

He who would spend his days in silence,

And his nights in tears.

All of them who’d stop,

And lend him their ear.

**About the Author**

One of the points emphasized to college professors over the past decade was to help strengthen students’ critical thinking skills.

No problem honing Nicolas Browning’s skills in that area. But “hone” is not the proper word – whatever that word is, he would know it…

*Hone seems just fine to me.*

Strong opinions combined with a thesaurus-like vocabulary make Mr. Browning’s rants come alive for the reader. Whether it was journalism or creative writing, Nicolas proved time and time again to be quick with the wit and quick with the proper word choice. As you will see in his series of opinion pieces, he could certainly have a future as a newspaper columnist. One might agree with him; one might not agree with him; however, one will be challenged to think after reading the prose of Nicolas Browning.

Freedom and justice…education and imperialism…infinity and perception…the essays within this body of work should make you smile at times, frown at times, but above all, think at times. Welcome to the thoughtful world of Nicolas Browning.

-Ned Johnson, Part-time Writer & Full-time Professor

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# The Imitations

While much greater authors would likely hide their greater ideas within well-constructed high fantasy epics, it has been brought to the attention of the author for the sake of “being fun and interesting” to pen “a series of rants based on personal philosophies.” Due to the conceivable roadblocks in the case of the former and the limited supply of patience found in a man, the latter has been selected for this project. The contents of this coming project will be written literally and blatantly. Rants segmented into topics detailing the virtuous and logical conclusions to arguments as they are seen by the idiot writing the rant. With that said, it pays to address that while the phrasing of these philosophies are to be inspired by the likes of Aristotle or Sun Tzu, the writer makes no claim to rise to such levels. These are self-aware imitations, not ignorant attempts to act pompous. The stated views will be flawed and on topics of or adjacent to politics, religion, faith, freedom, law, conquest, morality, authority, objective intelligence, and sex. They who are omniscient on one or all of said topics, to the point of being immovable in their perspective, are politely asked to use some different work when learning to read.

# Golden Foundation

Every Abrahamic religion and eastern philosophy share a single fundamental lesson. Within Judaism this is “*Love your neighbor as yourself.”* Within Hinduism this is “*One should never do that to another which one regards as injurious to one’s own self.”* And to the modern thinker this can be understood as “Treat others how you’d like to be treated.” or “Don’t shovel shit into the mouths of people unless you’re ready to eat that shit tenfold.”

In a sense, this is a form of karmic justice, but as an individual will find it works in real time. Be angry with people and they’ll get angry with you, same goes with calm, happy, sad, and serious. The world is as we make it, tell the truth and less liars will surround you, don’t expect respect if your ego tramples your empathy. If you wish to live, don’t threaten the life of your fellow man.

As common sense as this may seem to the considerate, it takes only one long cynical look at the world to see the greed and selfishness that has consumed culture. Rather than write an ideal fiction they will demand yours change. Fat corporations will dictate your health. The ignorant will parade and yell to strangers, disturbing any peace, making themselves hated within their community in pursuit of adoration.

Within cases of mob mentalities every member of a crowd is an unwilling leader, each setting an example for the whole. If you lend your voice to a movement of hatred out of fear of being hated then that hatred only grows. If you stand in stark defiance, choose sense over inclusion, at worst you will be shunned by this mob of strangers, at best you will see the conquest of reason.

It also should be stated, the golden rule does not change with intention. If the intention was liberty and the result, tyranny, then you’ve been fooled. The same movement that dethroned Tsar Nicholas II for his selfishness and ignorance put Lenin in charge. In the process of fighting tyranny they made fear, stole funds, rigged elections, became tyrants and liberty was lost. *From man to pig, it was impossible to tell which was which.* Demanding a slave beat their master isn’t equality, demanding they beat each other will leave both bruised.

# The Concept of Freedom

Now that the way an individual should treat the world has been considered, we must in turn consider how the world should treat an individual.

Within a society two forces are at conflict: order and freedom. Freedom, in its ideal form, is the inalienable right to live as an individual wishes. Order, as well some other things, is the promise of a governing body to protect its citizens from the immoral wishes of individuals. Freedom with too little order is chaos, order with too little freedom is dystopia. It is both a requirement and responsibility of society to constantly seek a balance between these two states as a loss of balance will always result in mass human suffering.

Within these definitions is the origin of “*your rights end where mine begin*”, therefore; logic sequences can be imagined. It is within the freedoms of an individual to keep and bear arms, it is within the freedoms of an individual to live in peace (without being shot), it is within the freedoms of an individual to express excessive force in the event a human life is unjustly threatened, and finally it is within the freedoms of a governing body to legislate what constitutes unjust threat to human life.

In the event an individual threatens the freedoms of another individual the threatening individual forfeits their own personal rights proportional to the threat made. If an individual or group of individuals move to revoke the freedom of speech from another individual or group of individuals, they forfeit their own right to speak. If an individual moves to impair the sexual freedoms of another individual, they forfeit their own sexual freedoms in the sense of castration and long-term imprisonment. If an individual or group of individuals move to impede the right to live, that individual or group of individuals forfeits their own right to live. Impeding the right to live ought to be defined as both the denial of life (Murder) and the denial of the free development of an individual (Pedophilia).

An individual is defined as any human regardless of age, health, or sex. All living thinking adults are to be held to the same standards as madmen don’t deserve an escape from justice. Those except from normal legal proceedings are the dead, as they can’t defend themselves or dispute property, minors, as the immoral actions of a developing individual are a result of circumstance rather than choice, and those otherwise incapacitated where they are effectively dead. In the case of minors, all adults with significant influence who could have prevented crime with proper counseling should be considered accomplices. No matter how high up on family trees or public education bureaucratic ladders.

In the case of the unborn individual, the governing body must legislate the moment a mass of chemicals becomes an individual under the eyes of society. It is the responsibility of the involved parents to decide their own capacity to invest the required resources into the development of an individual, both financial and emotional. In the event it is decided said resources are inadequate for the child, the involved parents should be free to choose an orderly termination of the chemicals prior to their formation into an individual.

# In the Pursuit of Justice

For justice to occur all cases must be entered with the understanding everyone is *innocent until proven guilty*. Baseless accusations are the clearest indications of ill intent. Baseless accusations of terrible crimes warrant the reversal of punishments if ill intent can be proven, as an attempt on the freedoms of an individual does not change with the medium of the attack.

A trial should be judged by a group of educated, responsible individuals of sound mind and moral compass. These judges should be counted in odd numbers starting at five, increasing with the complexity of the case never exceeding fifteen. These judges should have no personal stakes in the result of the case in any sense. An individual may become a judge after rigorous examination as legislated by a governing body as those who are ignorant of the complexities of the world are incapable of sound conclusion. In cases where a judge attempts to interfere in legal proceedings they will be considered an accomplice to the accused or a false accuser depending on the side taken. This is one of many scenarios that will result in new judges being called and the number of judges increased.

When dispensing punishment to those convicted it is important to remember the very conception of justice in the *Code of Hammurabi*. While an *eye for an eye* may be archaic to a progressed culture, punishment proportional to crime is vital to proper justice. Imprisonment should only be considered when the convicted poses an imminent threat to the freedoms of society at large. Convictions of first-time destructive incompetence which resulted in injury or damage to property are to be punished financially as to deter similar mistakes in the future. Repeat offences of destructive incompetence will result in imprisonment for reason of public safety.

Cases of intentional murder or pedophilia upon conviction warrant capital punishment. Crimes such as these are culminations of troubled, disgusting lives that no amount of reprimand can change. Individuals caught in these acts will only try harder not to be caught next time upon release, this eliminates the idea of less-than-permanent punishments. Punishments of life in prison are immoral to the individual and financially harmful to the society which now must float the bill of keeping a life-long prisoner alive. Capital punishment, when applied correctly, will save more lives than it takes.

Long-term imprisonment has given way to the most disgusting evils of modern society. Life-long prisoners are people who get used to prison life, once they serve their sentence they can’t function in civilian life and would rather go back to jail than make the adjustment. Jails want this since for-profit prisons use prisoners as cheap labor and use the funds to lobby legislation that will ensure the continued expansion of this evil. Long-term imprisonment has given way to modern slavery and is not justice.

# Misconceptions on Human Perception

Few phrases are as ignorant as *“I’ll believe it when I see it.”* If an individual truly only believed what they saw the majority of reality is lost. History, astronomy, a large swath of physics, suddenly become completely untrustworthy. Dreams, hallucinations, and well-constructed or bias confirming works of fiction, become grounds for conclusion.

The most complex computer a contemporary creature can own is the human brain. Every tool more complex than a cudgel can break and misfire; yet some individuals still look to the supernatural for explanations of the absurd. Some are obvious, a known drunkard waking up in the woods outside town likely isn’t evidence interstellar travel has been achieved by some extraterrestrial visitor. Others are not so obvious however, such as the mind’s subtle increased awareness during a fear response to find any excuse to flee from old, poorly lit, prisons or hospitals.

It could be considered to go as far as to conclude the human race is much more susceptible to spontaneous hallucination rather than the existence of an alternate plane of reality where the dead speak. In order to support this hypothesis, the writer would like a brief transition to the first person to better illustrate a lived experience.

Ever since I could remember, in moments of boredom and silence, I’ve experienced a phenomenon I’ve come to consider: *Chronological Contraction* or *Chronal Dilation*. Everything feels like I’m going too fast, rushing through actions. I become hyper-aware of auditory stimulus; clocks are louder and faster. Things like my walk or the tapping of my feet feel like it's sped up. My breathing gets out of synch as I struggle and over-compensate to regain a sense of a normal rhythm. Everything that happens is completely calm but done with a racing panic. The episodes don’t last long as I’ve discovered watching TV or playing video games seem to snap me out of it.

No diagnosed condition on the internet accurately describes this feeling but message boards confirm I’m not the only one that feels this way. I know it's all in my head because when I check a clock afterwards it will turn out that it only lasts about 5-10 minutes rather than a whole hour going by in a minute. It's just my perception, the outside world doesn’t change.

In that case, if some individuals experience patterns of temporal hallucinations, it isn’t far-fetched that other individuals experience other, more convincing, sensory hallucinations. People who have been convinced they are some breed of psychic medium could be suffering from an undiagnosed neurological disorder similar to Chronal Dilation.

# The Unmoving Mover

Aristotle’s theory of the unmoving mover is the foundation for all creation myths of all religions and parallels the big bang. The starting point is everything that moves was set in motion by something else. Triremes wouldn’t just appear in the middle of the Mediterranean, they would need an engineer to design it, a sponsor to pay for it, and a crew of dock hands to build it.

This is a simple deduction. It doesn’t take a Holmesian detective to say “I am in immediate danger” when surrounded by still-twitching human corpses. Theoretically, deductions such as these can be followed back to speculative, pre-historical events. A thinker can track why things move, and what moved them, until the genesis of life or the birth of the universe. But before that, what happened? What caused this ‘beginning’? And what caused *it*? That is the problem.

Keep in mind the time of Aristotle, a time before Abrahamic religion or contemporary sciences. There was no accepted myth or theory on the formation of reality. There was a pantheon of deities, but even they were vulnerable to this chain; Zeus was fathered by Cronus, Cronus was fathered by Uranus, Uranus was born from Gaia, and so on and so on. Logic demands a beginning, but reality is seemingly infinite in all directions, including time. If past events continue on forever, then there is no beginning; if there is no beginning, then logic fails.

To avoid the rapid onset of existential dread that comes with thoughts such as these, comes the titular unmoving mover. A single entity or event that without being influenced by the nothing before it, knocked over the first metaphorical domino. Either an omnipotent creator who consciously forged reality or an unconscious planar accident. Both potential unmoving movers are artificial placements to rationalize the illogical infinity of time. A quick skip to an end we assume should be there but is not.

Let it be stated that at the beginning of this rant the author sincerely believed this theory made sense but upon further contemplation has found the unmoving mover to be impossible. No different from the idea of a highest number or furthest heaven. Such as the nature of infinity, with sufficient resources another step can *always* be taken. To compare all of creation to a boat; to compare G-d to a carpenter!

The basis of deism and the philosophy of the unmoving mover requires just as much faith as any other. It isn’t a logical theology at all! Aristotle would slap a thin curtain over the incomprehensible aspects of reality just to avoid the unavoidable question, “Who made the unmoving mover?” So, what then? Either G-d must answer for his origins, or the cause of the big bang must be investigated. Simple answers of “Nowhere” or “Nothing” are impossible and illogical. Therefore, existence is by nature, incomprehensible.

# The Three Responsibilities

An individual has three responsibilities. G-d given responsibilities within a similar vein to G-d given freedoms. If a single one of the three are failed, all three are failed and the world is worse off.

The first of the three is to the self. The maintaining of physical and mental fitness. The practice of rational and effective personal hygiene. Physical fitness being the regular development of muscle and reduction of fat. Mental fitness being the regular study of genuinely interesting topics and engagement of personal hobbies. The having of a humble and varied diet utilizing all available food groups.

The second of the three is to the family. The acknowledging, attendance, and organizing of significant life events such as holidays, weddings, and funerals. The aiding of family members in the fulfillment of responsibilities and when they need help most. The providing of resources for members of one's household in the way of financial or household hygiene or some other utility when able.

The third of the three is to society. To treat strangers with a neutral respect due to every stranger posing potential threat or kindness. To utilize community resources not in excess and to give back resources when able. To act in favor of global hygiene in every way available. To be educated in the way of politics well enough to vote in both major and minor elections and decisions. When voting, to vote in accordance with favor for the subject rather than against another subject. Voting in favor of a subject which the voter does not explicitly support the content of is to be considered a failure of the societal responsibility.

To allow the degradation of the self is to be considered a failure of the personal responsibility. If the personal responsibility is failed, the individual will find themselves hindered from the fulfillment of the other two responsibilities and further burdening either their family or society in the process. To neglect the needs of loved ones is to be considered a failure of the familial responsibility. If the family is neglected, they will be less likely to offer effective aid in times of need, thus damning an individual to failure. To act against the common good of the local or national community is to be considered a failure of the societal responsibility. If the quality of life within a society worsens, the quality of life for both the family and self worsens.

The failure of the responsibilities will be found to be the root of the majority of the world's unnatural ills. A culture of flawed personnel fitness leads to rises in obesity and depression. A loss in familial ties drives individuals to find family in strangers, leading to the increased presence of extremist groups and radical ideas. And finally, the erosion of societal good will ultimately lead to the fall of a nation.

# On the Topic of Conquest

Throughout human history conquerors have come and gone. While the earth is too large and diverse for a single force to control it all, numerous factions have held considerable portions of the world under a single banner for great lengths of time.

Rippling definers of culture such as the European colonial empires, the Islamic caliphates, the Chinese dynasties; or textbook legends like Genghis Khan, Julius Caesar, or Alexander the Great. None wholly good or evil. For thousands of years these intentions were regular and global, until relatively recently when the world flipped. Declarations of independence, revolutionary wars against ruling empires, and through that a growing blatant hatred of imperialistic practice.

Terry Pratchett once compared humanity to “*The falling angel meets the rising ape*.” Conquests of rivals and foreign territories are natural events for the rising ape. A leader is obligated to act in the best interest of those they lead. If a of group animals is hungry and another group has an excess of food, then the hungry group must attempt to take the food to survive; diplomacy from either side will be optional. Hindsight through the lens of biased moralities is from the falling angel. “*Was this right?*” the angel asks.

Perhaps the best example of the change could be found in the non-colonial western empires. The longest lasting of which being the Roman Empire, which lasted in some form for two thousand years. The last iteration of the Roman Empire was the Holy Roman Empire known in Germany as the *first reich*. The following two reichs would last a combined twenty-two years with the third being the shorter and most infamous of the two.

That’s quite the elephant to discuss, Nazi Germany. A governmental mutt of socialism, nationalism, and authoritarian dictatorship. It’s a dangerous game to play devil's advocate with Nazism, which is why only one question will be posed before moving on: “Why is it universally hated?” The idea of the government taking the property of citizens to be redistributed among the population is increasingly popular, so it isn’t socialism. Prioritizing your own nation over others is inherently neutral. Only the ignorant would argue selfishness to the aforementioned apes, so it isn’t nationalism. One party states are more closely related to communistic governments, and you don’t see that same level of condemnation to Cuba, Vietnam, or Lao from the global crowds. Therefore, authoritarianism can’t even damn a nation in that same way.

That real sin was antisemitic fueled systematic genocide. Using governmental power to kill people under your own control with the efficiency of industry left an unignorable stain on Germany. Subjugating an ethnic minority to slavery is a widespread crime and arguably worse, but the treatment of the Jews during the Holocaust is what made Adolf Hitler’s name synonymous to evil. Gassing, burning, and dumping, as though your fellow man is livestock.

But if humanity hates genocidal authoritarian national socialists so much what is China? How can Disney film Mulan on top of the ashes Uyghurs killed in the exact same way by the communist party? How could anyone live knowing an ethnic minority is being *cleansed* by a world power and not care? Why isn’t the biggest humanitarian crisis of the twenty-first century not even discussed? We fallen angels are blind to the rising apes.

# A way into Aesthetic

Aesthetics are the ongoing philosophical arguments pertaining to the nature of beauty. While implicit biases demand opinion-based observations to be subjective to some extent, subjectivity in this context does not demand anything is beautiful.

The subjective idea of aesthetic gave way to the nonsensical and careless modern art movement and the effortless and random postmodern art movement. With these movements traditional visual art died. The current culture around art is that “*If others call it art, then I will call it art as well.*” Contemporary art installations have reached the point where men tape fruit to walls and charge admission. Perhaps this is beautiful to the cynic, but to a passing layman contemporary art is confusing, idiotic, and worst of all, ugly.

To tie beauty to an individual’s ego is foolish, and to do this with the subjective idea of aesthetics will lead only to lies or offence. Those who’d fear the destruction of another’s ego will lie and those who value truth will come off as callus and mean. The acknowledgement of obesity, however rude, is ultimately a neutral statement and the declaration of fat does not influence a perceived quality of character. Ills of body weight and fragile egos are often intertwined and must be solved together.

# Opposing Ignorance

The topic of education is a broad and multifaceted one. The natural state of all that lives is to be born into ignorance. Some creatures have developed a Darwinistic instinct, like baby turtles racing into the ocean, humanity has no such luxury. We rely on others to relay learned information to us: language, compassion, history, and all other unseen aspects of reality. Due to this reliance, our information is only as good as our sources. Languages die if they aren’t spoken, compassion can be contorted and immoral, history can be misrepresented. Too many people are ignorant. Education has failed too many.

When thinking on education, stupidity must be addressed; and how stupidity is different from ignorance. Ignorance is a neutral state, the subject does not have all the information. Stupidity is a negative state, the subject is armed with all the information and actively chooses to do wrong. If a student is demanded to learn and memorize a subject within an hour using a select belt of resources and cannot, **then the parameters are wrong, *not the student***. The resources (including the instructor most of all) are flawed, the allotted time is too short, and the ability to measure information retention is flawed.

To best educate people without sacrificing mental health to the point of fabricating a suicide epidemic (such is the case with the current system), public education *MUST* be abolished. It is understood this will be the single most radical view expressed in these rants. The current system of education is a complete failure in every way. Public schools and higher education preach they are essential for the success of *EVERYONE*. Not only is this untrue, but it is unfounded. Artists are widely self-taught, trade schools operate almost independently from the rest of education, jobs hire based on family ties and networking, and athletic talent will rise to the top regardless of other factors. Schools are a detriment to the social development of children in ways of bullying and school shootings. Even in terms of higher education, college diplomas are next to worthless when considering the debt that they cost.

The modern learner will find more success in self-teaching by way of the library of Alexandria that sits in each of our pockets, containing all of recorded human knowledge in some form. self-teaching has fewer roadblocks in motivation as it inherently is on subjects which the individual wishes to learn in. Informal lessons do not impose ridiculous parameters in which the student must prove their ability to an instructor but instead focuses completely on immersion into a topic, another failing in the current system. The sole failing in self-teaching is that there is no one to hold you to goals which theoretically could lead to true apathy and procrastination. This is because self-teaching relies on *wants* rather than *needs* such as public education. Faux procrastination such as that in public education stems from the reality that if you demand ten apples from the subject under threat of punishment, they will not give you eleven. The general apathy found of course comes from the forced nature of schooling as well.

The current public education system is also fundamentally flawed in its ability to simply omit key information when it comes to major political issues. In no better place can this be found than American history. It is well and good to spend some time on the civil rights era; however, bias will be found in not knowing the republican party was founded with the goal to abolish slavery. Bias will be found in the lie that the parties swapped stances on racism. Bias will be found in not knowing that in every presidential election between the civil war and the Civil Rights Act the post-confederate states were *blue*, in every year voter intimidation took place. Bias will be found in someone voting because they were told they had to because of their skin or hating somebody because they were told people that looked like them hurt their forefathers. Bias will be found in not understanding that “*If you vote we’ll hurt you*” and “*If you vote against us, you’ll be hurt*” are the same statement. Ignorance is echoed every time a republican is called a racist due to any of the above. Upon his signing of the civil rights act of 1964, Lyndon B. Johnson, the sitting president and lifelong democrat remarked, “*...I think we just delivered the south to the republican party for a long time to come.*” This systematic political game was surprisingly easy to deconstruct. The current school system is wholly politically motivated and knows no sense of altruism.

The solution to abolishment of public schools and “higher education” does not come from legal doctrine, rather, *blatant refusal*. Home school your children, teach independently from schools; remove the citizens from this machine and watch it decay. People are the blood of this monster and if it bleeds...

# Thoughts on thinking

What an absurd mutation self-consciousness is! What need does an animal have to know it exists? What evolutionary purpose is served in questioning the creation of reality? So many wants come to mind shot dead by a mix of empathy and fear. No one wants to read something terrible so nothing should be written if it results in terrible writing. This feedback loop error in the programming of this human mind has killed the potential greatness of unborn fictions.

It isn’t instinct but a result of learned responses. A child slaps their palm to fire and is burned; the child learns not to touch fire. From then on everything touched can burn. After so many burns the child keeps their hands to themselves and that chance isn’t taken. How many times do you expect a child to trust you when you tell them the fire isn’t *that* cold? Introducing yourself gets you bullied. Making things results in being ignored at best and mocked at worse. Life is disappointments and the bliss between them.

How is it that ignorance morphs perception like this? It isn’t an opinion to say raising the minimum wage will increase average salary it is an objectively wrong statement. It cannot be mandated to increase the allocations of funds by a business for its employees. If employees become more expensive, unemployment will increase, and average salary will remain unchanged. To see minimum wage increase without any other ideas proposed (such as a mandate on minimum positions available for a business) is a testament to how many people refuse to think on complex issues.

The further muddied the line between objective and subjective gets, the more damage to a community will occur. Democracy is inherently moral is another objective falsehood that many low information individuals have the “opinion” of. Socrates was put to death via popular vote after being accused of being an atheist. Athenian democracy or direct democracy is malleable to the extent of being dangerous to anyone outside the majority. A constitutional republic is objectively the fairest system of government, including the electoral college, the world has had, and you still have ignorant democrats (the philosophy, not the party) calling for a rule of the majority.

Politics only has sway over the mind of the average citizen if they choose to think about it. Such broad topics will matter little if one chose to drop out of society. Return to nature; deal only with the land of thinkers to claim a sufficient amount of land. To be alone with nothing but your own thoughts is a punishment I’ve endured for too long. Maybe that's enough thinking for one day.

# On Sleep

Why must a creature rest? The simple answer is something could only run or swim for so long but that's not true fully. Aquatic life may rest, slowly drifting through the water after frantically and narrowly escaping danger. This sleeping would be closer to meditation if it wasn’t for the inarguable stupidity of most fish.

And what of humanity? Surely if exertion was the sole cause for fatigue then a day of sitting and typing wouldn’t leave a man equally exhausted to an active one. There is little to be done to effectively escape the grasp sleep has on a full third of our lives. The inverse is more observable it seems, when there is nothing to do the body takes the opportunity to sleep.

Thus brings the subject of a new theory on sleep, centered around dreams. It is widely proposed dreams occur within a two-hour window of rapid-eye-movement (REM) sleep, last for five to twenty minutes, and are rarely even committed to memory. This way of thinking would restructure such notions to better rationalize the fact dreams are a universally experienced, especially evolved phenomena.

The states of waking and sleeping are a fluid gradient rather than a static binary. Recognize the transitional phases and their phenomena such as sleeping with open eyes or sleep paralysis. Also recognize the peak phases such as rem sleep and the healthy active hours approximately three hours away from falling in or out of sleep.

In addition to this restructuring of the perception of the sleep cycle it would be suggested that just as the thinking process is uninterrupted in waking the same would be in sleep. *As above, so below* and so forth. The mind takes a moment to process and recreate the waking experience. The subconscious tests the conscious mind so we may learn about ourselves and build our faulty perceptions of reality.

While the process is forgotten in its entirety by morning its results remain. We may feel like we know people, places, or things just from stories but that is because we experience those stories, to an extent, within our dreams. This would naturally extend to nightmares as well. Reinforcing fears and prejudices resulting in phobias and retribution in the waking world.

Of course this all baseless speculation perhaps sleep **is** simply the single uniform aspect of biology that *just is* and on top of that dreams are completely random and mean nothing.

# The Sword of Damocles

Twenty-five centuries ago, there was a king. King Dionysius was a miserable man with fame and power and wealth.

A boy named Damocles came to Dionysius, “O what bliss the life of a lord must be!” remarked this boy. This did not cheer the king. “If such a life would please you, a day in the life of a lord you will have.” Damocles excitedly accepted the generous offer.

The boy was seated on a golden lounge tucked with the finest fabrics in the most ornate of rooms. Damocles gorged on sweet breads and hardy steaks. The most pleasant perfumes filled his nose, unaware that Dionysius set a longsword on a string high from the rafters. “What is this?” King Damocles asked upon noticing the danger. “That edge is fit to cleave ten men!”

“The sword that sits above all leaders my Lord.” answered Dionysius. “Only the wisest and most fair rulers may escape its sting.” The cotton fibers spun and stretched against the weight of the weapon.

“Surely you jest! I am but a child! This blade has no place over my head!” shouted Damocles, now panicked. Almost in reply, the indifferent string let some threads snap.

King Damocles threw away his grains and blankets, sprang from the most comforting of cushions. Alas the boy only made two steps. In his haste he jostled the beams of the room. The sword shifted in the air and fell in a spin. Its hilt sank and bounced from a pillow before fitting the blade snuggly within Damocles’ lung. Tripping backward, the fool plunged his killer through him, broad to guard. Wise and miserable King Dionysius retrieved his crown and blade and returned each to his own head.

The tale of the Sword of Damocles is widely attributed to Cicero. Cicero would find the lesson in “*There can be no happiness for one who is under constant apprehensions.*” Almost suggesting Dionysius is foolish for not enjoying life and focusing only on possibilities of pain.

This version has been tweaked to better illustrate the lesson more seldom taught. Politics is a thin line between prosperity and peril. Only in calm, decisive, and conservative movements can danger be sidestepped. Too drastic of measures tend to backfire and worsen the problems they intend to solve. Only the implementation of practical wisdom executed with efficiency will contemporary issues be solved.

Just as fools will die by the Sword of Damocles, tyrants who kill children will fall on their own blade.

# Epilogue

Thus concludes the project of penning the beliefs of a very opinionated man who does not often enough discuss the intricacies of existence within the confines of everyday reclusion. Perhaps this philosophy will be kept as a ruleset for the life of this man or released for all who are willing to learn and debate. Perhaps these rants will be forgotten or purposely hidden, never again to be read by living eyes. Contemporary culture is too loose, there are no true modern movements of philosophy. The twenty-first century is the precipice of either a new renaissance of freedom and technology or the beginning of a great bright dark age where humanity falls to new sins and old ideas. If an authoritarian regime rose to challenge the freest nation on earth under the guise of “*more freedom, more equality*”, would enlightenment thought return to reject the ghost of dead tyrants? If a society stops writing and contrasting its views, how far may it stray? I fear for the day I lose my right to think for myself because too many pets prefer to be told what to do.