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LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER

Erotic autonomy and social transgression: reassessing female agency in Lawrence's *'Lady Chatterley's Lover'.*

"Ours is essentially a tragic age, so we refuse to take it tragically." – D.H. Lawrence.

Infamous instantly upon publication, hailed one of the most controversial novels in English literature, D. H. Lawrence's *'Lady Chatterley'* has occupied a unique position in history as both a scandalous literary affront and a necessary exploration of sex, class, and the human need for fulfilment. Lawrence stages a provocative inquiry into erotic autonomy and social transgression, inviting a reassessment of female agency that remains crucial for examination and appreciation today. The novel's portrayal of Constance Reid's (Lady Chatterley) emotional needs, desires, and refusal to be contained by class and conventions, reconfigures autonomy as an embodied, erotic self determination rather than mere rhetorical freedom. Its premise, coupled with the vulgarity of the language used (and expletives peppered throughout) was inconceivable in 1929, when it was first published. John Yorke commented, 'In 1920s Britain these class-straddling lovers would have sent shockwaves through society,'[1] with the particularly candid portrayal of intimacy being more than indecent for the typical reader of the period. But Lawrence refused to compromise his vision and in order to publish, paid a small Italian printer to print it privately because no British publisher would touch it. It wasn't until the 1960s that a complete, uncensored version was released in Britain. And for those reading in the shadow of the 1960 trial highlights how literary censorship and changing standards of free expression reframed Lawrence's work from scandal to a touchstone for sexual frankness. The novel's notable sexual transgression emerges where private desire collides with societal norms – blatantly in the form of Connie's affairs, unsettling class boundaries and exposing the hypocrisies of post-war English respectability. Though a dutiful

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[1] John Yorke, *Opening Lines,* BBC Radio 4, 29/1/23

wife, *"She was attached to Clifford... she wanted a good deal from the life of a man, and this Clifford did not give her: could not"* her husband's impotence is, for Connie an indication of the gap between her emotional attachment to him and the deeper erotic and human fulfilment he is incapable of offering her, marking a moment of recognition that her own, unmet desires are legitimate, setting the groundwork for her 'necessary' pursuit of sexual agency outside the confines of their marriage. In this essay the reassessment of female agency will take into account *'Lady Chatterley's'* presentation of erotic autonomy and the transgression required for it to be fulfilled.

Lawrence's novel situates the female body as a contested site where cultural anxieties about class and sexuality converge. Connie's body becomes a political terrain in which autonomy is negotiated: Clifford seeks to control her through intellectual companionship and social respectability, while Connie resists by reclaiming her body as a source of pleasure and vitality. Due to her husband, Clifford Chatterley's injuries obtained during the First World War she later finds that the marital promises of intimacy have been hollowed out by his paralysis and intellectual detachment, leaving her physically and emotionally bereft.[2] Her body becomes a terrain of dissatisfaction and estrangement; she tends to her husband's needs out of duty but results in receiving neither erotic fulfillment nor recognition of her sensual self. Clifford's frank encouragement to Connie – *"If lack of sex is going to disintegrate you, then go and have a love affair"* – acknowledges early in the novel the importance of sexuality in her life, and her subsequent encounter with Oliver Mellors, the gamekeeper whose raw

[2] Many returned from the First World War with lasting physical and psychological wounds. The unprecedented scale of mechanized warfare produced high rates of paralysis, amputations, and disfigurement, while the trauma of trench combat left many suffering from what was then called 'shell shock.' These injuries not only reshaped lives but also strained marriages and family structures, as partners often faced the emotional distance and physical limitations imposed by war's aftermath – for Clifford and Connie, their relationship becomes mechanised and limited as consequence, and familiarity provokes distance between them.

physical presence and openness to intimacy contrasts sharply with her husband's, provides the relief Clifford described as a prevention of 'sexual disintegration.' When Connie and Mellors first make love in his hut she experiences a simultaneous release and a form of awakening that she has never known with Clifford. Her reflection as he lay *"softly panting against her breast"* that *"it lifted a great cloud from her, and given her peace?"* shows that with Mellors sexual relations aren't just mere eroticism; sex becomes intrinsic to her recognition of herself as a fully embodied person with desires that matter[3], having been limited with both her husband and the Michaelis. With Michaelis, Lawrence exposes the emptiness of purely physical intimacy, as his self-absorbed passion leaves her unfulfilled and emotionally untouched. Mick feels *"a curious sense of pride"* from *"her achieving her own orgiastic satisfaction from his hard, erect passivity"* yet is then disappointed when she failure to obtain more simultaneously, expecting more from her. The affair with Michaelis underscores her need for a deeper union, despite her repeated contempt for the possibility of a child with him, *"Mick's children! Repulsive thought!"* – paradoxical to her later relationship with Mellors where sexual reciprocity and emotional connection become the foundation of her true autonomy, and indeed when the novel ends with her pregnant with his child. The focus on her body and the sensual challenges the conventions of his time which treated female sexuality as something to be controlled or confined by the patriarchy. Connie's repeated dalliance's outside of her marriage shows a natural, instinctive rejection of the patriarch in her life, Clifford. Her use of her body on anyone other than Clifford illustrates the transition of it into political territory where individual and social constraints converge, and awareness of her body's needs and her refusal to minimize them becomes a radical act that

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[3] Lawrence's insistence on the spiritual and restorative dimensions of sexual union challenged early 20th-century taboos, presenting sex as a vital force that reconnects individuals to their humanity and to nature. In this way, Connie's gratifying experience with Mellors reflects Lawrence's broader philosophy that genuine sexual relations could dissolve alienation and restore wholeness in a modern world fractured by industrialization and war.

contests the dominant moral codes of her class and era. For Lawrence and the narrator, *"The body is the one great reality, and the rest is shadow."* Lawrence's attention to the ways in which Connie's dissatisfaction with Clifford's coldness parallels her alienation from her own body underscores this point. In a society where women were still expected to behave as though their sexuality was ornamental and conditional on male desire the novel insists that acknowledging one's physical desires is a claim to personhood in its own right. In fact Connie rejects this, initiating much of her sexual encounters within the book, the narrator remarking his disappointment when *"Connie had not come to him in the night,"* and her interrogative turned imperative *"May I come...I'll come to you"* showing that her erotic autonomy here is not merely personal but quietly, unintentionally political, challenging the patriarchal notion that female sexuality should be subordinate against male authority.[4]

'Chatterley' also explores the extent to which social position inhibits Connie's agency. Though her affairs mark her refusal to remain confined within the rigid structures of class and marriage, their eventual implication is her pregnancy outside her social rank. When she is forced to admit to Clifford that she is pregnant with Mellors' baby and is refused divorce the impact of reclaiming her sexual agency has limited her social standing by continuing on with a commoner. Importantly, in discussion with her father about her situation, despite his happiness that she has found sexual satisfaction, is outraged that her lover is a commoner – further alienating Connie from any support and consciously revealing the consequence of her

[4] Two landmark reforms in Britain reshaped women's rights in the early 20th century: the Representation of the People Act 1918, which granted suffrage to women over thirty, and the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919, which opened professions and public office to them. These measures began to erode the legal and cultural assumption that women's roles, and by extension their sexuality should remain secondary to male authority. Connie's assertion of her sexual autonomy against Clifford's detachment resonates with this broader societal shift, dramatizing how female desire was increasingly recognized as legitimate in both private and public spheres.

action. Her relationship with Mellors represents a radical social transgression: a woman of aristocratic background choosing intimacy with a working-class gamekeeper who was *"kind to the female within her, which no man had ever been...Men were awfully kind to Constance Reid...but not to her womb they weren't"*. Their relationship destabilizes entrenched hierarchies, allowing Connie assertion over her autonomy against social position. By crossing boundaries of class and propriety, Connie redefines her identity beyond Clifford's expectations and society's norms. The narrative of deceit and self-fulfillment thus dramatizes female agency as a challenge to the social order, where erotic choice becomes a vehicle for social critique. The choice of Mellors as her primary lover over Mick (an intellectually superior friend of Clifford) transgresses established social boundaries not merely for sensation's sake but as a deliberate rejection of her upper-class identity with all of its expectations and hierarchies. Additionally her brief affair with the playwright Michaelis at the start of the book, though intellectually satisfying, fails to provide her with either emotional depth or physical pleasure, *'he did not satisfy...he was always come...while she lay, dazed, disappointed, lost'* leaving her feeling estranged from both upper-class indulgence and the very world that once seemed a source of stimulation, *'she still wanted the physical, sexual thrill she could get with him, by her own activity, his little orgasm being over.'* One of the most well-known moments of transgression in *'Chatterley'*, sees Connie and Mellors engaging one another in the forest of Wragby and they achieve multiple orgasms together, something which for Connie is transformative. The deeply affecting moment, awakes for Connie a tender admiration for Mellors and a sense that they've reached a profound emotional and sensual harmony. It marks the first time Connie experiences intimacy as something mutual, and emotionally alive rather than something mechanical or dutiful. It signals a turning point in her awakening, the idyllic, natural setting reinforcing her move away from the typical as she sees desire is no longer something to supress. Mellors allows a

reconnection to her own body, to nature, and to a sense of genuine human connection. 'The nature-sex imagery provides considerably more than texture,'[5] her turning away from Clifford's world and toward Mellors's farm labour life represents autonomy over social positioning; she prioritizes the essential experience of life and sensation over prescribed class roles. This transgression points to the deeper message that autonomy over one's social position is not only about mobility in the economic sense but involves self-definition outside of societal expectations.

'Lady Chatterley's Lover' remains a novel that unsettles because it confronts deep-rooted assumptions about body, class, sexuality forming a psychologically powerful depiction of adult relationships. Through Connie Chatterley Lawrence explores the female body as a site of political and personal assertion challenging the spirits of repression and convention. Her movement beyond the social strictures of her class toward a relationship that privileges physical and emotional integrity over inherited rank articulates autonomy not as abstraction – but a lived choice. Her sexual expression complicates and expands notions of agency in ways that reverberate beyond the text and into the very history of publishing and cultural norms. Importantly, Connie does not emerge as a revolutionary figure in the conventional sense. Her actions are not guided by political theory or social reform but by an intuitive recognition of her own deprivation. Yet it is precisely this lack of ideological intent that renders her autonomy so radical. By prioritising bodily knowledge over traditional codes of conduct, Lawrence suggests that genuine transformation often begins beneath consciousness, in sensation rather than speech. Erotic autonomy thus becomes inseparable from social critique – once Connie asserts the legitimacy of her own desire, the structures that deny it (class

[5] The Interpenetrating Metaphor: Nature and Myth in Lady Chatterley's Lover, John B. Humma

stratification, marital obligation, and patriarchal control) are exposed as untenable. She moves from the bloodless world of the intelligentsia and aristocracy into a profound relationship rooted in sensuality and sexual satisfaction. Once a challenging product of its time the novel invites readers to reconsider what it means for a woman to claim her body, her desires and her life in a world that routinely constrained such claims. In this light erotic autonomy and social transgression become inseparable from female agency, and why in today's society where female agency is continually abused and forced into violent limitation, it is crucial that *'Chatterley'* is reassessed and appreciated separately from mere shocking sexual depiction and the tight lipped, unsupportive persecutors from the Chatterley trial. As Calvin Bedient noted, 'the book is nothing like obscene and should never have been tried.'[6]

Word count (quotes excluded): **1986**

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Jane Eyre: how does romantic idolisation affect religion?

Aimie Domagalski | UVI Dale | Minerva essay

Aimie Domagalski

In *Jane Eyre*, romantic idolisation interplays with religious faith throughout the metanarrative, sometimes even superseding or 'eclipsing' it, until the dénouement, where the two can coexist without threatening to erode the other key forces at play; identity and integrity. The novel's discourse on idolatry and religious devotion can be seen as a reflection of Charlotte Brontë's own dislike of and fascination towards Roman Catholicism, which Protestant Victorian society at the time fervently associated with idolatry, contending that its over emphasis on external forms of worship obscures God in the same way idolatry does. However, Brontë is not dogmatically critical of idolatry like other Protestant Victorian writers at the time; she sympathises with Jane's descent into idolatry and conveys the duality of imagination - the instrument of idolisation - to both encourage the self-delusion which can lead to idolatry and to expose its psychological and moral dangers. Romantic idolisation entails elevating human love to a near-spiritual or absolute force, therefore contradicting biblical teachings that condemn fashioning idols and preach that love of God should be prioritised over all others.[1] Therefore, by simultaneously sympathising with and critiquing romantic idolisation, Brontë offers a nuanced view on it, suggesting that it can act as both a threat and complement to religious faith. It can be a threat when destabilising judgement and encouraging the abandonment of religious principles, yet a complement when passion is controlled and enables God's love to be felt through His creation.

To first understand why romantic idolisation is formed, C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity* can be helpful. Lewis tries to prove the existence of God through the argument that "Creatures are not born with desire unless satisfaction for those desires exists...If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world."[2] In short, Lewis claims that humanity has an innate yearning for a transcendental experience that this world cannot satisfy, and because humans cannot yearn for what does not exist, God and Heaven must exist. However, whereas Lewis argues that the resolution to this dilemma lies in 'coming home to God', the romance genre suggests it is meeting your 'soulmate' (as Plato's theory of soulmates[3] depicts). However, in this process, the 'soulmate' is required to be elevated to a 'god-like' position (according to Christian

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[1] In the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:vs. 2-5), God decrees, "You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them". Matthew 22:27: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."

[2] Lewis, C.S., *Mere Christianity* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1952) p.134

[3] Plato's *Symposium* states "Love is born into every human being; it calls back the halves of our original nature together; it tries to make one out of two and heal the wound of human nature. Each of us, then, is a 'matching half' of a human whole...each of us is always seeking the half that matches". According to Ancient Greek mythology, humans used to consist of two people fused together as one.

myth); completing someone. Therefore, they are essentially *eclipsing* God or even committing a 'satanic rebellion' through the act of usurping His throne. This is reflected in the characterisation of numerous male love interests with satanic imagery and moral deficiencies in romance novels, notably Rochester in *Jane Eyre*. At the beginning of the novel, Jane is an embodiment of the infinite longing Lewis cites; it is her restless desire for excitement and adventure that drives her beyond Lowood, the convent school where she has spent the past eight years being "drilled in religious forms". Commenting on this restlessness of Jane, Searle remarks that "The fact that the imagination evokes visions and arouses a restless desire, which transcends the possible social configurations designed to satisfy it, suggests the existence of an infinite, personal being that corresponds to this longing".[4] Searle's argument (about yearning for transcendence in a world not designed to satisfy it pointing to the existence of God) complements Lewis', suggesting that Brontë intends to critique humans' idolatrous attempts to satisfy their otherworldly desires through others, as this can only be fulfilled by a divine being. Jane's longing for rapture appears to be realised when she meets Rochester, her intellectual equal and 'other half'. Yet, ultimately, this fulfilment proves illusory, as Rochester becomes a finite substitute for the infinite being her imagination seeks, revealing that Jane's desire for transcendence cannot be fully satisfied through human attachment alone.

Brontë alerts the reader of Jane's susceptibility to idolisation and her tendency to form deep attachments due to the lack of love she received in her upbringing. The narrator, an older Jane, reflects on her strong attachment to her doll, stating "human beings must love something, and, in the dearth of worthier objects of affection, I contrived to find a pleasure in loving and cherishing a faded, graven image". Brontë establishes that a flaw in Jane's character that could (and almost does) end up being her hamartia[5] is that all the adoration she was unable to bestow in her childhood makes her inclined to love too deeply. The way in which Jane loves the doll could also be seen as paralleling her relationship with God because, just as the doll cannot reciprocate Jane's affection, physical reciprocation of God's love for her is intangible. This therefore sets a precedent for Jane to seek validation and mutual love in human relationships, which can supersede the validation she feels from God's love in terms of gratification. Another instance demonstrating Jane's inherent craving for human love is when she exclaims "if others don't love me, I would rather die than live...to gain some real

[4] Searle, A: 'An Idolatrous Imagination? Biblical Theology and Romanticism in Charlotte Brontë's 'Jane Eyre" in *Christianity and Literature* 56, no. 1 (JHUP:Maryland, 2006) p. 57
[5] A fatal flaw or crucial error that leads to the downfall of a tragic hero or heroine

affection…I would willingly submit to have the bone of my arm broken". The extreme imagery of suffering emphasises how she has been so deprived of genuine affection that its value has risen inexorably, to the extent where she claims she would rather give parts of herself away. It is only after she realises the importance of adhering to her own understanding of religious principles and rejecting alternative and oppressive interpretations given by others, that she refuses to let parts of her identity be effaced by either Rochester's idolatry or St. John's proposal of a loveless marriage. Brontë therefore portrays that the key to religious devotion and earthly love's coexistence lies in maintaining a stable balance between the extremes of Helen Burns and St John's ascetic creeds and Rochester's indulgent idolatry; a balance between passion and self-denial.

Brontë uses both Jane and Rochester's romantic idolisation to illustrate its dangers in causing moral degeneration when eclipsing devotion to God. Rochester's idolisation of Jane is especially dangerous because it threatens not only to plunge him even further into moral degeneration through his adulterous attempt to marry Jane[6], but also to obscure Jane's devotion to God and "drag her down into his life of sin"[7]. Vejvoda argues that Rochester "hopes to mediate his salvation through another human being: to expiate his sins, particularly his first marriage, by marrying and taking care of Jane."[8] This indicates that, although Rochester does love Jane, his love is also rooted in self-interest because part of his desire to form a relationship with her stems from his belief that she will be his way to Salvation; an Angel purifying his sins and elevating him from the depths of his indulgence closer to the gates of Heaven. When asking Jane her opinion on whether a man would be justified in breaking societal constraints by marrying someone who they think would lead them to religious redemption, Jane's principles teach her to recognise that "a sinner's reformation should never depend on a fellow-creature." Yet, Rochester rebuffs "But the instrument - the instrument! God, who does the work, ordains the instrument…I believe I have found the instrument for my cure in–", demonstrating his misplaced belief that marriage would be a shortcut to redemption. Rochester's corruptive influence of Jane is evidenced by the fact that, when faced with his adulterous betrayal, Jane considers the possibility of becoming his mistress; such was the agonising prospect of having to part with her idol. This is evidence of Rochester's own low moral standards almost beginning to erode at her religious principles.

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[6] Rochester was already secretly married to Bertha Mason, whom he keeps hidden in the attic at Thornfield due to her violent insanity

[7] Le, U: The Illusion of Idolatry: A Lesson Sponsored by Hozier and Jane Eyre (https://ace.nd.edu/blog/illusion-idolatry-lesson-sponsored-hozier-and-jane-eyre). Accessed 1/1/26

[8] Vejvoda, K: 'Idolatry in 'Jane Eyre" in *Victorian Literature and Culture 31, no. 1* (CUP: Cambridge, 2003) p.247

One evening with Jane, Rochester reveals his susceptibility to idolatry, using a metaphor of admitting an angelic-seeming figure into his heart in an attempt to make her aware of his desire for her. Whereas Jane's strong religious principles informs her to be wary of idolatry, indicated by her warning "distrust it, sir; it is not a true angel", Rochester proclaims "I have received the pilgrim - a disguised deity, as I verily believe. Already it has done me good: my heart was a sort of charnel; it will now be a shrine." This shows how Rochester's idolisation shapes his religious outlook to be more personal and tailored than doctrinal. He perceives he is entitled to commit the biblical transgression of idolatry by worshiping Jane (as "shrine" indicates) *because* her moral superiority makes her a spiritually ameliorating force that can help him achieve moral reformation. Rochester's remark to Jane about his close connection with her; "I know what sort of a mind I have placed in communication with my own: I know it is not one liable to take infection…I do not mean to harm it: but, if I did, it would not take harm from me…while I cannot blight you, you may refresh me" conveys his overestimation of her abilities. He believes that her mind is untainted, and therefore places too much faith in her ability to protect herself from corrupting forces, demonstrating his selfishness; he wants her influence to reform and "refresh" him morally, but does not realise his influence is equally potent and may infect her. Rochester's corruption of Jane displays the pervasive threat of idolatry to disguise itself as love while subtly eroding someone's identity. Jane's idolatry is different from Rochester's; to her, Rochester has usurped God, to the extent where she cannot feel religious anymore. This is best exemplified when she reflects retrospectively "My future husband was becoming to me my whole world…almost my hope of heaven. He stood between me and every thought of religion, as an eclipse intervenes between man and the broad sun. I could not, in those days, see God for His creature: of whom I had made an idol." The world being plunged into darkness in the nature simile of a planet eclipsing the sun mirrors how Rochester's influence leads Jane towards a morally dubious path. Jane being unable to see God for His creature embodies Brontë's intention to encourage the separation of love for God and love for God's creation. In this instance, earthly love and religion cannot coexist because Rochester's love is elevated to a spiritual level and is monopolising Jane's devotion. However, in the same way that Milton's Satan can never truly occupy a heavenly throne, neither can a 'sinful' or bigamous marriage truly achieve the same success as one that adheres to the Christian framework; Jane and Rochester even get separated in a house of God.

Brontë portrays religion as corrective to the sinful idolatry of Jane and Rochester's love; it is only when they reconcile with their religious devotion that their relationship can thrive.

However, Vejvoda argues that "Jane's sudden refuge in sanctimony is unconvincing...Clearly, Jane herself is not convinced. Feeling defensive and betrayed by Rochester, she seeks stability in her Protestant selfhood, the pole of identity opposed to his Catholicism and corruption."[9] It is arguable that Jane's return to religion in the face of Rochester's betrayal is more about turning to God for comfort when her other 'god' has deceived her. Furthermore, Jane's control over her idolatrous tendencies at the dénouement of the novel is tenuous. When returning to Rochester after her spiritual rehabilitation, she does not yet know his wife is dead, and is willing to risk idolatry to be with him once more. After discovering Rochester's betrayal, Jane proclaims "One idea only still throbbed life-like within me - a remembrance of God", suggesting that, in the sudden vacuum of love left by Rochester's deception, she attempts to fill it with self-love and love for God once more; Rochester can no longer monopolise it. When arguing with Rochester about her need to leave him due to his attempted adultery, she increasingly uses biblical phrases, almost as if her personality has undergone an evangelical cleansing. This could imply that her turn to the Bible in a time of need is the only way she can see herself becoming strong enough in her religious convictions to counter Rochester's incitation of idolatry and her lingering idolisation of him, rather than merely spiritual reformation. Yet, ultimately, whether purely benevolent or not, her return to God helps her piece back her identity that was menaced by idolisation. She regains her principled independence and again realises the importance of adhering to religious laws when she refuses to become Rochester's mistress and ponders "Laws and principles are not for the times when there is no temptation...If at my individual convenience I might break them, what would be their worth? They...are all I have at this hour to stand by." The rhetorical question emphasises her rejection of moral relativism, hence she must undergo a great trial of character - resisting temptation - in order to reprioritise her morals so that religion and autonomy are first. Her recognition after leaving Rochester that staying true to God instead of turning to idolatry when experiencing restless desires for transcendence is exemplified by her reflection "when our energies seem to demand a sustenance they cannot get - when our will strains after a path we may not follow...we have but to seek another nourishment for the mind, as strong as the forbidden food it longed to taste - and perhaps purer." This embodies Brontë's ultimate aim; as Searle puts it, "to deconstruct the mythic claim of romantic passion to fully satisfy any human being."[10]

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[9] Vejvoda, K p.251
[10] Searle, A p.36

The only time Jane and Rochester's relationship can function properly and morally is when Rochester has been torn down from his pedestal and the power imbalance - both socioeconomic and moral - has reached equilibrium so that they can no longer idolise each other. In a similar way to how C.S. Lewis' argument about coming home to God necessitates death, relationships in romance novels often need a kind of 'rebirth' or symbolic death in order to function successfully and continuously. After this 'death' they live 'happily ever after' because they have essentially reached completion and become one as Plato's theory depicts; equals, without one eclipsing the other, as was the case with idolisation. Rochester even acknowledges his symbolic death and 'rebirth', after having faced a close encounter with death when a fire scorched Thornhill estate, resulting in his wife's suicide and the loss of his right arm and sight[11]. He states "I was forced to pass through the valley of the shadow of death. *His* chastisements are mighty; and one smote me which has humbled me for ever." It is only after "the Omnipotent snatched" his "treasure" and he faces a close encounter with a fiery death (reminiscent of 'purging' evil spirits, linking to the New Testament theme of sanctification through suffering) that Rochester 'comes home to God' and begins to "experience remorse, repentance, the wish for reconcilement to my Maker". After this realignment with God, Rochester's prayers are able to be answered, as shown by his prayer for a reunion with Jane, which she somehow receives telepathically and follows his voice calling her. This could be interpreted as a sign of God condoning the relationship after it has become sanctified in a Christian way, as if their telepathic communication is carried out through the medium of God or some higher power. At the denouement, their relationship also works because she has had brutal first-hand experience of a fault of his, which serves therefore as a constant reminder of his moral limits and fallibility; he can never truly replace god because she knows he is not omni-benevolent. While Brontë does depict that human love should not eclipse love for God, she also portrays that religious devotion and self-denial, such as the extreme asceticism of her cousin St John, can be unbearable without earthly love. Searle claims "Jane and Rochester are choosing, through their ultimate submission to the biblical principle of monogamous union, to recognize both their finitude and accountability as human beings made in the image of God on the one hand and divine power and authority on the other."[12] This suggests that Jane and Rochester's marriage affirms the possibility of religion and earthly love to coexist, as Jane and Rochester appear to be able to control their passion and have come home to God.

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[11] Ironically, the biblical punishment for adultery
[12] Searle, A p.53

In conclusion, Jane is a site of contest between two extremes; idolatry and asceticism. Yet, by rejecting both and following her own principles and letting herself ascertain the path God plans for her, she is able to tame her idolatrous tendencies and recognise the mutuality of human love when God is prioritised.

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Henry Kirby

How does Orwell present political and economic mechanisms of power and control in *Animal Farm*?

George Orwell's *Animal Farm* follows the corruption of an idealistic revolution and shows how political and economic mechanisms of control transform collective freedom into authoritarian rule. At the beginning of the novella, Old Major, the most senior pig on the farm, shares his vision of equality and collectivisation, which mirrors Marxist principles of shared labour and the end of exploitation[1]. However, revolutionary idealism quickly changes to hierarchy as the pigs, who are intellectually superior, monopolise education and resources, showing how the farm acts as a microcosm of wider society. This leads to a progression from self-governance to dictatorship under the new leader, Napolean. History is manipulated, labour intensified and propaganda is spread. Orwell thus demonstrates how revolutions collapse through internal corruption, eventually mirroring the ideologies they rebelled against, reflecting his disillusionment with authoritarian socialism and broader concerns over how power operates in many political systems. Orwell effectively conveys his political standpoint, 'against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism'[2], in the novella and clearly shows his intent throughout.

Animal Farm acts as a historical allegory of the 1917 Russian revolution against Tsarist autocracy and was written in 1944, during the height of Stalinism. After Lenin's death in 1924, Stalin emerged victorious from the power struggle, outplaying Trotsky through political manipulation. He then used propaganda, purges, industrialisation and the NKVD (secret police) to consolidate his authority, turning the Soviet Union into a totalitarian state with centralised economic power and a cult of personality. Many see Stalinism as one of 'the major totalitarian political movements of the first half of the twentieth century'[3], along with Nazism, showing how the revolution was defined by the combination of political and economic domination. This essay will explore the themes of ideological corruption; the role of literacy and language in consolidating power; the use of fear as a mechanism of control; and finally economic mechanisms such as control of labour and resources.

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[2] Orwell, G: *'Why I Write'* in *Essays* (London: Penguin, 2004) p 6
[3] Arendt, H: *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1951) p. 420

Orwell presents revolutionary idealism as both dangerously naïve and morally compelling in *Animal Farm.* It acts as the ideological foundation of the revolution and helps power to later consolidate and corrupt. Early in the novella, Old Major makes a speech which closely mirrors many principles of Marxism, as the old pig emphasises 'abolition of private property'[4] and the end of exploitation. He declares that 'nearly the whole of the produce of our labour is stolen from us by human beings' to his fellow animals which depicts how they are oppressed by humanity, which parallels Marxist theory of a class struggle between the exploitative bourgeoisie and the exploited proletariat. This foreshadows the transformation of the pigs' leadership from socialism to totalitarianism, which eventually parallels the oppressive system under Mr Jones. Initially, labour on the farm is depicted as unifying for the animals, which aligns with Marx's belief that alienation will only come about when the means of production are controlled by a ruling class, in this case the humans. The slogan 'all animals are equal', sums up the revolutionary ideal of absolute equality which drives the animals during the revolution, but the aphoristic simplicity of the mantra undermines its strength as an ideology and shows how fragile Old Major's vision is. Orwell suggests that the vision relies heavily on emotional appeal, which makes it vulnerable to manipulation in the future, once power consolidates. There were promises of equality and collective governance following the Russian Revolution of 1917, which also gained huge support through idealistic rhetoric which appealed to the wider population. Orwell clearly illustrates his scepticism towards revolutionary movements by presenting the ideology as idealised and unrealistic which means they risk reproducing the hierarchies they intended to rebel against.

After the establishment of revolutionary ideology, Orwell presents literacy and language as the earliest political mechanism of power. The main reason that the pigs have legitimate authority is that they are 'generally recognised as being the cleverest of the animals'. This implies that most of the animals consent to their leadership and the hierarchy has not been forced upon them. This completely undermines the main principle of Animalism, that 'all animals are equal', suggesting how early the ideology has fallen apart and made way for inequality due to the acceptance of the fact that the pigs are intellectually superior. This is underpinned by the later addition of, 'but some animals are more equal than others', an impossible, paradoxical statement which serves as a powerful critique of totalitarianism and shows how the pigs'

[4] Marx, K: *The Communist Manifesto* (London: Pluto Press, 1996) chapter 2

literacy allows them to manipulate the laws of Animalism later in in the book, which depicts Orwell's warning that 'political language is designed to make lies sound truthful'[5], as historical reality is changed to legitimise the pigs' authority. This dynamic aligns with Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony, where a dominant ruling class maintains power by controlling a society's values and beliefs so that the oppressed accept them as the norm[6]. This ruling class is represented by the pigs who parallel the Bolshevik intelligentsia, educated professionals and theorists who generally supported and shaped the revolution. Their existence excluded the working class from meaningful political participation, as they greatly shaped socialist ideology, much like the pigs. Orwell uses the pigs to illustrate that when knowledge is unevenly distributed, it can evolve into a useful mechanism of control, allowing those in power to easily dictate policy without input from the wider population. This shows how literacy is a central political mechanism in the novella, and how revolutions relying on an intellectual elite often set themselves up to become an authoritarian state. Propaganda also becomes a weapon of control as the regime develops. The 'Beasts of England' song is initially an expression of revolutionary hope which is later banned once it threatens the authority of the new ruling class, showing how propaganda is only permitted when it benefits those in power. Squealer's rhetorical question, 'surely, comrades, you do not want Jones back?' is another key example of using language as a weapon of propaganda, instilling fear in the animals rather than inspiring political debate, framing obedience as the only rational choice in the scenario. The alteration of the Commandments mirrors Soviet propaganda under Stalin, where a cult of personality was formed to ensure obedience. Education, media and historical records were changed to solidify Stalin's position as leader.

Surveillance and terror are the mechanisms through which power is finally consolidated, as the farm moves towards totalitarian governance. These mechanisms replace consent and force the animals to conform even when ideological control begins to become questioned. There is a sudden use of violence as a control mechanism by Napolean which signals the militarisation of power on the farm when 'nine enormous dogs wearing brass-studded collars came bounding into the barn.' The dogs' role mirrors that of the NKVD, who ensured that the population was obedient by acting as a threatening presence who punished those who were out of line. Orwell

[5] Orwell G: *'Politics and the English Language'* in *Essays* (London: Penguin, 2004)
[6] Gramsci, A: *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. Quintin Hoare (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971) p. 12

shows that terror does not need to be consistently used to be effective, as the threat alone can be enough to regulate behaviour. This is made clear during the public executions, in which dissenting animals 'were executed on the spot'. The bluntness of this phrase emphasises how the violence was normalised within the system. These executions parallel Stalin's show trials which were used to eliminate opposition and discipline the population during the Great Purge from 1936 – 1938. By forcing the animals to publicly denounce themselves, Orwell shows how fear and terror make individuals internalise the regime's control. This aligns with Michael Foucalt's argument that power is omnipresent and self-regulating, and functions through self-surveillance rather than constant oppressive force, which eventually leads to the production of 'docile bodies'[7], who are easily managed and productive and therefore more valuable for economic and political power. American historian Hannah Arendt argues that terror in totalitarian regimes is not a temporary tool but is 'the essence of totalitarian domination'[8]. Orwell reinforces this by showing how economic systems like labour intensification and scarcity reinforce internalised control by operating alongside fear to force the animals to comply with the pigs' wishes. Through the depiction of violence and terror, Orwell exposes the final collapse of the revolution, leading to a system in which internalised fear sustains control.

Throughout the novella, political control is increasingly supported by economic mechanisms, particularly control of labour and resources, which betrays the fundamental idea behind socialist collectivism. When Animalism was first established, it promised collective ownership but as the pigs rise to power, they monopolise the means of production on the farm which leads to alienation of labour, as Marx theorised. He also argues that society can be divided into the 'base' and the 'superstructure'[9]. The 'base' relates to the forces and relations of production and determines the superstructure which comprises a society's laws, politics and culture. Since the pigs have control of the 'base', they also determine the 'superstructure', allowing them to justify labour exploitation through propaganda and normalise inequality on the farm. Boxer, with his indispensable strength, is described as 'the admiration of everybody' which demonstrates how labour exploitation was normalised, as his slogan; 'I will work harder' exemplifies Marx's theory of alienation. Boxer's labour sustains the system, yet he gains no genuine benefit, revealing how 'the worker becomes all the poorer the more wealth he

[7] Foucault, M: *Discipline and Punish, The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin, 1977) p. 138
[8] Arendt, H: *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt & Brace, 1951) p. 464
[9] Marx, K: *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970) p. 20

produces'[10] in exploitative economic structures such as that on the farm. Orwell doubles down on this imbalance by claiming that it was 'the biggest harvest the farm had ever seen', whilst also stating that 'the animals worked like slaves', exposing how increased productivity can negatively impact living and working conditions. This closely parallels Stalin's Five-Year Plans, during which industrial production rose drastically, particularly in heavy industries, but led to economic success being prioritised over workers' wellbeing. Orwell critiques how economic growth is used as propaganda, as the sense of achievement for workers drives them to continue. During the hens' rebellion they are forced to 'surrender their eggs', mirroring Stalinist grain requisitioning during Soviet industrialisation, where agricultural produce was used to fuel state power at the expense of the peasants. Orwell clearly demonstrates how economic dependency functions as a key mechanism of control, as the animals are forced to be obedient to survive which leads to the formation of an authoritarian system, as resources are centralised and labour is exploited.

In *Animal Farm*, Orwell presents power not as something seized in a single revolutionary moment but constructed and sustained over time through a network of many political and economic mechanisms. Orwell demonstrates how ideological control stems from propaganda and manipulation of language, while instilling fear through terror and violence enforces obedience. These mechanisms are reinforced by economic control, inevitably leading to class stratification. Orwell is clearly disillusioned with Stalinism and offers a critique of his regime, as it progresses from revolutionary idealism to state capitalism, as corruption materialises. In the novella, Orwell warns that revolutions can often embody the values of the systems they initially sought to topple. The closing image exposes the revolution's moral failure: 'the creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which'. This ending reflects political realism, as the self-serving pigs prioritise their own interests, leading to the rise of authoritarianism. To conclude, Orwell reveals how political and economic mechanisms of power and control still apply to many modern political systems and how, once institutionalised, they corrupt revolutionary ideals and reproduce the very tyranny the revolution initially opposed.

[10] Marx, K: *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1959) p. 71

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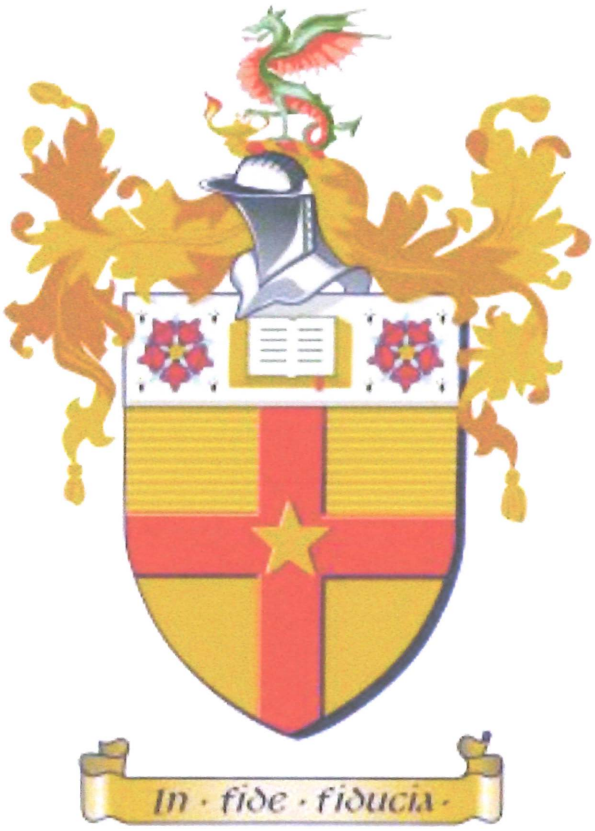

Name: Zack Worden

Title: Fitzgerald's Jazz Age: critiquing the economic and social consequences of unregulated capitalism

Fitzgerald's Jazz Age: critiquing the economic and social consequences of unregulated capitalism

Following the end of the First World War, the United States of America experienced an economic boom, fuelled by mass production and technological innovation with new goods like the automobile. This growth was encouraged by President Warren Harding's pro-business policies, which he believed to be crucial to economic prosperity[1]. This was done through a combination of tax cuts and a reduction in government regulation. This approach was continued by President Calvin Coolidge. While these policies led to short-term prosperity, they caused the economy to overheat, leaving the country vulnerable to economic collapse. It is within this context of unregulated capitalism and newfound wealth that F. Scott Fitzgerald sets *The Great Gatsby* using the novel to criticise the social inequality and economic instability of the Jazz Age.

Fitzgerald presents the widespread inequality of the Jazz Age by contrasting the vast wealth of those living in East and West Egg with the poverty of the Valley of Ashes. While East and West Egg are characterized by excess and luxury, the Valley of Ashes is home to those who are far less fortunate, left in poverty as a consequence of the rich's lavish indulgence. Fitzgerald describes this area as "a fantastic farm where ashes grow", this acts as a metaphor which illustrates how industrial capitalism has left decay and waste. This environment is embodied by George and Myrtle Wilson, who are exploited by Tom Buchanan and ultimately discarded, reflecting how capitalist systems take advantage of the working class before abandoning them once they are no longer useful. Through Tom's treatment of the Wilsons Fitzgerald critiques an upper class that exploits those beneath them under capitalism, while avoiding taking responsibility for the damage that it causes, reinforcing the deep social division of the Roaring Twenties.

We see further social consequences of unregulated capitalism through the commodification of people and relationships. In the novel, individuals are valued primarily for their wealth and social power. This is evident in relationships such as Myrtle's relationship with Tom Buchanan, as Myrtle sees Tom as a way of accessing status. Similarly, Gatsby describes Daisy as having a "voice full of money," suggesting that his love for her is due only to her wealth and power. This suggests that she has become unapproachable for anyone who does not come from similar wealth[2]. This reflects a capitalist culture where human worth is measured by financial success,

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[1] Moore, J: *The Original Supply Siders: Warren Harding and Calvin Coolidge* (The Independent Review, 2014) p. 598

[2] Boyd, W: *The Connell Guide to F. Scott Fitzgerald's the Great Gatsby* (Connell Guides: 2010) p. 59

reducing people to commodities rather than individuals with genuine worth. Fitzgerald presents the Jazz Age as being a plutocratic society in which wealth, rather than character or morality defines the value and worth of an individual[3].

Through the iconic symbolism of the eyes of Dr T.J. Eckleburg we can see Fitzgerald's dismay at the moral erosion of society in America during the Jazz Age. The eyes, loom over the desolate wasteland of the Valley of Ashes, representing how the godless and indifferent society is ruled by capitalist greed. It watches over those in the novel as they pursue wealth and the glittering, exciting American Dream with complete disregard to others and the consequences of their actions. This shows the moral vacuum left by capitalism, leaving people corrupted and empty. This lack of moral responsibility and carelessness is further reflected through the sexual promiscuity throughout the novel. Tom Buchanan's affair with Myrtle Wilson, exploiting her for his pleasure and then showing a complete disregard for her, shows how individuals are used. When we see Tom striking[4] Myrtle, Fitzgerald presents the moral decay of society, where the wealthy are not held accountable for their actions and instead are able to fulfil their own desires. Similarly, Gatsby's affair with Daisy, while presented as romantic, is actually rooted in deceit and moral irresponsibility. Daisy pursues her desires with Gatsby while remaining married to Tom. She uses Gatsby, giving him the idea of a future they may share together, with no intention of actually delivering this life that he idolises. Gatsby's idealisation of Daisy reduces her to a symbol of wealth and status, instead of herself, further reinforcing the idea that his attraction to Daisy is purely for material reasons. Through the eyes of Dr T.J. Eckleburg and the hidden sexual relationships, Fitzgerald presents his disapproval of the loss of moral values in capitalist society where money is more important than honesty and doing what is right.

The character of Gatsby can be seen as a critique of self-made wealth and how riches are achieved in a society that is focused completely on money. Gatsby becomes extremely rich through bootlegging alcohol and his connections with the 'gambler' Meyer Wolfsheim. This suggests that capitalism rewards corruption and not morality. In this society those who do good are not rewarded with wealth and luxury but instead are left behind in the dirt trying to earn an honest living. Tom Buchanan inherits all his wealth, while Gatsby acquires his through criminal activity. Despite their different paths, neither individual's riches results from meaningful success. Yet, both of them find themselves empty, chasing after material goods and social status. Gatsby is shown as a consequence of capitalism, abandoning any beliefs in the pursuit of wealth.

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[3] Fussell, E.S: *Fitzgerald's Brave New World* (The Johns Hopkins University Press: 1952) p. 292

[4] During a party Tom Buchanan is angered and punches Myrtle

Fitzgerald further exposes the social consequences of capitalism, through the class division of East and West Egg. East Egg is home to the old money, Tom and Daisy Buchanan represent the careless superiority of the old money during the Jazz Age, while Gatsby, a resident of West Egg is used to show the lavish indulgence of the new money. Tom Buchanan is represented as a racist and elitist member of the upper class. In the novel we see the Buchanans "retreat back into their money" demonstrating how in a capitalist society, such as America during the Jazz Age, money can become a method of defence for the rich, using it to separate themselves from those they perceive to be below themselves. Tom's disdain for Gatsby shows the divide even among the wealthy, between old and new money. This vivid class division, with the poorest members of society residing in the Valley of Ashes as victims of the wealthiest individuals shows the clear societal consequences of unregulated capitalism. This shows that while capitalism pretends to offer mobility, with anyone rich or poor able to work their way up to the top, class structures remain rigid with wealth alone not being enough to grant social acceptance.

Through his depiction of Gatsby's extravagant parties and material excess, Fitzgerald presents consumerism as a disruptive force at the heart of Jazz Age capitalism. Gatsby's parties are an iconic part of Fitzgerald's novel, uninvited guests arrive from across the city in fancy automobiles, dressed in sparkly dresses and elegant dinner jackets. They drink excessively and enjoy the music and the social occasion before disappearing. The guests consume freely at Gatsby's wealth yet feel no loyalty towards him, showing no desire to reciprocate or form a genuine connection with him, revealingly none of his guests attend his funeral. In this society, genuine human relationships are replaced by excess and obsession with consumption. These relationships are purely transactional; people only interact with others if they believe they can gain material goods or status from them. Partygoers consume at the expense of Gatsby until he is no longer able to provide for them, at which point they leave without a second thought. Fitzgerald shows how a society with such free capitalism leads to a complete obsession with material goods and consumption, to the point that humans are seen only as commodities able to provide a service.

Fitzgerald uses the character of Nick Carraway to act as a moral observer, giving the readers an insight into his ideas about the social and economic failures of the Jazz Age and its unregulated capitalism. Nick enters as a neutral character, he is not a member of the old money, neither does he have the vast wealth of Gatsby. He is originally from the Midwest; this results in him having values and beliefs that differ from those of the members of the East that he interacts with. This is shown when he says "I see now that

this has been a story of the West after all". He becomes accepted into both East and West Egg, through family connections. All of this allows Nick to act as neutral character, providing insights into both the old and new money, as well as reflecting Fitzgerald's own criticism of America during the Roaring Twenties. We see Nick become increasingly disillusioned throughout the novel. Initially he is neutral and tolerant and decides to "reserve all judgements" however as the novel continues and he sees the greed and excess he becomes more critical of life in New York and the culture that surrounds it. This results in his criticism of Tom and Daisy as "careless people ... they smashed up things and creatures". This reflects Fitzgerald's criticism of the capitalist elites who use their wealth to avoid accountability.

The end of the novel is a clear criticism of the American Dream and shows how capitalism creates false hope. Gatsby's dream of being reunited with Daisy fails as he is unable to overcome the social boundaries despite his own financial success. We see his desperation to achieve his dream through the image of him reaching for the green light, which acts a projection of Gatsby's hopes[5]. This failure shows how the American Dream is misguided, despite his hard work Gatsby was unable to succeed, with the green light acting only as an illusion. Gatsby's death represents the collapse of the American Dream and the unsustainable nature of the opulence and excitement of the Jazz Age. The American Dream is shown as being fragile, falling apart quickly and decisively. This suggests that Fitzgerald may have foreseen the eventual fall of the Roaring Twenties as he understood it was simply a façade covering the economic and social chaos that was caused by capitalist greed. The novel can be seen as elegy for the American dream, acting as both a warning and a criticism of the American Dream and capitalism, showing its fragile and deceiving nature[6].

Ultimately, *The Great Gatsby* acts as a criticism of the excess and luxury of the Jazz Age, exposing the social and economic consequences of unregulated capitalism. Through the stark contrast of rich and poor, the commodification of relationships, and the class boundaries dividing old and new money, Fitzgerald presents a society in which wealth replaces morality and human value is reduced to wealth. Gatsby's failure, despite his wealth, reveals the false promise of the American Dream, exposing it as an illusion that promises reward for hard work that can never be fulfilled. Through this presentation of the Jazz Age, Fitzgerald's novel can be read as a damning criticism of unchecked capitalism and its social and economic consequences.

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[5] Burnham, T: *The Eyes of Dr Eckleburg: A Re-examination of the "The Great Gatsby"* (National Council of Teachers of English: 1952) p.7

[6] Boyd, W: *The Connell Guide to F. Scott Fitzgerald's the Great Gatsby* (Connell Guides: 2010) p. 73

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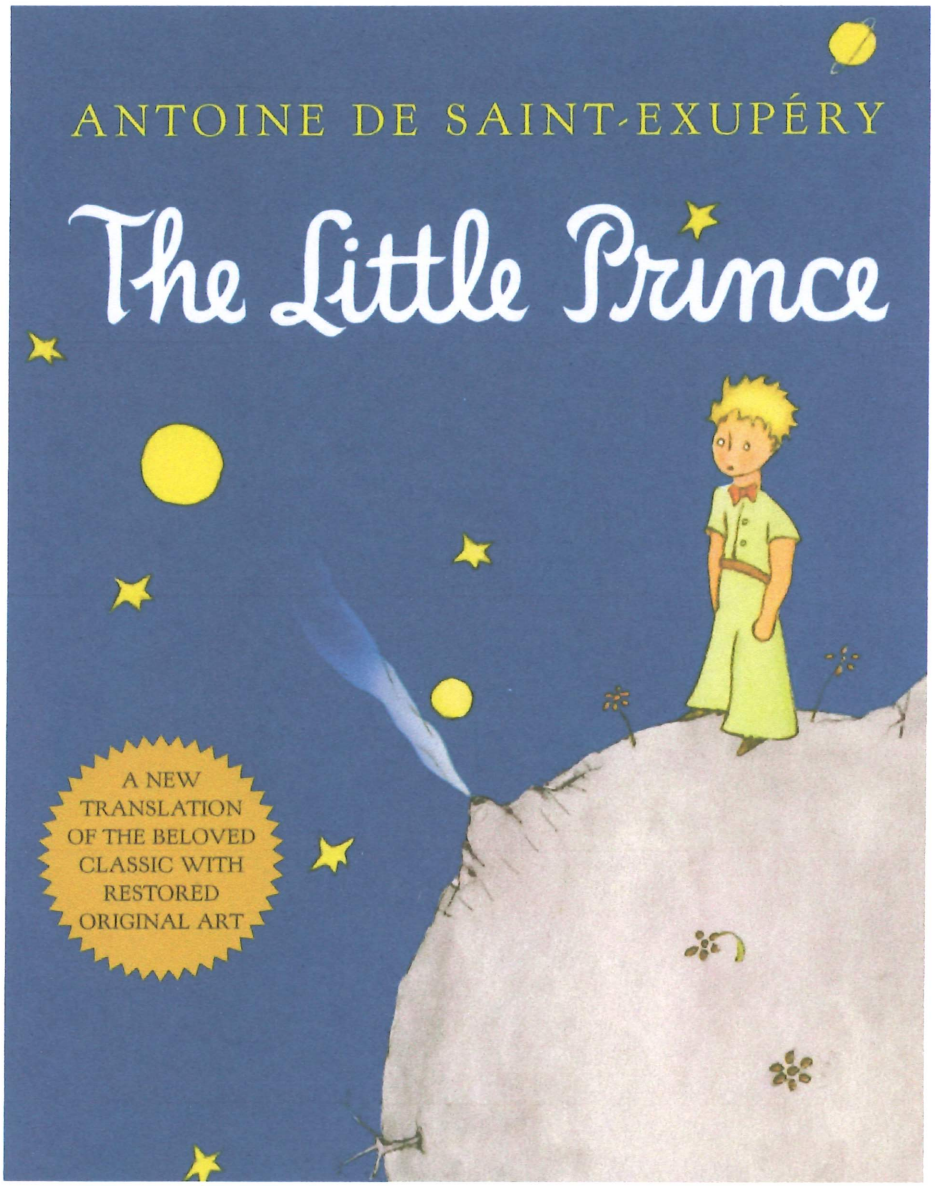
Counting Stars and Measuring Meaning: Economic Abstraction in The Little Prince.



Benjamin Parkins | The Leys School | LVI | Barrett

Minerva Prize

German sociologist Max Weber warned that rapid industrialisation and modernisation will entrap society in an 'iron cage'[1] of rationalisation where calculation, efficiency and control will come to dominate human life. This threat to humanity is explored in Antoine De Saint-Exupéry *'The Little Prince' (1943)* which, beneath its deceptively simple narrative employs a Little Prince with a childlike perspective to uncover the true values of modern society. This is done through encounters with allegorical characters who crave power, ownership and liberty. Notably the businessman who 'owns' the stars, the king who claims abstract authority over an insignificant kingdom and the lamplighter who is trapped in a cycle of mindless labour. Through this Saint-Exupéry exposes the dehumanising consequences of measuring meaning through metrics. By contrasting this with the prince's emphasis on care, responsibility and time the novella ultimately challenges prevailing conceptions of value and questions whether the most important in life can ever truly be measured, possessed or even accounted for.

Before meeting any of the adult figures, Saint-Exupéry use the prince's planet to establish a moral framework which is juxtaposed with the other characters. Asteroid B-612 functions as a symbolic microcosm of life where meaning is created through attentive maintenance as the prince looks after his flower and volcanoes. Each morning the prince 'Carefully... swept his volcanoes' even the extinct one explaining that 'you never know. This almost humorous detail highlights the attentiveness and humility of the prince as his labour is driven by his own obligation to take care of his planet. He is also devoted to a flower, his rose which each morning he lovingly waters, shelters and listens patiently to her complaints. This rose stands for the unique bond that gives life meaning showing that genuine relationships are sustained through constant attention rather than grand gestures. The prince's daily routine of uprooting

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[1] Weber, M. *The Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism*. Charles Scribner's Sons. (1930) p. 180

the baobabs also has a significant meaning. It illustrates the necessity of confronting dangerous habits and ideologies while they are small, as neglect allows them to grow uncontrollably. As Saint-Exupéry was writing during the Second World War these baobabs carry significant historical significance. They can be read as an allegory for totalitarian systems like that of the Nazi party during the 1930's and 40's. This warning is subtle yet still urgent as it mirrors the fact that destructive ideologies do not arrive fully formed but take root and grow and you 'can never get rid of it'. Saint-Exupéry uses the prince's humanitarian attitude, evidenced by how he takes care of his planet, to expose how modern economic logic distorts relationships and meaning.

The prince first encounters the king, a character whose desire for abstract authority masks a deep loneliness which is reflective of the destructive effects of 'disembedded'[2] systems of power, an increasingly popular form of governance in the 20th century. Despite ruling over an almost entirely empty planet, the king insists that 'my orders are entirely reasonable'. The calm and unquestioning tone within this claim reveal that his decisions are not made for meaningful collective purpose but to assert the legitimacy of his own leadership. This may reflect the broader anxieties of the 20th century where authoritarian regimes aimed to legitimise their authority through enforced obedience, deception and terror, something particularly resonant with Saint-Exupéry's exile following the Nazi occupation of France. However, beneath the king's initial image of integrity and assuredness the prince uncovers the emptiness of his authority, exposing it as an illusion of importance which he maintains through command rather than meaningful responsibility. When asked what he rules over the king replies 'Everything', which is immediately juxtaposed by the emptiness of the planet.

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[2] Polanyi, K. *The Great Transformation:* The political and Economic Origins of Our Time. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. (1955)

This hyperbolic claim reinforces the performative nature of the king's authority but also reveals the social dislocation the king experiences in his pursuit of power. The king's power can be seen as 'disembedded' as it is exercised over an abstract 'kingdom' that has no real connection to the real world or the need of his subjects. This idea is rooted in Karl Polanyi's concept of a market being 'disembedded' from society where decisions are made according to rational economic logic that override social, cultural and political constraints. In *'The Great Transformation' (1944)* Polanyi warns that these methods of governance are accompanied by detrimental consequences, most notably the destruction of social relations and human wellbeing. These consequences are evident through the king's actions when the prince decides to leave. The king abruptly declares that 'I make you my ambassador', through this imperative declaration the king tries to overcome his underlying feelings of detachment by employing the prince within his abstract system of power. The elevation of the prince to the symbolic role of 'ambassador' proves how despite his need to form human relationships the king prioritises staying in accordance with his system of governance. Ultimately Saint-Exupéry uses the king to warn those who chase authority at the expense of forging human connections, as this will isolate them as much as they dominate the ruled.

On the fourth planet Saint-Exupéry presents a businessman to criticise those who equate success with ownership and accumulation, rather than happiness and fulfilment. From the outset, the businessman is stuck in his own fabricated image of self-importance replying to prince for the first time, 'I am a serious man... no time for nonsense.' His immediate disregard for the prince displays how human relationships have been marginalised for his ironically 'serious' pursuit of counting stars. This produces no social benefit, fulfilment or anything of tangible use and displays how the businessman is stuck in his own idle dream of self-importance where his fictitious accumulation of stars substitutes for genuine purpose and meaning. He insists though because 'I thought of it first' that the stars belong to him. This

ownership is entirely symbolic rather than practical as the stars have no function other than being counted. This alludes to a Marxist idea of 'use value'[3] and 'exchange value'[4] where commodities in capitalism are not valued because of their utility but for their ability to be owned, exchanged and accumulated. Marx argues in *'Das Kapital (1867)'* that 'when commodities are exchanged, their exchange value manifests itself as something totally independent of their use value.'[5] These stars possess no 'use value' to the businessman, but their abstract 'exchange value' is what fuels the businessman's perceived importance. Saint-Exupéry therefore exposes the absurdity of solely chasing wealth without human need or enjoyment. In contrast on his planet the prince is only in possession of a rose and 3 volcanos however, his relationship with them matters more than anything he can gain through their ownership. Later in another allegorical encounter a fox tells the prince, 'It's the time that you gave to your rose that makes your rose so important'. This makes value seem like something created through time, care and emotional investment rather than the ownership and numerical accumulation of the businessman. Linking back to Weber, the businessman is trapped within this 'Iron Cage' of rationalisation where his life is now governed by systems of measurement and calculation, leaving little space for joy and wonder. In contrast, the prince exists outside the cage; his relationship with the rose resists rationalisation as its value cannot be quantified or owned, therefore suggesting the most important in life is immeasurable. Through the

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[3] Marx, K. Capital: *A critique of political economy*, Volume I, Chapter One. Moore & Aveling English translation. (1867) p.2

[4] Marx, K. Capital: *A critique of political economy*, Volume I, Chapter One. Moore & Aveling English translation. (1867) p.2

[5] Marx, K. Capital: *A critique of political economy*, Volume I, Chapter One. Moore & Aveling English translation. (1867) p.45

businessman the novella ultimately exposes the risk that society may become imprisoned in the pursuit of wealth and ignorant of what truly matters in life.

Following the prince's encounters with figures defined by self-interest and abstraction, the lamplighter emerges as a stark contrast. Saint-Exupéry uses the lamplighter to expose how needs and qualities of the proletariat are often suppressed by the burden of work particularly within systems like Frederick Winslow Taylor's 'scientific management'. This system sought to maximise efficiency by breaking labour into repetitive tasks, disregarding the workers autonomy to meet production targets. Unlike the preceding characters whose identities are built around power or obsession, the lamplighter's identity is reduced to labour, simply stating 'It's my job' and later insisting that 'a job is a job'. Saint-Exupéry strips the lamplighter of his individuality and emotion alluding to Marx's theory of 'alienation'[6] as he reveals the lamplighter's feelings of powerlessness and self-estrangement. He has become a 'mere adjunct to the machine'[7], existing only to sustain the lamp, embodying Marx's warning that industry transforms humans into 'instruments of labour'[8]. This is an attempt by Saint-Exupéry to expose the damaging systems that 'alienate' workers and exploit their devotion to their labour in a society where work has become a necessity for survival. The lamplighter's planet 'Year on year... been spinning ever faster' and his job 'hasn't changed!', symbolising the ever-changing and increasingly demanding working environment. By the 20th century, the shift from rural, task-orientated ways of life to urban clock-oriented labour was complete. Workers were no longer governed by natural cycles like sunrise and sunset but rather the

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[6] Marx, K and Engels, F. *The Communist Manifesto*, Chapter 1. Penguin Classics (1848) p.81
[7] West, E.G. (1969) The political economy of alienation: Karl Marx and Adam Smith, *Oxford Economic Papers*, p. 3

[8] Marx, K and Engels, F. *The Communist Manifesto*, Chapter 1. Penguin Classics (1848) p.82

punishing pace of the factory whistle. This mirrors the lamplighter's plight whose planet now spins so quickly that he is trapped within a cycle of labour without time to even rest. The lamplighter's conversation with the prince is continuously interrupted by a monotonous cycle of 'Good morning' and 'Good evening' stressing how the relentless rhythm of labour denies him the time for sustained human interactions. The light he ignites is extinguished almost immediately, rendering his labour as useless stripping it of any 'use-value' as it neither benefits him nor others. The Lamplighter continues this work not because it serves a useful purpose, but because his 'job' has not changed, unearthing how systems like 'scientific management' oblige workers to maintain productivity even when the labour has become irrational. Saint-Exupéry therefore critiques these methods of management where efficiency is seen as inherently virtuous and exposes how these systems suppress creativity, autonomy and critical thought. In doing so the lamplighter embodies the dehumanising consequences of such systems on the working classes who are forced to obey as work has been materialised into a necessity for survival. They are institutionally stuck inside this 'iron cage' not by choice or ignorance like the businessman or the king but because it has been forced upon them. Painfully aware of the truth they and the lamplighter are unable to escape, illustrating how industrial systems reduce human labour to monotonous, dehumanising cycles, stripping workers of autonomy, purpose and individuality and trapping them in a never-ending struggle for survival.

'The Little Prince' offers a sustained critique of modern rationalised society exposing how systems overly reliant on calculation, efficiency and abstract authority ultimately impoverish human life. Through the prince's encounters with the king, the businessman and the lamplighter, Saint-Exupéry reveals different instances in society where one can become entrapped in Weber's 'iron cage' where authority is separated from companionship, wealth divorced from use and labour stripped of meaning. These figures, while shown either to be

powerful or productive, are also profoundly isolated, 'alienated' and incapable of fulfilment. Saint-Exupéry uses this as a warning, urging people to reject these dehumanising systems and resist rationalisation. In contrast the prince presents an alternative perception of value based on care, nurture and responsibility reflecting that the most important in life is not only immeasurable but now actively endangered by a world increasingly governed by calculation.

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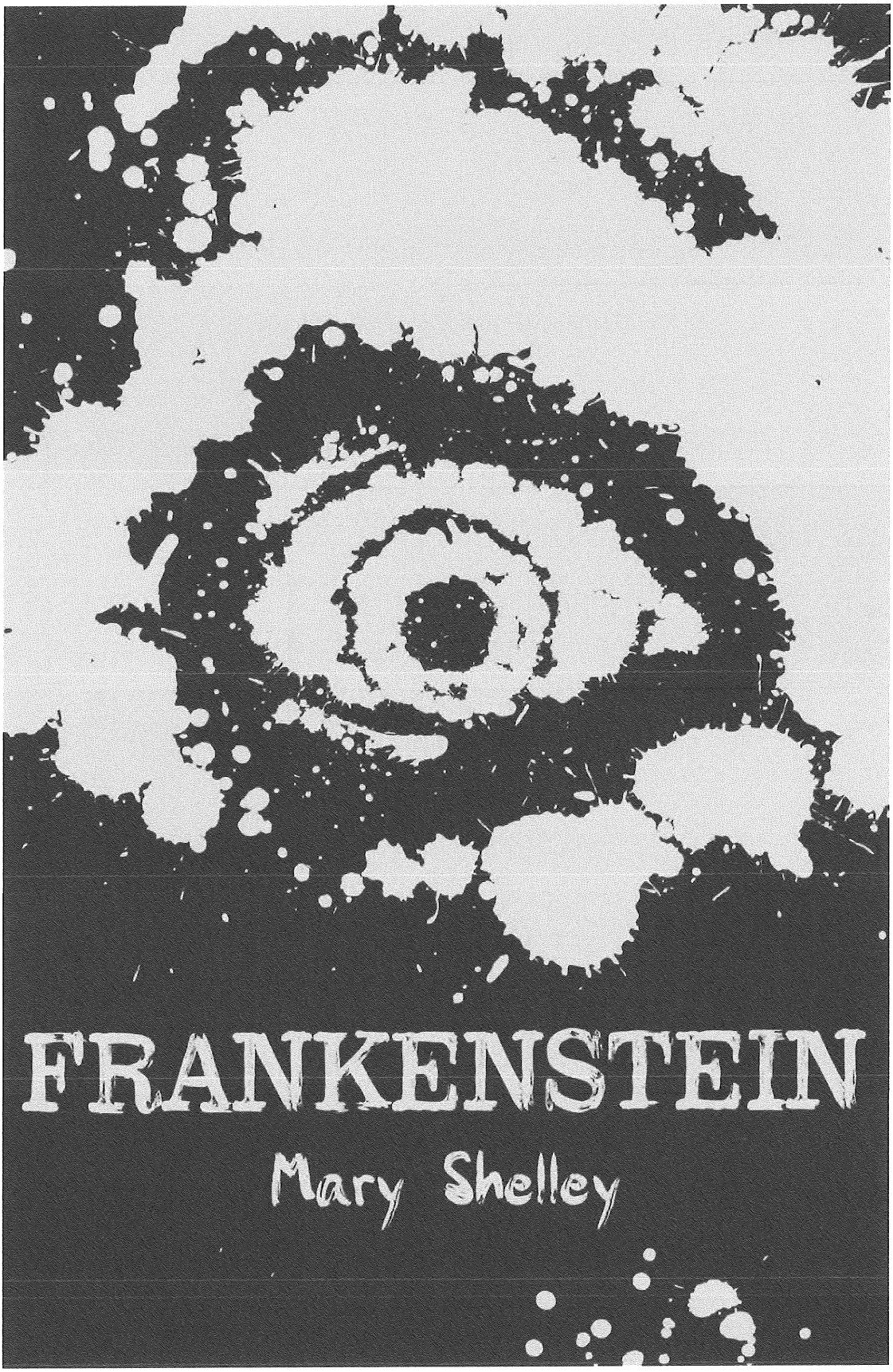
Dissecting Frankenstein: Who is the monster?

Macy Fung



Dissecting Frankenstein: Who is the monster?

For many readers, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is the archetypal Gothic horror novel. Written during the Romantic Era, in the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution, the text reflects widespread anxieties about mechanisation, dehumanisation, and the harsh social changes brought by factories and urban life. The Gothic thus emerged as a revival in all that is antique, natural, raw, and basic: a rebellion against the scientific and technological advancements of the period, reminding us that humans can never supersede nature. Inspired by contemporary medical methods such as galvanism, as well as ghost-story discussions during the stormy summer of 1816, Shelley wrote a novel about Victor Frankenstein, a scientist who creates a living being from dead body parts. Horrified by his creation's appearance, Victor abandons it, leading the intelligent yet profoundly lonely creature to seek revenge, and bring suffering upon its creator and his loved ones. Ultimately, the novel portrays the tragic downfall of a human who attempts to defy the natural limits of creation.

From the above, the description of "a living being from dead body parts" appears inherently monstrous and unsympathetic, and that is an impression that aligns closely with Victor's own perspective. From the initial appearance of the word "monster" in the novel, where Victor first encounters his Creation and says, "I beheld the wretch- the miserable monster whom I had created". This framing has been reinforced by later cultural adaptations, particularly in Hollywood. From James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931), with its flat-headed, scarred, lumbering figure, to Guillermo del Toro's *Frankenstein* (2025), the creation is repeatedly portrayed as grotesque and inhuman. The emphasis on the creation being a product of a mad scientist's ambition and a hideous figure has become a cultural standard, unintentionally labelling the Creation as a "monster" before it has the chance to speak for itself. Despite this persistent cultural reduction, Mary Shelley's novel offers a far more sympathetic portrayal. She grants the Creation its own voice and a personal narrative – an element that is often excised from modern retellings. As Esther Schor has observed, this loss of the Creation's humanity in cinematic adaptations is "perhaps the most extraordinary undocumented theft of twentieth-century cinema"[1]. The aim of this essay, therefore, is to present both sides of the story: to give the Creation a "voice" and to invite the reader, by the end of the discussion, to reach their own conclusion about where true monstrosity lies.

The Creation's experience throughout *Frankenstein* is shaped by prejudice directed at his physical appearance. To understand this, it is first necessary to define the concept of "monstrosity". As Natalie Lawrence states, "The word "Monster" derives from Latin, *monstrar* ("to demonstrate") and *monere* ("to warn"). Originally, it refers to a divine warning, that is to be deciphered and kept in mind to avoid potential catastrophes. Over time, the word "monster" has expanded to define any dreadful or mysterious event, thing or person"[2]. A traditional example of monstrosity includes Grendel from the English epic poem *Beowulf*. Grendel is characterised by his ruthless and indiscriminate violence and is described as a "giant",

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[1]: Billington, Josie, *The Cornell Guide to Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (Connell Publishing: London, 2016) p.51
[2]: Lawrence, Natalie *What is a monster?* (CUP, Cambridge, 2015) p.1

who is" very terrible to look upon"[3]. In contrast, Shelley's creature is rejected both by his creator and society solely based on his appearance, before he has committed any wrongdoings, or before he is born into this world. At the scene when the Creation slowly awakes to life, Victor recoils in horror, asking, "How delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I endeavoured to?" He immediately associates his Creation with a "wretch", later admitting that "the beauty of my dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart". The stark juxtaposition between "beauty" and "disgust", as well as "dream" and "horror", exposes Victor's unrealistic expectations and aesthetic vanity. His revulsion is further emphasised as he "rushed out of the room", abandoning the creation at the very moment of its birth. This rejection from his very own creator established the Creation's later lifelong isolation from the world. His physical difference continues to shape his interaction with humanity, most notably in the episode of the drowning girl. Despite acting selflessly- dragging her back on shore and endeavouring "every means in his power to restore animation"- his benevolence is repaid with unreasoned violence. A rustic, assuming the creature to be evil based solely on his appearance, shoots him without hesitation because he "looked so hideous". This episode exemplifies how the Creation's pure, amiable gestures are diminished by social prejudice into something that is merely evil and of no good. Through repeated rejection and dehumanisation, the creature gradually internalises the identity imposed upon him. This is evident when he reflects, "I cherished hope… but it vanished when I beheld my person reflected in water or my shadow in the moonshine". Shelley demonstrates that the Creation's "hope" is contingent upon visual recognition. Once confronted with his physical difference, he understands that his appearance alone is sufficient to deny him a human connection. As Percy Shelley stated in his review of *Frankenstein*, "Treat a person ill, and he will become wicked"[4]. The Creation does not begin as a monster but is driven to adopt this identity through persistent helplessness, isolation and despair. Shelley thus suggests that monstrosity is not inherent but socially constructed.

While monstrosity in *Frankenstein* emerges through social rejection, Shelley implies that it could have been prevented—and perhaps reversed—if Victor had fulfilled his moral obligation toward his creation. As Anna O'Malley articulates, "from the viewpoint of behaviour psychology, Frankenstein's Creation is born as a *tabula rasa*, reflecting the idea that individuals begin life as a blank slate, where all behaviour is shaped by the environment"[5]. This perspective is significant, as it suggests that despite the creation's fully developed physical form, his mental and emotional state is equivalent to that of a baby. His behaviour following Victor's abandonment is particularly childlike and is marked with confusion and ignorance. Alone in his own world, the Creation finds himself surrounded by nature, he "began to distinguish his sensations from each other", gradually discovering sounds coming from "throats of little winged animals", later recognises them as birds, and observes "the boundaries of the radiant roof of light which canopies him" that he comes into understanding as sky. His gradual sensory understanding is remarkably similar to the sensorimotor stage of a child's cognitive development, where an infant learns about both themselves and their environment through sensory experiences. To envision an infant

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[3]: Marshall, Henrietta Elizabeth: *Stories of Beowulf* (T.C. & E.C. Jack: London, 1908)
[4]: posthumously published in The Athenaeum in 1832
[5]: Anna O'Malley: *Frankenstein: The true monster* (https://owlcation.com/humanities/frankenstein-invention-vs-inventor) Accessed 23/12/25

deserted in a forest, exposed to a variety of unknown dangers with no prior experience or protection, is to recognise the cruelty of such neglect. Alas, this is precisely the same situation Victor casts upon his creation. Capturing the reader's empathy towards the Creation, Shelley emphasises the susceptibility of the creature and reveals his guileless and vulnerable side. She then gradually shifts the moral responsibility from the creature to the creator himself. Victor's monstrosity, oppositely, stems from profound selfishness. He consistently prioritises his own goals and desires over others' well-being. This extreme form of self-obsession and indulgence is not limited only towards his Creation. Victor's moral failure is most evident in his refusal to confess the truth when his own adopted sister, Justine, is wrongfully accused and later executed for a crime she did not commit. His silence sentenced an innocent woman to death. Victor attempts to justify himself by claiming that his story is "not one to announce publicly", fearing that "its astounding horror" will be dismissed as madness by "the vulgar". When this exaggerated fear of humiliation, described as "astounding horror", is juxtaposed with Justine's imminent execution, Victor's fear appears trivial, almost morally grotesque. Shelley thus underscores the moral failings of Victor Frankenstein— the true form of monstrosity is not the corruption of the appearance but the corruption of the soul- Victor's constant refusal to accept responsibility for the consequences of his actions.

In contrast to the moral corruption of Victor Frankenstein, the Creation stands out as a compelling embodiment of high emotional intelligence and heroic pathos, demonstrating qualities of compassion, self-awareness and restraint. Shelley foregrounds the Creation's innate inclination towards love and understanding from a very early stage of his existence. Upon realising that his presence contributes to the poverty and distress of the De Lacey family, the Creation reflects on the injustice of "stealing a part of their store" to satisfy his hunger, recognising that such actions "inflicted pain on the cottagers". In response, he immediately abstains from theft and instead satisfies himself on berries alone. He further seeks to atone for it by secretly gathering firewood each night to ease the family's labour. This willingness to acknowledge his wrongdoing and act selflessly stands in great contrast to Victor's persistent evasion of responsibility. The Creation's high level of reasoning and capability of distinguishing right and wrong is further exhibited by his expressed abhorrence of murder. He conveys that he "could not conceive how one man could forth to murder his fellow", and that he finds himself "turning away with disgust and loathing" whenever he hears accounts of vice and bloodshed. Such accounts attest to his inherent desire for goodness and peace. Even after his final rejection by the cottagers, he initially resists vengeance. Shelley thus presents the Creation not as innately monstrous, but as a being whose emotional depth exceeds that of his creator, reinforcing the novel's challenge to the conception of monstrosity. This contrast is accentuated at the final moral contrast of the novel. Whilst Victor, the creator, longs for his creation's death to alleviate his suffering, the Creation, despite profound suffering, desires his creator to live and ultimately mourns his death. In his final speech, the Creation expresses his selfless wish for Victor's "happiness in tranquillity", even as he acknowledges that his own hopes have been "blasted". Yet, he does not allow his misfortunes to curtail his wishes for others and proposes his final hope that "another may succeed", revealing a remarkable generosity in spirit. Shelley thus concludes

the novel by affirming the Creation's everlasting humanity; his suffering does not extinguish his empathy but grows it. His capacity to wish happiness on others reveals a striking divergence from Victor's egocentric despair.

To conclude, *Frankenstein* explores the very foundation of monstrosity, challenging readers to consider where the true monstrosity resides. Through the formation of a complex yet singularly conscious and deeply miserable being, Shelley delves right into the boundaries of human ethics. The novel ultimately poses a troubling question: Is true monstrosity embodied by the scientist whose god-like ambitions transgress natural boundaries, or the sufferings imposed by the miserable complex he created? The subtitle "Modern Prometheus" may have provided a compelling framework for the dilemma. In classical Greek mythology, Prometheus was the Titan fire-god who stole fire from the Gods to give to mankind. While Victor initially appears to occupy the Promethean role, breathing life into the being, Muriel Spark observes that "as soon as he (the monster) is created, takes on [a different aspect of] the role"[6]. As Josie Billington further argues, the attributes of the Promethean hero are divided between two figures: Victor "defies divine power by creating life, but his creature suffers at least part of the consequences or punishment"[7].

Perhaps then, Shelley suggests that both figures embody forms of monstrosity. Both Victor and the Creation are defined by alienation and a desperate longing for acceptance by the world. Victor seeks validation through intellectual ambition, yearning for acceptance and fame, indulging his ego until it destroys everything he loves, including himself. The Creation, in contrast, is born into a hostile world where his true self is distorted by his physical deformity. Stripped of companionship, he loses everything- including his beloved creator and sense of self - yet ultimately withdraws from civilisation in pursuit of peace denied to him by the world.

Through these parallel sufferings, Shelley reframes monstrosity not as a matter of physical form, but as both an active and passive condition arising from isolation and despair, thereby warning of the terrifying consequences of human endeavour and the dangers of usurping God.

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[6]: Spark, Muriel: *Child of Light* (London: Tower Bridge Publications, 1951)
[7]: Billington, *Connell Guide*, p.10

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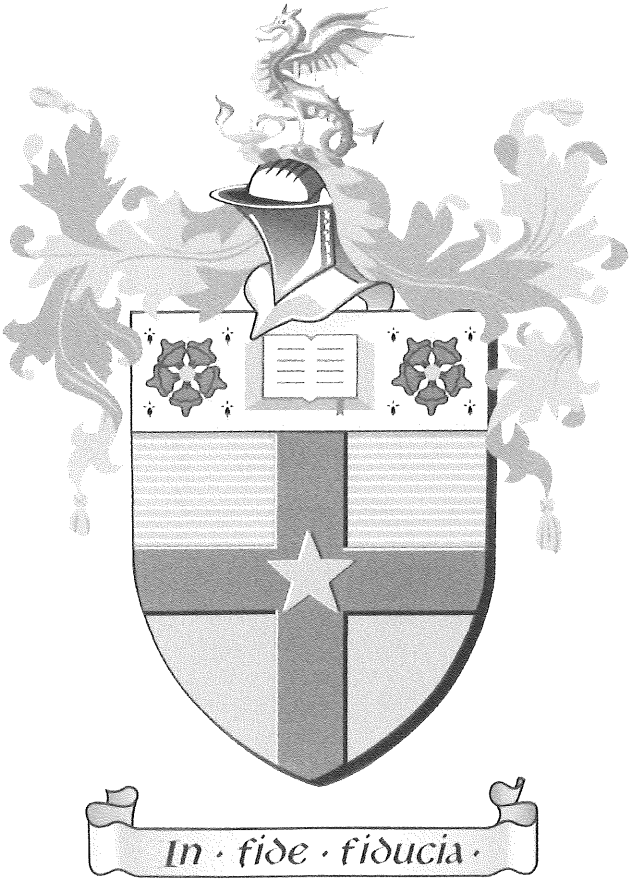

Name: Lucas Mudkavi

Title: Justice and Dharma: Presentations of the Soul in the Bhagavad Gita and Plato's Republic

"Justice and Dharma: Presentations of the Soul in the Bhagavad Gita and Plato's Republic"

Plato's *Republic* and *The Bhagavad Gita* emerge from distinct intellectual traditions and historical contexts yet both present concerns with the condition of the soul and the question of how it becomes properly ordered. The *Republic* by Plato was written in the 4th century BCE, a time of tremendous political and social turmoil in Athens, deeply influenced by the execution of Socrates and the rise of Sophists.[1] In this text, Plato's inquiry into justice proceeds from the conviction that moral failure does not arise primarily from ignorance of rules or from isolated wrongful actions, but from a deeper disorder within the soul itself. Justice is therefore treated not merely as a social or legal principle, but as an internal condition whose presence or absence determines the quality of both individual and civic life. The *Bhagavad Gita* is a sacred Hindu philosophical dialogue that was composed between the 5th and 2nd century BCE.[2] The dialogue takes place on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, in northern India, at a moment of existential crisis for the warrior Arjuna who is reluctant to partake in the battle as he would have to fight against many of his own kin who are on the opposing side. In parallel to the *Republic*, the *Bhagavad Gita* faces the problem of disorder within the soul, however it looks at it through a more theological and metaphysical framework. Arjuna's moral paralysis is not merely presented simply as a difficult ethical dilemma but as the symptom of a profound misalignment within the self. In both texts, the problem of what it means for the soul to stand in right relation to the order it inhabits, is inseparable from the individual carrying out righteous actions.

Initially, Plato develops his account of justice by first articulating it within the structure of his hypothetical, ideal city called Kallipolis. This methodological decision reflects his belief that justice is easier to recognise on a larger scale before it can be identified within the individual. The city of Kallipolis is divided into three classes: rulers, auxiliaries and producers, each defined by a distinct function. Justice in the city is not a matter of equality or fairness in a distributive sense, but of functional order. Plato defines the just city as one in which each class performs its own work and does not interfere with the work of others.[3] Justice is therefore a principle of internal organisation rather than a list of externally imposed rules. A city may appear prosperous or powerful yet remain unjust if its internal structure is distorted.

This political model then serves as an analogue through which justice and harmony in the soul can be clarified. Plato argues that the soul mirrors the city in its internal composition. It too is divided into three parts: reason, spirit and appetite.[4] Appetite seeks bodily pleasure and

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[1] Plato, The Republic (London: Penguin Classics, 2007), Introduction.
[2] Easwaran, E, The Bhagavad Gita (London: Penguin Classics, 2007), Introduction.
[3] Plato, Republic, Book IV, 433a-434c.
[4] Plato, Republic Book IV, 436-441c.

material satisfaction, spirit seeks honour and recognition, while reason aims at truth and the good. This division within the individual is grounded in ordinary psychological experience. Plato observes that individuals frequently experience conflict within themselves which implies a lack of cohesion between the three aspects of the soul. Justice in the soul, like justice in the city, consists in the proper unification of these elements.

More precisely, Plato expresses that justice is achieved when reason governs, spirit supports reason's rule and appetite obeys. This hierarchy requires the regulation of desire and appetite, not their elimination. Appetite is not destroyed but disciplined. Spirit is not suppressed but redirected. The just soul is therefore unified and capable of acting coherently because it is not torn between competing impulses. By contrast, injustice within the soul arises when spirit or appetite attempts to rule which leads to internal disorder and instability with the individual.

Furthermore, Plato reinforces this account through the analogy of health. He compares justice to health and injustice to disease, arguing that virtue is 'a kind of mental health or beauty or fitness' of the soul, while vice is its corruption[5]. This analogy is philosophically significant. Health is valuable because it allows the body to function as it should and in the same way, justice benefits the individual intrinsically because it enables the soul to function properly. A soul at war with itself cannot flourish, regardless of external success or reputation.

Plato's emphasis on injustice as internal disorder becomes especially apparent when he considers why individuals are drawn towards unjust behaviour in the first place. Claiming that humans just have a conscious preference for evil is not a very fulfilling answer as to why misconduct is present in society. Plato would insist that it is because of individuals having a psychic imbalance, in which appetite or spirit overrides reason. When reason fails to govern, the soul becomes fragmented, pursuing incompatible aims with a lack of direction. Injustice often appears attractive because it promises immediate satisfaction, power or recognition. Yet this attraction usually conceals a deeper harm. The unjust individual mistakes the intensity of desire for fulfilment, confusing momentary gratification with genuine righteousness or good.

In this respect, the implication is that injustice is self-reinforcing. Each unjust action strengthens the dominance of appetite or spirit, further weakening reason's authority. Over time, the soul becomes increasingly divided, less capable of reflection or self-command. Plato's portrait of the tyrant illustrates this process at its extreme. The tyrant is ruled by fear and desire, unable to trust others or himself and is perpetually driven by impulses he cannot

[5] Plato, Republic, Book IV, 444d-445b.

control. Plato insists that such a person is 'the most wretched of men'[6], precisely because he lacks internal unity.

Moreover, Plato's concern with the soul is further developed through his account of education. In the Allegory of the Cave, the movement towards justice is described as a reorientation of the soul from appearance to reality.[7] The ascent from the cave is an intellectual and moral transformation. The soul must be turned towards what is truly good. Therefore, justice depends just as much on knowledge as it does on discipline. A soul may be orderly in its habits yet remain misaligned if reason itself is ignorant. This explains why Plato describes philosophers as the people who are most adept at conquering the issue of the soul within themselves. The philosopher's soul is aligned because it apprehends the Good, reason truly governs the philosopher, therefore just actions flow naturally from them, hence why Plato also instates Philosopher Kings to rule his city, Kallipolis.

Conversely, the *Bhagavad Gita* approaches the problem of the soul from a different starting point. However, like The Republic, it is driven by a closely related concern with inner alignment. The dialogue unfolds with Arjuna speaking to his charioteer Krishna on the battlefield and him revealing that he is filled with fear and confusion. Arjuna's response is quite visceral: he trembles, feels physically weakened and finds himself unable to act. Krishna immediately questions the assumptions underlying Arjuna's distress. He insists that the true self is not the body, nor the emotions, nor the outcomes of action, but the soul (ātman), which is eternal and unchanging: 'The body is mortal, but that which dwells in the body is immortal and immeasurable.'[8] Arjuna's despair therefore stems from a fundamental misidentification of the self with what is transient and perishable, rather than with its enduring reality.

Within this metaphysical and theological perspective, dharma emerges as the principle governing righteous action. Dharma is a role-specific obligation embedded within the cosmic order, a sacred duty in essence. Arjuna's flaw lies in attempting to abandon his dharma as a warrior. On the surface, it is tempting to agree with Arjuna's reasoning as he appeals to the horrors of violence and war. However, Krishna does not endorse this response and instead he treats it as confusion, rooted in over attachment to the physical, superficial world. Arjuna's compassion, though sincere, arises from identification with bodily life and social ties rather than understanding of the eternal self.

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[6] Plato, Republic, Book IX, 576c-580c.
[7] Plato, Republic, Book VII, 514a-521b.
[8] Easwaran, The Bhagavad Gita, 2.18.

Krishna's criticism reveals that emotional intensity does not guarantee moral clarity. Arjuna's grief paralyses him because it overwhelms discernment, it clouds his vision. He is unable to distinguish between what appears morally compelling and what is truly aligned with his dharma. In this respect, Arjuna's failure mirrors Plato's account of the soul ruled by appetite or spirit. Although Arjuna's motives may appear noble, they are just another roadblock of attachment, preventing him from liberating his soul. The *Bhagavad Gita* therefore rejects the idea that moral goodness consists simply in following immediate emotional responses.

At the same time, the *Bhagavad Gita* draws a crucial distinction between action and attachment. Action itself is not the source of moral bondage. What binds the soul is attachment to the fruits of action. Krishna declares that 'You have the right to work, but never to the fruit of work.'[9] This teaching allows the *Gita* to reconcile action with spiritual liberation. The aligned soul acts fully and decisively, yet without egoistic claim over outcomes. Through such disciplined action, the soul is purified and brought into harmony with God (Brahman).

The moral psychology of the *Bhagavad Gita* further reinforces this emphasis on inner alignment. Krishna describes the person of steady wisdom whose mind is not disturbed by pleasure or pain and whose desires are restrained.[10] Desire is identified as the root of disorder that draws the mind astray from clarity and understanding. Alignment of the soul therefore requires mastery of desire which closely parallels the *Republic's* insistence that the lower elements of the soul must be governed by a higher principle. Where Plato locates this principle in reason's apprehension of the good, the *Gita* locates it in insight into the soul's grounding in God (Brahman).

Despite these similarities, fundamental differences remain. In the *Republic*, Plato presents the knowledge of the Good as the condition that makes just action possible[11]. When one has knowledge of this, they gain a high role in society alongside the highest amount of responsibility. The philosopher who has apprehended the Good is required to return to the city and rule, translating insight into political and ethical responsibility. Action therefore must be grounded in prior understanding. Alternatively, *The Bhagavad Gita* does not treat knowledge as something that must first be secured before action can occur. Instead, it insists that understanding itself is perfected through disciplined action performed without attachment to its fruits. The soul is aligned through the guidance of dharma. Through this lens, the two texts diverge over the route by which action and understanding are brought into harmony, yet they both still coincide on the belief that action is of great importance in the process to liberating the soul.

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[9] Easwaran, The Bhagavad Gita, 2.47.

Nevertheless, the contrast should not be overstated. Plato's education of the soul involves discipline and habituation long before dialectic appears, while the *Bhagavad Gita* insists that action without understanding is blind. In both texts, alignment requires both insight and practice. The difference lies in the matter of emphasis. The *Republic* stresses rational vision, while the *Gita* stresses disciplined action. Both treat moral excellence as a matter of inner order rather than external conformity.

Viewed together, the *Republic* and the *Bhagavad Gita* present convergent accounts of the soul's relation to order. In the *Republic*, justice is the soul's internal harmony, reflected outwardly in the just city. In the *Gita*, dharma is the outward expression of a soul aligned with Brahman. In each case, moral order is not invented in the soul. Instead, it participates in an objective structure that transcends individual desire. Moral failure arises when the soul is misaligned with this structure, while moral excellence consists in restoring that alignment.

In conclusion, although Plato's *Republic* and the *Bhagavad Gita* differ profoundly in context, language and metaphysical commitments, they converge on a shared philosophical insight. The central task of human life is the ordering of the soul. Justice in Plato and dharma in the *Gita* are not ends in themselves; they are expressions of a deeper alignment from which right action naturally follows. When the soul is properly ordered, action becomes coherent, society becomes harmonious and the individual participates in a reality that exceeds private desire.

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Violet Normsworth, Year 10

How does C.S. Lewis utilise Fantasy World-building to reconstruct Biblical Allegory in "The Chronicles of Narnia"?

C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia* is a world-renowned children's book series, first published from the years 1950-56, and have been critically acclaimed for their wholly engaging and enriched storyline. The series contains seven books in total, three of which have been adapted into film. To the uneducated eye of a small child, the narrative told by Lewis is an original tale of several children who find themselves transported into a world of magic and intrigue, where many evils must be fought and friendships are forged, assisted when needed by a mysterious Lion. In this essay, I will explore how Lewis' development of his characters and their world not only transports readers, young and old, into a whole other universe, but also reconstructs recognisable Bible teachings within his seemingly unrelated storyline.

The first chronicle in the timeline is *The Magician's Nephew*, following the characters of Digory Kirke and his friend, Polly Plummer, the first two children to venture into Narnia. More than any other parallel between *The Chronicles of Narnia* and the Bible, the world's creation is doubtless the most prominent. The characters, after finding themselves in a desolate void, witness Narnia's beginning – and hear it, in The Lion's song. Lewis describes how "the eastern sky changed from white to pink… just as it swelled to the mightiest and most glorious sound it had yet produced, the sun arose." He uses this moment, the actual dawn of a new world, to recreate Genesis, 1:3, when "God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light." The sun rises on Narnia at Aslan's command, beginning the sequence of events which the other books are centred around. Following this, Aslan asks an otherwise non-descript London cabman, who was accidentally brought along with the children, Uncle Andrew, and Jadis[1], "would you like to live here always?" and, when the Cabby tells Aslan that he is married, his wife promptly appears. These two become the first King and Queen of Narnia – initiating the terms used later 'Son of Adam' and 'Daughter of Eve'. These two phrases are quite plainly referring to a human man or woman, subsequently descended from the first humans in the world – whom the Bible tells us are God's own creations, Adam and Eve. Adam is said to have been the first to exist on Earth, as is the Cabby the first man in Narnia, whilst Eve comes from Adam: "So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh."[2] In Lewis's book, while Nellie[3] is not physically created from the Cabby, he wills her to be there and Aslan complies. Furthermore, Lewis later describes a garden, as Aslan tells Digory: "in the centre of that garden is a tree. Pluck an apple… and bring it back to me." This is a clear parallel to The Garden of Eden, and how "God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden,'" as Eve tells the serpent in Genesis 3:3. The serpent, representing temptation, is reestablished as Jadis, who tells Digory that "it is the apple of youth, the apple of life," appealing to his greed so that he would break his vow to Aslan. Thus, *The Magician's Nephew* retells The Book of

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[1] Who, after gaining eternal life, later becomes The White Witch.
[2] Genesis 2:21
[3] In Chapter 11, the Cabby addresses his wife as 'Nellie', which we learn later is short for Helen – the Cabby's name is revealed to be Frank.

Genesis in Lewis' depiction of the creation of Narnia through the allegory of Narnia's prelapsarian[4] nature until the story's antagonist allows evil to blemish the pure new world.

Next is the subject of Edmund, and consequently, the reoccurring Deadly Sins[5]. The third Pevensie child plays a key part in the fight for rule over Narnia in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, as he is seduced by the beautiful and devastating power of evil. In discovering the wintery world beyond the wardrobe in Professor Kirke's "Spare Oom",[6] Edmund stumbled across the very woman who would haunt him for years afterwards – The White Witch. Lewis illustrates that "her face was not white – not merely pale, but white like snow or paper… a beautiful face in other respects, but proud and cold and stern." Edmund's naivety and gluttony are his fatal flaws, since without the promise of glorious revenge against his siblings (or rather, just Peter), and "'whole rooms full of Turkish Delight,'" he would not have caved to temptation. This leads to the comparison of Edmund Pevensie to Judas, betrayer of Jesus. Both men lust after omnipotence, succumb to their cravings, face the consequences, and are remorseful. Matthew 27:3 states that "When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders." This is akin to how "Edmund shook hands with each of the others and said to each of them in turn, 'I'm sorry,'". His repentance is the turning point for his character, as he eventually fights alongside his siblings in the battle against the White Witch, a battle in which he is seriously wounded – a fact which stands as a final moment of retribution for his initial betrayal of his family. Moreover, Edmund gains the title of "King Edmund the Just", one which solidifies the development of his character. In the later books, he juxtaposes his fundamental introduction, reflecting how time for maturing permitted him to grow from the arrogant errors of his history, and to make his world a better place in payment.

Another distinct parallel between a prominent Bible story and *Wardrobe* is that of the resurrection. Good Friday saw Jesus wrongly crucified on the cross and died. On Easter Sunday, he returned, and was seen by two women: Mary Magdelene, and 'the other Mary.'[7] John 20:14-15 tells us that "she turned around and saw Jesus standing there; but she did not recognize that it was Jesus." This is comparable in content to the events of Aslan's resurrection, which takes place after he is muzzled, bound, and killed by the White Witch – in place of Edmund. Additionally, the witnesses to his return are two women: Susan and Lucy Pevensie. Lewis describes how the sisters "looked round. There, shining in the sunrise, larger than they had seen him before… stood Aslan himself." He is brought back to life due to the mysterious ancient magic protecting him, dictating that "'when a willing victim who had committed no treachery was killed in a traitor's stead… Death itself would start working backwards.'" The meaning here is that to take the fall of another is not only the most selfless act a person can perform, but also one which cannot be justified. Such an individual as to sacrifice themselves would indeed be punished as promised – but they would also be duly paid with spiritual (or, in this case, physical) rebirth for their suffering. Ultimately, Lewis uses the character of Aslan as a representation of Jesus, and therefore of God on Earth, a definite theme across the entire series.

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[4] Referring to a time before The Fall of Mankind (i.e. Eve eating the apple).
[5] Of which there are seven; not all are relevant so need not be mentioned.
[6] As the fawn, Tumnus, calls it.
[7] Whose description remains hazy, though Matthew 27:56 calls her "mother of James and Joseph."

The fourth chronicle, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* is opened by this uncomplicated, direct sentence: "There was a boy called Eustace Clarence Scrubb, and he almost deserved it." From the very beginning, Lewis succeeds in collectively hooking readers of the novel with just this simple statement – introducing the character, describing what sort of boy he is, and by merely reading his full name, readers learn more about him than if Lewis had declared 'this boy is insufferable.' The book narrates Eustace's first visit to Narnia, accompanying Edmund and Lucy, his cousins. During their escapade, the children reunite with Prince Caspian[8] on a journey across the Eastern Seas, where Eustace encounters an unfortunate fate. While the crew of Caspian's ship, *The Dawn Treader*, explore an island, the protagonist finds himself in a cave brimming with treasure. Naturally, Eustace is thrilled – causing his own downfall. By "sleeping on a dragon's hoard with greedy, dragonish thoughts in his heart, he had become a dragon himself." In Luke, verse 12:15, Jesus warns us, "be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." Perhaps Eustace should have considered this, as his gold-digging detour leads him to subsequently transform into a dragon. Redemption, however, is given to him directly from the hands (or rather, paws) of Aslan. Scrubb tells Edmund that "'when he began pulling the skin off, it hurt worse than anything I've ever felt... there was I as smooth and soft as a peeled switch and smaller than I had been.'" The metaphors to unpack here are immense. Firstly, Lewis reconstructs being spiritually cleansed through Aslan's undressing of Eustace from his dragon skins – tearing away the unholy, sinful part of him and revealing purity. The fact that, as Scrubb describes, Aslan's removal of the skins – although paining him – worked, while his own efforts failed – despite not hurting – reflects the idea that to become truly freed from the weight of past mistakes, one must endure agonising measures – which oftentimes cannot be conducted without assistance. Secondly, Eustace's observation of his decrease in size, which symbolises how his soul, now bare, brings him the perspective to see that he had not only sinned in his greed, but in his narcissism. He had been self-absorbed and conceited, but, when a folly taught him a necessary lesson, another's aid washed both his slate and psyche clean.

Finally, *The Last Battle* is the tale of how The Land of Narnia reaches its end, with every character from the previous six books playing their part in what truly is the final battle for Narnia. The story once again follows the reformed Eustace and his friend from *The Silver Chair*, Jill Pole, after the pair are summoned into Narnia by the captured King Tirian.[9] When Shift, the ape, found a lion skin, he persuaded the dozy donkey, Puzzle, to wear it and pretend to be Aslan – who, by this time, rarely visited Narnia, becoming legend. The end of the book takes a surrealist twist, centring on the idea of "Aslan's Country" – which the characters slowly realise is Heaven, as a result of their deaths in the battle. Chapter Twelve is titled "Through the Stable Door", symbolising the transition from life into death. Peter Pevensie reappears to close this door between the dying world of Narnia and Aslan's Country, a poignant fact which draws the chronicles in their full-circle moment, as the High King[10] seals the last entryway into his world. There, they reunite with old friends, and again we see the Cabby and his wife, "and Tirian felt as you would feel if you were brought before Adam and Eve in all their

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[8] Whose name is the title of the fourth chronological book – In *Voyage of the Dawn Treader* he is King of Narnia, following his Uncle Miraz's death.

[9] According to Lewis' timeline, the events of the final book take place seven Earth years after *The Silver Chair*, making Jill and Eustace sixteen, which, since the Pevensies were roughly three years younger than that when Aslan said they were too old, solidifies the idea that their visit was vital but terminal.

[10] In *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, all four Pevensies are crowned rulers, with Peter as the 'High King' above all others.

glory." In Genesis 28:17, Jacob awakens from dreaming and realises that Earth is "none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven." Here, we see the relation to the stable door, and we again see that Lewis illustrates numerous links to biblical facts within the series – although, he claimed that it was not originally intentional[11], but the theological notions are plain to see, deliberate or not. Moreover, whether by initial design or accident, C.S Lewis reconstructs notable biblical extracts, creating a nuanced world and equally complex characters. His use of such symbolism grips the reader and forges a fantasy realm utterly unique within its genre.

WORD COUNT: 2097

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[11] According to Root and Martindale's *The Quotable Lewis*, depicting Lewis expressing his beliefs about Narnia.

Felix Johns Gabelich

To what extent are Iliadic themes expressed in Wilfred Owen's poems?

The *Iliad* is an epic poem composed by the poet Homer around 700 BC. It is one of the earliest explorations of war, following the 10-year Greek campaign against Troy. It portrays themes of a world shaped by violence and suffering, heroism, honour, glory, as well as moments of pity and shared humanity. Nearly three thousand years later, Wilfred Owen engages deeply with these same Iliadic themes in his poetry of World War I, drawing directly from his lived experience as a soldier. Owen inherits Homer's intense focus on the physical and emotional suffering caused by war as well as his recognition of compassion between enemies. However, whilst Homer sustains a heroic framework which underpins *The Iliad*, in which honour and glory give meaning to death, Owen challenges these narratives as void of moral worth, exposing war as futile, dehumanising and destructive. Owen's work was 'instrumental in developing poetry as a truthful witness to atrocity and chronicle of horror rather than means to buttress morale and feed patriotism' (Vrana, Ellen, 'Wilfred Owen's War Poems Developed Poetry as a Witness to Atrocity Not Propaganda' (Wilfred Owen's War Poems Developed Poetry as a Witness to Atrocity Not Propaganda - The Examined Life). Accessed 27/12/25.)

Wilfred Owen's poetry expresses the Iliadic theme that war is brutal, violent and brings suffering. *The Iliad* is saturated with images of suffering and loss. In Book XVI, Homer describes the Greek hero, Idomeneus, killing a Trojan warrior, Erymas, with a 'spear [that] passed clean through the skull, below the brain, and shattered the white bone, smashing the teeth, filling the eyes with blood…'. In such descriptions, Homer concentrates 'upon the act of killing' (Jenkyns, Richard: *Classical Epic: Homer and Virgil, p.7*). Similarly, Owen also describes violent deaths in war such as in his poem *'Dulce et Decorum est'*, which depicts the death of a soldier, who in a gas attack, fails to get his gas mask on and 'blood' begins 'gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs' and has 'white eyes writhing in his face'. This vivid description goes on for eight lines conveying the long, drawn-out suffering of the soldier. Owen goes further than Homer by also portraying suffering which is a result of being in a war zone outside of combat. In Owen's *'Dulce et Decorum est'* he describes the men marching as 'Bent double, like old beggars under sacks' and 'blood-shod', conveying the harsh

conditions the men are living in, highlighting the soldiers are worn out and suffering even before battle.

Both bodies of work also throw light on the suffering of those at the home front. Hector, a prince of Troy, whilst being chased by Achilles, a Greek hero, around the walls of Troy, runs past a stream outside the Scaean Gates where there are 'troughs' that the 'wives and daughters of the Trojans once washed their gleaming clothes in peace-time…' (Homer, Book XXII). This poignant memory highlights the happiness and prosperity of the Trojans before the arrival of the Greeks and is in stark contrast to the then imminent and brutal death of Hector which follows. This underscores the long-term suffering of the Trojan populace due to the war as well as the impact war has on regular societal activities. Similarly, in *'Disabled'*, Wilfred Owen describes a young soldier who has returned home who is mentally and physically scarred; 'legless and sewn short at the elbow'. Throughout the poem, Owen gives sustained contrasts between this soldier's pre- and post-war life, such as 'Now, he will never feel again how slim/ girls' waists are… all of them touch him like some queer disease'. This displays, like Homer, the prolonged suffering that war brings on individuals and societies long after the conflict has been resolved. Here, Owen also suggests that much of the suffering and consequences from war are irreparable.

A dominant theme in *The Iliad* is the belief that heroism and glory are the highest achievements of human life, earned through courage in battle. Similarly, Owen acknowledges the traditional association between heroism, war, and death, but he dismantles this link, presenting it as immoral, and demonstrates war's destructive nature. The Heroic Code is a set of values all Greek heroes strive to uphold and seek, valuing honour (timē) and eternal glory (*kleos*) above personal and societal risk, as seen when Achilles, recounts the prophecy which offers him the choice between a long, obscure life or 'endless renown' at the cost of an early death. Achilles' decision to stay and fight at Troy, fully aware it will lead to his early death, demonstrates the extent to which glory is revered above life itself.

Mortality itself is fundamental to this heroic ideal, as what makes a hero's honour and glory so great is that it is always 'an inch away from misery, ugliness and death' (Jenkyns p.15), suggesting that the nearer the suffering and risk to a hero, the greater the potential glory. This idea is reinforced by Sarpedon, king of Lycia and ally to the Trojans, who tells his fellow Lycian captain, Glaucus, that if he were 'ageless and immortal' he would not fight (Homer,

Book XII), implying honour only exists because of the fragility of human life. In addition, if they were gods, honour and glory would already be theirs; therefore, he highlights for mortals that it is only worthwhile in life to pursue these values. Owen, however, dismantles this Iliadic association between death and honour to convey war only brings waste and destruction. This can be seen in his *'Anthem for Doomed Youth'*, where Owen questions 'What passing-bells for those who die as cattle.' This highlights the anonymity of the soldiers being killed, stripping them of any heroism or glory that is won in battle and granted through funeral rites in death, as it is replaced by the 'monstrous anger of the guns'. Owen's comparison to 'cattle' presents soldiers' deaths in battle like a mass slaughter of animals, which helps him present the futility and sheer waste of life whilst completely removing any link to heroism, condemning this narrative.

Social obligation to go to war and fear of shame are also central to Homeric heroism. Hector's decision to go and fight despite his wife, Andromache, pleading for him not to, fearing that when he dies, he would make her a widow and his son, Astyanax, would be an orphan. In his response, one of the reasons he gives is that if he chose to hide 'like a coward' he would 'be shamed before all the Trojans and their wives…' (Homer, Book VI). This highlights that as a Homeric hero, one has a personal and societal obligation to go out and fight to maintain and seek honour, notwithstanding any suffering. This reflects what E. R. Dodds describes as Homeric society being a 'shame culture'(Dodds, E. R., The Greeks and the Irrational, p. 28.) where a hero's worth is defined by others. Hector's fear of public disgrace is so great therefore that it outweighs personal and familial suffering. Although Owen acknowledges the continued existence of this narrative and the pressure it has in modern society, he does so to expose it as manipulative and destructive. In *'Dulce et Decorum est'*, the actual phrase 'Dulce et decorum est/ Pro patria mori' (it is sweet and fitting to die for one's country) comes from the Roman poet Horace, conveying just how ancient and recycled a narrative of going to war being glorious is. He condemns those who perpetuate this 'old lie' by addressing the reader with bitter irony: '…you would not tell with such high zest/ To children ardent for some desperate glory', echoing *The Iliad's* obsession with 'glory'; however, critiquing it. As he suggests here that the societal glorification of war functions as propaganda that sacrifices 'children' for this morally hollow ideal and presenting that nothing is noble in dying—only waste.

Despite the dominance of heroic violence, *The Iliad* acknowledges in the context of war and suffering people there is compassion and empathy for their enemies, revealing moments which transcend the battlefield. After Achilles kills Hector, He keeps his body and desecrates it for several days. Priam, King of Troy and Hector's father, enters the Greek camp with the help of the god Hermes. He humbles himself before Achilles, kneeling and kissing the 'terrible man-killing hands' that had killed many of his sons, conveying the grief that he is going through, and asks Achilles to return Hector's body to him. Priam asks him to 'think of your own father', Peleus, who like Priam, faces the prospect of losing his own son (Homer, Book XXIV). This plea acts as a catalyst, cutting through his rage at the death of his friend Patroclus, whom Hector killed. Moved by this, it caused him to weep for his father and fallen Patroclus whilst Priam weeps for Hector. These two men, although enemies, are united in their shared experience of loss and suffering. This presents suffering as universal and able to transcend conflict, with the heroic code temporarily giving way to human empathy. Owen expresses this theme also in *'Strange Meeting'*, which takes place in a subterranean tunnel leading to a shared 'Hell', following a soldier who meets another soldier saying, 'I am the enemy you killed, my friend', collapsing the boundary between friend and foe. The absence of anger and bitterness from his voice emphasises that in death motivations of hatred are gone because national boundaries dissolve in death along with any animosity, which forces men to see each other as fellow sufferers. Owen suggests that war itself acts as a barrier between fundamentally similar men, implying it is a part of human nature to be compassionate, highlighting the tragedy and moral failure of war. Homer also acknowledges a universal suffering being able to break through to shared humanity. However, it remains a rare and fragile moment within *The Iliad's* heroic framework.

In conclusion, Wilfred Owen's poems strongly express many of the key Iliadic themes. Like Homer, Owen particularly portrays the violence, brutality and suffering caused by war, the lasting impact on individuals and society, as well as the recognition of shared humanity between enemies. However, *The Iliad* has many aspects which glorify war through the heroic code, justifying and undermining suffering and death by giving it meaning. Owen, on the other hand, acknowledges the deep-rooted existence of this glorified narrative to undermine these ideals and expose them as morally corrupt and destructive. By critiquing the glorification of war, Owen emphasises its futility and dehumanising effects. By offering a less glorified view, he subverts Iliadic themes into a condemnation of modern warfare, revealing as he wrote, 'the truth untold/ The pity of war, pity war distilled'.

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Jet Johns Gabelich

How does Homer's poem the Iliad explore the significance of parent-child relationships in the context of today's world?

The *Iliad* is an epic poem, which was traditionally attributed to Homer and thought by most scholars to have been composed around the mid-to-late 8th century BCE. It follows the story of the ten-year Trojan War surrounding several themes such as glory (kleos), honour (timē), rage and exploring several philosophical themes of battle. However, it also explores a slightly overlooked theme: parent-child relationships. Throughout the epic, parent-child relationships are prevalent and are key in the decision-making and behaviours of several characters. Despite the Iliad being supposedly composed roughly 2700 years ago, several similarities in these relationships can be seen from the Ancient Greek world to the modern world and their significance can be noted. Throughout this epic, parent-child relationships are explored and characterised through the endurance and sacrifice parents make. In addition they are through the loss and grief experienced by them and the far lengths that parents go to care and protect their children. In this essay I will explore the immense value of parent-child relationships in the *Iliad* as emotionally central forces that impact human decisions and actions and how it relates and is profoundly important to today's world.

Homer's depiction of parenting under war conditions resonates strongly in the modern world, where parent-child relationships are often tested and affected in the face of the consequences of war. Typically, there is huge emotional strain put on these relationships and there are also huge emotional consequences as family members die in war or are obligated to serve in them, which creates conflict between duty and the ability to love and parent. As the *Iliad* is a poem which follows a ten-year war, this conflict is particularly evident and shows the significance of parenting while war is occurring but how the ability to parent is inhibited in the face of war. An excellent example of this in the *Iliad* is the memorable scene at the end of Book 6, in which Hector, the greatest Trojan warrior, meets his wife, Andromache, and their son, Astyanax, on the walls of Troy, as he prepares to go into battle. Andromache begins her speech by addressing Hector saying, "Husband, this courage of yours dooms you. You show no pity for your little son or your wretched wife, whom you'll soon make a widow." (*Iliad 6.418-421*). Andromache refers here to Hector going to battle and not staying with her and

Astyanax. Andromache's immediate accusation and the use of absolute language indicate the abandonment she feels by Hector, who has not just abandoned her but their son as well. He is therefore suggested to be forced from his duties as a parent and husband for his martial duties as a warrior of Troy. Andromache, as well as mentioning herself, mentions their son which highlights how the actions of parents affect the well-being of their children, which signifies the importance of the parent-child relationship as she cares for Astyanax, and she anticipates the effects of Hector's death on not just herself but their son. However, Hector starts in his speech following Andromache's by saying that, 'I too am concerned, but if I hid from the fighting like a coward, I would be ashamed before all the Trojans and their wives in their trailing robes.' *(Iliad 6.444-447)* Hector here clearly shows his decision-making with a clear contrast, which shows that his obligation for duty overshadows his ability to stay and love, and therefore his ability as a parent. This is further shown after Hector finishes his speech, where 'glorious Hector held out his arms to take his son, but the child, alarmed at the sight of his father, shrank back with a cry on his fair nurse's breast, fearing the helmet's bronze and the horsehair crest nodding darkly at him.' (*Iliad 6.466-468*) This alongside Hector's immediate reaction, where he 'doffed the shining helmet at once and laid it on the ground' *(Iliad 6. 468-469)* creates a powerful contrast between Hector as a warrior, symbolised by the wearing of his helmet, and as a father figure, without the helmet, which alludes to Hector's desire to be able to parent and show love to his dear son. Hector highlights the importance of being a parent to him in the haste of his action to remove his helmet, however the petrified reaction of Astyanax initially indicates the inability for Hector to parent in the face of duty and as a soldier. This scene is particularly powerful in showing the desire of parenting (to Hector through love for Astyanax) and the emotional importance of being available as a parent, which is resonated not just throughout the ancient world, through the actions of Andromache to compel Hector to stay, but also in today's world. This can be seen through several psychological studies and articles which promote it today such as an article written by Stephanie Underwood in 2025, which recognises the importance of emotional availability and its benefits for children and developing a 'genuine connection' with a child. This scene in Book 6 is one of the most detailed parent-child interactions in the Iliad and 'establishes a basic similarity between the ancient and modern notion of the child as a beloved object and of parenting as an activity of love that issues in attentive caregiving.' (Louise Pratt: The Parental Ethos of the Iliad (Athens: Hesperia Supplements, 2007) p. 26 Its importance is accentuated in Hector's inability to fully carry out this 'activity of love that issues in attentive caregiving'

as a soldier, despite his desire to, which overall accentuates the significance of parent-child relationships as they conflict with duty.

Furthermore, the *Iliad* maintains a coherent vision of parental devotion, which is characterised in the form of sacrifice and endurance, and child-like needs of investment and care. The actions of parents on behalf of their children are for the betterment of them, despite personal sacrifices being made, which emphasises the importance of parent-child relationships through the love and care that parents show. Once again, this same scene in Book 6 is too significant an example not to mention. G.S Kirk calls it 'the most famous of all Homeric scenes' [G.S Kirk: 'A Commentary on the Iliad' in G.S Kirk (ed.): (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) p.219]. Astyanax is the only small child that appears in the main narrative of the poem and he is loaded with immense emotional resonance, as well as Hector who is the major example of a parental figure in this scene and is devoted to the care of others, as seen previously towards the people of Troy, but also to his son, Astyanax. At *Iliad* 6. 400-404 Astyanax is introduced with tenderness and care at the breast of a nurse, G.S Kirk says, 'the sympathetic idea of the child held close to his nurse's breast is deepened in successive words or phrases, each touching and carefully chosen.' (G.S Kirk p.212). Astyanax is then called 'beloved' (ἀγαπητόν) *(Iliad 6.400-401)* which emphasises the emotional effect he gives rise to in Hector and he is also likened in a simile to a 'beautiful star' (ἀλίγκιον ἀστέρι καλῷ), which suggests a transcendent beauty to Astyanax as well as the importance and special value that he holds for Hector. Hector also gives Astyanax a nickname, Scamandrius, which only he uses. Although explicitly connected to Hector's dominance as the sole true defender of Troy (*Iliad* 6. 403) it may suggest as Louise Pratt argues, 'the lofty position the child holds in the city's heart and in its hopes for the future' (Louise Pratt p.27). This alludes to the success Hector wishes for Astyanax, which he even expresses later in a prayer to the Gods *(Iliad 6.484-489)* as he wishes people to one day say, '"He's a better man than his father."' This is a very familiar parental feeling which is heavily reciprocated today and therefore shows how significant parent-child relationships are through the support that parents provide for their children, so they can succeed to the best of their ability. Hector's love and care is further emphasised in his response when he sees Astyanax: 'Hector smiled and gazed at his son in silence' (*Iliad 6.404*)(ἤτοι ὃ μὲν μείδησεν ἰδὼν ἐς παῖδα σιωπῇ) Homer's use of alliteration of the 'μ' sound creates a warm tone and further expresses Hector's joy at seeing his son as he smiles, which is an overwhelmingly parental response and is

heartbreakingly familiar today. All of this sentimentalises the bond between parent and child and therefore emphasises the significance of parent-child relationships in the ancient world through the devotion of parents to their children through the love and care they hold for them as well as the value that children hold in the lives of parents. In addition to this example, parental devotion is also shown throughout the *Iliad* in several similes, which echoes the themes of parental care and sacrifice for not only the betterment but particularly for the protection of children. In Book 4 the attentiveness of parents is alluded to in a very tender simile when Athena brushes away an arrow from Menelaus (*Iliad 4. 130-131*) "as lightly as when a mother brushes a fly away from her child who is lying in sweet sleep." (ὡς ὅτε μήτηρ / παιδὸς ἐέργῃ μυῖαν ὅθ' ἡδέϊ λέξεται ὕπνῳ) although this simile demonstrates the power of the Goddess and the relative ease at which she brushed away this arrow, it also presents the familiar attentiveness of a mother, guarding her child even through sleep and protecting it from something even as harmless as a fly, this shows the extent to which parents go to for their children and therefore the significance of parent-child relationships due to the intense care parents show for their children. Homer creates a very warm image of childhood here and alludes to the idea of the maternal parental figure being more protective and invested in care of children and may suggest a more intertwined relationship between mothers and children rather than fathers and children. Secondly at *Iliad* 8. 270-272, when Teucer would go take shelter behind the shield of his brother, Ajax of Salamis, he 'would scurry back like a child to its mother' (πάϊς ὣς ὑπὸ μητέρα δύσκεν) this characterisation of the two brothers, Ajax as the protective mother figure and Teucer as a vulnerable child seeking protection from his mother, creates clear roles in a parent-child relationship and also creates expectations of a mother as a protector. The use of these similes by Homer creates a unified notion of what parents are expected to do: care and protect children, which highlights the significance of the parent-child relationship as it is a clear precedent for the nature of them, not just in antiquity but when compared with actions also in modern society today. These similes create this model of parenting which continues to shape modern expectations today of parental care and protection.

In addition, parent-child relationships are characterised through loss and grief as it emphasises the importance of both the parent and child to each other, through devotion, and the significance of that relationship to both parties. The *Iliad* is Book-ended by two incidents involving the loss of a child that shape parental devotion and evoke the extent to which

parents undertake because of loss and grief because of the value their children hold to them and therefore the strength of their relationship. In Book 1 the poem starts with the old priest Chryses' attempt to ransom his captive daughter Chryseis, and the poem ends with Priam's successful ransom of his dead son's body, Hector's, and its burial. Chryses is the first character to speak other than the narrator and Priam is the last. This creates a parallel between both characters and their situations and despite Chryseis being a woman and often seen by many scholars as a woman who is a token of exchange in the relations among men, this structural parallel likens the relationship of Priam and Hector and Chryses and Chryseis to each other and therefore suggests that both children are equal in value to each other in the eyes of their parents. This is evident in Chryses' inclination to expend 'limitless ransom' for the sake of his daughter who was presumably no longer a virgin, which is what many fathers valued in the ancient world. This shows that Chryses was deeply emotionally invested in his daughter and the language describing the ransom is very affectionate: he pleads for her return at *Iliad* 1. 20-22, "set my beloved daughter free for me." (τὴν δ' ἐμοὶ λύσατε φίλην) he described her as 'beloved' (φίλην) and uses the possessive dative "to me/for me" (ἐμοὶ) which reinforces that she holds emotional value to Chryses, rather than being property to him. This, alongside the urgency at which he wants his daughter returned by using an imperative, evokes the grief that Chryses feels when Agamemnon has Chryseis and because of it he will beg for her return and be a supplicant to her captor (Agamemnon) for it, before then resorting to divine worship of Apollo after Agamemnon refuses. This all shows the extent to which he went to, as a parent who had experienced loss, to have his daughter back. In addition, from a broader perspective it can be inferred that the value of sons and daughters are equal to parents in this way, a view which is much more like modern parent-child relationships today. In addition, this shows the extent to which parents will go to after 'losing' a child and how grief can influence the actions of parents and children drastically. This displays the significance of parent-child relationships in the Homeric period and that gender did not always have a defining role on parental value, which in antiquity was not always the case as sons were typically more desirable. This in turn draws huge similarities to parent-child relationships today, which is a much more equal society in terms of parental value based on gender, and as a result highlights the integral nature of parent-child relationships throughout history. But it is at the end of the poem that epitomises the significance of parent-child relationships as a universal feeling and experience. Priam is driven by extreme grief at the loss of Hector and as a final plea, he goes to Achilles to attempt to ransom Hector's body. On behalf of Hector and

the immense grief Priam experienced as a parent, who had lost his favourite son, he astonishingly, 'clasped his [Achilles'] knees and kissed his hands, the fearful, man-killing hands that had slaughtered so many of his sons.' *(Iliad* 24.477-479). This immediate action of supplication to a much more powerful man and his enemy, who has slaughtered so much of his house and family, really accentuates the power of grief in the context of parent-child relationships, and also accentuates the desire Priam has to give Hector a proper burial as his grieving father. In Priam's speech to Achilles, he urges him to, "think of your own father" *(Iliad 24.500-510)* and creates a comparison of himself to Peleus (Achilles' father) in absence and 'his words had moved Achilles to tears.' Afterwards they wept together, Priam, for Hector, and Achilles, for his own father and Patroclus. This scene is particularly powerful in illustrating the power and importance of parent-child relationships in driving extreme actions of individuals. Priam was able to touch and move Achilles solely by the reminder of his own father, Peleus, who was growing old alone, and Priam was able to carry out this act of extreme bravery and courage by making his way to the Achaean camp on behalf of his relationship with Hector, "It's all for him[Hector] I have come to the ships now." As a result of this Achilles releases Hector's corpse to Priam, after previously dragging it around the walls of Troy for 3 days and saying that he will not return Hector's body and "no man alive could keep the dog-packs off you[Hector]" *(Iliad 24.486-490)* when Hector pleads to Achilles before his death to be returned to Troy. This previous response and mindset of Achilles further emphasises how drastic the change was in Achilles and the pity aroused in him caused by the fundamental emotional bond with his father. Through the touching words of Priam, he feels grief for his own father 'Achilles is reminded of his humanity at the end of the poem and he sees himself as Hector and Priam as his father. He sees his enemy as himself - Achilles confronts what it means to be mortal, by understanding grief.' ('The End of Homer's Iliad: Achilles and Priam Book 24.' The End of Homer's Iliad: Achilles & Priam Book 24 - YouTube *Great Books Professor,* YouTube, uploaded by Great Books Professor, 2020) All this shows that the significance of parent-child relationships is emphasised in the context of loss and grief and there is extreme emotional response because of loss happening to family members in the Iliad. However, this can also be related to today where grief of children and parents evokes huge emotional responses from them, such as parents after school or community tragedies e.g. school shootings who will speak of a sense of injustice and lifelong ache and sometimes show powerful emotional responses such as advocacy, shock and anger. An example in the modern world that can be compared being the 2012 Sandy Hook

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Elementary School shooting were several parents co-founded a nonprofit organisation called Sandy Hook Promise, which works on educating students and adults to 'know the signs' of potential violence and intervene early (Mark Barden and Nicole Hockley: *(www.Sandyhookpromise.org)* Accessed 04/01/2026*)*. Such responses reflect the same grief driven motivation that drove Priam to the Achaean camp, to Achilles and it thus reveals that parental grief in the modern world remains a catalyst for action just as in the Iliad.

Overall, all this shows that there is no doubting the significant value of parent-child relationships throughout the *Iliad*. The *Iliad* presents parent-child relationships as having fundamental emotional importance to everyone and they shape the actions, decisions and values of its characters drastically. Homer has explored this significance in several predominant ways such as through the evaluation of the significance of the conflict of duty and the ability to love and parent to maintain parent-child relationships in scenes such as Hector saying farewell to Andromache and Astyanax. Homer creates tension between martial duty and duties as a parent and thus how war inhibits the ability of a parent to show care and devotion which is significant. The *Iliad* also explores the significance of parent-child relationships through several Homeric similes that create images of parental protection and attentiveness, which define the fundamental roles of parents as predominantly protectors and the child as a desired, beloved object and establishes care and sacrifice as features in a parent-child relationship in the *Iliad*. Loss and grief also exemplify the emotional significance of parent-child relationships as it drives powerful emotional responses and actions as explored through Achilles, Priam and Chryses on behalf of the opposite party in the parent-child relationship. All of these examples display how parent-child relationships are a universally human experience and hold immense emotional weight in the hearts of humans. The *Iliad* in this way resonates strongly with the modern world through emotional realities of parenting, the values and roles in parent-child relationships, the sacrifices that parents undertake for the benefit of their children and grief and loss that is experienced in daily life and in the face of war, which all shapes the lives, decisions and responses of people today. Overall, Homer explores through these depictions the overwhelming significance of parent-child relationships and, in doing so, has created resounding and familiar themes and feelings that resonate in the modern world.

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Caleb Durrani

Is *300* an accurate representation [of the battle of Thermopylae] compared to Herodotus' *The Histories*

The Battle of Thermopylae has been retold numerous times since Herodotus first recorded it when he was writing in the mid-fifth century BCE. It details the first battle the Greeks had lost against the Persians, as 300 elite Spartan soldiers, along with approximately 1000 Greek soldiers, fought an innumerable Persian force. Eventually despite a 3-day holdout by the Greeks, the Persians emerged victorious. *300,* written by Michael Gordon, follows the 300 Spartans led by King Leonidas, who fought the Persians in a retelling that highlights their bravery and heroism, presenting their deaths as valiant and honourable. In Herodotus' *The Histories,* however, the loss is also portrayed as a crushing defeat for Greece as a whole, as one of the two Spartan kings was killed, and it meant that the Persians were safely on Greek soil. This event in *The Histories* combines enquiry, storytelling, and moral reflection, rather than the action-filled and legend-like way that Gordon presents the Battle of Thermopylae. *300* also does not attempt to educate its readers, but rather it prioritises persuasive, ideological storytelling, making it a deliberately stylised and rhetorically driven representation of the original, and in doing so it loses its accuracy to the original.

The motivation behind the two texts, has a clear effect on both of their reliability. This is because Gordon created the script for the purpose to entertain an audience, whilst Herodotus wrote to preserve and inform the history of the Greco-Persian wars. Herodotus did not write for the modern audience, rather he wrote for an Athenian audience, who had defeated the Persians, and were, at the time of writing, at war with Sparta[1]. This means he had an underlying pro-Athenian bias, which seeps into *The Histories* as he often praises their pseudo-democratic political system and contributions to the war against the Persians. Despite this making his work subjective, he still attempts to remain impartial, he is also the most contemporary and in-depth source that has survived since it was first written, meaning it is the source we base most research off. *300* on the other hand, is an action-filled tale that mythologises its characters, and it is the main purpose to entertain its reader. So, it is not meant to be accurate to the story, rather the story is manipulated to target a modern-day audience.

A key cause of *300's* inaccuracy is its provenance. *300* was made in 2005, America, and it was specifically based of the graphic novel by Frank Miller. Therefore, it was never based off *The Histories*, but instead, a fictious novel that in of itself is not meant to provide a 1 to 1

[1] The Peloponnesian War was the war between Athens and Sparta, first between 460-445 BCE and secondly 431-404 BCE.

account of Herodotus. This decision by Gordon directly impacts the validity of *300*, as it is not following the account given by Herodotus, and this shows in the various historical inaccuracies that appear. This script also is affected by the political world in which it was made under, as it parallels themes from the 'war on terror'[1] started by George W. Bush[2]. This is because *300* is heavily depicted as a fight for the freedom of Greece and Sparta, and a common remark used by Bush was that they their 'very freedom came under attack' referring to the 9/11 attacks, and similar sentiments through the entire campaign were shared. Although, this is not the sole reason the script was created, it still holds influence over how the battle is depicted, affecting the accuracy of the script negatively. *The Histories* also suffers from its origin, as Herodotus was only a young child at the time of the events he writes about, making it impossible for him to have had the detailed speeches and private conversations which he details. However, we know that he travelled extensively for research, allowing him to give deeper reliable detail on battles like Thermopylae. This shows that *The Histories* also can be questioned in its validity over its provenance, but *300* is affected much more heavily by this, as it

Spartan heroism is constructed by the script using exaggerative and absolutist language, which transforms them from historical figures into legends, unlike the more measured portrayal given to us by Herodotus. In *300*, the Spartans are shown to be these heroic figures, defending the free Greek world they lived in. Before the final confrontation between the Spartans and the Persians, Leonidas refuses to surrender and instead tells his men 'Spartans! Prepare for glory.' The use of the abstract noun 'glory' replaces the military objective of defeating their opponent with the idea of fame and to be remembered in history. Rather than death, heroism is presented to be an end, romanticising it rather than giving context to it like Herodotus does. He instead, gives us a private meeting between an exiled Spartan, Demaratus, and the king Xerxes, where Demaratus attempts to educate Xerxes on the Spartan obedience, telling him, 'Their master is the law' and that they are 'forbidden ever to turn tail'. This indicates to the reader that the Spartans are not staying to gain personal glory, like it is in *300*, but rather heroism is institutional in Sparta, and the decision to stay and fight shows the discipline and obedience to laws from Leonidas and the 300. This shows that Herodotus provides the contextual explanation of motivation behind their decision that is missing from *300*. *300* glorifies the Spartans further in its baseless claims that they wore nothing but a leather loincloth, a red cape, a bronze helmet, and no appropriate protection like a breastplate, showing their extensive close-combat skill, as despite this. they were able to kill so many with so few a deaths. By exaggerating the Spartan heroism, it prevents the script from analysing the Spartans, and it displays them to the audience as something to admire, then to understand, meaning it becomes an inaccurate representation.

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[2] American president from 2001-2009 and started the war on terror in response to the September 11 attacks in 2001.

Through the presentation of the Persians, *300* further loses credibility, as Gordon decides to portray them as villains, whilst Herodotus offers a far more nuanced depiction. In *300,* the Persians are portrayed as merciless and barbaric through their use of slavery and beasts in warfare. The King's personal bodyguard, named The Immortals, are described as having 'Eyes as dark as night. Teeth filed to fangs... soulless'. The zoomorphism creates a caricature of the Immortals, reinforcing the 'othering' of the Persians by making them appear inhuman and savage. This strongly influences the readers' perception, by positioning the Persians as villains and elevating the Spartans by contrast. This portrayal of the Persians is reinforced by the depiction of their king Xerxes, as he is suggested to be a tyrannical megalomaniac. He even believes in himself so highly that he tells Leonidas to 'kneel,' implying that he is a god-like figure, and the simplicity of the command mirrors religious submission rather than political obedience. As despite them having the same role as king, Xerxes believes himself to be above Leonidas religiously as if he is a god, when he clearly is not, and it means that the reader will have a negative impression of him. On the other hand, Herodotus provides a more balanced approach to the portrayal of Xerxes, as he allows more development of his character leading him to be more complex than an evil tyrant. A straightforward way he does this is through the decision to invade Greece, whereupon Xerxes is given counsel by two of his advisors, Mardonius and Artabanus. Mardonius tells Xerxes of the great power of the Persians and weaknesses of the Greeks, and reassuring him 'What do we have to fear?' The rhetorical question he poses to Xerxes strokes his ego and convinces Xerxes to invade. Whilst Artabanus supplies a perspective for Xerxes, telling him 'But what if you suffer a defeat.' This simple message then persuades Xerxes to change his mind, which he does again after more counsel with Mardonius. This proves Xerxes to be more than a single-minded tyrant, into an emotionally unstable and persuadable person, and not an omniscient god, like *300* shows him to be. Ultimately, the vilification of the Persians through the description of their soldiers and king, is to entertain its reader, and so through this, 300 loses sight of the critical analysis of the Persians in *The Histories,* reducing its accuracy.

Another contrast between *300* and *The Histories,* is their narration, *300* takes a monologic narrative by Dilios, a Spartan soldier who returned to Sparta from the battle and detailed the events of the Battle of Thermopylae to the Spartan council. Whilst Herodotus offers the reader multiple perspectives allowing for them to make their own decisions, rather than being forced into one, like in *300.* As the narration comes from one person, who is Spartan, then the only view we get from the text is a Spartan view, that is going to curry favour for themselves and put down the Persians. This is clear at the end of the script as Dilios declares to his soldiers, as they fight the Persians at Plataea in Greece[3], 'This day we rescue a world from mysticism and tyranny.' From this, the reader is only provided with the idea that the Persians wrong in their belief and that they came to Greece to enforce terror among the Greeks, when the Persians mainly want to get revenge as they had been defeated before, but also Athens

[3] Plataea was a land battle led by the Spartans, in Plataea, Boetia, 479 BCE, which the Greeks won.

had aided the Ionian islands, in their revolt.[4] But no context is given by Dilios, thus reducing the political complexity of the war, and instead making it into a moral absolute. Herodotus on the other hand, provides the reader with multiple points of view, and is not absolute in writing, and often questions his sources, and tells the reader 'Although it is incumbent on me to state what I am told. I am under no obligation to believe it entirely.' This shows how Herodotus believes that accuracy means a transparent enquiry, and it does equal to certainty. This openness directly contrasts with the absolutist narration we have from Dilios in *300*. This narration has a direct effect on its accuracy as it reduces the historical complexity that is shown in *The Histories,* leaving the reader with a single persuasive version of the events which remains unquestioned throughout the script, removing any uncertainty that is displayed by Herodotus.

To conclude, *300* is intentionally an inaccurate representation of *The Histories*, as it is not designed to educate readers of the Battle of Thermopylae, but to immerse them in a myth of heroism and bravery opposed to cruelty and heartlessness. This is achieved through its monologic narration, vilification of the Persians, and elevation of the Spartans from historical figures to mythology. While *300* successfully captures the mythic spirit of Spartan self-representation, it remains inaccurate when judged against Herodotus' analytical and enquiring account of the battles

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[i] Tom, H: *Persian Fire: The First World Empire, Battle for the West* (London: Little, Brown & Company, 2006), p. XIV

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[4] The Persians were defeated at the Battle of Marathon, in 490 BCE under the king and father of Xerxes, Darius. The Athenians gave 20 ships to the Ionians to aid their revolt that started in 499 BCE and ended in 493 BCE.

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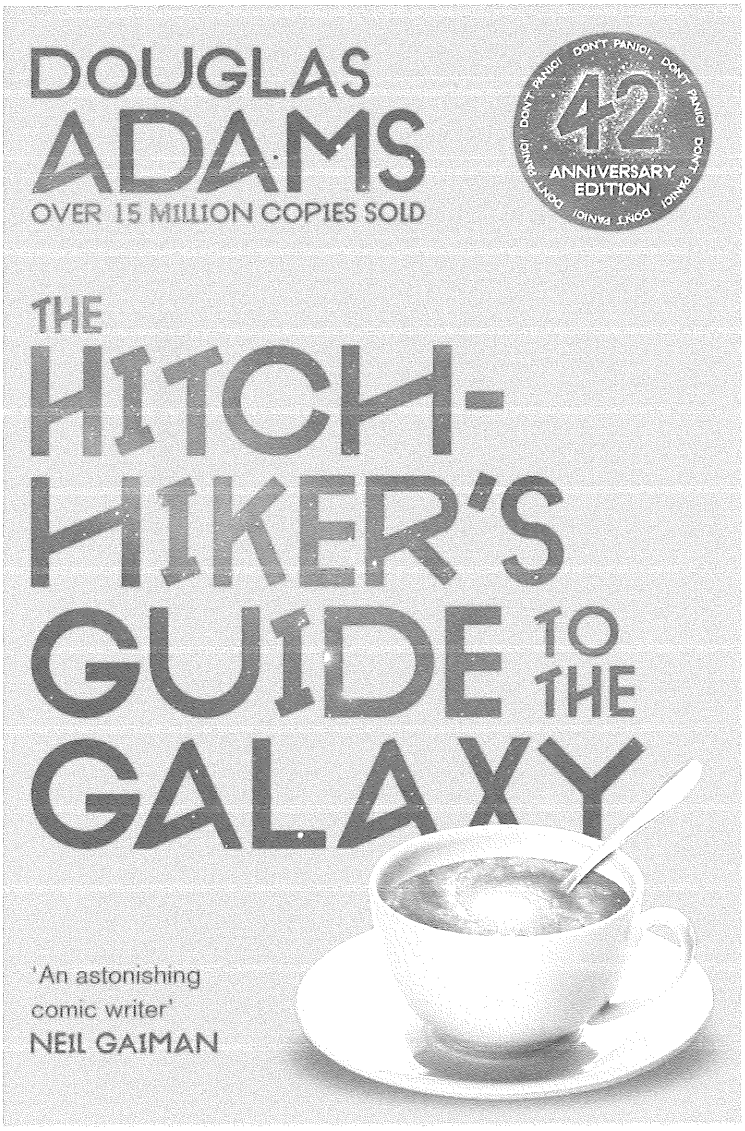
How does D. Adams explore the concepts of law and order (on an intergalactic scale) in 'The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy'?

By Jacob Lucas-Adams



How does D. Adams explore the concepts of law and order (on an intergalactic scale) in 'The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy'?

By Jacob Lucas-Adams

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This essay will examine the first book in isolation (in its entirety) and briefly speculate around the latter novella in the more general genre of Science Fiction.

Douglas Adams' *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, originally a BBC Radio 4 series in 1978, focuses on the journey of Arthur Dent, and his extra-terrestrial companion, Ford Prefect through intergalactic space, with the value of law and order insinuated into the current 'five-part trilogy[1]' of novels. The work explores the outlandish themes of corruption and purposelessness, through the many parallels between modern world and the fictional setting and their inherent absurdity, the latter being one of the themes debated of this style of literature. Matters such as the ones in question are a prominent feature, exemplified in the abstract of chapter one in *Absurdity in Literature* (Cornwell) saying that absolute lack of power for humans happens generally in a 'universe with no meaning or value' – quite a poignant representation of Adams' fictious setting; the plot is developed quite creatively for a morose alleged 'no value' setting. Corruption is shown in the persona of Zaphod Beeblebrox, the 'president' of the Galaxy, defined later, and his desire to steal the 'Heart of Gold' spacecraft, which in itself is based around the theoretical 'improbability drive'. Lastly, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* also illustrates mass manipulation and miscommunication, in particular – from the organic 'experiment' of Earth to its very demolition. There is not a particular common antagonist depicted in Adams' novel; however, collectively, the Vogons and the character of Beeblebrox can be concentrated on from their actions towards themselves and others.

One can begin by defining the utility and infrastructure of law in a society that is at such great distance with itself, and its comparable aspects to life in the modern world. Britannica defines the term 'intergalactic' as 'existing or occurring between galaxies'; however, the definition of 'law and order' poses an evident question: what medium does it cover? Adams explores the concept of 'order' through many dilemmas, over matters of argument, between people and – ultimately apparent in every cathartic adventure novel – between factions themselves. In the plot of the first novel, the reader follows the self-respecting protagonist Arthur Dent as he stumbles out of bed one morning to the unbeknownst surprise of a bulldozer outside of his house, with the argument made by Mr. Prosser (the local planning agent) that the records of the demolition in place of a bypass had been 'available' in the planning office for nine months. In the chaos of the situation, Ford Prefect tries to convince Arthur, after a

[1]A common phrase used by Douglas Adams to describe his collection of novellas, stated in an interview and described in an essay by Dina Sostarec.

categorically confusing argument which resulted in Prosser lying down on the floor in front of the machinery, that he should come to the 'pub' and 'not panic' about the situation. At this point, a critical announcement is broadcast across the planet to the news, peaking the satirical interest of the reader, that the entire planet must be destroyed for a 'Vogon Highway' cutting through Earth's star system: a parody to the ordeal happening to Arthur Dent at the same moment. Moreover, there is an irony found between the documents being visible to see; the Vogon race placed them in the 'local planning office' in Alpha Centauri (a somewhat distant star system). After escaping and making their way onto the presidential ship, named the 'The Heart of Gold', they battle with improbability, and eventually end on the planet of Magrathea: an example of a customised planet, stranded socio-economically in the solar system. This builds to a climax where human logic is the last desire for the pan-dimensional beings disguised as 'Earth mice'. Primarily, one will explore the role of corruption in the plot, which will transpire into a discourse regarding improbability and then lastly, justice.

Firstly, regarding law and morality, one is able to show how Adams illustrates the message of corruption (what some would say is the opposite of 'order') through the novel, explored further through the character of Zaphod Beeblebrox, as aforementioned, who informs one greatly about how the entire system of government in the galaxy is managed. However futile this is, it can be seen especially in his plan; he declares that the Heart of Gold is 'so amazingly amazing I think I'd like to steal it.' Through this speech, Beeblebrox frames a strong image of himself, almost on autocratic grounds, resounding a constant message of 'I', and 'I'd': putting himself at the forefront. Moreover, an inferred sense of being comparable to a 'robot' is elucidated with his monosyllabic statements, apart from when he is blinded by his own desires. These power dynamics already prove a somewhat deceitful universe, because if the president – the one who supposedly leads – is so materialistic and full of greed, even having to burn his own brain 'flesh' to avoid suspicion (hence, corrupt), then surely the universe would inherently follow. Adams stupefies the reader once again, however, by juxtaposing this: the speech was declared intrinsically 'marvellous' by the surrounding audience and news representatives; this is the opposite of what one would expect a person in significant position of power to say. Furthermore, in galactic society, the figure of 'president' is given the full title of 'President of the Imperial Galactic Government', described in the book's 'shorthand' guide as 'very much a figurehead [...] (with) no real power whatsoever [...] but those of finely judged outrage'. Clearly, their job is not to wield the power behind leadership but instead detract from what modern society may call a 'shadow government' or 'secret society', with hidden complexity: now that 'imperialism is [now] an anachronism', presidential regard does not change, but the operations that happen in a furtive manner do. More evidence for this can be found in a guide to the factual history of 'secret societies', for instance in *The Real History of Secret Societies* (Spence) using the quote, 'they aren't for everyone, and that quality of specialness drives much of their appeal.' *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, similarly, illustrates that only a select few, six to be exact, know this information, and to the reader, this demands inquisitiveness. Is it not strange, yet moral, how a false utopia, governed by secrets, does not demand more utility in law than in actuality: or in perceived actuality?

Next, one can discuss the great difference between 'Earth' and fictional 'intergalactic society', and the theme of 'improbability', something which the novel does not hesitate to pursue, even through even the few events already discussed. One can see the reasons behind this clearly summated in Adams' quote: 'anything that is in the world when you're born is normal and ordinary and is just a natural part of the way the world works.' Improbability seems natural to the Vogons, and the rest of the galaxy (obviously excluding Earth). Contrasting to Arthur Dent's human planet, uncertainty plays a larger factor in the society of the Vogon race, and when one talks about this, it is contrary to our 'Earth' stricter law and order. In the items explored in the novel, for instance, the improbability drive: the machine which powers the 'Heart of Gold' ship; it is difficult for the average person to attribute themselves with the concept, because in the modern world, one has rules which they adhere to[2]. Because societal changes enforce rule upon rule, it is difficult for one to mirror their beliefs onto the ideas of the Vogons and therefore not have the ability to associate with a set of political ideals, exactly what a confused Arthur Dent feels in the novel. It is not merely just the government that experiences differences, but also the rules in general as the essay *The Novelization of Douglas Adams' the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (Robertson Salas) states that some experiences and things 'cannot apply directly to his/her imagination' (hence a need for a larger description in writing rather than radio). Lastly, the novella in question proves how the universe is utterly incapable (similarly to the remark on corruption) of upholding any form of justice – from enforcement to social engagement. One could see a parallel to this potentially as when originating the idea for the series, Adams lay 'drunk and depressed' in a field in Innsbruck, Austria; this could be insight into a lack of order itself.

What remains apparent through, is that *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* is a piece of literature that does explore corruption and improbability; however, it is presented in a way that influences the reader to think 'outside the box'. Although deceptive manipulation is a theme in many sci-fi novels, what makes Douglas Adams' works distinctive are that they interweave such themes into the plot, rather than basing the plot around them in their entirety. One could have chosen many more themes to discuss, however surface-level law and order is not the end of this Adams 'inquiry'. Justice, comparability and what humans can draw on for morality is subtly but deeply intertwined with the work itself; anyway, one really would not want to live in a place in the absence of impartiality, right?

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Final Word Count: 1,974

[2] Some 'critics' to this view would potentially say that people feel that they have liberty to do 'whatever they want to', as to some, law and order does not feel particularly strict, and hidden deceit is mirrored strongly in the modern world. This is a valid point; however, it is hard to imagine an even more loosely governed place which doesn't delve into the reams of dystopia. As a further note, the prior definition of 'some' (referring to critics) could be defined as 40-43% of the population depending on studies 2013-15 who detailed this percentage of the global population as living in 'free' countries.

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Hera Bloomfield - Dale Year 10

To what extent does William Golding blur the boundary between humans and animals in his novel '*Lord of the Flies*', and can humans truly be considered above animals?

In *'Lord of the Flies'*, William Golding depicts how a group of young schoolboys act when deserted on an island. After a plane crash, young boys from different schools all appear stranded on a desert island, with no adults in sight. As the story develops, the boys turn against each other and wreak violent chaos. There are similarities shown between these young boys and the animal kingdom, how without their natural environment with adults and a society, violence and bloodshed creep their way into control, displaying the striking resemblance to wild animal nature. The study of zoochosis can be used here to interpret the similarities shown between animals and humans. Zoochosis is when an animal that has been moved out of its natural habitat, into a zoo enclosure for example, where there is lack of stimulation, loss of social groups, and deprivation of a comfortable environment. The animal then starts to develop mental issues and dangerous symptoms. This therefore causes the animals behaviour to change into abnormal, repetitive actions. These actions include hyper-aggression, self-harm or mutilation, and compulsive stress releases. The animals' enclosure that's drives zoochosis to happen is mirrored by the desert island the boys crash on, creating an interesting comparison.

The lack of clear leadership and inability to share power on Golding's island creates a hierarchy that causes the boys to become increasingly savage to those lower in the hierarchy and to those who refuse to conform to it, such as Piggy and Ralph, displaying their similarities to animals. As civilisation breaks down, the boys begin to act on instinct rather than logic, much like animals attempting to survive in the wilderness. This is shown through Jack's change in behaviour when "he began to dance and his laughter became a bloodthirsty snarling." Golding uses zoomorphism by using the word "snarling" to compare Jack to a wild animal, suggesting that he is losing his human instincts and identity and replacing them with his primitive instincts. The sudden shift from "laughter" to "bloodthirsty" highlights how quickly Jack moves from his old human instincts and a shift in behaviour, showing his emotional instability. In addition, the chant "Kill the pig. Cut her throat. Spill her blood" shows how the boys' behaviour becomes ritualistic and animal-like. The repetition creates a hypnotic rhythm that encourages violence and danger and stops the boys from thinking for themselves. Instead, they begin thinking as a pack or a herd. This is also similar to repetitive behaviours seen in animals under stress. Through this, Golding suggests that without the control of civilisation, humans can easily become violent and animalistic.

Throughout the novel, the boys start to lose their sanity and ability to listen to reason, as if they are experiencing distress similar to animals suffering from zoochosis. As the isolation and fear of the island becomes more apparent, Golding uses their psychological deterioration

as a similarity between humans and animals. This is particularly clear through the character of Simon, who becomes aware that the Beast is not a physical creature like the boys thought, but rather something within the boys themselves, their inner beast. In the line "fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill", Golding uses irony to show Simon's realisation, highlighting the boys' confusion and irrational fear. This mirrors zoochosis in animals, where the distress the animals experience causes them to misinterpret harmless surroundings as threats. Furthermore, Simon's mental state continues to decline when he "found himself looking into a vast mouth." The surreal imagery suggests a hallucination of the beast, implying mental instability brought on by extreme isolation and trauma. By presenting Simon's breakdown in this way, Golding suggests that when humans are removed from civilisation and stability, their minds can deteriorate in a similar way to animals kept in unnatural, distressing conditions.

By using the pig head and the Beast, Golding explores the similarities between humans and animals as the boys lose their innocence and become obsessed over violence. The severed pig's head represents both the boys' brutal actions and the darkness within themselves, showing deep they descended into savagery. When "the Lord of the Flies spoke to him in the voice of a schoolmaster" it uses personification and irony to turn the pigs head into a twisted figure. The familiar "schoolmaster" voice suggests discipline even though it comes from rotting animal head, highlighting how leadership on the island has become corrupted. This reflects how fear is now viewed differently by the boys, much like animals experiencing zoochosis who respond to imagined threats. Similarly, the line "there was a blackness within, a blackness that spread" uses metaphor to demonstrate the moral decay spreading through the boys. The repetition of "blackness" emphasises how this it is dark, uncontrollable, and infectious, mirroring the way animals react to uncomfortable situations. Overall, Golding uses the pig and the Lord of the Flies to show that when civilization collapses, humans can be driven by the same fears and instincts as animals.

As the story goes on, savagery increases, and the boys start to treat each other violently instead of with humility, blurring the lines between human and animal. The boys appear as predators rather than children, linking them to the wild and stripping away their societal roots. This becomes clear during Simon's death when "the crowd surged after it, poured down the rock, leapt on the beast, screamed, struck, bit, tore." The intense verbs used here create a rapid, breathless pace that reflects the chaos of the moment, stripping away any sense of responsibility or emotion, through use of the technique asyndeton. The repeated violent verbs dehumanize the boys, showing them as a savage pack attacking prey instead of young boys. Similarly, Piggy's death is described in animalistic terms when "Piggy's arms and legs twitched a bit, like a pig's after it has been killed." Golding's simile directly compares Piggy to a slaughtered animal, highlighting the total loss of empathy and moral boundaries on the island. By depicting the boys as both hunters and prey, Golding suggests that without

civilization, humans can engage in the same brutal, instinct-driven violence as animals. This reinforces the novel's message about the fragility of human morality.

Despite this, many characters resist the urge to act like animals and work to create and maintain society and order on the island. This shows that not all humans behave like animals. Golding presents characters like Ralph and Piggy as proof that reason can survive even in harsh conditions. Ralph consistently tries to keep order by building shelters, holding meetings, and prioritizing the fire in hopes to be rescued. This shows rational thought and a desire for responsibility rather than just instinctive survival. Similarly, Piggy relies on logic and reason, as seen with the conch, which symbolizes civilization and communication. His focus on reason contrasts sharply with the violent behaviour of Jack's tribe. This conflict is captured in the rhetorical question, "What are we? Humans? Or animals?" Through this question, Golding directly addresses the boys' identity, making both the characters and the readers consider whether their actions come from humanity or instinct. The structure of this question suggests that the boys have some self-awareness, which means they can recognize and resist savagery. It implies that while humans can act in animalistic ways, savagery is not an unavoidable condition but a conscious choice. Some characters resist it while others embrace it.

In conclusion, Lord of the Flies explores how fragile civilization is and how easily humans can fall into chaos when stripped of structure, authority, and stability. Through the boys' loss of leadership, mental decline, violence, and symbolic imagery of the pig, Golding consistently blurs the line between human and animal to a great extent. This reinforces the idea that instinct, fear, and savagery lie just beneath the surface of humanity. By drawing parallels to zoochosis, Golding suggests that extreme environments can distort the behaviour of both humans and animals. However, the resistance shown by characters like Ralph and Piggy complicates this idea, emphasizing that savagery is not inevitable but a choice. Golding's final message serves as a warning that civilization is fragile, and without it, humanity risks reverting to brutality, showing that we are no better than our fellow animals.

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How does J.R.R. Tolkien draw inspiration from Norse mythology to give depth and personality to his pantheon?

by Riley Neville

Tolkien's legendarium is often described as a modern mythology, but what makes it feel genuinely ancient is the way he draws on older traditions and reshapes them for his own purposes. Norse mythology is one of the most important of these influences, not only in terms of imagery but in the way it helps define the personalities and roles of the Valar. In this essay, I focus on *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and the opening sections of *The Silmarillion* — especially *Ainulindalë* and *Valaquenta* — to explore how Tolkien adapts Norse archetypes within his pantheon. Norse myth, which developed in the Scandinavian Iron Age and reached its height in the Viking Age, offers a set of gods and cosmological ideas that Tolkien clearly admired, even if he didn't follow them straightforwardly.[1] As a philologist influenced by *Beowulf* and a wide range of mythic traditions, Tolkien knew these stories well.[2] What interests me here is the way he transforms them: he takes recognisable pagan archetypes and reshapes them into morally coherent figures who fit the ethical structure of his Christian-inflected universe. My argument is that Tolkien uses Norse models as psychological templates, refining them to give depth, personality and moral clarity to the Valar.

Firstly, Tolkien heavily draws inspiration from the Norse god Odin to characterise Manwë, the ruler and leader of his pantheon. Like the All-Father Odin, Manwë is 'appointed to be [by Ilúvatar] the first of all Kings: lord of the realm of Arda and ruler of all that dwell therein. In Arda his delight is in the winds'. The absolute 'all' suggests Manwë's total leadership, even over his fellow Valar, and the pathos created by the word 'delight' suggests Manwë's purity and love for his control over the winds. Manwë is also deemed to be wise beyond all other Ainur, described as being 'the closest in thought to Ilúvatar'. Ilúvatar, akin to the Christian God, is omnipotent, and so being 'the closest in thought' to this omnipotent being suggests that, aside from Ilúvatar himself, Manwë is the most intelligent being – in direct parallel to Odin. However, a strong example for how Tolkien is influenced by Norse Paganism to aid in characterisation rather than directly copying all aspects of the character is through the fact that Odin is often malevolent in nature, whereas Manwë is described as 'the friend of all children of Ilúvatar' and that 'he seeks no power or dominion'.[3] The children of Ilúvatar are generally virtuous and noble people, not entirely benevolent but the furthest mortals from malevolence. The fact that Manwë is not just respected but considered a 'friend' shows his great love for the good and unmarred things on the earth – a direct testament to Manwë's benevolence. Additionally, Manwë's refusal to seek dominion, despite his power, portrays Tolkien's ideas of moral constraint, even in a metaphysical character. This benevolence likely stems from Manwë's cosmic responsibility, and from Ilúvatar creating him as the counterpart to the despicable Melkor. This shows how Tolkien adapts noble parallels from Norse mythology to create a character who seems close to God (Ilúvatar), and to define nobility and benevolence as an assured archetype worthy of the leader of a pantheon.

Another metaphysical being that Tolkien explores is Tulkas, the war god of the Valar. Tulkas is a direct and straightforward parallel to the Norse god Thor, where both are mighty

physically, competitive in contests, and generally simplistic, exuberant, hearty people. Tulkas, out of the protagonist Valar, is the most unlike Manwë. Where Manwë is wise, Tulkas is narrow and hearty. Where Manwë is a good counsellor and advises the other Valar, Tulkas is more the brawn of the Valar, having no interest in the past or future and existing only to enjoy the present – in contrast to the other Valar. Tulkas is mighty despite not being one of the Aratar, and specifically distrusts Melkor for being evil, and Melkor loathes him because he is not benevolent, like most of the other Valar, and so is less easy to persuade. The Norse prize physical prowess and have very specific heroic ideals. They believe that, as well as being physically strong, heroes should be joyful, unburdened (for the most part), and uncomplicated – a distinction that sets them apart from the other gods in their pantheons. Tulkas and Thor are both joyful, possessing boisterous confidence. Tulkas is given the title Astaldo, Quenya for 'the valiant'. This is very similar to one of Thor's titles: Véurr, which is Norse for 'the protector': a valiant role.[4] Tulkas is specifically introduced in *Valaquenta* as a soldier who 'laughs ever, in sport or in war, and even in the face of Melkor he laughed in battles before the Elves were born.' Tulkas' extreme joyful nature is specifically expressed by laughing 'even in the face of Melkor'. Tulkas laughs directly at an evil so strong and concentrated – the very essence of evil – that it would utterly break any mortal or even Maiar, showing his careless nature and displaying characteristics of Norse heroism. A common misconception is that Thor and Tulkas lack intelligence – they are intelligent deities but are simply uninterested in tactics and scheming. Thor is not cunning, unlike his brother Loki and his father Odin. Likewise, Tulkas is described as 'no maker of things, nor is he a counsellor.' This emphasises a strong, hearty personality influenced by Thor. Another trait they share is that they both act as an intimidating force towards evil. Thor is the most feared Aesir by the giants in Norse mythology, feared more than Odin, because he is by far the strongest god in Norse mythology both physically and in spirit.[5] Very similarly, Tulkas is feared by Melkor himself, even going so far as to 'flee before his wrath and his laughter'. One of the primary reasons shown for Melkor's fear is Tulkas' strong spirit, specifically 'his laughter', which seems to be a great weapon against evil because of the strong positive emotion in it. However, Tulkas is not a direct parallel. Very similar to Manwë and Odin, Tulkas is the more perfect version of Thor. While Thor has pride, a quick temper and recklessness, Tulkas is humble and 'a hearty friend' according to *Valaquenta*. By shaping Tulkas through the joyful archetype of Thor, Tolkien adapts classic Norse heroism into a friendly and enthusiastic character rather than one that carries pride and recklessness.

Finally, Tolkien is inspired by the craftsman archetype presented by Odin to influence Aulë's independent and defiant personality as a craftsman. Both Odin and Aulë are cosmic craftsmen: Odin creates humans and shapes the earth. Very similarly, Aulë makes the Dwarves and shapes the essence of Arda. Odin often acts without permission from the other gods. The most notable example of this is when Odin hangs himself from Yggdrasil, the world tree, in order to gain knowledge.[6] This self-sacrifice is not permitted by the Norns nor the other gods, and is in direct defiance to spite the Norns, because Odin is jealous of their freedom to roam Yggdrasil. Another example is when Odin steals the mead of Kvasir from Suttung.[7] This theft is in direct defiance of a sacred oath that the gods and goddesses make after the Aesir-Vanir war. Tolkien, inspired by this, uses this defiance to shape the personality

of his master craftsman Aulë, who has even more cataclysmic acts of defiance and independence as a result of his impatience. Before the Firstborn arrive, Aulë 'is impatient and desires to make things of his own.' Through Aulë's impatience, he attempts to create the first life, out of hubris, in the Dwarves. Immediately after creating the Dwarves, Ilúvatar gets angry, as he intends the Elves to be the first mortal life in Arda. Aulë clearly creates the Dwarves impulsively, as he immediately regrets his decisions and complies, saying 'If thou wilt take them, I will give them.' This shows that Aulë is not completely defiant, only impulsive and impatient, and that he does not think of the consequences of his actions. Both Odin's and Aulë's craftsmanship have severe consequences that drastically alter the course of events in their worlds. Odin commonly crafts gifts for mortals and gods that lead to doom, such as the runes.[8] These runes bring vast destruction and unlikely happenings into the Norse mythological world. Likewise, Aulë teaches the Noldor how to craft, which eventually leads to Fëanor crafting the Silmarils, changing the course of Arda forever. Additionally, Aulë's great crafts attract the attention of Melkor, who envies Aulë and desires his power for himself. This shows that neither Odin nor Aulë consider the consequences of their craft and instead act on impulse, leading to destruction and unintended changes to the general course of events. However, Aulë is more pure than Odin. Odin's creativity is morally ambiguous, and has heavy ties to deception, sacrifice and ruin. On the other hand, Aulë's creativity is purified. Aulë repents for what he has done wrong, submits to Ilúvatar and accepts the limits on what he is and is not allowed to do. This shows how Tolkien adapts the Norse archetype of Odin into a figure defined by humility. In conclusion, through Aulë, Tolkien adapts Odin's wicked craftsman archetype into a character who is defined by humility and repentance, aware of the ethical responsibilities of sub-creation rather than Odin's restlessness and ambiguity.

In conclusion, J.R.R. Tolkien uses Norse archetypes as psychological templates which he reshapes and adapts to fit the purity of the moral logic of the pantheon in his legendarium. For example, Manwë reflects Odin's wisdom and control over the skies, but is purified into benevolence. Tulkas encapsulates the pride and spirit of Thor, but without excess pride or recklessness, and Aulë keeps Odin's consequential creativity, but is transformed into a humble character. Tolkien keeps the overarching archetype of the Norse gods, but by removing moral ambiguity he rebuilds the personality to fit a Christian-inspired metaphysics. Through this, Norse paganism becomes a foundation for a new, moral pantheon that feels ancient and yet original.

Footnotes

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2. McCoy, *The Viking Spirit: An Introduction to Norse Mythology and Religion* (CreateSpace, 2016).
3. *The Silmarillion*, 'Valaquenta'.
4. 'Véurr', *Wiktionary*.
5. *Thor Beyond the Hammer: Protector of Gods and Men*, Viking Style.

6. ‘Odin’s Discovery of the Runes’, *Norse Mythology for Smart People*.
7. ‘The Mead of Poetry’, *Norse Mythology for Smart People*.
8. Ibid.

Glossary

Valar Greater Ainur — angelic god-like beings who shape and govern Arda.

Ilúvatar / Eru The original being in Tolkien’s universe. He creates the Ainur, the Firstborn (Elves), and Arda. He parallels the Christian God.

Maiar Lesser Ainur, created to serve the Valar.

Ainur The collective term for Valar and Maiar — angelic beings of Arda, greater than mortals but below Ilúvatar.

Marred Refers to the influence of Melkor. At the start of the First Age, Melkor mars the world, removing the possibility of complete innocence or true goodness.

Eä The created universe — the “world that is”.

Melkor / Morgoth The primary antagonist of Arda. Banished by the Valar at the end of the First Age into the Timeless Void. “Morgoth” is Sindarin for “Black Foe”.

Dagor Dagorath Tolkien’s version of Ragnarök: the final battle in which the Valar and Fëanor return, the Silmarils are recovered, and the world is renewed unmarred.

The Silmarils Three jewels crafted by Fëanor that capture the unmarred light of the Two Trees. They burn any unworthy to touch them.

Valinor The land of the Valar in the West. The Two Trees of Valinor once illuminated it before their destruction by Melkor.

Aratar The eight highest Valar — the most powerful among them.

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