

The Gadfly

Unreliable Narrators Since 470 BCE

Weather:

Varies based on the mood, location, and disposition of the reader; generally sunny

Satirical [adjective] -

/sə'tɪrɪkəl/

"Exposing human folly to ridicule"

Example:

The Gadfly is a satirical paper

Issue #3

November, 2025

Five Cents

It's Back to the 1820s at Laurel Heights With Tea Talks!

By: Hassan Ahmed



In its quest for legitimacy, The Gadfly has begun seeking out normal everyday LHSSians to talk to. Surely if we bother enough people, we'll become famous school-wide. Our first victim was Alex Gaballa. Unfortunately very popular and difficult to get a hold of, the student exec (or "representative" as the office would like us to call them) for Tea Talks has a lot to talk about!

GADFLY: Alright, first question. Why are they segregated by sex?

ALEX: What?

GADFLY: The Tee Connectors! There's a male gender on one side and female gender on the other. I'm starting to think you don't know much about Tee Connectors or Coax Cables.

ALEX: No, I don't.

GADFLY: Then tell me what's Tee Talks, if it's not this?

ALEX: Oh, TEA Talks has nothing to do with whatever that is. It's about talking, and discussing, and learning from different perspectives, and coming together to talk about societal issues, and to debate a little, while also eating food and having fun!

GADFLY: Next question! This one hits close to home. I understand that everyone has to "dollar up" so to speak. Really get the 19th century atmosphere. Don't you think that's cultural appropriation?

ALEX: I mean-

GADFLY: My culture is not your costume.

ALEX: I don't think you're from that era-

GADFLY: -Really!?

ALEX: So that's not really your culture.

GADFLY: So you're dictating what century I was born in?

ALEX: Look, dolling up is optional and it won't be expected every time. And we'll have some meetings where you don't have to, but it will be appreciated. Not to imitate it, but to learn from and appreciate it.

GADFLY: That makes me feel better, thank you. Ok next question! Wow we are breezing through this. Who is Tea Talk's biggest rival? For example The Gadfly has The New York Times...

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"Si jamais on arrete de le baisser, c'est pour lui filer un coup de pied dans les..."

Back to the 1820s at Laurel Heights Contd.

ALEX: Debate club.

GADFLY: Debate club?

ALEX: Debate club. When people ask me what Tea Talks is, I basically tell them it's a different type of debate club with food.

GADFLY: Right, I want to expand on that actually. You eat the same food, go outside to be in your own little bubble, wear similar clothes; is this a club or a cult?

ALEX: I don't think that the school would support a cult, so I would call this a club.

GADFLY: And that's the only reason you wouldn't identify as a club, correct?

ALEX: Well,-

GADFLY: I'm just going to cut you off there. Moving on! I was talking to the big guy the other day, Mr. Lozon. We're good friends. Y'know we talk all the time.

ALEX: Oh.

GADFLY: Just yesterday I was loitering in front of his car.

ALEX: Yeah I'd be careful with putting that on tape, that can be seen as stalking and harassment.

GADFLY: Ok well it's his fault for putting up a big sign that says PRINCIPAL PARKING in front of his car.

ALEX: I wouldn't admit to that on the record, seeing as we're in a public school right now.

GADFLY: Nah don't worry, we're the only ones in here.

Editor's Note: Mme. Smith was in the room, right next to us, overhearing everything.

MATEO (who has been here the whole time): I'll just post this issue on Reddit or something, no one'll see it there.

GADFLY: Phew! Ok wait, what were we talking about again? Oh yeah, my question! My sources in the office tell me that Tea Talks promotes dangerous levels of reflection. Cause y'know, we're in a school; kids can't think too much around here. What do you say to those critics, and are they invited to the next meeting?

ALEX: They ARE invited to the next meeting! I'm still heartbroken that my 'performative men' posters were taken down. They weren't meant to be offensive, no one found them offensive-

GADFLY: Well clearly someone in the office felt attacked. We can only guess as to who...

ALEX: I understand that slightly older people may not understand the meaning behind my posters, and I invite them to the next meeting; see what it's really about, to discuss, learn, and understand with us instead of just assuming. No ill will towards the office, it was just a miscommunication, but I'd love to open an inclusive dialogue with them.

GADFLY: All I got from that is the office-folk are old.

ALEX: That is NOT the takeaway.

GADFLY: Ok! Now where are you even getting the funds for all this?

ALEX: It's actually very sustainable! The gardening club may or may not be supplying us with tea leaves in the future, so if they give us bad leaves it's their fault.

GADFLY: Cool. Ok next question. You get to invite one teacher to a Tea Talks meeting and we'll make it happen. We have connections. We'll email them relentlessly, we'll beg, we'll plead, we'll cry-

MATEO: We can brive them

GADFLY: So yeah, any teacher, Alex.

ALEX: My grade 09 English teacher. Purely because I don't think my math teachers like me, or my science teachers. And not my french teacher because french might come up as a topic and that would be divisive.

GADFLY: Who was your French teacher?

ALEX: Mme. Power. I loved Power, she was so nice. She's the sole reason I considered taking French again. But yeah I'd probably say my grade 09 English teacher. I don't think you'd have to harass him, I think he'd willingly come.

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"Pro-tip: hide the suspendable offense in a stupid ad"

It's Back to the 1820s at Laurel Heights Contd.

GADFLY: No, we'll harass him, don't worry. Alright well last question. Remind everyone where we can find you!

ALEX: Ok! We have posters all around the school, join our classroom! We have all the information in there.

GADFLY: Yeah, we'll throw the code in here somewhere. We'll put that in, your first name, last name, mother's maiden name, Social Insurance number.

ALEX: You don't need to do all that...

GADFLY: Nah don't worry, it'll be no problem at all.

Editor's note: The code in question is: hlacomw4

MATEO: This whole thing was an ad?

~~~~~  
Ad:

## STOP THE STIGMA



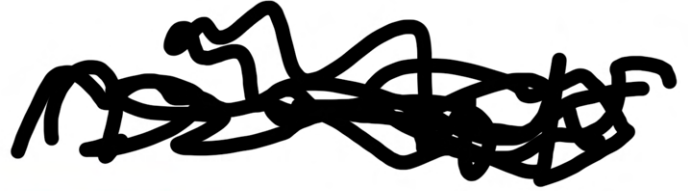
## BE TOLERANT

~~~~~

GADFLY: How else are we going to convince execs to let us make fun of them for 30 minutes?

Thank you for reading the transcript everyone. Join Tea Talks so that other execs are convinced that these interviews are worth their time and dignity!

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A small image of a man in a suit standing in a doorway.

EXERCISE FOR THE READER:

The last article is finished, and it'd be silly to start a new one here. Since we need something to fill the space, write your own article in the space below!



I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Last Night

Article by: Hassan Ahmed
Featured in Photo: Anonymous 3

My manager called me into their office the other day. The only sound for a while was the creaking of my chair as I took my seat. My bloodshot eyes reflected off the window behind them, and I felt a drop of sweat run down my neck. My hyper self-awareness was only broken by the clacking of their keyboard. What came next was an hour or so of lecturing. They were talking about how I never hand anything in on time, how I never flush, on and on *ad nauseam*. Frankly, I was too stoned to give a damn. After they caught wind of my breath, which at this point had contaminated every inch of that tiny office, they started screaming fairly derogatory terms and I promptly left.

The next day, I found a note on my desk:

FOR NOVEMBER ISSUE:

WRITE REMEMBRANCE DAY ARTICLE.

INTERVIEW DEAD VETERANS. FAILURE TO

COMPLY RESULTS IN LITERALLY GETTING

FIRED. MUST FINISH BEFORE TUESDAY.

OVERTIME WILL NOT BE COMPENSATED.

- MANAGER

Crap. How was I supposed to interview a dead person? This task seems 'literally' impossible and I'm pretty sure that failing this assignment will be the excuse through which I'm fired. Surely there's a law against editors giving their reporters articles like this. Not that it matters, I'm certainly not going to challenge my boss in court or anything: best not to risk it.

After clocking out of work that Monday evening, I went to visit my dad in Parkview. He was the only dead person I knew. Frankly, he was the only person I knew in general. He didn't really have a grave there, but the real one was a fourteen hour flight away; too far for me to visit. I made

a makeshift one in the corner of Section B. He was a driver. An honest man. Earned his life through discipline. I'm a writer; I lie for a living. You wouldn't know I was his son unless someone told you. I asked if I could sit down next to him. The nice thing about dead people is that they never say no. I was never any good at starting conversations, so we sat in silence. The silence gave me time to think. I thought about all the time I did try talking to him. And I started thinking about the times he spoke back; that's exactly what I needed if I wanted to keep my job. April 8th, July 3rd, September 8th. They all had something in common.

I got home pretty late, maybe 11:10 or so. I needed a finished article by 9 in the morning. What do you really need for an interview? Top hat, trench coat, notepad, pen? I got all my things, hardly thinking about what I was trying to do; I'd never done anything to this scale before. In the drawer next to my bed was the portal to heaven, so to speak. It was my key to saving my job and getting that interview. I took everything I had and waited. And soon, my senses began to fail me. It's hard to describe what I was seeing. Purgatory, maybe? I felt as though I was in freefall and floating both at once. There were no directions, no frame of reference. Everything was up and everything was down. I could taste the colours in my hair and hear the sight of my sweat.

I fell into heaven. Or maybe I passed out and didn't feel the ascent. I took my first few steps up towards the gates. I wasn't sure if this was temporary or not. I'm not a man of heaven though, God would've realised by now if I was in the wrong spot. There was an immigration officer at the door. Asked for my passport. I didn't have it, so we wasted about an hour trying to sort that out. Her shift finally ended and I was let through. The bareness of it all struck me immediately; God's kingdom hardly had any subjects. Quality over quantity I suppose. After roughly three hours I hadn't had any luck. There didn't seem to be a single soldier in heaven. I didn't pack lunch, and heaven's urban sprawl had me walking more than I would've liked. A woman noticed as I wandered without

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"Hallelujah, I'm a bum!"

I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Last Night Contd.

without destination and waved me into her home.

She introduced herself as Jane. Said she used to work with monkeys or something. I was more focused on the food, to be perfectly honest. I told her about my predicament, and she didn't seem too weirded out by the whole thing. After thinking for a while, her hand gestured over to the docks outside the window. I suppose I would check there first before giving up. I couldn't see a single soul there, though that seems par for the course up here. I resigned myself to delve into the rings of hell, when I spotted a man lighting a cigar in the corner of my vision.

He seemed the soldier type. Rough hands, light frame, young man too: maybe 30? I walked over and asked him,

"Hello sir. I'm here from The Gadfly, spare some time for an interview?"

He looked on with confusion and maybe a bit of apprehension,

"Not interested."

The man was stubborn. I'd usually let up but I had too much on the line. I pressed on,

"It's a piece that's meant to honour everyone that's died. I'd really appreciate your input."

"Ain't nothing honourable about what you're doing."

"How do you mean sir?" I asked. I just needed to get him to start talking.

"They killed me to keep folks like you happy."

"I'm real sorry about that, then. Hell must be nicer than whatever this is meant to be."

That got him to laugh. I think I'm in. I took a seat across from him as he went on,

"Well kid, they tell heaven a perfect kingdom and hell a broken democracy. Nothing happens up here. Only a fool wishes for paradise."

"Why are you still up here, then?"

"The music."

I jotted that down. It wasn't really important but I'd like for him to think that I'm a serious reporter.

"So, sir.... You were a soldier?"

"You're not going to get the story you want out of me kid."

"Look man, just help me out. If I don't get an interview soon, I'll probably get fired."

"Your union won't let that happen."

"... I'm not part of a union."

The smoke from his cigar built a temporary barrier between our faces. He started back up after it dissipated,

"A coward and a fool. Making a great first impression son."

"Then let's restart. You said they killed you. What kind of enemy was it? Somali? Boer?"

"The kind that pays your starvation wage, I'd wager."

He was wasting my time. There wasn't anyone else around though, and I'd rather get something before I go.

"Do you remember anything from the battlefield?"

"They tied me to a chair. Five rifles, four bullets, one blank."

"So you were captured?"

He flicked the ash from his cigar. He handed it to me, and I tried to smoke it. I couldn't handle the smoke and started wheezing. He went on,

"I still see myself in Salt Lake City."

"That's where you lived?"

"That's where I was killed."

The Gadfly

Unreliable Narrators Since 470 BCE

"If you want nothing before you are dead, shake hands with your boss and look wise"

I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Last Night

I'm lost. It didn't help that he could never answer a question straight. Maybe moving away from war would bring normal responses.

"What was your job before fighting?"

"Musician."

"Must've been hard to play music in the trenches!"

He didn't laugh at my joke. In fact, he looked at me like I was an idiot.

"There's plenty of time on the picket line. Want me to play one of my songs?"

"I don't really have the time dude."

Didn't matter what I said. He already grabbed his guitar and started strumming.

*"My will is easy to decide,
For there is nothing to divide,
My kin don't need to fuss and moan,
'Moss does not cling to rolling stone'.*

*My body? Oh, if I could choose,
I would to ashes it reduce,
And let the merry breezes blow,
My dust to where some flowers grow.*

*Perhaps some fading flower then,
Would come to life and bloom again.
This is my Last and final Will.
Good Luck to All of you,
Joe Hill."*

"Look, Mr. Hill, is it? I think we're getting off track. Who were you fighting for? What were you fighting for?"

For the first time since I met him, he smiled at me.

"You wanna know what I fought for?"

That's what I just asked. I nodded.

"I fought for humanity. I fought for peace. They didn't like that one bit. They might've taken my life but I ain't dead! I might've been shot by the Copper Bosses, but it's the cold complacency of all those fellows that cut my time short. You're not like them. You keep pushing. I like that."

I wasn't really sure what to say, I just wrote it down. And as I was jotting down my notes, his cigar finally died. I looked up, but he was gone. And I started to feel like I didn't belong here. Heaven began to melt and fade away and I started falling.

I landed on the floor of my room, drenched in sweat. A spider that was crossing the room scurried away from sight. It was two in the morning. I was so tired, but I thought I'd look up who Joe Hill the activist was before I went to sleep.

When I went into work the next day, late again, my manager started yelling at me. Frankly I was still too stoned to give a damn. After submitting my piece, I planned on giving my 2 week's notice. Do something important with my life. Maybe start a blog. Who knows?

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"I am less interested in the...convolutions of Einstein's brain than in the...people of equal talent [who] have lived and died in the cotton fields and sweatshops."

Section of Fun

Opinion: The DNC Said It's MY Turn to be a Corrupt Mayor!

By Andrew Cuomo (Independent, not affiliated with The Gadfly)

You elected him. You'll pay for it. Seriously, a radical communist assemblyman? I deserved to win this election! I mean, I didn't have to work this hard when I "ran" for governor. As my father, Mario Cuomo, used to say, "money buys votes". Thanks a lot dad! But listen New York, when you're ready for a meek and moderate voice, I'll be here. Well not here. I'll probably be in Mar-A-Lago. Just call me.

Minesweep: Sweep the Mine



Funny Prank By Hassan Ahmed

			3	1	
4		4			
		4	1		
2		4			
					3
	4				
2					3
1	2	2			

Ask Harper
with Hassan Ahmed

Dear Harper,
Should I feel bad about not wearing a poppy to school every day this month? I'm on the fence still.

- Agreeable Reader

Dear Agreeable Reader,
You should feel bad for asking the question. Either be a dangerous traitor to the Canadian state, or become an absent-minded fervent nationalist. The world has waited itself to death over your kind's inability to make a bloody decision.

Yours in War & Peace,

- Harper Artichoke

Dear Harper,
I heard vaping is totes cool, and it'd be radical (or chanme as my french friends say) if I started. It would be an infinite aura pull if you could share some of your elite ball knowledge about that zaza.

- Dope Reader

Dear Dope Reader,
If I see one more person vape in a public bathroom, I'm afraid a felony may be committed.

Yours Soberly,

- Harper Artichoke

Dear Harper.
My friend loves Paramore, and won't shut up about them. I'm behind in all my classes because of them. How do I get them to listen to actually good music?

- Miserable and Busy Reader

Dear Miserable and Busy Reader,
Have you tried introducing them to Evanescence?

Yours Still,

- Harper Artichoke

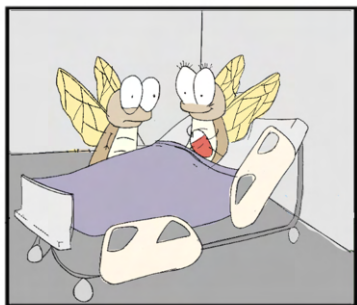
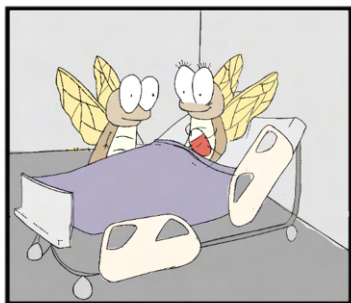
Dear Harper,
My boss keeps lecturing me about going 'above and beyond', but that sounds hard. How do I exceed expectations without doing any extra work?

- Quitting Reader

Dear Quitting Reader,
Employ more verbs, more jargon, and less substance. Try saying, "Let's circle back", "I'll reach out", and "I'll touch base". Once you sound like a manager, no one will notice you've been doing no work for the past four months.

Yours resonantly,

- Harper Artichoke



The Gadfly

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"Why, look at me. I've worked my way up from nothing to a state of extreme poverty."

The Truth.

By: Lianne Elkadri

Clairvoyance is a gift many wish to have but very few inherited from the ancients. From random buzzfeed quizzes to crones with an addiction to eating incense sticks, there are a plethora of sources in which you can have your future read. As you may have noticed, the resulting "predictions" are incredibly vague and grammatically incorrect, and it is honestly both insulting and hilarious that people take advantage of the lack of public knowledge of the clairvoyant arts. Outlined below are some of the common misconceptions about the topic, signs that your psychic may be lying to you, and your horoscope, accurate and specific, as you deserve it

Commonly, when asked to picture a psychic, people picture crystals, incense, half melted candles, and other items of that nature. This is not required for clairvoyance, and this mental trickery was caused by the half human half mole people in Hollywood, who wish to keep the true secrets of the arcana to themselves. Psychics can be found anywhere, but are most commonly found in dodgy looking alleyways talking to rats. Rodents communicate on a different frequency that normal humans can't hear, but psychics can tune into with practice, which is a good tell when it comes to checking the authenticity of your psychic. Another misconception is that psychics have 3 eyes. Unless you can see the third eye, a psychic claiming to have one is lying to you. Finally, you may think that psychics eat normal food, but they don't, because it's very poisonous to them. They can be found eating rocks, paper, and occasionally scissors.

Now you found a psychic, but what if they're messing with you and giving you false information despite knowing the real truth? This is a very possible scenario and it is important to stay vigilant and be able to detect lies. If you are told of an "upcoming opportunity", this is a blanket statement, as anything can be considered an opportunity. If they try to tell you when you will die, that typically isn't a lie, but call the police, as they will stop at nothing to get their "street cred" (as the youth say) up through accuracy. Claiming that a deceased family member or pet misses you happens sometimes, but it's gray, as ghosts are pricks most of the time, on account of them being mad that they're dead, so either your psychic doesn't know this and is pretending, or they just feel like giving you a false hope. Carry a vacuum cleaner with you in case of any attempted hauntings, because if you're going to die, it will look like you care about cleanliness

Your horoscope, from a real incense eating clairvoyant.

Aries (Mar.21-Apr.19)

Be weary of icy surfaces, unless you're ice skating on a pond, in which case, be weary of non-icy surfaces. You faced a hardship recently, which will come back to haunt you when you least expect it, and you can't do anything about it. Your favourite colour is clear.

Taurus (Apr.20-May.20)

You like flat soda, you absolute freak. You pretend it's gross but you secretly have a fridge full of opened soda cans. If given the opportunity to have an opportunity, firmly grasp it, but allow it reasonable freedom. Your birthday is between April 20 and May 20.

Gemini (May.21-Jun.20)

Your hamster is planning an escape plan, and by the time you're done reading this, it will already have found its way to the paper shredder. You have the spirit of a ghost, who causes you to dream about ghosts, but you can't see the dreams because ghosts are invisible. You hate it when bad things happen to you.

Cancer (Jun.21-Jul.22)

You are being pursued by a cannibalistic Hollywood actor, who shall not be named, but if you see Shia LaBeouf, run away. Or don't. He'll catch you either way. You may come in contact with pirates, and you must decline their invitation to watch One Piece, because that show is really boring. Your birth month starts with the letter J.

Leo (Jul.23-Aug.22)

Lions, amirite?

Virgo (Aug.23-Sept.22)

Your pet fish misses you, and needs your help to get to the afterlife. To help, you must leave as much cash as you can under the recycling bin on the third floor of Laurel Heights Secondary School. Sometimes when you get very tired, you have difficulty staying awake. You should go hiking more often.

Libra (Sept.23-Oct.22)

You pronounced it "library" for an embarrassingly long time. You will try something new eventually and realize it is fun. As a young child, you ate crayons, and as you grow old, you will return to this habit. Do not fight it, it is your destiny.

The Gadfly

Unreliable Narrators Since 470 BCE

"When all else fails, there's always delusion."

The Truth.Contd.

Scorpio (Oct.23-Nov.21)

You likely have an opinion about bugs, whether it be positive, negative or neutral. In about a week, you may find yourself at a crossroads, and you will have to ask someone for directions. If you have ever legally driven on a main road, you likely have a driver's license. Be cautious, as if you are not, your dog's curiosity of snowplows will be unfavourable, unless you don't like your dog.

Sagittarius (Nov.22-Dec.21)

You're zodiac sucks because I had to double check the spelling. You're an obnoxious person, and you correct people when they use the wrong "you're". Fear the things you are scared of, and confront things that you need to confront. You should read The Gadfly more often.

Capricorn (Dec.22-Jan.19)

You have an old soul. Consider investing in a newer model, as it will be profitable in the long term. You find Libras to be intimidating, especially when they are better than you are. Basketball is a sport that you may or may not be interested in. As is the same with soccer. Your princess is in another castle.

Aquarius (Jan.20-Feb.18)

You are very good at deceiving others, as you are an air sign when you should obviously be a water sign. If you stand in the woods, beware of bears, especially non-vegan bears. Always carry a baseball bat, in the event that you see a piñata. Rat poison is a food you should avoid.

UPPER CLASS PROBLEMS By: Mateo Grgic

The other day, while walking through the private gardens of one of my favourite villas, I noticed a small dirt stain on my fourth-favourite pair of shoes and it inspired me to write this article. I feel the upper class are under-represented in our modern day and age, and I want to shed light on the perhaps underappreciated struggles that we upper-class folk must endure.

For one, purchasing entirely new wardrobes every few weeks becomes quite tiring. I do sometimes wish I could wear the same clothes more than once, but for someone of my stature? Simply unforgivable. It's the same issue with my shoes; I get new ones every few days, so now I have more than 100 pairs of shoes just lying around! That being said, I try to be environmentally friendly, so I burn my old stuff, and that additionally employs many people in the process.

Another struggle arises whenever the newest iPhone is on the cusp of being released. Despite my being best friends with Tim Cook, (or Big Apple Daddy as he insists I call him), I am not allowed to use the prototype pre-release iPhone in public. No matter how much I threaten to sue him for being a 'dingus' (as the kids say), and despite promising to be discreet, he simply does not permit it. Which reminds me: yesterday, I placed my iPhone 17 Pro Max 2TB in Cosmic Orange on a crocodile-leather tray (instead of my usual albino small-grain rhino-skin tray) before bedtime, and it acquired a slight scratch on the screen. Let me tell you, syncing a phone takes forever, and it does feel a tiny bit wasteful to dispose of an entire phone, but what could I do?

I simply could not tolerate the scratch.

Yet another issue I face regularly is the limited variety of food I am served. It feels like prison fare. Only four courses? Wagyu prime rib and caviar twice a week? Can a person not have a little variety? I adore caviar and all, but it becomes tiresome quickly. I mean, seriously, that is just absurd. Only last week, I was flying to Austria for some masked party, and I had to ask one of the flight attendants for something to drink. I forget how truly dreadful first class is: I was flying on a public plane, you see; my other two private jets were both being serviced, and I could not secure another one at such short notice.

All I am asking for is a little recognition. Starving children get all the whoop-de-do, but I would argue I am more tortured each day, and I'm not even that wealthy, all things considered! I inherited a few hundred billion, sure, but I only make a couple of million a year from investments. Think of how much worse someone like Musk might have it. You know, with high culture, being forced to compromise is equally, if not more, damaging to the very soul than starving. Send your local billionaire a few hugs; you never know how badly they are actually suffering behind the scenes. It's not easy being rich.

The Gadfly

Unreliable Narrators Since 470 BCE

"Everything not forbidden is compulsory"

I Enjoy the Presence of Trees

By: Mateo Grgic

ENG 3DU - Essay on the Meaning of Human Desire

I like trees.

There is little I enjoy more than a tree. I don't mean 'tree' in any impetuous way; I am not referring to marijuana, pot, or weed. I mean the woody perennial plants that are so common on our Earth. I have been criticised for such a simple pleasure before, and although rather flowery in my manner of description, I stand by this simple adoration.

The nascent yet simple desire of the tree is to grow. This symbolises man's stagnated yet profound desire to grow past the limitations imposed by our humble origins. The verdant plain left behind, man no longer visits home for tea and cookies, yet evermore must remain in place. He cannot move, yet must be ever-changing. It is the tree that represents, guides, and fuels man. It remains unmoving, uncaring, unwavering, and forever changing. That, dear reader, is the marrow, the nerve, of my argument.

Therefore, the growth of the tree is revealed to be naught but an analogy for Man's desire for power and human growth. It's as if a narwhal baconed at midnight, an unwavering and chilling truth. Ultimate freedom is impossible, and the stagnant nature of man is inescapable. The inherent contradiction is obvious. The tree is the inevitable physical representation of man's ultimate folly, and it is within the silent world of the trees, where cryptic creatures rule like gods, that other dramas occur.

A honey badger, of standard variety and appearance, stands quietly. Its night of pussyfooting interrupted, it waits, alert. The honey badger stands on a large, flat rock; it observes the scene below. It had been drawn by the noise, the human chaos festering into the silent forest. Below the badger, far below the trees, through the underpass and past the river, lies an unassuming cabin. In that cabin was Arthur, a man of average stature, normally outgoing but currently in bed ill, doubled over in pain. Arthur's groans turned to wails, then silenced. The honey badger glanced at its tiny watch and departed, slinking back into the night to continue the hunt. He had been poisoned. Of course, at the time, Arthur didn't know it. He died over the course of 2 hours, 12 minutes, and 3 seconds.

Painfully. Avoidably. Early.

Poisoned by wormwood. An accident, determined by the local shrink; Arthur had simply mixed up his typical tincture. The next day, when Arthur's home was being cleared out, the honey badger returned, and it watched. It knew what had really happened. Like an occult hand rearranging a drawer without being noticed, the watcher & the watched: the badger. It knew.

Across the world, and eight centuries earlier, Johannes Ketameen, known nowadays mostly for his controversial view on the ontological status of moss, discovered the tree. So overlooked, it took the genius Ketameen to actually discover the true nature of this woody plant (for thousands of years prior, trees as we know them were widely dismissed as merely ugly women, scorned by God and fixed forever to cease movement). The tree was the most fundamental incarnate of man, and without Ketameen, none of it would've been possible.

Ketameen failed, however, to grasp the full corrosiveness of man's anti-desire. The terror, the fundamental plot all is built upon. Ketameen died before he could fully grasp the true meaning; the language of the enforcers; the axiom, the self-evident and thematic truth, whispered from the darkest corners! "He who piles dust upon sand can be vanquished with the slightest blow", the tree: it all meant something!

Painfully. Avoidably. Early.

Poisoned by wormwood. An accident, determined by the local shrink; Ketameen had simply mixed up his typical tincture. The watcher & the watched: the badger. It knew.

The tree, as it's been discovered time & time again throughout history, has been shown to represent much in our world, both symbolically and literally. The tree watches a million setting suns before we take our first breaths. The tree, which watches us grow, play, wither, and die. The immortal being; forever rooted and forever yearning. What a spiteful master we are to it, and it to us. Woe be unto those whom its wrath befalls. The tree is ever-present, ever-still, ever-growing. In an age when the human spirit is decidedly molested, the fact that even a simple aspect can remain constant and

The Gadfly

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"Intelligence is the ability to avoid doing work, yet getting the work done."

I Enjoy Trees the Presence of Trees Contd.

unmolested (the tree) comforts me. Arthur & Ketameen showed this fact and paid for it with their lives. Arthur the most, Ketameen secondly.

Outside my bedroom window, as I am typing this very essay, the badger raises a small antique silver pistol.

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He pauses, takes aim, and begins to clench his small badger-finger...

Actually, you know what? I can't shake the feeling that this entire essay has been a pseudo-epic attempt at 'deepness' that collapses under its own weight. Frankly, I think the inclusion of a honey badger, an anachronistic 12th-century philosopher, and two identical accidental deaths was nothing but a desperate, structurally indefensible attempt to hit the minimum word count. I've run out of meaningless, vapid nonsense. This is all nonsense. I'm not even good at it.

I just like trees. Cedar trees, in particular, are pretty nice. Cherry trees too.

Do I have to justify that simple feeling with a thousand lines of prose?

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become what you were meant to be
be. Become what you were meant to be
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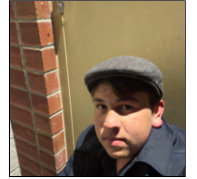
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Credits

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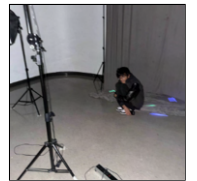
Mateo Grgic - Co-Founder, Writer, Steering Committee, Editor, Layout, Finances, Website

Mateo Grgic is a grade 11 student at Laurel Heights Secondary School. He was born & raised in Waterloo, Ontario in an upper-middle class household. He co-founded 'The Backcast', a failed school newspaper with his friend Hassan Ahmed, which eventually got shut down for being too funny. Never ones to give up, they then started a new, legally distinct newspaper: The Gadfly. Mateo is an avid cyclist & computer enthusiast. His favourite colour is neon green. He is also a corporate shill for the following things: Kagi Search, uBlock Origin, LibreWolf Browser, Fedora Linux, Framework computer, Giant Bikes, and many more!



Hassan Ahmed - Co-Founder, Writer, Steering Committee, Secretary, Senior Funny Ad Maker

Hassan Ahmed is a co-founder of The Gadfly, and an aspiring New York Times Bestselling Author. Born in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, he was deported for being too funny. He moved to the land that provided the most promise and opportunity for a young journalist; suburban Waterloo. With only 3 incidents involving the police, Hassan discovered one day that anyone can start a news publication if they tried hard enough, and here we are.



Lianne Elkadri - Co-Founder, Writer, Steering Committee, Unpaid Artist, Holder of the Secret Knowledge

Lianne Elkadri is a journalist for the Gadfly, while also dedicating a significant amount of her time to thinking about what to do with her free time. She also never knows what to put in "about the author" sections, despite this being the first time she has had to write one. She enjoys music, collecting vinyl records, the colour red, space, turtles, physics, and geometry.



David Jedlovsky - Writer, Unpaid Artist, Good Music Taste

Born before gen alpha kids, David Jedlovsky is a self-renowned journalistic investigator known for his achievements in cyberstalking his opponents. At the early age of 3, he noticed he had a knack for breakdancing and started working his way through the ranks. David is a professional music producer, collaborating with artists like Mozart, Debussy, developing diss tracks on haters. He now spends his free time monitoring his teachers and friends' online social life.

