornell before joining Harvard in 1991.

Gates discovered [The Bondwoman's Narrative](#) which is the first known novel written by an African American woman who had been a slave. He with Anthony Appiah

edited [Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience](#).

Honors granted to him include the [Zora Neale Hurston Society Award for Cultural Scholarship](#) the George Polk Award for Social Commentary and the Tikkun National Ethics Award. He has been a Mellon Fellow at Cambridge and the National Humanities Center, a Ford Foundation National Fellow and a MacArthur Prize Fellow.

Talking Black: Critical Signs of the Times opens with the following quotation from Alexander Crummell:

For a language acts in diverse ways, upon the spirit of a people; even as the spirit of a people acts with a creative and spiritualizing force upon a language.

Already we find in these few lines the flowing critical elements of Gates: *black, slave history, language, and spirit*.

Yet people find that this historian is just another imprisoned Marxist- offering only art to the repressed, refusing any attempt for the current 'masters' to understand literature holistically. No unity, for these nay sayings. Like sheep they race to the slaughter house and then complain when the day ends and they find that they have yet another day to wait to find their absolution.

Suffice to say, these sheep are blind. They refuse to see the self-critical role that Gates is playing for art in a universal sense. Note, he ends his piece "For the future of theory, in the remainder of this century, is black indeed." This clever conclusion encompasses both the failure of the institutions of literary criticism to properly develop African-American literature- the 'black' or sorrowful result- and its success, with African American discourse bursting and establishing itself from the white "matrix" of literary theory.

For Gates American discourse and identity is determined by the traditional master relation of white males- which is still toweringly dominating academia, thus dominating our views on art. But cry the critics, Gates is building a canon which we are locked out from- he is refusing the tradition of African American writing, and worst yet, he is being racist by first homogenizing African American art and then locking its eager white apologists from gleaning insight. How these cries cover the profound misunderstanding of the current tilt in our ivory tower, and how indeed they only achieve to point to the validity of Gates' point.

Gates writes:

"Race is a text (an array of discursive practices), not an essence." → it can't be owned or possessed but say the breaded men...

"We must do so [make black structures and language of criticism by drawing on the black vernacular, the language we use to speak to each other when no outsiders are around. Unless we look to the vernacular... [we will be] masked in the received stereotype of the Black Other helping Huck..."

The institution needs periodic overhaul, just as the novel hurled out the dated primacy of epic poetry. Gates identifies African-American literature as a vehicle which is born in the womb of the American institution, but is simultaneously alien. Thus, critics need both the language and structures of white and black America. Not to 'own' and lord black literature over the heads of the 'masters' but to save the very institution itself. For only with the inward turn and critical self-reflection and autonomy of the vernacular of black literature can it grow and truly actualize the shared heritage. And thus the slave, as it so often does, will breathe new life into the master.

Spirit for Gates is not black, spoken only with the vernacular of inner-city. He, himself, cannot find home in this as he rests on the tower of white academia. Spirit is the spirit of language; and now it is not new forms that will save us, but new voices- but they need to move from 'parole' to 'langue'. Listen to the words, oh yee well-intention sheep, stop black-facing an American Adorno- society cannot afford it. And now something for the kids. Specifically the ones you hate.

