

The Daily Dada

—Poetry Is News That Stays News—



Coming to
your town...

Misleading headline

Bouvard Pécuchet
Staff Reportrer

Writing in *On Earth*, about Whitman, Creeley says: "Was it all phantasmagoria? Who was finally there? The roll and turn of the physical waves, their ceaseless repetition, the seeming return of each so particular, the same and yet not the same—this is the 'call,' recall (*recoil*), he has come to, an indeterminate spill of memories 'By any grand ideal tried, intentionless, the whole a nothing.' But one hopes to have been included even so, to have mattered, taken place, been part of *done*—as one says in this utterly merciless country—*something*."

Interior modification form

Richard Denner
Editor-in-Chief

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Continued on back



THE DAILY DADA

Richard Denner

dPress ☼ **2022** ☼ **Ellensburg**

///NEWS FLASH/// CANCEL CULTURE AT CWU

Bouvard Pécuchet interviews Jampa Dorje

BOUVARD: What's going on?

JAMPA: I had a confusing classroom experience. We were doing an exercise called “four corners” where there were four areas of the room designated: *Agree*, *Strongly Agree*, *Disagree*, and *Strongly Disagree*, and we were asked by Professor Nuckols to take a stand. The question posed: “Has cancel culture gone too far and begun to restrict free speech and free thought?” We had been assigned to read the July 7, 2020, Harper Magazine article, “A Letter on Justice and Open Debate” by Atul Gawande, signed by a bevy of public intellectuals, and we had just finished discussing John Stuart Mill’s essay, “On Liberty,” where the author writes on the benefits of personal freedom for both the individual and society. The Harper “Letter” begins:

Our cultural institutions are facing a moment of trial. Powerful protests for racial and social justice are leading to overdue demands for police reform, along with wider calls for greater equality and inclusion across our society, not least in higher education, journalism, philanthropy, and the arts. But this needed reckoning has also intensified a new set of moral attitudes and political commitments that tend to weaken our norms of open debate and toleration of differences in favor of ideological conformity. As we applaud the first development, we also raise our voices against the second.

These are broad, sweeping claims, and the tropes are recognizable from standard news clippings. A large majority

of the class located themselves in the Agree and Strongly Agree areas of the room. I took the Disagree position with four men. Our group spoke first. I waited and listened, and then I supported them in their arguments. I had not looked at the question on the board, and I thought I was taking a moderate stand in favor of cancel culture as being an understandable position for people that had no voice to address grievances concerning disreputable behavior by citizens who are able to avoid the consequences of their words and actions, but that many less fortunate individuals suffer irreparable devastation to their careers and reputations.

BOUVARD: Was this your true belief or were you just playing devil's advocate?

JAMPA: I was being an underdog. During an earlier discussion in class, I had mentioned that ostracism was a fundamental part of the democracy. I had read about *homo sacer* in Giorgio Agamben's book, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford University Press, 1998) where he relates how a tyrant, or any powerful person, could be ostracized and banned from society by early Roman Law. Such a person, living outside of society and at the mercy of the gods, could be killed but not used in a sacrificial ritual. In a Wikipedia essay ("Ostracism"), I read that 5th c. Athenians voted once a year to ban an unwanted citizen for a period of ten years. So, it appeared to me that cancel culture is built into the democratic process.

BOUVARD: How did this go over?

JAMPA: Two men on my side moved to the Strongly Disagree area, one man on our side of the room joined the other side, and a man, who had earlier made the comment that *The Declaration of Independence* was a big cancel of English culture, came and stood next to me. I was unsure of what was going on.

BOUVARD: Why?

JAMPA: Like I said, I had not read the question and thought I was answering John Stuart Mill's position that free speech was good for the individual and the body politic, and that this was in line with cancel culture because it was part of the process, even though tabloid journalism with its sensational claims and social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter have amplified the range and immediacy of the ostracism.

BOUVARD: What happened next?

JAMPA: Another man, on the Strongly Agree (that cancel culture prevents free speech and has gone too far) side, gave a coherent argument backed up by a personal story about being "cancelled" due to an essay he had written on feminism, even after he had made corrections to his comments. A restraining order had been filed by someone who took offence at his opinion, and he was contacted by the campus police. It seemed strange to me that there would be this much fuss over a term paper. Even though he had suffered an indignity, he still held the opinion that cancel culture has merits, such as bringing a form of comeuppance to powerful individuals who have biases that are demeaning to people of color and gender and disability, but that extreme ideological stances taken by those on the right and the left of the political spectrum can stymie the search for truth.

BOUVARD: I saw a riff from Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophica* on Facebook that runs: "Facts are information minus emotion; opinions are information plus experience; ignorance is opinion minus information; and stupidity is opinion minus facts.

JAMPA: Be that as it may, at this point, I was standing pretty much alone. Our class came to an end, and I didn't have the opportunity to say that I stood with Jesus, Buddha, and Socrates—each of whom had totally cancelled their entire culture. I wanted to say that everyone in the room had bought into the "American Dream" and that this dream is based upon material gain and self-aggrandizement with goal-oriented motivations that lead us to believe in a reality that is an illusion and a selfhood that is oriented toward objects and relationships that are by their very nature impermanent. This condition of clinging and desire produce a sense of false security and is the cause of our anxiety and suffering. Jesus taught love, but he wrathfully drove the moneychangers from the temple. Buddha taught compassion and the bliss-emptiness of phenomena. Socrates undermined the epistemological

foundations of thought and revealed that most people haven't the slightest understanding of what they are talking about. I might have included Spinoza. He cancelled his contemporaries' belief systems. The Jews called him an atheist; the Christians, a pantheist; and the skeptics insisted he was a Deist. No one was happy with his concept of God imbedded in everything and his geometric proofs of the moral universe. So be it. He just wanted the freedom to think without being told what to think and to be let alone with his nose to his grindstone polishing his lenses.

BOUVARD: Amen.

Recipe for a Dadaist news article:

- Take a newspaper.
- Take a pair of scissors.
- Choose an article as long as you are planning to make your story.
- Cut out the article.

Then cut out each of the words that make up this article and put them in a bag. Shake gently. Next, take out each cutting one after the other and paste them down in lines.

Cookery

*Jheragonia of Lesbos
Food Writer*

Salmon data casserole

blueback salmon, entire lives in ready to migrate as kokanee, do not during spawning. primarily of populations, the Northern Sockeye kokanee salmon, also called and live their spawn. Some migrate to (Oncorhynchus nerka), in freshwater an anadromous length and This species they are species of referred to that is primarily Pacific Ocean ocean, over distances The sockeye salmon red salmon, fresh water and rivers diet consists found in discharging red in hue after they remain semelparous, salmon dying or simply salmon (5–15 lb). Pacific salmon to the ocean until they are sockeye, is into it. up to 1,600 km (1,000 mi)

Medicine for the soul

Jampa Dorje, Staff Reporter

Philosophy is alive and well in Downtown Ellensburg. I can attest to this because I attended a community discussion event at the Hal Holmes Center on Tuesday, October 4, 2022. I was amazed by people from the town

meeting with people from the college in a community setting and discussing ideas relevant to their lives. I might have been in the Sufi Fourth Heaven of Friendship or on the Second Ring of Mercury, where philosophers of the past meet to discuss the perennial questions. The guest speaker was Associate Professor of Philosophy, Dr. Michael Goerger, and the subject of his talk was: “Ancient Greeks on the Good Life.” What might we learn from the ancient Greek philosophers about living a good life?

Philosophy can be intimidating. There is a professional vocabulary when talking about the first principles of things, like cause and time and space. This is a branch of philosophy called *metaphysics*. How do we know anything about these first principles? This is called *epistemology*. Right off, Dr. Goerger made short work of these mindbenders. He pointed out that for the Ancient Greeks, the main purpose of philosophical inquiry was to discover what the best life is. The other questions were subordinate to this goal. Dr. Goerger brought up the shade of Plato, who said (in the *Republic*) that life is not worth living when the soul is ruined and corrupted and that philosophy helps us to heal our soul. When Socrates was condemned to death, he claimed that “an unexamined life is not worth living” (*Apology*, 38a5–6) because he believed the study of wisdom was the supreme human endeavor.

A man in a short-sleeved striped shirt asked, “Does any of what these old philosophers have to say have relevance today?” Dr. Goerger responded, “Yes, much of what they say is important to research in modern psychology, political science, and sociology because the Greeks believed that philosophy was good for the health of the individual as well as the health of the populace.” He then asked the audience to form small groups at the tables in the room and to discuss among themselves their ideas about the nature of self-examination. This was exciting. We have been couped up so long in our Covid caves, muffled by our masks. It was refreshing to converse with a neighbor.

A lady with blue eyeshadow, wearing designer jeans, said that sometimes you must stop and take stock and that she had battled with alcoholism and sought a spiritual path. A lady with music in her voice, wearing a floral puff-sleeve blouse, said some people just go through life doing what they are told, going to work, coming home, and never take time to think about the meaning of life. A bearded man wearing a light blue slim-fit jacket, pointed out that some people just seem to be happy wanderers and others are always down on themselves and feel unfulfilled. A young man in a gray khaki bib shirt said that he felt he needed to find a balance between too much self-examination and just enough to clear the cobwebs from his thinking. A man with his hair in a topknot, wearing Thai fisherman’s pants, said that old age was the time for contemplation because when we are young we must study, when a teen we must court, and when grown we must work and perhaps raise a family. An elderly man in a 50s plaid bowling shirt said he had gotten a lot out psychotherapy but that it was expensive.

According to Dr. Goerger, for the Greeks, when it came to the idea of happiness, there were two central questions: What is happiness? And how do you attain it? For Plato, with a spiritual outlook, we should adhere to the virtues and avoiding the non-virtues. He claimed we had three “voices”: the voice of our desires, the voice of our reason, and the voice of our emotions, and that harmonizing these voices will bring about a life without internal conflict. Plato’s disciple, Aristotle, felt that happiness was the highest goal (*Nicomachean Ethics*). Happiness for Aristotle was more of a biological concept. The Greek word for happiness is *eudaimonia* which literally means a state of “good spirit” and by extension, “to flourish,” like an animal in good health.

To answer the question of how to attain happiness, Dr. Goerger turned to another philosopher, Epicurus (342-270 BC), who founded the School of the Epicureans. He believed in the wise pursuit of pleasure. Dr. Goerger pointed out that this was not a form of licentiousness like embodied in the Hippie slogan, “sex, drugs, and rock ‘n’ roll.” Here there is an emphasis upon comfort, a middle ground between asceticism and hedonism. Epicurus believed that it was not good philosophy if it did not treat an ailment. Epicureans have a prescription: Do not fear the gods; do not worry about death; what is good is easy to obtain; and what is terrible is easy to endure.

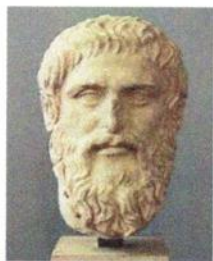
Again, Dr. Goerger asked us to discuss this topic among ourselves and then tell him what we had come up with.

A girl in a red cashmere sweater said that happiness, for her, was in having things to be grateful for. A man in a black shirt with snap buttons said it was a feeling of being fulfilled. A girl with long hair in a ponytail, tied with a pink ribbon, felt it had to do with joyfulness. The man with a topknot said that the word “happiness” might be better understood as a state of well-being, of feeling at ease in the cosmos.

Then, Dr. Goerger told us about Epictetus (c. 50 – c. 135 AD), a Greek Stoic philosopher. who claimed that suffering is the result of wanting to control what we can’t control. This reminded me of the Serenity Prayer, written by the American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr: “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.” In his handy guidebook to happiness, *Enchindian*, Epictetus admonishes us to not want things, refrain from excesses, expect to lose competitions, and if things go wrong, remind yourself to think other thoughts. For Epictetus, suffering derives from false beliefs. Grief is a false belief about life and death; desire is a false belief about happiness; fear is a false belief about what causes harm; and anger is a false belief about how to correct injustice. In other words, avoid emotions and do what is right, but don’t do it in anger. A girl in an abstract print tunic said this sounded cold-hearted and asked, “Isn’t it ok to love?” The man with the topknot said, “I think you would find a better answer to that question from the Greek poet, Sappho, or the Roman poet, Catullus.”

Time had run out, and Dr. Goerger concluded his talk saying, “By living the good life, we are cultivating our humanity by becoming the thing that we are meant to be.” He then quoted the Roman Stoic philosopher, Seneca, who says in Book III of *de Ira*: “This breath that we hold so dear will soon leave us: in the meantime, while we draw it, while we live among human beings, let us cultivate our humanity: let us not be a terror or a danger to anyone. Let us keep our tempers in spite of losses, wrongs, abuse or sarcasm, and let us endure with magnanimity our short-lived troubles: as the saying goes, while we are considering what is due to ourselves and worrying ourselves, death will soon be upon us.”

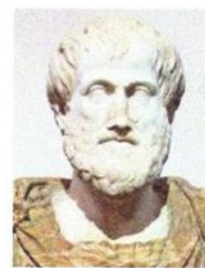
The event was hosted by Dr. David Schwann and was sponsored by the CWU Ethics Lab and Ellensburg Public Library. This was one of a series of monthly discussions on topics like love, happiness, creativity, art, technology, work, and family.



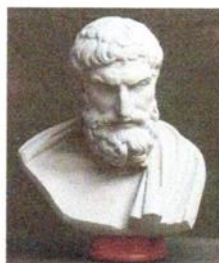
Plato



Goerger



Aristotle



Epicurus



Schwann



Epictetus

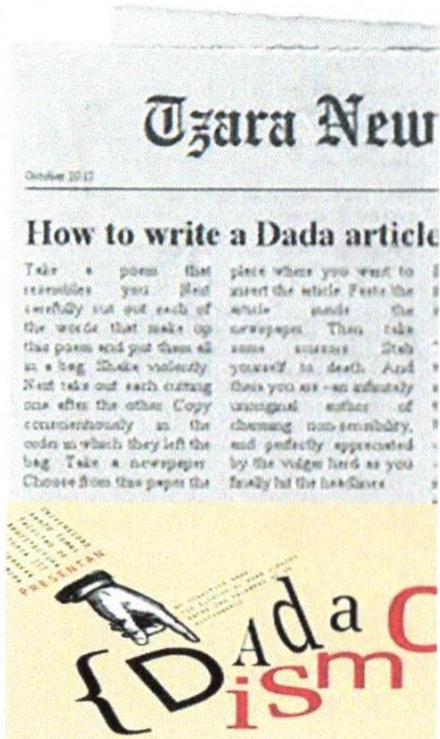
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alternative facts

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1. Information arranged to mislead the public; lies



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