The DePaul University International Studies Quarterly Newsletter

Actively Engaged Intellectuals, Intellectually Engaged Activists

INTERRUPTED SILENCE

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MEET THE SENIOR REP & EDITOR

Sara Aqariden

I'm a senior undergrad student majoring in INT and some of my recent topics of study include North African political economies and the distinction between modernization and westernization. I'm also a tutor for Business Statistics, though I don't care to enter the business field at all! Some of my hobbies include crocheting, reading, and creative writing.

A BOOK EVERYONE SHOULD READ

Cat's Cradle by Kurt Vonnegut Jr.

SONG CURRENTLY ON REPEAT

Timeless, Ibrahim Maalouf

WHY INTERNATIONAL STUDIES?

My favorite things about DePaul's INT program are definitely the professors and students. Every professor offers many unique perspectives on important topics and I feel so much more articulate in subjects I used to shy away from. More importantly, I've never felt discouraged when confused but rather excited to learn something new.

YOUR CHICAGO/CAMPUS "SPOT"

A very basic answer but definitely the couches on the fourth floor of Arts and Letters by the windows. It's a perfect place for people-watching.

FAVORITE INT COURSE

Impossible to answer! But *one* of my favorite classes was Orientalism: Colonialism, Modernity, and History (INT 328) with Dr. Malik. I had been too intimidated to read my copy of *Orientalism* by Edward Said for so long and this class was the best place to both read and truly understand that text and so many more important pieces.

MEET THE SENIOR REP

Katherine Mooney

I'm a fourth year majoring in International Studies with a minor in Public Health. I'm from a suburb of Detroit, Michigan and I chose to come to DePaul because of the INT program. On campus I am involved with Rugby and Alpha Phi Omega. Off campus I enjoy photography, walking around the city, and working at Wrigley field.

A BOOK EVERYONE SHOULD READ

Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book by Hortense J Spillers

SONG CURRENTLY ON REPEAT

Sun Bleached Flies, Ethel Cain

WHY INTERNATIONAL STUDIES?

My favorite thing about INT is the size of the major and our ability to get to know our peers and professors because of it. We're large enough that you'll have classes with non-majors and a larger group of people while still seeing familiar faces in most classes. Similarly, you'll see the same professors in a variety of classes and get to know them throughout your time at DePaul.

YOUR CHICAGO/CAMPUS "SPOT"

Local coffee shops, every place is unique in their decor, coffee, food and vibes. Currently my favorites are Levant, Two Shades, and Botanical Cafe.

FAVORITE INT COURSE

INT 203 with Gil Gott has been my favorite INT class. The focus on a variety of social movements in class was extremely interesting. Giving students the freedom to study one of their own interests for the final paper was a great application of the analysis learned in class and applied to personal interests

MEET THE GRAD REP

Rosbel Garza-Hernandez

I'm a Graduate Student with the INT Department, I obtained my bachelor's degrees at the University of Kansas in Global Studies and History. My research focus is on topics relating to immigration and 'biopower.' In my free time I enjoy reading fiction, writing poems, and skateboarding.

A BOOK EVERYONE SHOULD READ

Torn from the Nest by Clorinda Matto de Turner

SONG CURRENTLY ON REPEAT

Karina Buhr, Vira Pó

WHY INTERNATIONAL STUDIES?

The professors in the INT department are the absolute best. They're passionate, dedicated, and offer nuanced perspectives

YOUR CHICAGO/CAMPUS "SPOT"

I feel like I am at the lake every day, either in Lincoln Park or Hyde. It just feels like such a nice place to get homework done. I love the rocky shores of Hyde Park.

FAVORITE INT COURSE

My favorite INT class so far would have to be the one I just finished with Dr. Gott, INT 402/323 (I took the graduate level). The class is titled, "International Humanitarian Law," but covers the concept of law from a foundational perspective, helping to contextualize the current shortcomings of law within grander narratives.

The Bavaria Project

The following "Letter to King Ludwig II" by Favour Onyinyechi Ifurueze is a featured piece from Professor Sharma's INT 201 class. This letter falls under the Germany/Bavaria Project, with which all INT students are familiar. The assignment requires students to imagine themselves as an aged Bavarian nobleman who serves as the chief advisor to King Ludwig II in the early 1870s. The letter is composed of advice for King Ludwig following the proposal of unification with Prussia, and whether the King should proceed with the integration or avoid it at all costs. In this time period, Prussia was a rising European power that sought unification with Bavaria and sometimes forced integration with other nations. This project forces students to take a professional diplomatic stance and truly embody the 74-year-old Bavarian nobleman through diction, language, and educated advice.

This particular case study encourages students to "dig deep" into the social consciousness of the imagined character they are pretending to be in order to wholly understand the political, social, national, and humanitarian circumstances at the time. Some main inquiries that inspire the content within this letter (from Professor Gotts' description) include:

- What was the nature of the national movement in German-speaking lands, and how was rooted, or not, in a social or historical basis “in fact” (was there such a thing as “German” identity)?
- How is the German national question relevant for Bavaria (what was or is “Bavarian” identity)?

Letter to His Majesty King Ludwig II on the Question of Unification with Prussia

Favour Onyinyechi Ifurueze

Your Most Serene Royal Highness, King Ludwig II of Bavaria,

With deepest humility and undying loyalty, I humbly submit my counsel regarding the grave matter of the proposed unification of the German states under the leadership of Prussia. The present question bears tremendous consequence for the future of our cherished Bavaria, and I have endeavored to weigh this matter in the balance, mindful of our kingdom's legacy, traditions, and the will of its people.

It is without question that the movement for German unity has, in recent years, gained significant traction. As a youth in my days of study, I beheld firsthand the fervor that the idea of a united German nation stirred among our people. This fervor is predicated on a shared language and a certain sense of common cultural heritage. Yet, I must remind Your Majesty that while we may share in a German tongue, our identity as Bavarians is distinct, cultivated by centuries of sovereign governance, Catholic faith, and traditions wholly our own.

The invitation to unite with Prussia, a predominantly Protestant and militaristic state, must give us pause. Bavaria's devout commitment to the Holy Catholic Church and its rich ecclesiastical history stands in stark contrast to Prussia's more secular and Protestant leanings. I question whether Bavaria, with her deep spiritual and cultural heritage, can coexist within a German Empire dominated by Prussian interests without compromising those things most dear to us.

Furthermore, the martial prowess of Prussia demonstrated in her recent victories suggests that her power within this proposed confederation would dwarf that of the other states. Bavaria, though proud and capable, would find herself in the shadow of Prussian dominance. Thus, I implore Your Majesty to consider carefully whether this unification would serve Bavaria's long-term interests or simply erode her sovereignty.

Should Your Majesty incline toward supporting unification, I counsel that it be under stringent conditions: Bavaria's autonomy must be preserved in matters of religion, governance, and law. Any agreement must safeguard our ability to govern ourselves in all things internal, free from Prussian interference.

In sum, Sire, while the allure of unity may be strong, Bavaria's unique heritage, religious fidelity, and sovereignty must be protected above all. If these assurances cannot be secured, I must humbly advise against such a union.

I submit this counsel, trusting in Your Majesty's wisdom to guide our kingdom through these troubled waters.

Your most loyal and obedient servant,

Duke William Gunther
Chief Advisor to His Majesty

Universal Rights or Cultural Suppression: The Struggle for Religious Freedom in France

By Ashley Noel

As Shani points out, World War II opened the international community's eyes to the ways in which human rights were violated, leading the newly formed United Nations (UN) to issue its Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR, ch 25, pp 525). The UNDHR consists of a set of principles that outlined an international means of protecting human rights globally. The origins of the UNDHR lie in the *1789 French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen*, which recognized that all citizens were endowed with natural human rights (ch 25, pp 525). The US Declaration was similar except it stated that these rights were god-given. Thus, in France, Muslim women were banned from wearing the headscarf (hijab). The logic was that public spaces should be freed of religious expression. France deemed religious expression a threat to their secularity, which further made it a threat to the French state as a whole. This ideology that public religious expression is harmful sparked L' Affaire du Foulard. An example where the French state saw public religious expression as a threat was when a conflict between a public school located in Creil, a Parisian banlieue, and its students occurred (ch 25, pp 528). Within public schools wearing a hijab was accepted, but not among the teachers. A hijab was seen as a sign of rebellion rather than conservatism and a representation of religious values. In 2004, An Act outlawed wearing anything in a public school that suggested religious affiliation. In this case, Muslim students' free speech was limited by an institution; therefore, their human rights were not protected. Such skewing of the image of Islamic beliefs and Muslim identity can be accredited to the racialization of Islam. The French believed in the privatization of religion and used this to suppress Muslim ideals

and any form of Islamic fundamentalism. The French believed in the privatization of religion and used this to suppress Muslim ideals and Islamic expression. Specifically, when the 9/11 attacks took place, Islamic identity was racialized and used to associate Muslims with terrorism and violence. In all, as a protection of free speech, Muslim women should be allowed to wear their hijab without judgment. Additionally, the Charlie Hebdo case exemplified the complications that can come with the right to free speech. On January 2, 2015, the French satirical magazine, Charlie Hebdo, had its headquarters attacked by terrorists. The Charlie Hebdo attacks were motivated by the derogatory depiction of Mohammed, an Islamic God. As a human right, one should be allowed to express themselves in any way without being attacked.

As previously stated, the French state deemed public religious expression as a threat to the French state. This further opens the discussion: what about other instances of religious expression in France? What about the Hasidic Jews who wore their Shtreimel? Or the Christians who wore their crucifix in public places? Interestingly enough, France did not apply the same level of scrutiny to Hasidic Jews or Christians who displayed public expressions of religion. Muslim women were subjected to both being racialized by the French state and being forced into assimilation. The maltreatment of Muslim women exemplifies how there is power that lies within the hands of those who have more rights, which can be used as a weapon to oppress other groups. The French state used its power to impose its law against religious expression to further oppress Muslim women by banning their hijabs. This use of power is inherently racist, due to the fact that other public acts of religious expression were not handled with the same level of urgency. Further, it cannot be a coincidence that after the racialization of Islam because of 9/11, the French decided to further marginalize Muslim women specifically.

When dealing with universalist projects, problems that arise include forced assimilation, cultural imperialism, and a lack of multiculturalism. When a group is forced to assimilate into a different culture it is dehumanizing. To go from being comfortable in your own skin to being told how to express yourself degrades one's sense of self and cultural appreciation. Specifically, this idea is seen when Muslim immigrants were forced to assimilate into French culture. Similarly, cultural imperialism disregards an individual's cultural traditions and values leaving both parties resistant to each other which can lead to conflict. Universalist projects are highly flawed due to the fact that collectively all people and cultures are different; therefore, one cannot consolidate ideas into one mold that works for all people.

The history of universalist agendas adopted by nation-states guided my thinking into realizing that one principle will never work effectively across the board. One must recognize the importance of multiculturalism, in which integration is seen as a two-way street. A two-way street that recognizes both parties' cultures and beliefs to reach a form of "kumbaya". Forcing assimilation never ends well, as seen when Muslim immigrants came to France during the aftermath of WWII and the War of Independence in Algeria. For this very reason, international life should never be governed by a single code because one mold does not fit all.

Who has rights? We all should, and we all do have rights to an extent; however, in application, they are not all effective. Now, making this question a work in progress, until the international community can reach a place where our "human rights" protect all humans.

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STUDY ABROAD: SUMMER 2025

FY@BROAD AUSTRALIA: INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES, HISTORY, & CULTURE

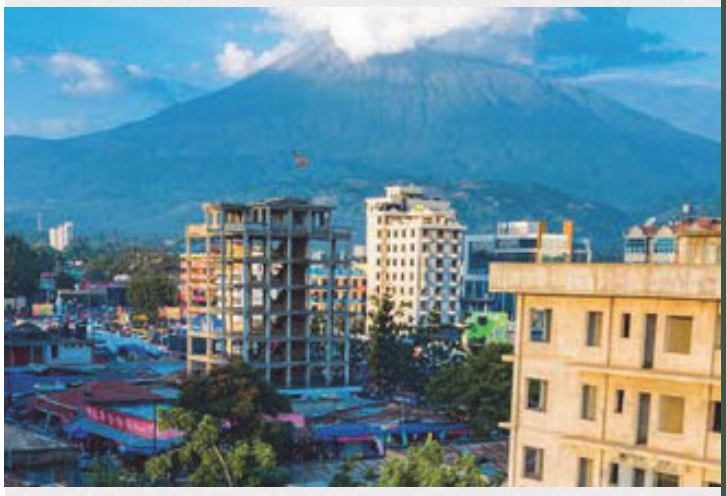
This program examines community-engaged service learning in communities in Australia and the United States, focusing on racial justice and resistance. Students will explore topics such as Indigenous Australian history, educational initiatives, politics, social issues, and Aboriginal art and culture through interaction with Indigenous Australian communities in the Melbourne and Brisbane areas.

Application deadline: 02/01/2025

NORTHERN IRELAND: PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

This program will provide students an experiential opportunity to see peace and reconciliation efforts through public policy and nonprofit social organizations. The program will be run in coordination with Politics Plus a nonprofit organization that is the outreach arm of the Northern Ireland Assembly. Course sessions would be held in the historic Stormont parliamentary buildings in addition to site visits and housing would be provided at Queen's University Belfast.

Application deadline: 02/01/2025



RWANDA & TANZANIA: POST-CONFLICT JUSTICE IMMERSION PROGRAM

The Post-Conflict Justice Immersion Course is a one-week course, which will take place in Kigali, Rwanda and Arusha, Tanzania. Students will have the opportunity to witness firsthand, the practice of international criminal law. In Kigali, Rwanda students will visit genocide war memorials and study the legacy of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Rwanda. Students will interact with a variety of professionals working in the international criminal law field, spanning all relevant judicial organs.

Application deadline: 02/01/2025

The Voyeuristic Traits of Orientalism: Oriental Women as Images

By Sara Aqariden

During my junior year of high school Spanish class, a boy asked me, "What are you?" These three words put together as a very short question, regardless of the inquirer, displace me. There are things about me like how I look or speak that make me ambiguous, difficult to know, and most importantly different. Always different from the person asking the question. I responded with my ethnicity, at the time (and still presently) unsure of how to define my race.

Looking back now I feel my response was naïve. Growing up, peers at school, strangers at the library, and parents at birthday parties would play guessing games about "what I was." They would ask me the fated question and promptly interrupt to state they didn't want it revealed, they wanted to try their luck. Yet they would always guess wrong and I would always kindly correct them. My naiveté in relieving their curiosities stemmed perhaps from a certain type of pride, but I now realize this message was not always conveyed nor interpreted as such. I am trying something new here by not revealing "what I am." Immediately following my response the boy asked me, "Can you belly dance for me?" Though I could almost laugh at the absurdity of a question like this one today, in the moment I was horrified. He was completely serious in his tone and facial expression, only revealing a sly smile as my silence grew. Upon learning my ethnicity, my classmate internally conjured and processed ideas which he then transmitted to me with his short yet complex question. He envisioned the geography of the country– the accuracy of his imagination being unknown– and linked the country to something he knows better (i.e., the broader, monolithic Middle East). By doing so, he simultaneously set himself outside of this region and therefore outside of my own existence despite my physical proximity to his seat, intellectual proximity to his schooling, and birthplace proximity to his own. I then existed in relation to him, not with him. He considered the numerous external representations of this region and its people who might look like me. By "external," I mean representations created from a position set outside of the Oriental world and in that one of the Occident (Said 1979, 280). Finally, he gendered these representations to best connect all of these images to my feminine performance as a woman. The outcome of his thinking process? That I, an Orient in his eyes, could belly dance. And how to situate himself in this

exchange? To ask if I, an apparent Oriental belly dancer, could dance for him. The power dynamics were fixed and every second of our conversation had reproduced them. In fact, these dynamics had been set during his initial question because he had already situated me outside of the West to bother asking where I was really from. Thus, I was displaced from his world and replaced in another. I as the "Other" and he as the "One." I as a "what" and no longer a "who."

Knowledge, as defined by the Orientalist, is seeing. My classmate conjured a link between the Orient and belly dancing because of what he had seen. The school of Orientalism, then, is defined by its dividing up of the world into separate and unequal regions– the West and the East (Said 1998, 3). The East, and specifically the people who inhabit it, are "different" from the West thus birthing the terms "Occident" and "Orient." The Orientalist's dominating frameworks make up the Orient but are structured outside of that foreign world because the Western paradigm does not allow for the non-Orient to penetrate the Oriental world. He is always and deliberately outside of this world while simultaneously crafting knowledge about the internal arena that he can never enter.

In this private sphere, the Oriental woman deviates from the classic brutal images of the dangerous Oriental man. She is different because not only is she backward like her father or brother, but in her most vulnerable state, sensuality supplants sexuality. The Orientalist, never having entered and knowing he will never enter her private sphere therefore creates this image out of necessity; the Orientalist knows the Orient better than the Orient herself. He reproduces knowledge of reality and also creates reality. In the latter process, the scholar is no longer an observer or a storyteller– he is a voyeur or someone who takes pleasure in observing something private. If knowledge is seeing to the Orientalist, how does he produce knowledge of things that cannot be seen? The answer lies in redefining truth outside of the scope of Orientalism. Seeing births knowledge, but imagining, on the other hand, births fiction. The Orientalist and anyone involved with the Orient is obsessed with penetrating and possessing their private sector and more importantly, knowing the Oriental woman in this setting. The images that emerge from these fantasies, like that of the Oriental belly dancer, are overtly sexualized which indicates the sordid motivations behind such reproductions of knowledge.

The difference between nakedness and nudity is vital in understanding the eroticization of the Orient because here I argue that in the eyes of the Orientalist, she is not nude, but naked.

"Sociologists have distinguished between nudity, which is a natural state without clothes, and nakedness, which is a state of being undressed. The latter often has sexual suggestiveness, implying focus on the vital organs" (Mazrui 1980, 58). What I mean by this distinction is that, in the private sphere of life, Orientalists portray the Oriental woman as naked and hence inherently provocative, sensual, and allusive. When she disrobes (especially her veil, a historically studied and debated subject), the Orientalist must always compare this state to that of her publicly modest image. In this way, she cannot be nude because there is no "natural state" in which she is simply without wearing clothes– her covered and modest image is her predominant image and therefore she is only in a temporary state of "being undressed." It is only a matter of time until she covers herself again which she must ultimately do in the Islamic world that is synonymous with the monolithic Oriental world. The secrecy and mystique surrounding this fleeting moment of nakedness sexualizes her even further. This naked state has expanded beyond academic frameworks and is portrayed in visual art forms.

The sexual representations of Oriental women in visual media illustrate her mystical nature– she is sexually entrancing but intellectually limited. Belly dancing, one of the oldest derivatives of dance, is believed to have emerged out of North Africa and has been linked to the entertainment of women in labor to relieve their pain (Moe 2012, 3). Current imagery, however, usually depicts belly dancers in large groups with "no individuality, no personal characteristics or experiences" (Said 1979, 287). These women are intended for a male audience as indicated by their seductive behavior geared towards male watchers. Take, for example, the scene in Disney's Aladdin where three identical-looking women wearing only bras and underwear with transparent veils around their hips intentionally dance around and attempt to kiss Aladdin, centering him as the seeker of pleasure (Clements and Musker 1992). During the belly dance featured in The Curse of the Mummy's Tomb, viewers can only see the woman's waist as she dances around the room full of only men (Carreras 1964). I had represented this classic Oriental woman in my high school classroom simply by looking like any one of these earlier images. My classmate had somehow taken me outside of that class and had followed me into the private harem where, according to him, I seduced and charmed. And despite what this person would argue today, he desperately wanted to enter this space. Probably not for anything I had to offer, but for

the fictionalized sexual nature of the space and any woman who was in it. The Orient is not meant to be known, only to be observed. The Oriental woman, however, is also to be enjoyed.

The absurdity in this boy's inquiry was evident in our power relations, in where he situated himself and by which I had also become situated. He had called forth a subjectivity, or a "situatedness in power dynamics that yield[ed] variable forms" (el-Malik 2016, 213). Both of our experiences and the contexts in which we existed thus determined our relations to one another. He the inquirer, and I the subject. Did this person engage me as an Orientalist would? Perhaps not, as he was not writing about, teaching, or researching the Orient (Clifford in Schirato 1994, 45). He did, however, imagine the Orient and reproduce those imaginations in his question to me. He had evoked an image of me that he had never seen, an image produced outside of anything I had chosen to present to him. The wording of his question furthered the seductive motifs of how the Oriental woman is portrayed, not based on how she acts, thinks, or looks. Somehow, the Oriental woman has undergone a sexual transformation without the slightest suggestion of her consent. It is exactly this missing piece that provokes the Orientalist to seek her in private: she has no say in this pleasing and sensual image because that is all she is– an image.

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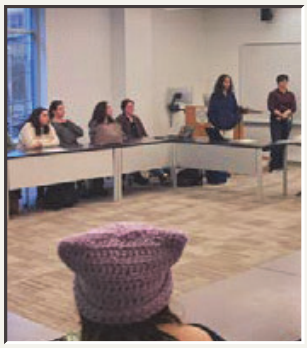
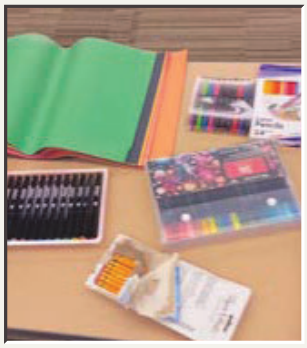
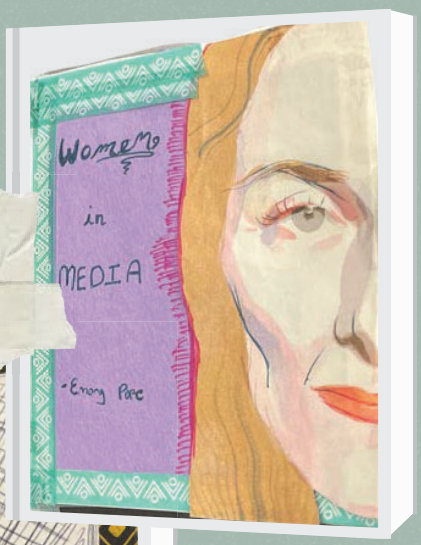
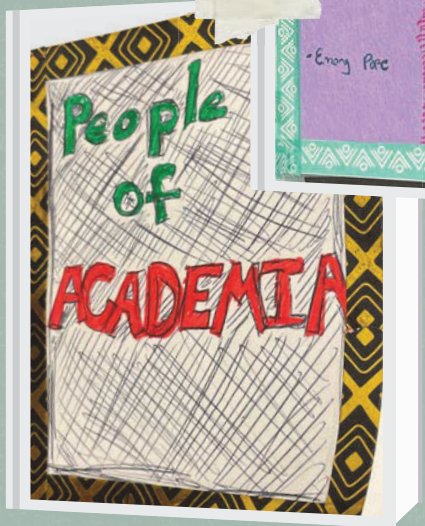
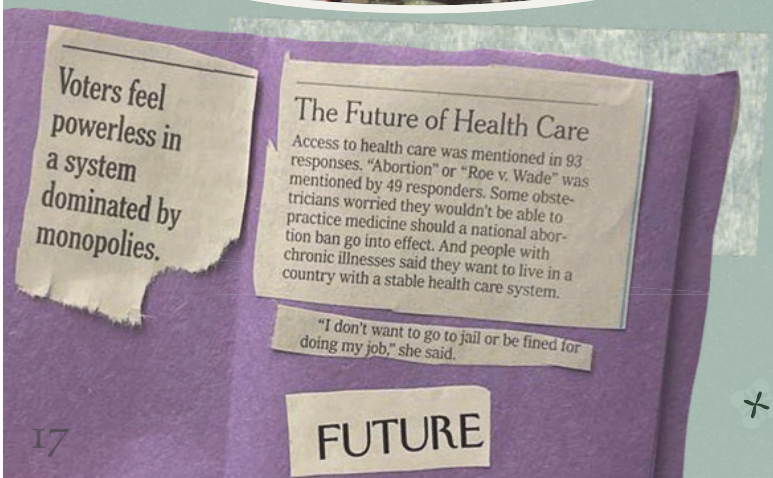


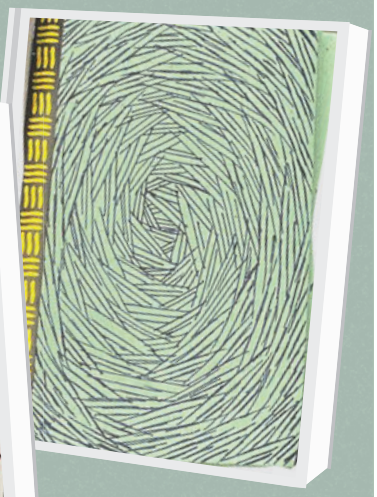


IN TUESDAY RECAP









INTUESDAY RECAP

EATING AS AN ETHICS: A LEVINASIAN PERSPECTIVE ON FOOD

Clara Cox

The topic of food and eating in philosophy is one often neglected and deemed minor in comparison to some of philosophy's other concerns, such as the question of knowledge or free-will. This is largely due to Plato's notion of food and eating, as he set the stage for Western philosophy in regards to the questions it asks, and the way in which these questions are approached. I in this essay, I will begin by unraveling his conception of food and eating, and then assessing the ramifications of said conception. From there, I will turn to Emmanuel Levinas, a French existentialist philosopher, who turns Plato's notion of eating completely on its head, arguing for an ethical ontology grounded in eating. Finally, I will argue for a remedy of our modern-day philosophical attitudes towards food.

Firstly, we turn to Plato's Phaedo, a fictional dialogue he wrote about Socrates' last hours before being executed, in which Plato presents his own philosophical views through Socrates, who was his teacher at the time. Just mere pages into the Phaedo, Socrates asks Simmias, another ancient Greek philosopher who was Socrates' disciple, "Do you think it befits a philosophical man to be keen about the so-called pleasures of, for example, food and drink?" (Plato, Pheado, 64d). To this, Simmias says, "'Not in the least, Socrates,'" (Plato, Pheado, 64d). Plato fundamentally argues that the task of the philosopher is to be in constant search of the ultimate truth, something that can only be done through the mind and soul. This pursuit of truth is hindered by the body. When the mind tries to discover truth through the body using its senses, it is misled. Plato argues that our senses are not clear and accurate. They are too subjective to lead the philosopher to an ultimate, universal truth. For example, an object may appear to me as dark red, but to you it appears as more of a purple. This leads Plato to argue that food and eating are merely bodily distractions in the philosopher's pursuit of truth, and thus must be ignored.

He actually argues for the philosopher to be in a constant state of near bodily death in order to successfully philosophize. He wants a complete repression of the body's "pursuit of necessary sustenance," as he believes that only the mind and soul can arrive at ultimate truth. The separation of soul and body, something consistently argued by Plato, allows for an arrival at the ultimate truth. Of course, though, the soul is only separated from the body at death. Therefore, the philosopher must be constantly near bodily death in order to allow his soul and mind to arrive as close as possible to ultimate truth. He even goes as far as to say, "In despising the body and avoiding it, and endeavoring to become independent – the philosopher's soul is ahead of all the rest" (Plato, Phaedo, 65c). We see here Plato's almost despicable attitude towards food and eating, as though he sees it as an inconvenience and unimportant. We also see his praise for avoiding the body's signals of hunger. The philosopher, in avoiding his feelings of hunger, has a superior soul, argues Plato.

I turn to a chapter in a book written by Deane W. Curtin titled Cooking, Eating, Thinking, in order to assess the ramifications of Plato's attitudes towards food. Curtin argues that Plato's superior placement of the mind and soul over the body makes topics such as food inferior with no place in philosophy. The ramifications of that on our society she argues, are a collective radical separation of mind and body, something she believes leads to a disembodiment present within us. We develop this gap and distinct separation between the body and mind, which Curtin argues can lead to illness. In order to illustrate this, she turns to an essay written by Susan Bordo, who argues that anorexia can be linked to our popular culture's attitudes of bodily inferiority. Bordo discusses her own experience with anorexia, stating, "The starvation of the body is motivated by the dream to be 'without a body,' to achieve 'absolute purity, hyperintellectuality and transcendence of the flesh' (Bordo, 34-35)." The idea that the mind can almost overtake the body to not only repress it's needs, but transcend them, is an attitude Bordo argues is present in anorexia.

Curtin links this to Plato, as his philosophies were so fundamental to Western culture, that this societal attitude of mind superiority over the inferior body is still deeply embedded to our present-day culture.

In order to remedy this, I argue that we first turn to Levinas, who asks the question, "What would it mean to imagine every bite I take, or give to another, as a direct engagement with my own and my neighbor's existence?" (Goldstein, 43) Throughout various of his works, Levinas argues for food as the grounds for an ethical ontology, or in other words, the grounds for what it means to be an ethically responsible being. An essay by David Goldstein allows us to better comprehend Levinas' perspectives on food. In this essay, Goldstein argues that eating can be understood as the primary moment of ethical engagement. Eating is one of the very first things we do as humans. It begins even before we are born. It is, as Levinas argues, the first action in which we engage in an ethics. Critical to understanding Levinas is his conception of the self and the other. The self is yourself as a subject, and the other is that which is outside yourself, whether it another person or ideas. The other allows us to recognize ourselves in relation to others in the world and leads us to proceed responsibly following that recognition. In the context of eating, there is a relationship between you consuming the food and the ethics of the food you eat, for example, the animal whose life you consumed, or the beings involved in your acquisition of the food you're consuming. This duality of eating because you need to sustain yourself, but also being aware of the ethical relationships in sustaining yourself, is our first instance of an ethical relation as humans. Take for example, breastfeeding. The child, before it even has fully developed consciously, begins nourishing itself through the mother. The child feels the pain of hunger, cries for a remedy, and is fed by its mother, an "other" who gives part of herself to nourish the child. Even if they child is not fully aware, there is this primary moment of the child, as self, crying out for its hunger to be resolved, and it being resolved through the mother, who in this case acts as "other".

An ethical relation forms between the two subjects, and there is a recognition of each other in which one is suffering, and the "other" submits to the ethical obligation to soothe said suffering. With this conception of food and eating, Levinas places upmost importance on the act of eating for his ethical understandings. Eating not only allows us to recognize ourselves as subjects, but to recognize others and our relationship to them. With this view in mind, we have no choice but to refute Plato's argument of food as a hinderance to philosophizing. If anything, it allows us to philosophize an ethics according to Levinas.

I'd like to return to Curtin's book for a modern-day application of Levinas' understanding of food. Curtin argues for a de-alienation from the body and the mind and soul in order to counteract Plato's common notion of the two as separate, which we still so often find in Western society. She argues we must see our self, our body, as self. We must see ourselves as subjects, our entire selves, our body and mind and soul – not just our mind and soul. Doing so requires a "sympathetic attention to food," argues Curtin. It requires an understanding of ourselves and others in regards to food. To illustrate it, Curtin says, "Eating is like childbirth in the way it threatens a sense of self as absolutely autonomous. A fetus is part of a woman's body, but it will become separate. Even when separate, though, the child remains related to the mother physically and emotionally. The mother's body is food for the child" (Curtin, 9). We see here the inextricable connection between the self and the other that Levinas suggests. When the baby is born and begins having to eat from the other, it develops a relationship with food and hunger, and thus develops a relationship with the other, through which it has its hunger relieved and through which it receives the food. We must reject eating as merely a bodily need and understand it as an ethically binding activity that determines the way we relate to one another.

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Next Gen Manifesto:
A Marxian Take on Today

By Anastasia Perry

Exploitation: The Gig Economy

Capitalists make their money by exploiting their workers - basically, pocketing part of the value that workers create (Marx and Engels 1848). This is evident in the gig economy where companies like Wag! label workers as "independent contractors," to avoid paying for benefits or materials. Wag! charges pet owners a set rate, but the dog walkers receive only a small percentage and must cover costs like gas, dog treats, and waste bags.

Algorithmic management and data tracking take exploitation to a new level. These companies track when, where, and how workers perform their jobs, maximizing productivity to increase profit margins. Gig workers get assigned jobs through algorithms that supposedly 'randomly' assign work to active users. In reality, the process is not random, it is based on data such as response times, location and other metrics that are not shared with workers. Walkers on Wag! are prioritized based on ratings and completed jobs. If a request isn't accepted within minutes, the job is sent to the next walker. You essentially have to sit on the app and constantly refresh, hoping to catch a walk request. This creates a situation where Wag! has a large, unpaid pool of workers available any time a request comes in. Meanwhile, the company can blame any complaints about job allocation on a 'random algorithm'. In the early days, Wag! even had workers sign non-compete agreements, preventing them from working with other dog-walking services - even if Wag! wasn't giving them any jobs.

For Marx, instability and uncertainty in work are forms of exploitation. Gig economy workers face both, as they never know when they'll receive work or how much they'll earn. Additionally, these apps offer randomly generated "bonuses" and digital badges, providing temporary incentives that create a brief sense of achievement. Data and location tracking add another layer of control, pressuring workers to be active during "peak" times (Worker Info Exchange, n.d.).

It's not just a hustle - it's exploitation, where the workers eat the costs while the business cashes in on profit.

Alienation 2.0

Marx argued that modern work often leads to alienation, leaving workers disconnected from the products of their labor and lacking meaningful connection to their tasks. This alienation is

rooted in the nature of the work, and the relationship workers have to it. While Marx was originally referring to assembly-line workers performing repetitive tasks, his ideas about the relationships people have with their work still resonate today. Marx defined four types of alienation: alienation from the product, from the process, from nature and from other workers. (Marx and Engels 1848) (Wolff and Resnick, 2012).

During the pandemic, remote work became widespread, enabled by advances in technology While office jobs previously had clear hours and boundaries, working from home blurred the lines between personal and professional life. Even now, as more people choose to work remotely, there's an open question about how it affects our connection to work, our relationships with coworkers and our work-life balance.

In today's digital world, workers can feel alienated from the product of their labor, as digital work becomes more abstract and lacks a tangible result. For example, game designers may work on parts of a product without collaborating or working on the project as a whole.

Marx would argue that remote work increases alienation from our coworkers as it removes us from the collective environment of the workplace. In the office, workers can socialize freely, sharing grievances and bonding over "water-cooler talk" (Schutzbach 2021, 3). By contrast, in a remote setting, workers are spatially isolated and often limited to task-focused conversations on monitored company servers.

By bringing work into the home, it blurs the lines between leisure and work. While flexibility in hours can be a perk, some people find it challenging to set boundaries and feel as if they're constantly "on call". Monitoring software adds to this alienation, as remote workers need to digitally clock in and are monitored by their computer's webcams (Schutzbach 2021). This surveillance can create alienation from the self, as people feel their personal space and identity are intruded upon.

On the other hand, some people may find that remote work can be liberating. The ability to set their own schedule and create their own work environment can enhance their sense of control and connection to their work.

It's Time for a Revolution!

Let's face it- working harder won't make us rich. The wealth gap keeps growing because the system is rigged. A small elite owns the land, factories, technology and big corporations while most of us work long hours for low pay. Whether it's Uber drivers, factory workers or servers, people are getting paid less than their time and labor are actually worth. The wealthy elite make

their money by cutting corners, paying workers minimum wage, and investing in new financial schemes. They maintain their advantage because government policies and financial institutions work in their favor. Small tweaks to the system won't work because inequality is built into the structure of capitalism itself.

Programs like Medicaid offer only temporary relief in alleviating the hardships created by socioeconomic inequality under capitalism. These publicly funded programs help low-income households access basic health services. Yet many healthcare providers do not accept Medicaid patients. Healthcare disparities within the US reflect broader socioeconomic inequalities within a market-based system, where services can be costly and inaccessible to many Americans (Pillai, et al. 2024). Instead of challenging the system, these programs benefit the elite by pacifying the masses and delaying revolutionary change. For example, during the pandemic, Congress enacted a continuous enrollment provision that Medicaid keep everyone enrolled throughout the emergency. In mid-2023, they ended the continuous enrollment period, and many people lost coverage. At the same time, inflation grew, and many basic necessities such as food became more expensive. The income requirement to qualify for coverage did not align with the increased cost of living for many people.

To keep people from starving, we need to tear this whole system down (Marx and Engels 1848).

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