

**Dr. Monica Bennett
Up Close and Personal**

By Morgan Schray

Dr. Monica Bennett, also known as Dr. B to her students, teaches physics and biology classes at the Well-Trained Mind Academy, where she is beloved by her students and known for the funny and interesting problems that she makes to teach her subject material. Before being employed at the academy, she attended the University of Dallas, where she received her undergraduate degree in physics. Subsequently, Dr. Bennett completed her Ph.D. (also in physics) at Vanderbilt University, studying the forces that act on fruit flies in the early stages of their development. When asked about her Ph.D., she stated that the combination of mandatory classes and research provided her with a unique experience that made her an expert in one very small part of her field of study. However, Dr. Bennett does wish she had been given more time to learn about communication and science teaching.

After college, she, like most people, joined the workforce. Her Ph.D. led her to develop an interest in science communication, and a science blog she briefly ran caused her to realize how much she loved connecting with students and seeing them learn from her material. Even as a child, she liked teaching and playing school.

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Dr. Monica Bennett



Infographic - Bree Fowler

Letter from the Editor

Hello, Well-Trained Mind Academy Community!

Welcome to the first issue of the Well-Trained Tribune for 2023! As we continue to move steadily toward the end of the spring semester, I thank you on behalf of the paper's staff for taking the time to peruse our work and wish you the best of luck with your upcoming exams.

I would like to remind all students entering high school in the fall that if you want to work on the paper, putting your writing or graphic design skills to practical use, please register for next semester's newspaper club! We are always happy to have new members, and I personally have found the paper to be an excellent spot to pursue my interest in writing over the last two years.

As always, this issue will contain our columns on topics as varied as current events, literature, film, science, travel, and food, as well as a profile of WTMA's Dr. Monica Bennett. In addition to the usual columns, this issue rolls out a brand-new album review column and contains a feature article about the philosophy of Socrates. It is a joy to organize such a large group of talented writers as they create delightful pieces on a wide variety of topics. I hope you enjoy our work as much as we enjoy creating it.

Read on!

Riley Fowler
Editor-in-Chief
Well-Trained Tribune

Science & Tech
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By Lilith Carlson

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A Contemplation on Socrates

By Silas Herring

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X-STEM NOVA 2022 Experience

By Lilith Carlson

In the fall of last year, I attended an X-STEM event in Northern Virginia, where I listened to two talks: one presented by Alex Nataros and Morgan Keese and the other by Dr. Matt Buffington. The event was presented by the USA Science and Engineering Festival (USASEF), whose mission is “to stimulate and sustain the interest of our nation’s youth in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) by producing and presenting compelling, exciting, and educational STEM events and programs.”

The first talk with Nataros and Keese featured a robot using some of the latest artificial intelligence. Common Objects (whose CEO is Nataros) and Airbus U.S. Space & Defense (whose Chief of Staff is Keese) collaborated to produce a dog-like robot named Snowball. Attendees were able to get up close to the robot and watch it walk, climb steps, and bend its flexible joints in many directions. Twenty-five years of research went into the creation of Snowball.

The engineers talked about how the field of robotics has evolved from something of the future to applied technology in only five years. They are currently working on Snowball to help with safety missions using artificial intelligence. Nataros talked about eleven jobs (and more to come) in this ever-evolving field, including software engineers, software developers, IT security managers, and more.

Next up on stage was USDA Research Entomologist Matt Buffington, speaking about his journey to finding and enjoying work in the field of entomology. When starting his career search, he did not even know what entomology was, and now he works at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History. His specialty is wasps, and he also works as a curator at the museum. Buffington’s talk emphasized that, even though the average person does not think about them much, bugs are an important part of the earth, noting that there are more insects than any other type of animal.

“What’s the point of a mosquito?”



LadyofHats, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

During his Q&A session, he was asked about his standpoint on ticks. He said that he gets asked a lot of questions like, “What’s the point of a tick? What’s the point of a mosquito?” In response, he quipped that animals don’t have a point and that species evolve because they can. The X-STEM event showed the breadth of topics that are contained within the STEM fields and demonstrates a trend towards STEM topics and discussion becoming increasingly accessible to the public.

A Fruit Fly Feeding on a Banana



Drosophila melanogaster. By Sanjay Acharya - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=63862733>

Dr. Monica Bennett – Continued from Page 1.

Teaching as a profession seemed like a natural choice, and this was only further cemented when she learned about WTMA from Dr. Elizabeth Edwards, whom she had met while earning her graduate degree. Dr. Bennett took the job because she wanted students to receive the best virtual education and was impressed by how many teachers and students shared this mindset. She has been employed at the academy now for six years.

It is no surprise that WTMA provides a different experience from brick-and-mortar schools for students and instructors alike. On her experience with teaching remotely and how it compares to working at more traditional schools, Dr. Bennett says that she enjoys having no commute, no need to wear shoes, and more time to spend with Baldr, her adorable dog. However, she wishes she could interact with her students in person, easily do classroom demonstrations, and use neat handwriting on Blackboard.

Of course, there is more to Dr. Bennett’s life than just her job. Indeed, she enjoys reading fantasy and science fiction, hiking, writing, playing tabletop RPGs, singing, contra dancing, and playing with her dog in her spare time. Dr. Bennett would give the following advice to anyone who also wants to become a teacher. First, don’t feel you need to choose between your passion and teaching; many universities will help you find teaching opportunities regardless of your major. Second, everyone should try teaching in some capacity, even if it’s just a class presentation, to gain a new perspective and better understand the subject material. And finally, don’t worry if you feel uncomfortable with public speaking or make a mistake. “Every teacher always has more to learn, so you aren’t alone!” Much appreciated by her students, this attitude makes them feel that everyone has something to contribute to her classes.

Science facts

YOU DIDN'T KNOW

1. The majority of Earth’s oxygen is produced by oceans.
2. Helium works against gravity.
3. There is no flavor in food without saliva.
4. A laser can get trapped in water.
5. There are more trees on Earth than stars in the galaxy.

Infographic - Bree Fowler

Niccolo's Booknotes

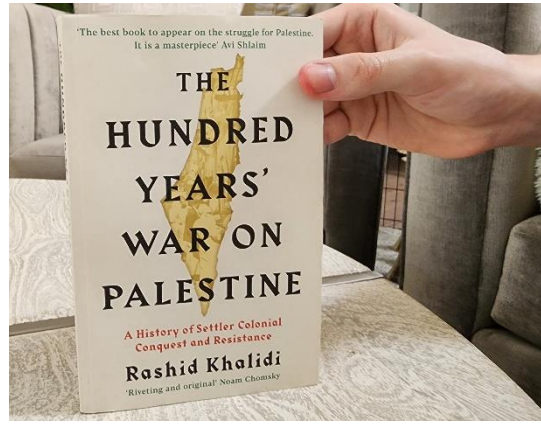
The Hundred Years War on Palestine

by Rashid Khalidi

By Niccolo Gentile

Few conflicts plaguing humanity are as epochal as the prolonged dispute between Israel and Palestine. Columbia University Professor Rashid Khalidi is uniquely poised to chart the region's story due to his personal experience and access to his family archives. The Khalidi family played a part in nearly every step of Palestine's recent history, beginning with his great-uncle's correspondence with Theodor Herzl, the founder of Zionism.

Using these stories, Khalidi brings the past to life in a manner impossible to replicate without hands-on knowledge, explicitly setting out to complement his scholarly body of work



with a more accessible overview of the conflict over the last century. Khalidi's sweeping historical narrative and personal tales blend into a compelling account of the Palestinian perspective on this hotly contested topic.

The book is organized into six "declarations of war" that span from the 1917 Balfour Declaration, which established British support for Israel, to the retaliations against the Second

Intifada that wrought destruction upon the Gaza Strip in the early 2010s.

These flashpoints allow Khalidi to explore different facets of regional politics, including great power meddling, the broader Arab world's actions, and the parallel development of two nationalisms—Palestinian and Israeli—that were pitted against each other time and again. Jumping through history in this manner might make some elements of the book somewhat inscrutable for readers lacking the relevant historical context, but Khalidi's writing always manages to convey his thesis even as he occasionally sacrifices focus for greater detail.

When explaining the American and British motivations in fostering the Zionist experiment and unveiling Israel's patronage of Christian militias in Lebanon, Khalidi's unfailing clarity elucidates the Palestinian side of the conflict. Despite its obvious—and admitted—bias, *The Hundred Years' War* provides invaluable insight into the Palestinian experience for the uninitiated and knowledgeable alike.

Fowler on Film

The Fall/Winter Movie Season

By Riley Fowler

Black Panther: Wakanda Forever

Directed by Ryan Coogler

★★★★☆

To be fair, circumstances have been unkind to *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*. The untimely passing of Chadwick Boseman, the titular Black Panther of the previous film, robbed the world of a fine actor and left screenwriters Ryan Coogler and Joe Robert Cole in the difficult position of making a sequel to a popular movie without its star. However, simply acknowledging that *Wakanda Forever* had a great deal going against it does not make it any better.

While a better director than most of his Marvel peers, Coogler is largely unable to solve the script's problems as the film becomes bogged down in a feeble story that rapidly wears out its welcome. Letitia Wright, Angela Bassett, and Lupita Nyong'o valiantly try to elevate the thin material, but all efforts to make both a decent film and a tribute to the departed star yield only a slog.

Avatar: The Way of Water

Directed by James Cameron

★★★★☆

In the intervening years between 2009's *Avatar* and its newly released sequel *Avatar: The Way of Water*, it has become customary in public discourse to give time to such questions as "Who asked for this?" Now, thirteen years later, James Cameron has returned to decisively answer that very question and once again silence those who question his ability to continually produce blockbuster entertainment unrivaled by any director since the glory days of Steven Spielberg.

In a film landscape where the standout popular films of the hour are the messy, interlocking muddles of CGI that Marvel churns out three times a year, the raw beauty of Cameron's conception of Pandora, as well as his consistent hand with the familiar beats of the Hollywood screenplay, seem like miracles, an oasis of raw feeling and filmmaking acumen in the desert of dreadful films. Compared to the countless blockbusters mass-produced in the last few years, Cameron's film effectively cannot be spoiled and must be seen to be believed.



Artwork by Lila Tangorre

While constructed as a clear story with a suitably epic conclusion, the film's dramatic structure is artfully supported by moments of sublime beauty that contribute very little to "the plot" yet are exquisite and necessary images. The characterizations of Jake Sully, Neytiri, and Colonel Quaritch are deepened from the first films (with great performances by all three, including a marked improvement by Sam Worthington as Sully from the first film), and the new characters are appealing and memorable, with Sigourney Weaver easily humanizing what on paper could be a bizarre

character. Although dismissed before its release by many, Cameron has once again established himself as the premier blockbuster filmmaker of the era.

Women Talking

Directed by Sarah Polley

★★★★☆

In writing and real life, action and talk are often compared to one another, action usually dubbed more important and revealing than words. In Sarah Polley's adaptation of Miriam Toew's book *Women Talking*, however, conversation becomes a sort of revolutionary action in and of itself. Concerning itself with a group of Amish women in a barn debating whether to either leave the community wherein the men have abused them for years or to stay and fight them, words in Polley's film acquire an urgent political power.

Taking the form of an extended nightlong conversation with several short breaks, Polley's protagonists, including the dreamer Ona (Rooney Mara), aggressive Salome (Claire Foy), concerned mother Mariche (Jessie Buckley), and the elderly and level-headed Agata and Greta (Judith Ivey and Sheila McCarthy), move through philosophical and political theory as they consider various arguments, but Polley's film retains an apparent cinematic craftsmanship, never once succumbing to the pitfalls of wordy, theatrical filmmaking. Regrettably, the gray color grade seemingly slapped onto the entirety of the picture in post-production muddies Polley's images. At the same time, Ben Whishaw, as the illiterate women's note-taker, and Mara's flighty character sometimes strike as less than believable, but the film remains powerful nonetheless.

Music Reviews

Paramore's Return with *This is Why* ★★★★★

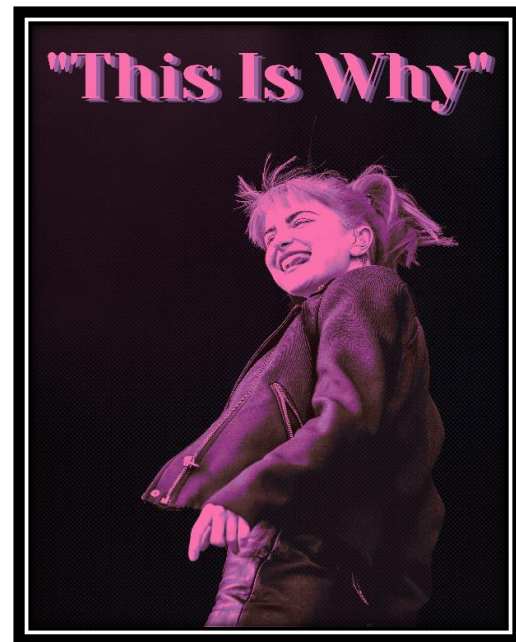
By Madelaine Wentzel

Paramore released their first album in six years, *This is Why*, on February 10th. Following three early singles and a tour, the band has returned during a pop-punk and emo revival fed by TikTok and other social media platforms. *This is Why* mixes post-punk rock with gothic influences and funk-inspired instrumentals, painting a picture of post-lockdown cynicism.

The instrumentals on this album are excellent. The lyrics, less so. Centered around layers of dark, jazzy guitar and frontwoman Hailey Williams' brilliant voice, the first songs (three of which were singles) define the album as a whole. However, the lyrics in these songs are out of touch and cliché. "The News" talks about a war across the world without any real empathy, and the bridge is made of buzzwords from the past few elections: "Exploitative, performative... Rhetorical, deplorable." "C'est

Comme Ça," featuring spoken gothic-inspired verses, lacks the intensity to be graceful and jars you from the album. The second half of the album finds a stronger balance of instrumentals and lyrics. The instruments blend with Williams' voice, finding a place whether the sound is dreamy or punk-ish. It's cohesive and comfortable—it feels like their ideal sound. "Figure 8," with heavy bass and gentle guitars, employs poetic lyrics that suit the band. "Liar" and "Crave" are smooth and wistful. The final track, "Thick Skull," is a perfect closer, with layers of Williams' voice harmonizing in the background until she's left singing by herself.

Paramore can find their place again if they try. This comeback album is showing us that, sonically, they are finding a new niche. Lyrically, they need to catch up with the times. This isn't the same world the band was founded in, but if they put in more thought, they can bridge the gap between then and now.



Original photo (altered here) by Sven-Sebastian Sajak, CC BY-SA 3.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

***The Record* by Boygenius ★★★★★**

By Madelaine Wentzel



Original photos (altered here) by David Lee from Redmond, WA, USA, CC BY-SA 2.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

Boygenius released their new album, *The Record*, on March 31st. As a supergroup, Phoebe Bridgers, Lucy Dacus, and Julien Baker have worked together since 2018, when they released their first EP. After five years and three early singles, *The Record* has been highly anticipated and positively reviewed. It carries snapshots of the three artists' personal narratives through flowing pop-rock layers with folk and country influences, all tied together in low-fidelity recordings.

The album opens with "Without You Without Them," a track sonically different from the rest but beautiful, nonetheless. The quiet a capella harmony is reminiscent of old hymns and barbershop quartets. Along with the second track, "\$20," this song sets a kind of theme for the entire album—young love, radical politics, unearthing the past, the complications of personal identity, and above all else, the desire to be seen and understood by those around you.

"\$20," perhaps the most energetic track on the album, tells the blurry story of young revolutionaries while bright guitars dance in the background. "True Blue" marches smoothly along, steady drums and nostalgic steel guitar making a foundation for the layered harmonic vocals. "Cool About It" ebbs and flows with gentle vocals and quiet, desperate love confessions, and "Revolution 0," similarly gentle, incorporates low-fidelity elements, forming a bedroom-pop sound. Though instrumentally variant, these songs are coherent together, making the album pleasant to listen to, a factor many modern pop musicians unfortunately overlook.

The three artists have been public about their relationship and collaboration, what motivates them to make art, and how they work together. The name, Boygenius, reminds them, while they create, that they can act like male musicians who never get "no" for an answer—every idea they have is worth exploring. *The Record* is named like it's the most iconic release of the decade. These artists are a perfect supergroup—their voices and musical talents blend to make a seamless album.

TOP 5 SONGS THIS
WEEK: 5/1-5/6

**1. LAST NIGHT**

By: Morgan Wallen

2. KILL BILL

By: SZA

3. FLOWERS

By: Miley Cyrus

4. ELLA BALLA SOLA

By: Eslabon Armado X Peso Pluma

5. UN X100TO

By: Grupo Frontera x Bad Bunny

Russia “Rescued” More Than 6,000 Ukrainian Children

By María Gabriela Duque Solarte

The Russian government has set up a vast network of camps for thousands of “rescued” Ukrainian children, beginning only days before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. According to a new report from the Yale School of Public Health (YSPH) published on Feb. 14, the nation has detained at least 6,000 Ukrainian minors in 43 camps. Children range in age from 17 months to 17 years old, and while most of the kids taken are orphans from group homes and orphanages, others were taken from their family members and are still waiting to be returned.

“Many minors brought to camps were transported with the cooperation of their parents for an agreed period of days or weeks and returned to their families as originally intended,” affirmed a report by Yale University researchers in collaboration with the U.S. State Department. However, at least 10% of the camps have halted all returns, implying that the children are not permitted to rejoin their families in Ukraine. Furthermore, as reported by the YSPH research, consent was frequently disregarded or obtained under pressure in the cases of Ukrainian parents who gave permission for their children to attend these camps. “In many cases, Russia pretended to temporarily remove children from Ukraine under the premise of a free summer camp, only to subsequently refuse to return the children and cut off all ties with their families,” said State Department spokesman Ned Price on February 14.

More than two-thirds of the institutions are involved in “re-education” initiatives. At least 78% of the camps subject Ukrainian kids to Russian patriotic programs to incorporate Ukrainian children into the Russian government’s perspective of national culture, history, and society, the announcement stated, and in some circumstances, even military training. However, the researchers noted that there was no indication that minors exposed to military schooling at Russian camps were deployed into war. Experts agree that the wholesale transfer of children is possibly a war crime, even if they are orphans. Russian

officials do not dispute the presence of Ukrainian children in Russia but argue that the camps are part of a large humanitarian effort for abandoned, war-traumatized kids and that these camps are not a secret to the community but, in fact, are displayed through social media.

“In many cases, Russia pretended to temporarily remove children from Ukraine under the premise of a free summer camp, only to subsequently refuse to return the children and cut off all ties with their families.”

- State Department spokesman Ned Price

After State Department spokesman Ned Price released the report’s specifics, the Russian Embassy in Washington replied in a Telegram message, calling allegations of forced relocation and deportation absurd. It stated that Russia has welcomed children forced to escape Ukraine and that “they work diligently to keep children with their families.” Additionally, it announced that several of these institutions in Russia house Ukrainian children and then place them for adoption or foster care, giving them loving families in Russia. On the other hand, Russia refuses to admit where the children are located or the exact number of Ukrainian kids in the country.

The State Department’s conflict and stability division and Colleen Crenwelge said the Biden administration is investigating options to hold Russian officials accountable for their conduct in Ukraine, though she didn’t specify if the claimed system for re-educating children is included in that investigation.

Major Train Derailment Called “Chernobyl 2.0”

By María Gabriela Duque Solarte

There are about three train derailments daily in the US and more than 1,700 yearly. Two major accidents happened in 2023, including the East Palestine, Ohio, train derailment, a breaking news event on most of America’s television stations and newspapers. Called a 2.0 Chernobyl and mini-Chernobyl by locals and users on social media, the Ohio accident happened on the 3rd of February while the train was carrying toxic chemicals, including vinyl chloride, a highly explosive chemical, setting off the fear of a massive explosion. While most officials were cleaning up the area, preoccupied with the catastrophe that could follow the derailment, most locals were worried about their health and the surrounding environment.

Around 9 p.m., 38 out of 150 cars that contained butyl acrylate, ethylhexyl acrylate, and ethylene glycol monobutyl collapsed in East Palestine. In the village of 4,700 residents, about 2,000 residents were told to evacuate due to the possible effect this accident could have on their health and well-being. On February 6th, the evacuation expanded to a one-mile-by-two-mile area around the land. On February 8th, residents could return to their homes, as the Ohio Department of Natural Resources confirmed the air sampled was below levels of concern and would not impact the locals. Unfortunately, this was not the case for the environment and organisms around the area since more than 3,500 fish were killed, and about 43,000 aquatic animals were affected by the water quality after the release of the toxic substances.

Additionally, eleven dead land animals are being tested to determine if their deaths were related to the chemical leak. Though none of the animals affected were endangered, the number is still massive. Researchers have concluded that the entire ecosystem and



National Transportation Safety Board, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

aquatic biota were wiped out in parts of the Ohio River. Furthermore, experts confirmed that it would take multiple life cycles and several years for the streams to recover.

Other concerns have been raised about the large quantity of fish that humans near the area tend to consume, such as minnows, the fish species most impacted by the accident. Consumption of these animals could cause health issues for those who eat them. Furthermore, scientists affirmed that the sun might also play a part in the trouble, as its light could combine with the chemicals and create new substances that organisms in the area could eat.

Aside from the Ohio derailment, another catastrophe happened in California on March at 8:30 a.m. According to Union Pacific officials, 55 train cars containing iron ore derailed. There were no crew injuries or risks of fire or hazards to the environment, as iron ore isn’t dangerous.

S'mores Pie Recipe

By Abigail Goggin



Prep time: 30 minutes
Total time: 1 hour 30 minutes
Makes: about 12 slices

Ingredients

For the crust:

- 1 1/2 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 2 tbsp. sugar
- 1 tbsp. brown sugar
- 7 tbsp. melted butter

For the filling:

- 6 tbsp. salted butter
- 6 oz. bittersweet chocolate
- 2 large eggs plus 1 large egg yolk
- 5 tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup white sugar
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1/8 tsp. kosher salt

For the top:

- Mini marshmallows

My Experience in Barcelona

by Bree Fowler

My visit to Barcelona, Spain, was the first time I had ever left the United States. I was pleasantly surprised by the customs of Barcelona. For instance, they walk everywhere, and people rarely use cars. The day starts significantly later for them. When my family and I walked to my brother's soccer area around 9 a.m., there were very few people walking around. There were more taxis and scooters than cars. It was much quieter in stores and outside than in the United States, and very few people wearing shorts were not tourists. Many people native to Barcelona had a good grasp of English, although a few spoke solely Spanish, so we had to adapt to that.

Consistently, there was no rain the entire ten days of our stay, which is quite normal there. The food tasted delicious and was considerably cheaper than in the U.S. There were several cafes and pastry shops. Many

A few months ago, I was learning about Constantine in history class. My *Story of the Ancient World Activity Guide* suggested making an edible cheesecake version of Constantine's shield. I thought it sounded like a tasty way to interact with history, but then I realized that no one in my family likes cheesecake. In the end, I decided to combine a few recipes and create something that we could all enjoy.

It turned out amazing! With a gooey chocolate filling, crumbly and sweet graham cracker crust, and perfectly crisped marshmallows, it made a delicious (and historical!) dessert. When I made it, I made a cross shape with the marshmallows since it was for a history project, but you can create other shapes to correspond with a holiday or just cover it in marshmallows.

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 375° Fahrenheit. Then, in a medium-sized bowl, stir together the graham cracker crumbs, 2 tbsp sugar, and 1 tbsp brown sugar. Add the melted butter and stir with a fork until all the crumbs are well moistened. Pour the mixture from the bowl into a pie dish. Firmly pack the crumbs onto the bottom of the pan and along the sides. You can use your fingers, but the flat bottom of a measuring cup also works very well on the bottom of the pan. Bake in the oven for 7-10 minutes.

2. Melt the salted butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Quickly add the chocolate and whisk until it's melted. Whisk in the eggs, flour, sugar, vanilla, and salt. The filling should appear shiny and smooth. Pour the filling into the warm graham cracker crust and smooth with the back of a spatula. Bake on a baking sheet for 8 to 10 minutes (still at 375° F) or until the mixture is set. Remove from the oven.

3. Cover the surface in as many mini marshmallows as you want! Broil in the oven for about one minute until the marshmallows are slightly brown. Allow the pie to cool for 15-20 minutes and serve!

walked with their dogs, some on leashes and some off-leash. Barcelona was stunning, and there was so much old architecture. We went to see the Sagrada Familia, a massive church built by Antoni Gaudi, which was meant to have the entire story of the Bible on its exterior.



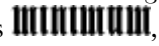
Photo credit: Bree Fowler

The church is *still* unfinished, so when we went to see it, construction workers were working on the points of the towers. Barcelona made me realize how big the world is and how different cultures are in other countries and continents.

Some Peculiarities of the English Language

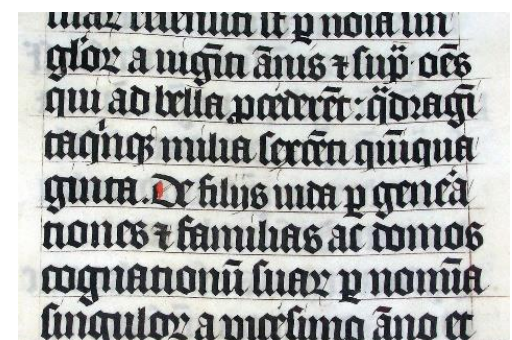
By Silas Herring

Our written language has evolved in countless ways over the years, resulting in some interesting quirks that defy language rules. Have you ever wondered why the pronoun 'I' is always alone in a sentence or why English words never end in the letters I, U, V, or J? Here is an explanation.

During the Middle Ages, many ways of writing letters developed, including the narrow, angular, vertical Gothic (or Northern) script; and the more rounded, flowing Italian (or Roman) script. Most of the letters in the Gothic script were composed of long sticks joined together by minute horizontal lines. Hence, the letter U looked exactly like two Is next to each other. An M and N were almost impossible to tell apart, especially when placed next to another letter such as U, V, O, L, or even D. An extreme example is the word minimum. When written with Gothic lettering, it appears as a series of straight lines with tiny horizontal connecting strokes. This would appear as , which is rather difficult to read.

Conversely, it was much easier to see the letter I when it was placed all by itself in a sentence, without any other similar-looking letters close to it. As the pronoun I is used rather frequently, printers and scribes decided to make it a standalone word for better recognition. The same explains why English words never end in U, V, J, or I. These letters looked nearly identical to each other when written close together. The differences between an I and a J were very slight, and there was almost no way of telling if a word ended in a U, two Is, a W, a VU, or a VI combination. As this caused confusion, they became unused at the end of words.

However, some words like spaghetti do end in an I. These words are not English in origin and therefore do not strictly follow English spelling rules. Spaghetti is a borrowed Italian word, and the Italian (or Roman) script was much different from the Gothic lettering, resulting in more clarity. Since the Italian script was much more comprehensible, it became preferred, and nearly all our modern fonts are in that style. Even the names of fonts, such as Times New Roman, reflect this. These are just some of the numerous ways our language has changed with time.



Another example of Gothic script, with its vertically aligned, stick-like letters

By Gerard Brils - Self-photographed
by Adrian Pingstone, February 2005, Public Domain,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?c=urid=68618>

The Most Beautiful City in the World Fading Underwater

By María Gabriela Duque Solarte

Venice, the most beautiful city in the world and the Veneto region's capital, is slowly vanishing into the sea. Consisting of 118 tiny islands linked by over 400 bridges, Venice is divided by a maze of canals that make up most of the city. Gondolas and water taxis transport passengers to and from numerous areas.

It is believed that conquerors and invaders initially forced Venetians to leave the mainland in the 5th century. Venice's objective was to provide protection for its first residents by creating the city on top of its lagoons. Rivo Alto, or "high bank," is the collective name for a tiny cluster of islands in the middle of a lagoon. Soon after, the region grew, and Ri'Alto emerged as the center of Venice.

Due to its receding foundations and escalating sea levels, Venice is in danger of sinking. It was constructed on a muddy pond with a poor understructure, and over time, the earth beneath it steadily compacted. The city has been gradually declining as a result of groundwater pumping out from below it and an increase in sea levels. It has dipped by about 2.75 inches (6.99 cm) every century over the past 1,000 years. Current sources claim that the city of Venice has dropped by over 9.44 inches (23.98 cm) just in the previous century, which may be more related to the polar ice cap melting and global warming.

Venice started to sag in the 20th century as several artesian wells were dug into the lagoon's edge to supply water to nearby industries. It was determined that one of the primary reasons for the continuous drop was the removal of water from the aquifer. Since the 1960s, when artesian wells were outlawed, the sinking has drastically decreased but hasn't entirely stopped. Venice saw its second-worst flooding disaster on record in November 2019. Many were astounded by the unbelievable photographs of Saint Mark's Square, one of the city's lowest-lying and most famous places, being flooded with feet of water and making headlines worldwide. Over 80% of the city was submerged as the tide reached its greatest height of 187 cm (6.14 ft) above sea level. Luigi Brugnaro, the mayor of Venice, stated that a state of emergency had been proclaimed and that the damage was estimated to be around €1 billion (£0.9 billion/\$1 billion).

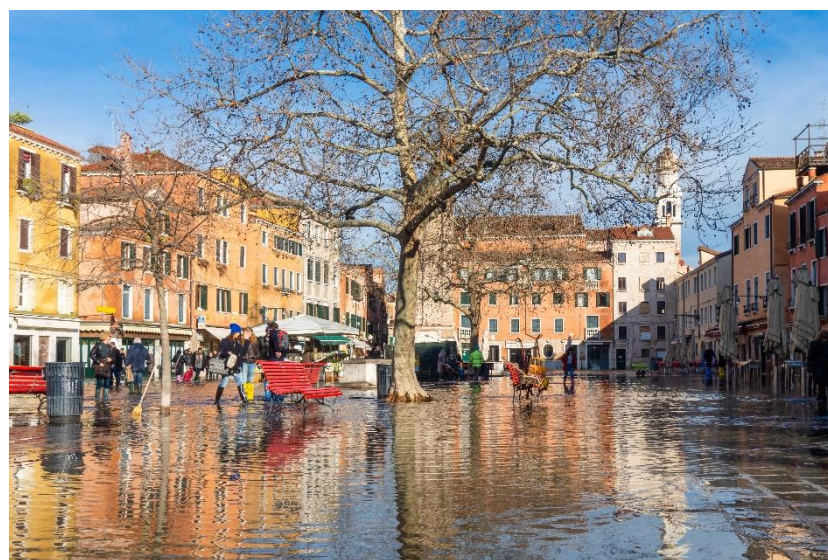
The roadways frequently become obstructed as the high tide season begins. To ensure the safety of pedestrians, wooden pathways must be built during those times. As a result of the damage and inconvenience the high-water level is inflicting on Venice and its residents, city governors now consider the issue to be urgent. Several of its structures are currently falling and being damaged by the wake of boats. Moreover, the city frequently experiences tourist overload while the local population is continuously declining.



Flooding in St. Mark's Square, Venice

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So, when will the world's most stunning metropolis submerge? If immediate action is not taken, the city's days may be numbered. According to the most recent study, it is sinking at a rate of 1 to 2 mm each year, and if this trend continues over the next 20 years, it will recede by around 80 mm from sea level. The threat of the sea consuming Venice is quite serious and is not being overstated. In the worst situation, the city may fully drown beneath the water as soon as 2100.



Acqua alta in Venice, Campo Santa Margherita

Photo by Marco Ober - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=94906890>

Does Italy have any plans to avert this disaster? Venice's solution to severe floods is the MOSE dam system, which stands for "*Modulo Sperimentale Elettromeccanico*", or Experimental Electromechanical Model. At the Venice lagoon's entrances, several retractable barriers have been constructed. Installing 78 moveable gates in key spots that allow boats 20 meters (65.62 feet) wide is meant to form a "coastal cordon," intended to reduce significant flooding episodes. How would this work? Engineers would activate a mechanism that pumps compressed air through the gates when storms with heavy winds sweep northeast over Italy and when tides are high. The air would push the water out, allowing the gates to rise on hinges and create a barrier against the raging waves.

According to *Consorzio Venezia Nuova*, the firm implementing the system, the barriers are buried during times of calm but rise to stop the incoming tide in the lagoon when seas climb to 110 cm (3.6 ft). The creation of MOSE has not exactly been simple. Since its inception in 1992, it has experienced delays and rising expenditures. Construction started in 2003 with the initial goal of finishing by 2011. In truth, MOSE wasn't completely active until 2020, when it was up for the first time. It will now be completed by the end of 2023. With an initial budget closer to €4.7bn (£4.1bn/\$4.7bn), it could end up costing around €8bn (£7bn/\$8bn). Additionally, there is a significant financial burden associated with using the barrier; *Consorzio Venezia Nuova* has estimated that it could cost €323,000 (£280,000 or \$323,000) each time it is raised.

There are a couple of issues with this solution, however. The project does not provide massive help. While MOSE was built to withstand significant water level rises, it will not be able to prevent flooding in low-lying places like Saint Mark's Basilica. Moreover, analysts claim that if the barrier is raised repeatedly, sewage may become trapped in the lagoon, causing not only discomfort but also destruction of the environment. Experts claim that this short-term strategy to halt Venice from sinking will only be effective in reducing floods for the next 20 to 30 years. There must be a long-term solution that addresses the causes of global warming. If not, the sinking of Venice may add another chapter to global history.

A Contemplation on Socrates

By Silas Herring

Undoubtedly, the ancient Greek philosopher Socrates was one of the greatest, or at least most iconic, thinkers of all time. His style of personal discovery through deep conversations and endless questions remains one of history's greatest treasures. But what did the Father of Western Philosophy really believe about such matters as autonomy, essences, polytheism, and immortality?

Socrates was born around 470 B.C. in the small city of Alopece outside of Athens. Not much is known about his early life, but it is thought that he likely did not have much formal education since his family was not particularly wealthy. When Socrates was in his mid-30s, the Peloponnesian War broke out. Although the Athenians were ultimately defeated, Socrates served in the Athenian military and was a prominent veteran of at least three major battles. During his time in the military, Socrates formed some of his ideas on courage and piety.

After Socrates returned from the war, he began his philosophical journey in Athens. He never wrote any books, nor did he ever lecture. In fact, all we know of Socrates' work comes from the writings of his eminent student Plato. Instead of publishing a wide variety of literary works, Socrates engaged in conversations, asking deep, meaningful questions that made Athenian citizens rethink their beliefs or way of life. Socrates wrought much change in the hearts of many Athenians and was a central figure in their city's history. Although he certainly had incredible insights into humanity and ethics, many of his teachings were based on assumptions and had no actual answers. (All examples are drawn from *The Last Days of Socrates* by Plato.)

Authority

- Men are self-governing, deciding the laws of the universe.
- No higher authority exists above men. (Socrates denied ancient Greek gods)

Material

- Forms (or essences) are the pure building blocks of all existence.
- Chaos must be avoided at all costs.

Mortality

- All through life, the mind is unbearably hindered by the body.
- Death is nothing more than the relieving release of the intellect.

Overview of Socratic Thinking

Socrates and Autonomy

"Autonomy" means self-law, coming from two Greek words: *auto*, meaning 'self,' and *nomos*, meaning 'law.' Thus, autonomy means that someone is "a law unto themselves." An autonomous person gets to be the final authority on what is true and what is right. The concept of human autonomy was the basic assumption of Socrates and Greek culture.

On the surface, Socrates presented himself as a humble scholar in search of knowledge. He pretended to make no claims; he pretended to be himself a student. But at the same time, he questioned the universe; he questioned the human way of life. And who was supposed to be the judge of these things? Which being with God-like qualities was rarely

mentioned but dominated the whole discussion? Who got to frame the entire debate, to quietly dictate what counts as true and false in the universe? That turned out to be Socrates himself. He was not even answering on the basis of his own ancient gods—he had already raised himself above them. He determined what was possible and impossible on the basis of his own assumptions. Socrates autonomously raised himself above all other possible authorities. That was quite an assertion for one claiming humility.

Socrates and Essences

In Socrates' view of the universe, celestial concepts called "essences," or Forms, exist. A Form is the perfect epitome of an ideal. Forms are intangible and impossible to understand clearly. All earthly objects are reflections of the essences, albeit imperfectly. Every noble or virtuous or courageous act is a worldly reflection of the perfect essences of nobility, virtue, and courage, deformed by human flaws.

"He was not even answering on the basis of his own ancient gods—he had already raised himself above them."

According to Socrates, everything has a bit of impeccable essence in itself, which makes it what it is: the same essence must show up in each thing of a kind. According to the great philosopher, essences are also invisible "patterns" of some sort. Socrates says, "explain to me what this characteristic is in itself, so that by fixing my eyes upon it and using it as a pattern, I may be able to describe any action of yours or anyone else's...if it corresponds to the pattern." One of the main goals of Socrates' work is to identify these patterns. Every material and immaterial thing is linked by these patterns, without which there would be chaos. For the Greek mind, this assumption motivated just about everything. Greeks dreaded chaos, and much of their philosophy was designed around avoiding it.

Socrates and Death

Socrates told his followers that death is "nothing more than the release of the soul from the body." His ultimate goal in life was to gain as much knowledge as possible. However, he recognized that the human body and intellect are incredibly flawed. His view was that the mind constantly seeks knowledge but is obstructed and inhibited by the confines of a broken, impaired body and fractured worldly intellect. So, to Socrates, the release of the soul and mind from the body would result in his greatest dream: unending knowledge and wisdom in the ethereal afterlife of souls. Socrates' view of the afterlife is unclear, but he certainly believed in an afterlife and the immortality of the soul. He even claimed that ideal souls would be recycled into new bodies.

In the end, Socrates' ideas were received with more dislike than acclaim. He was accused of being an atheist and of denying the traditional Greek gods (quite true). He was also charged with corrupting the minds of young Athenians. Socrates was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to death. On February 15, 399 B.C., after refusing to attempt escape, Socrates was forced to consume wine poisoned with deadly hemlock. However, his ideas live on, and when we subject them to examination, some of his thoughts seem more modern than they initially appear.

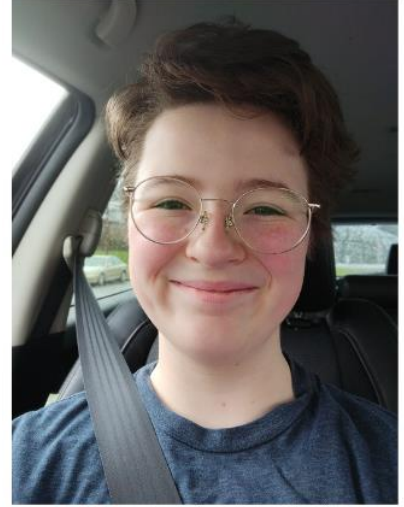
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