



WHITNE & BLUE

VOL 01
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IN THIS EDITION:

- Does God Dream of Apples?
- Separating the Art from the Artist
- Debates: Rome, Territories, Alien Life



DECEMBER

1



Editor's Note



Hello everyone,

With the days getting shorter and the nights becoming longer, the semester's journey for students of UNC is at an end. Now is the time for layered coats and quiet study halls; now is the time for preparation and reflection. I am thankful to introduce the Winter 2022 Edition of the White & Blue.

In its association with the Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies, many of this edition's works are speeches delivered during the fall semester in our chambers. We hope to showcase the rhetoric of the many members of the societies and archive them for years to come. Of course, variety is the spice of life. This edition also contains creative works, economic analysis, and poetry.

The members of the W&B team hope you enjoy your Winter Break, and we look forward to seeing new submissions as the snow melts, watering the spring flowers in the soil below. Special thanks to:

Marie Thorn, our Managing Editor;
Bruce McRae, our Copy Editor;
Deniz Erdal, our Opinions Editor;
and Anna Crist, our Literary Editor.

Ars massarum invicta.
Maddox Addy, Editor-in-Chief





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God Was Lonely

Sophie Van Duin

God was lonely. If you have ever been lonely, you have been like God. And if you have ever created friends from empty air, you have been like God in that way, too.

God was lonely, and so he created men. Real men, of flesh and blood, that walked and talked and loved and hurt.

For a while, God was content. He watched and the people feared him and he dispensed his justice. And better: in their quiet, and most vulnerable moments, people would pray, and he would respond, and it was so nice to give, and to be received.

(God of course, only gives. In his darkest, most lonely hours, there is no one for him to pray to.)

An interesting piece of trivia: you, as God's creation, can be flawed, but God himself cannot be. God cannot be flawed just as the creatures of the forest cannot be: there is no standard of morality that exists for them, because beasts are uncaring and because God is the creator of all standards and all moralities.

A lesser known fact: God spent eternities looking

down at his creation, lost in thought, after he drowned the world. Noah thanks God for saving him, but God, for once, does not hear. He is busy contemplating if what he did was right, and there is a dark doubt gnawing at his stomach.

(There exists no "shoulds" for God. In all the expanding darkness of the universe, there exists no one there to forgive him.)

God is omnipotent. So, when he created men, he did what omnipotent beings do: he set rules. He met his follower on a mountain-top and required that men love him, and only him. But it became clear soon after that they love him because he is God, not because he is him.

Humanity is flawed; God is not. Humans, God discovered, could love each other despite and even because of their flaws. God has no flaws, so there is no one there to love them.

Do you know that God dreams of apples? He pictures himself in a perfect garden, besides a forbidden tree. A woman who both loves, and will love him holds out fruit; he smiles, and takes a bite.



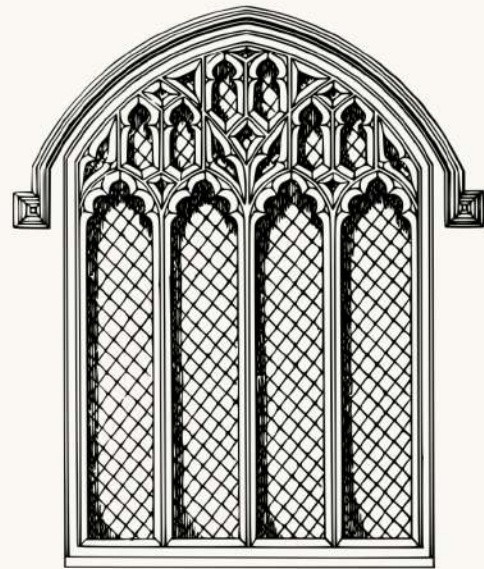
The Shattered Glass

Brutus

There was a time when I could down drinks and let smoke fill my lungs like a chimney. I often took pride in my ability to overcome these mental impediments by will. How I could be so drunk or high yet still be me. Still be someone who was there. This is not the case nowadays. Due to my bipolar diagnosis, I have ceased all activities and have become sober. A schism formed in my identity as I realized what I would have to do when I was back in school. How I would have to change from someone who could do everything and anything at a party to someone cast down to being unwillingly crystal clear of the reality that surrounds me. How my friends could come to a different wavelength while I am acutely aware of how my inhibitions that stop me from living in the moment.

How I am literally writing this at a party because I feel so fractured between the person I am and the person I have to be for my health.

The anxieties are made that much more complicated when considering how to interact with my friends. I'm sober, they aren't and that's a power imbalance. That's the worse part. I am in a position where I am less vulnerable than the people I want to interact with. I don't like knowing that someone may tell me something they wouldn't while sober. Or do something in my presence they wouldn't do while sober. I don't get to extend them the same display



or trust. I'm just always the same thing. I'm an open book but that's not the same as naturally letting aspects of the self come out.

I feel confined. I feel like every time I am surrounded by happiness and drinks I am reminded that while I am happy in my day to day life, parties, festivities, and everything in between will always remind me of somebody I once was. It reminds me of when I was as clear as shattered glass. I despise my flesh.

Resolved:

You Cannot Separate the Art from the Artist

Anna Crist

The concept of “separating the art from the artist” in American literary scholarship emerged during the New Criticism movement of the early 20th century (Grady). This movement emphasized the meticulous close-reading of the text itself and rejected any consideration of context or creator. As T.S. Eliot, a prominent New Critic, put it: “I have assumed as axiomatic that a creation, a work of art, is autonomous.”

These days, separating the art from the artist remains a relevant principle in the world of artistic analysis, but is most relevant in discussions surrounding the MeToo movement and so-called “cancel culture,” where it functions as a way for people to criticize an artist without necessarily condemning their artwork. It is a convenient and popular practice; However, I believe it leaves something to be desired. In this speech, I will first explain how separating the art from the artist is simply unintuitive and unnatural. Then, I will explain how this practice reduces our capacity to analyze and enjoy art by stripping it of something critical: context. Finally, I will disclose the practical harms of this doctrine by discussing how it encourages consumer inaction and complacency. By the end, I hope to have made clear why you must vote in the negation.

I will begin by addressing what I believe to be the core principle at the heart of this discussion: the relationship between art, artist, and consumer. If you were present for my petitioning speech, you will know that I have ... takes ... about the role of the artist. Art is made for a variety of reasons, some of them commercial, some of them political, but in the end most art boils down to an artist’s expression of self. I believe there is something deeply intimate in the way artists draw from their emotions and life experiences when creating something. Although I’d argue the most important interaction occurs between the consumer and the art, I don’t think the artist is ever fully removed from the equation. As a sculptor’s fingerprints may be found on a sculpture long after its completion, I believe the artist’s presence lingers in their art – a consequence of the artistic process’s deeply personal nature. By this logic, the resolution fails: an artist cannot be truly separated from their art, because their art will always represent an intimate creative expression of themselves.

However, I realize there are broader social and moral questions at play here, and I would be remiss to ignore them. This brings me to my first practical point: separating the art from the artist inhibits proper artistic analysis by ignoring context. These days, most classic works are examined with the author’s biography and opinions at least partially considered. This offers the



readers a lens by which to examine a work outside of itself by considering the perspectives that contributed to its making. This is especially critical when attempting to extract political commentary implicitly present in a text. Consider John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, an epic Biblical retelling of the fall of man. Amid the cosmic struggle between heaven and hell lies a political dialogue only visible if Milton himself is considered. Milton wrote around the mid-1600's, a time of British political upheaval. He was vehemently opposed to the restoration of the British monarchy and was even imprisoned for his political beliefs. This critical attitude is most visible in his portrayal of Satan as an antihero. Satan is punished for rebelling against an all-powerful, controlling, monarchial God, and at one point says that it is "better to reign in Hell, than to serve in Heaven." Although I don't claim that Satan was written to voice every political opinion Milton ascribed to, his role in the story is clearly influenced by them.

Paradise Lost isn't interpreted the same when Milton is dismissed. A valuable facet of analysis and political commentary is irreparably lost. The same can be applied to all art: it is best understood and appreciated when you know the full context surrounding it, and part of that context is the author themselves.

Furthermore, willfully ignoring the creator makes it easy to overlook imagery and symbolism that subtly endorses questionable things. As an example, take the artist Pablo Picasso. One of his paintings, entitled "Minotaur Caressing a Sleeping Woman," depicts a half-beast man poised over a resting woman, hunched, hungry, and almost domineering. To many viewers, this piece might simply depict the carnal nature of erotic love. People familiar with Picasso's abuse of his muses, however, might recognize that this piece could represent something

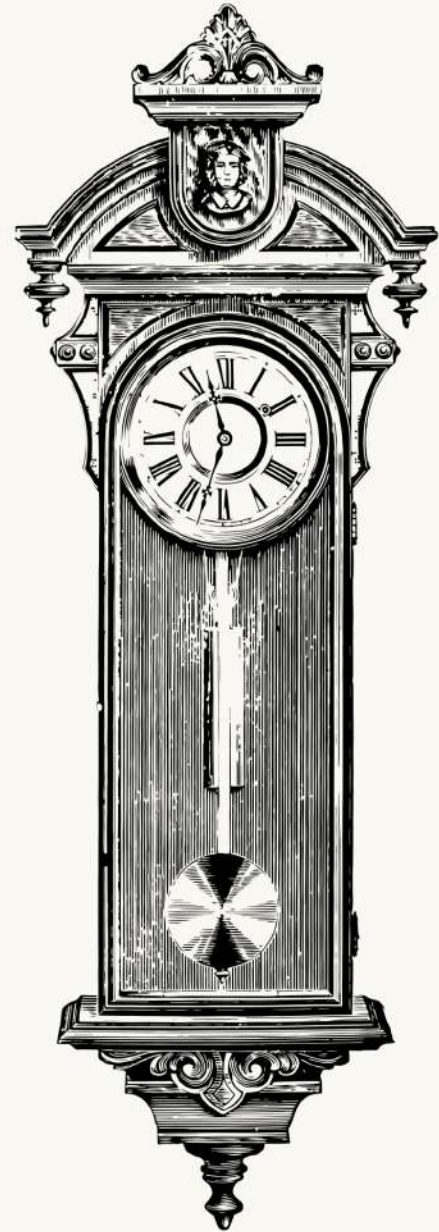
more, like the power imbalances present in heterosexual relationships. In this example, considering the author's experiences and attitudes yields a more nuanced understanding of his art – broadening the scope of analysis. And by inviting discussion on how misogyny might color our sexual experiences, we are encouraged to discuss an uncomfortable topic that might otherwise go ignored.

Undoubtedly, the affirmation will express some queasiness about the negation policing what art people are allowed to consume. I understand this discomfort, and I'm not here to claim that all art made by bad people is worthless and needs to be destroyed. However, it must be acknowledged that artists are often artists by trade, and consuming their art – whether or not you choose to "separate" them from it – still puts money in their pocket, and still contributes to their fame and power. So as with any other consumption, you must ask yourself: who am I indirectly supporting? Even if the artist is long dead, and no longer benefits from your support, I still think it's good to be deliberate with whose work we choose to spotlight. Instead of contributing to the legacies of already-famous abusers, perhaps we can elect to showcase more work from lesser-known and less dubious people – it's not like there is a shortage of art to go around. This is a softer suggestion, but my larger point stands: critically assessing which artists you support is the responsible thing to do.

Separating the art from the artist is a way to shirk this responsibility. It is a way for consumers to distance themselves from the moral failures of the artist, easing their consciousness and giving them license to consume whatever they like, guilt-free. Claiming to "separate the art from the artist," of course, doesn't actually change the relationship between the two; the artist is still the creator, the art still displays facets of the artist's character, and the artist still benefits from

their art being consumed. All the consumer has done is remove the motivation to hold artists accountable; since their own morality is no longer at stake, they feel no obligation to critically assess their favorite artists or reconsider who they support.

Separating the art from the artist may be a popular choice. It may well be convenient. But it is neither intuitive nor beneficial to our understanding of art. Moreover, it is actively harmful by encouraging consumer inaction and complacency. Whether we like this truth or not, artists are irrevocably tied to their art, and the consequences demand the failure of this resolution. Only then can we begin a legitimately productive discussion on how to respond when artists turn out to be bad people.



Resolved:

You Cannot Separate the Art from the Artist

Bruce McRae

Some time ago, we had a debate on whether or not we could “separate the art from the artist”. Unfortunately, I had a commitment that evening, and was unable to give a speech, so I’ll write out my thoughts here for all of you to read.

Here is a fun little thought experiment. Would you be yourself if you were born in another location, at another time, to different parents? In this case, would you be yourself if you were born 200 years ago in Germany? Examine yourself and the characteristics by which you define yourself, ask “which of these are not contingent?”. We are products of our time and place. There is no aspect of self-definition which can be removed from this context unless we suppose that our souls pre-exist our earthly incarnations, and this belief is a heresy. So, had Richard Wagner been born to my parents on my birthday, he would be me. In the same way, had I been born to Wagner’s parents, I would be Wagner.

In a similar way, I do not think that Parsifal would be Parsifal if it were written by someone other than Wagner. Take any great work of art, ask yourself: “would this be the same if it were the product of another artist?”. The answer will always be: “no”. Art is self-expression. Parsifal is necessarily an opera by Wagner, because part of what defines Parsifal is that it was a product of Wagner. If it were a product of some

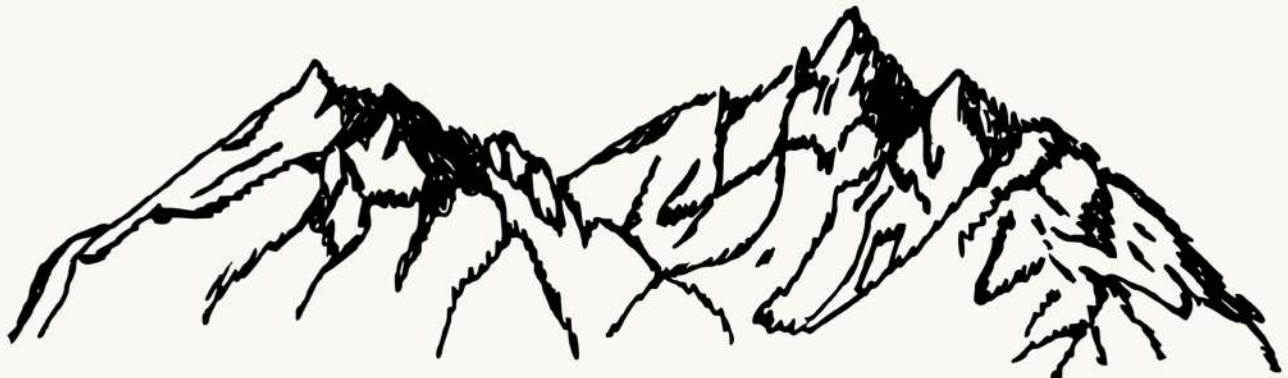
other composer, it would not be Parsifal, but some other work. So, I cannot separate the art from the artist, because a work of art is the product of an artist, and that work of art could not be made by any other artist.

It is fully possible for me to listen to a piece of music without knowing the artist, and there is some meaning which I could derive from it simply because it is composed in a certain way. But I would be unable to completely understand it unless I knew the circumstances in which it was written. For instance, Beethoven’s 9th sounds like any old classical music to most listeners, but at the time it was revolutionary, because composers did not write symphonies with choral parts. Beethoven wrote the choral part to his 9th Symphony in this context, knowing that it would blow the audience away. To not understand this is to not understand the full beauty of Beethoven’s 9th.

Similarly, with Wagner, Parsifal is a cool story set to good music, but I cannot fully understand it unless I immerse myself in the process of it. Parsifal is a product of the nationalistic movement, in which the nations of Europe began defining their national identity. Compositions based on folk tunes became popular. Composers would collect folk tunes and poems that were distinctive to their nation and re-adapt them into all sorts of pieces. Wagner took

Germanic legends and made them into operas, and Parsifal is one of these Germanic legends, an early form of the legend of the Holy Grail which later became a central piece of Anglo-Saxon folklore. So, with this understanding, I am able to appreciate Parsifal for what it is; I attempt to empathize with the listeners for which Wagner composed, and understand more of his intent. In attempting to separate the art from the artist, I deny myself something which is fundamental to that piece of art.

So, we cannot “separate the art from the artist”, because a part of what characterizes a work of art is the artist who made it. The same work of art could not be made by a different artist.



By How Much Can We Blame Our Tight Labor Market on Covid?

Cormac Lynch

The inflationary pressures seen today have been almost entirely attributed to the pandemic (1), whether through surging demand or irresponsible stimulus. It has also been said that the exit from COVID-19 created the conditions for a tighter labor market which have put additional pressure on prices. While the pandemic has definitely affected the nature of work in unconventional ways, labor market trends that existed before 2020 have rebounded as if the pandemic never happened. These are crucial determinants of the labor force and they do not show a significant deviation to suppose influence from the pandemic. If the pandemic had any hand in making the job market what it is today, it is from the firm side of the market.

One basic measure of a competitive labor market would be the ratio of the unemployment level and sum of nonfarm job openings. This shows the availability of workers for every job opening. For example, if there are 3,200 unemployed workers and 1,600 job openings, a ratio of 2.0 would show that there are two available workers for every open position.

(1) Although recently the Russian War with Ukraine has been disruptive to the energy and food markets, which both affect the rest of the economy.

Prior to the pandemic, this ratio was on the decline and has since decreased even further (2). This steep decline and plateau may be attributed to workers choosing to stay home for various reasons, but this can be explained by examining the consistency of other indicators.

The prime age (25-54) participation rate is metric for gauging labor competitiveness. Rather than observing the ratio of jobs to job seekers, here we see how attached those who are most desirable in the job market. Before the pandemic, this participation rate was on the climb and after a steep decline in 2020, it has picked up about the same pace.

There are two measures that I found particularly interesting when thinking about unskilled workers and joblessness. First was the difference in unemployment rates for those with a college degree and higher, and those with less than a high school diploma. Due to the desirability of skilled workers, the unemployment rate for educated workers is always much lower than those (2) A 1:1 ratio (meaning 1 unemployed worker for every open position) was met for the first time in February 2018 and declined to 0.81 in January of 2020. During the pandemic, the ratio shot to 4.9 in April of 2020 and was brought back down to a 1:1 ratio in April of 2021. As of this writing, it currently hangs at 0.54 in September of 2022.

with little education (3). But since record keeping began, the gap between these two rates has been constantly shrinking to extreme lows. The same is true for continued jobless claims. Ranking the number of continued claims since weekly reporting's began in 1989, the lowest ten percent were reported in the last four years and the lowest five percent in this year alone. Both instances seem to be consistent without the influence of COVID.

So, what does all of this tell us about the pandemic's effect on our labor market? As I have described, changes in the labor force seem constant and undisturbed by the past two years. If we think of employers as the supplier of jobs, the tightness we see now is definitely a supply side issue. Since the pandemic there have been a record amount of job openings but few hires. Filling positions in an already competitive job market is a hard and time consuming (4) thing to do, and companies are getting creative in their hiring (5) to keep possible employees interested.

There is little reason to suppose that labor demand is tightening the market. Pointing to a

(3) To put this in perspective, the unemployment rate for those with less than a high school diploma consistently outperforms the aggregate unemployment rate of Detroit Michigan, the poorest city in America.

(4) The time it takes for companies to fill a position is found by dividing the total number of job openings by the total number of hires (a result of 1 means it takes one month to hire someone.) From July of 2020 to September of 2022, that time has jumped from 1.07 to 1.76 months.

(5) To keep anxious job seekers interested in a position, some firms have offered bonus just for showing up for an interview.

heightened number of jobs quits, The Great Resignation was seen as a detachment from the workplace fueled by a mixture of dissatisfaction, better opportunities, and health concerns (6). These changes are notable but have subsided and do not seem to have left an impact. As a result, The Great Resignation has all but been retired.

It is natural to ask if a once in a lifetime pandemic is causing all our immediate problems. Many of the labor market pressures are coming from the firms and their ability to hire while balancing COVID restrictions and rising prices. If nothing else, we need to recognize that not everything has changed because of the pandemic and that whatever characteristics of the labor force have contributed to the tightness we experience now is a holdover from previous years.



(6) Of these quits, a large majority took place during in the service industry. In my opinion, this was driven by a change in their work structure that was unsatisfactory or burdensome to them.



Resolved:

All Populated Territories of the US ought to Become States

Logan Grodsky

In the balmy Caribbean heat of late July, Commanding General Nelson Miles waded ashore at Ponce, thus beginning the American invasion of Puerto Rico. The soaring peak of Cerro Punta in view, General Miles planted the American flag and declared to the Boricuas: “We have not come to make war against the people of a country that has been oppressed, but to bring them protection, promote prosperity, and bring them the blessings of the liberal institutions of our government.” This moment in history has stunning symbolism. Now and then, it marked the beginning of the end of the 400-year Spanish colonial dominion in Puerto Rico, brought about by the arrival of the bright liberal beacon of the world. General Miles’s promise was further significant to the United States, it being a bold statement of the mission of our new American Empire. This was to be a relationship far different from the abuse of the Spaniards, instead one founded on respect, uplifting, and the great principles of the American form of government. This notion is hardly impeccable: it does, in my opinion, play heavily into the racist ideas of a white man’s burden that appeared in most strands of European colonial thought at the time. But it is significant nonetheless that the inaugural statement of the American empire was one which promised protection where there was abuse, prosperity where there was poverty and, yes, democracy where there was tyranny.

A century and a quarter later, I ask this Joint Senate: can you honestly say that we have kept our promise? The answer, very clearly, is that we have not. Just a few years later, the Supreme Court would rule that even if we were to consider the people of our conquered territories as citizens, they still would not necessarily be entitled to the same protections of the Constitution as those citizens residing in the states.

So, where does this leave us now, and why is it so important that we do affirm the resolution in full? First, I believe that at this time the affirmative has firmly established that our evaluation of the resolution is one rooted in obligation and duty, and I will adhere to this framework as I expect all succeeding speakers to do. The duty in question is to guarantee to all people under the flag of the United States a sovereign and democratic form of government. I will, however, build on this framework to offer that the burden of the affirmative is limited to proving that the world of the resolution is better for the pursuit of our obligation than the world of the status quo. In other words, if we can say that it would be better for our five territories to be states, as framed along the principles of self-determination, then you have a responsibility to vote to affirm.



Resolved:

There is Currently Intelligent Life elsewhere in the Universe

Nathaniel Shue




The year was 1977. 10:16 pm one August night. A man by the name of Jerry was pouring over stacks of mind-numbingly boring data: a series of seemingly random characters signifying the strength of deep space radio waves captured by Ohio State's Big Ear telescope. As usual, these were almost all single digit numbers — ones, twos, and threes signifying the least forceful signals, with the occasional six or seven thrown in indicating some sudden burst of energy like radiation shed from dying stars during supernova. But then, amongst this background noise, Jerry noticed something, 6-E-Q-U-J-5. A radio burst so powerful it had to be measured alphabetically, let alone using letters like J and U, which indicated extreme power by virtue of their distance from "a," the beginning of the scale. The duration, power, and frequency of this signal were so unusual that Jerry wrote on the data sheet in bright red ink a single word that would become its name: "Wow!" The Wow! Signal, the likes of which have never been detected since, remains unexplainable by either natural causes or human activities. But it does fit eerily well with the expected characteristics of a message from extraterrestrial intelligence.

Of course, the Wow! Signal isn't conclusive proof that we aren't alone in the universe: it is little more

than a single datapoint in an ocean of relevant factors. But there are, for better or for worse, countless other reasons to reach the same conclusion.

Let's start with the most obvious: the size of the observable universe. In our solar system, consisting of a midlife star of one solar mass, there is one location that we can be reasonably certain bears intelligent life. We might even be able to find life elsewhere without venturing outside our celestial neighborhood: astronomers have speculated that living organisms could exist in the liquid water hidden away beneath the frozen shell of one of Jupiter's moons, although it probably wouldn't meet any of our standards for intelligence. Venture a bit further out, and the Milky Way Galaxy is thought to have between between 100 billion and 400 billion stars, some larger than the sun, some smaller. This is an inconceivably massive number. Even if we take the lowest end of that spectrum, and even if we suppose that only some ridiculously low number of stars could presently host planets hospitable to life, say one ten thousandth of one percent, that would still mean there are 100,000 potential candidates. This is the basic logic behind the famous Drake equation, a set of variables thrown together that seeks to give an estimate of the number of civilizations with which we can communicate in the Milky Way based on a basketful of assumptions. There's no way to objectively fill in that equation, but many reasonable estimates produce results in the thousands.





Conveniently, such speculation is supported by recent scientific observations: according to data gathered by NASA's Kepler space telescope, which was retired in 2018, between 20 and 50 percent of stars in the galaxy could have small planets orbiting close enough to them to have liquid water. And why should life not develop in some of these systems? What, exactly, makes earth so special? By and large, astronomers don't think there's much. The earth, the sun, and the solar system are by most basic metrics fairly unremarkable: moderate in both age and size, created by the death of some long gone star. The idea that earth is a spectacular exception to the cosmic rule is becoming increasingly outdated, if not downright geocentric.

And even if we can't communicate with all the life forms that are out there for one reason or another, as is needed for the Drake equation, why shouldn't some of these systems harbor intelligent life? The laws of evolution and natural selection would still apply in far-off planets, which would almost certainly push life past a microbial state in at least some instances.

That's not even to mention that these little thought experiments have looked only at the stars of our own galaxy. In the universe, there are at least 100 billion galaxies, and possibly as many as two trillion. We can apply our same reasoning from earlier: even if intelligent life exists in only one location in one ten thousandth of one percent of galaxies (a mind-bogglingly low estimation), that means 100,000 such locations are out there. Thus, to assert that life has never developed elsewhere, or occurs so infrequently as to render us the sole intelligent beings of our time, is to ignore overwhelming probability.

I suspect the negation is bound to point out a key counter argument: that we as yet have no evidence of extraterrestrial intelligence. To this, I say two things: first, that the Wow! Signal was a thing, AND second, that there are countless reasons why such civilizations might not be detectable to us. Do you really think that every intelligent life form ever to exist has for instance already killed itself off? Is it not more likely that some of them are at around the same stage of societal development as us, or even that some have found a way to govern themselves without destroying one another? Do you really think that a far more technologically advanced civilization wouldn't find it easy to hide from us if it wanted to? As a species, we still don't understand why physics works the way they do. Who's to say we aren't looking a massive extraterrestrial society in the face, but don't have the tools to even recognize it?

Fundamentally, we aren't that special and the earth isn't that unusual. While we could be alone in the universe, it is overwhelmingly improbable. Although we haven't run into them yet, with the possible exception of the Wow! Signal, alien civilizations are almost certainly tucked away in the distant reaches of the night sky.

Resolved:

The Division of the Roman Empire into East and West was on-net Harmful

Marie Thorn

Friends, Romans, Countrymen, lend me your ears! Today I rise before the Senate to affirm Resolved: the division of the Roman Empire into East and West was on-net harmful. The affirmative will present two contentions; first, the division of the Empire undermined civil-military relations, and second, the division of the Empire destroyed the political unity of the governing elites. Before moving into the contentions, I will present some historical background and framing.

When evaluating historical what-ifs, it is important to remember a few things. To start, history is not deterministic. There is absolutely no reason why the events which happened had to happen. We should not assume that because something happened, it was always going to. Second, it is very easy to get distracted and lose sight of what is being asked. We are not being asked how to save the Roman Empire after the Crisis of the Third Century. We are being asked to analyze the impacts of this action on the Roman Empire and whether it was the correct choice in hindsight. The “correct” choice also need not be possible in a practical sense, and it is oftentimes more important to diagnose why the “correct” choice was not possible when considering a what-if. Therefore, the resolution for tonight does

not ask for the affirmative to outline an alternative action that Diocletian must take but must analyze the cause, effects, and alternatives to his action to show why the split was on net harmful.

So, who exactly was this Diocletian character? And what exactly was the Crisis of the Third Century? To understand these questions, we must go back to the very foundations of the Roman Republic in 244 Ab Urbe Condita. The Republic was built upon complex social and political agreements, but its defining feature was how the military functioned. The military was loyal to the Republic above all else. As time went on, the military became more and more political to the point where Sulla and Marius both marched on Rome and ignited a civil war. The Great Civil Wars between the 1st and 2nd Triumvirates just decades later left the Republic in tatters. When Caesar August assumed control, he was not officially an Emperor but was instead the Principes - or First Man. The first task of Caesar was to restore order to the Empire, and he did this by concentrating the state in his person. Caesar sought to restore the loyalty of the Legions to Rome by tying their loyalty to him to the state. This strategy worked for a time, but the Princeps could not have foreseen the economic catastrophe that would confront the Empire in the 3rd Century. To greatly oversimplify, the Roman economy functioned with a gold-based currency. This worked fine as long as gold



did not leave the economy. As Roman merchants increased trade with India, East Africa, and other places, the amount of gold within the Empire decreased. This caused a massive economic crisis that left the Roman economy in tatters and the Roman state bankrupt. The 3rd Century saw near-constant civil war and regular war as the governing elites sought to piece back together the Empire. Emperor Aurelian would see the territorial integrity of the Empire restored, and Emperor Diocletian would restore the institutions of government.

The reforms of Diocletian are the subject of our debate tonight. Diocletian understood that the breakdown in civil-military relations and the inability of the governing elites to unify behind one leader were issues that needed to be solved immediately. His approach to fixing the problem was to design a system of designated successors and co-emperors. The Empire would be divided into 4, with one Emperor in the East and one in the West, and one heir apparent in the East and West. The tetrarchy would immediately fall apart as the co-emperors would engage in disputes over their powers, and the designated heirs would always seize the opportunity to overthrow the Emperor. This is how Constantine came to power by overthrowing the Emperor in the West and defeating his co-emperor. When examining the reforms of Diocletian is important to understand that he saw the problem with Empire being the succession imperial authority. He failed to see how the institutions of civilian and military control failed. The strength of Rome was that within the Empire, there was peace. Crime was almost nonexistent, and war was confined to the frontiers. Once the people of the Empire saw that the Legions could not defend the border and that they could not travel safely due to banditry, the Empire was doomed. Diocletian's inability to address this fundamental problem would lay the foundation for the Empire's fall.

But how does the split in the Empire play into this, you may ask? This brings us back to the first contention, the relationship between the civilian and military institutions of Rome after Caesar Augustus took power is, as previously described, grounded in the person of the Emperor. The Legions were loyal to their Emperor and, thus, the Roman State. Having two Emperors meant that the military might of Rome was not united into a single state but two individuals. Much like the 2nd Triumvirate, this division of military power and might left the Empire vulnerable. Without a unified military command, the Roman state was vulnerable to attack and susceptible to civil war. It was not uncommon for the eastern provinces to refuse to aid the West in times of crisis, and clashes between the two emperors occurred frequently. The Legion's continued inability to resist invasion meant that the public's confidence in the Empire dwindled, leading to fortification being built around cities within the imperial core. This would be important later as cities would begin to reject imperial authority. Further, the legion's inability to disarm German tribes as they crossed the border meant that large and armed populations began to exist within the Empire, which lived according to their own rules. The Foederati as they were known were effectively ungovernable, and it would be these kingdoms within kingdoms that would overthrow the Western Emperor in 1,229 Ab Urbe Condita.

This brings us to the second contention and the breakdown of a unified political ruling class. The Republic had always struggled to keep the patrician and plebian classes unified. This was achieved by designing a political system that rewarded participation and had its own form of checks and balances. Caesar Augustus, while mostly abolishing the Republican government, found new ways to keep the various classes unified, mainly by promoting economic

stability and providing opportunities for advancement in the Roman state. Following the 3rd Century, this system broke down forever. The ruling classes were not only even more distant from those whom they governed but also were themselves not unified. The political divisions between the East and West grew over time as the East saw the West as a deadweight. Diocletian, instead of unifying these political blocks, permanently divided them.

When taken together, these contentions lead to only one conclusion. The only correct decision for Diocletian to make in the 3rd Century was to recentralize the Empire. This recentralization, however, does not mean making the Emperor more powerful but restoring the Senate and provincial governments to working order and reasserting control over the Legions and Praetorians. The Empire had always had the resources to succeed; what it lacked was the institutional capacity to do so.

To conclude, the decision to split the Empire into East and West was on net harmful not only for the reasons given above but also because when the Empire did, in fact, fall, and it did so in a piecemeal fashion. I wish to remind the Senate that it is not enough for the negation to argue that because historical events happened, we must negate. They must show that the decision to split the Empire was on net good or even on net neutral. If the negation refuses to engage with the substance of today's debate, you must affirm.



Obelisk

Ryan Kalo

I stand before you desperate
Book in hand with incantations
From faraway, distant lands
I stand amongst the dead tonight
To let them know my last rites
As I stare into unknown eyes
Waiting for the words to leave
My mouth. To hear my plight.

I stand as I watch the obelisk
Before me fracture with white
Light looking back into mine
I know those eyes aren't right
But I keep looking deeper I need
This. I can't run away with fright

I stare as my words materialize
The figure before me approaches
With eyes burning bright ready to
Give every last delight but I know
That amongst all the riches of the
World, he could never make me
Someone who didn't have to find
Happiness in the depths of night





WHITE

& BLUE