

# The UD Symposium



# The UD Symposium

A Colorful but Briefly Academic Expose on UD Culture.

Thucydides of Cowanland

*Translated by*

The English Major Girls

**Dedicated to those who inspired this work: the Fall Rome class of 2016, the Ap[p?]ian way class, and the heroically inebriated poets of the Groundhogiad.**

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

To understand the story, one must understand the author. A tale of this magnitude requires a man of great legend, a certain Thucydides of Cowanland. These vignettes of ages past will stand to give context to the man and the legend.

Rising to recount the tales of his time, the bard stands upon the shoulders of his forebears, inspired by the greats and by those less so. The leader of times darker than now, he often bared all for the sake of the festival. Truly embracing the ideals of the Grecian, shame he held not while displaying himself in manner both Athenian and Spartan. When the pouring of libations were so abruptly cut short, he aspired to Odysseus in cunning escape, though fell short in both action and explanation. Responsibility he took on, leader of the pack he was known as, sacrifice he made. For events brazen and bold, he took upon himself the duties of others, once again bearing all for his baring all.

Traveling to the peninsula of both the empire and the Church, he drew upon himself the responsibility of scribe for his journey and his fellow pilgrims. Resplendent in new technology, GoPro in hand, he documented every facet of Latin life. Hikes and voyages, food and cobblestones, conversations both stimulating and mundane he recorded with feverish vigor. As then he grasped every aspect of every moment, so too has he now endeavored to exalt the four years of Crusader and Groundhog.

Of libations the poet partakes freely. Irish stout or English ale, German lager or Czech pils, French champagne or Italian reds find their way to his dwelling for oh so short a time. London gin or Glasgow scotch, bourbon or vodka, ouzo or grappa, rum or rye, it makes no difference to the man. They serve as muse for the storyteller and catalyst for stories to come. The heart of every celebration and the mate to any tale, his stories are told with a glass in hand as the crowd he thus regales. So grab your glass, pour your draught, and ready yourself for a tale of great proportions.

## FORWORD

The historian Thucydides is often compared to the father of medicine, Hippocrates, because of his inductive approach in recounting the events of the 5th century Peloponnesian War. Rather than relying on the gods to explain the war's outcomes, he uses a naturalistic approach — natural things happen for natural reasons. With Thucydides' disenchanted view of the Greeks and his high standard of impartiality in mind, one needs not question why the author of *The UD Symposium* used the name Thucydides in this pseudonymous work.

In *The UD Symposium*, the author allows not a hint of bias as he describes the adventures of the UD class of 2019, its unmatched dedication to tradition, and, most importantly, its preservation of the Catholic culture of effervescence in both conversation and drinks (for Jesus Christ, himself, turned “six stone jars ... each holding twenty or thirty gallons” of water into wine at the wedding feast at Cana).<sup>1</sup>

Although adhering to an unprejudiced and authentic historical narrative, *The UD Symposium* is also a work of ideals. Much like Thucydides, who pitted not the city of Athens against the city of Sparta but the ideals of Athens against the ideals of Sparta, the author of *The UD Symposium* unmaskes the ideals that the Groundhog and the core represent for students and faculty in Cowanland.

The theme penetrating this great work can be summarized in the words of the character Kelly as he addresses the crowd gathered for protest: “[H]ere too lies the truth of Cowanland: Temperance, Prudence, Diligence, Piety, Truthfulness, Honor, Justice, and Charity are all intrinsic to our nature; but so are Greatness, Daring, Cunning, Joviality, Ridiculousness, Rambunctiousness, Wit, and Mischief. We are Virtuous *and* Heroic.’ ”

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<sup>1</sup> John 2:6-10

# I

## A HOUSEBOAT ON OLD MILL POND

One bright and sunny afternoon Donny came sauntering out of the Mill and, to his surprise, was faced with an enormous craft on the pond. Donny ruffled his disheveled red hair and wiped the sleep from his eyes. Finding that the ship was still there, he demanded an explanation.

Who do they think they are to park this thing here? Donny was right to be angry. The thing *was* massive; it took up almost the entire pond. Besides, he was the official ferryman of Cowanland, carrying drunken students to and fro across the pond.

Donny reflected that he had worked hard to attain his status as official ferryman. Dr. Cowan himself had granted him a monopoly on all drunk ferrying way back in 1962.

"Now this damn thing is blocking my path across the pond," he fumed.

Donny marched up to the boat, though he admitted that it was really only half a boat. It had the hull of a large trireme, but mounted atop it was a red building that gave the impression of a barn.

He pushed this superfluous thought from his mind as he pounded upon the hull. After a few attempts, a head popped out of a small window on the side of the barn.

"What the hell do you want?" bellowed a voice from the window. This, of course, was Basil speaking, but as Donny squinted up at her the sun blinded him from actually seeing her face.

"What is this?" cried Donny. "You're on my pond!"

"Oh Donny, where have you been, old friend," cooed Basil. "Get up here. Slatts needs to talk to you!"

Donny muttered exclamations of exasperation under his breath all the way up the gangway before being shown into the main ballroom.

Slatts poured herself another cup of that disgustingly sugary jungle juice that the Trap House always mixes up and seeing him exclaimed: "Donny!"

She gave him a big hug, spilling a good portion of the sticky juice on him in the process.

"I have a job for you," said Slatts.

"I already have a job," retorted Donny, peeling his wet, sticky shirt away from his body.

"Yes," snipped Slatts. "But this one comes with free booze."

"Well then, I am at your service," said Donny with a mocking bow.

“What’s the job?” he asked, now half interested.

“I want you to be the head deckhand of the houseboat and I want you to pick two trusted mates.”

“Oh sweet!” chirped Donny. “This might work out well for me after all,” he thought.

“So you accept?” asked Basil.

“Well duh...”

“Who will be your mates?” inquired Slatts.

He thought hard, then announced, “Trent and General Patton!”

He knew they could handle themselves on a seafaring vessel. At the least they could be useful for rearranging the furniture, dragging it across the deck or even hurling it overboard if necessary.

“When can you start?” asked Slatts.

“Well,” said Donny with a grin, “I’ll start right now... by having a drink.”





## II

### DUE SANTI HAS A TALENT SHOW

As the 5:00 AM wake up call came across the houseboat intercom, Donny and Trent were already out of their beds.

“We made it!” cried Donny.

“We’re in Rome!” Trent shouted.

Their excitement was impossible to contain. Donny burst out the window shouting, “We’re here, we’re in Rome!”

Trent rushed to follow Donny’s announcement with a great “Ooooooowhoo!” In a moment they were both howling out the window at the top of their lungs.

“Shut the fuck up! I’m trying to sleep!” was the only response they received. In the end they were shouted into submission by an angry passenger two decks up. Nevertheless, the houseboat had arrived in Rome and that was enough to keep their spirits high.

That evening the Due Santi campus hosted the houseboat club for a talent show. Donny and Trent discovered soon after being hired that the houseboat was frequented by a select group of society called *Fromers*. These individuals constituted the ever riotous (though well educated and most delightful) houseboat club. The *Fromers* enjoyed much merrymaking on the houseboat, including international trips like the one they were currently on.

Trent opened up the show with “stand up” comedy; his skit explained how his daddy issues ultimately led him to bleach his hair with frosted tips.

Next, The Traphouse showed off their funky dance moves to Brahms’ “Juju on That Beat”. Their choreographed dance in *dirndls* was classic. Even the honored guests, Dr. Sanford and his family, got a kick out of it. From this point on, however, things began to go downhill.

Nicquan played “We Are Never Getting Older,” and the highly intoxicated crowd joined in singing along, but with the alternate lyrics “we are never getting sober,” to which they were accustomed to shouting.

At this Dr. Hatlie began to feel embarrassed in front of his prestigious guests.

The real kicker was when Mo, the houseboat club’s secretary, and Kath Zepeda, the twin sister of Herr Zepeda, took the stage. These two were usual partners in crime, but on this occasion they really outdid themselves. Staggering onto the stage, Kath opened up the mock Monday Night Meeting to a roar of laughter and applause (not so different from an actual Monday Night Meeting, I might add).

Haney, the official biographer of the club, was present; she took the following notes despite being quite tipsy and falling asleep for part of the show.

K: Gooooood evening everybody, tonight is Monday, and you know what that means. I'm David.

M: And I'm Mike.

K: And This.... Is another Monday Night Meeting. I just want to confirm that the following are still good for the soup kitchen tomorrow: Olivia Hays, Katie Rogel, Jason Stafford, Jim Mobus, and Emily LaFrance? You good? Can I get a thumbs up? Perfect, thank you, moving on.

M: You guys have done some good things, some bad things. We just want to highlight a few behavioral things to keep in mind.

K: I would like to remind you that quiet hours exist in the morning, so please do not howl out of your window at 5am. Also if there is howling, please do not yell back in retaliation.

M: School copiers are used for academic purposes only. It's also probably not a good idea to print "rager of the century" on your posters.

K: Back to the noise thing—we understand you love cheap thrills—the Villa doesn't need to know that. Also, the whole campus does not need to hear you yell profanities from the vineyard at night.

M: Do not take cups out of the Mensa; Nino and Nuncia hate you.

K: If you sign up for a meal, please show up for that meal.

M: All you smokers out there, please throw away your cigarette butts, we don't want the kids eating them. Also, your smoke detector is to stay screwed into the ceiling.

K: Remember on class trips, your sack lunch apples are not to be thrown into the Mediterranean Sea.

M: I don't care how sick you are; do not steal rolls of toilet paper from hotels.

K: Please do not lock Grecians in hot dog stands.

M: Do not take things from strangers, and do not let strangers take things from you.

*\*Whips out iPhone\**

Sorry, I just wanted to check the time. I love my iPhone.

*(Assistant Provost Reedy, whose phone had been stolen the week before reddened ever so slightly at this comment).*

Please respect the furniture on our cruise to Greece, and do not chuck the chairs off the deck into the sea. Just kidding, I know you guys wouldn't do that.

K: You have a lot of exams coming up; and yes, you are a record-setting class, but please do not strive for the lowest test average in the last 20 years.

M: Alrighty, that's all we have for you guys, you're good to go.

All of the club's dirty laundry was now thoroughly aired out and their hosts began to wonder just what kind of students they had invited to their campus.

Dr. Sanford admitted in private that he did rather enjoy the shenanigans.

Things began to look up again when General Patton and the houseboat dog, a stray looking creature whose name was Argos... (or maybe Alec... I can't be sure; Haney was napping at this point and Harr Zepeda had taken up the pen. He, however, was face down in the toilet at this particular moment and only returned, wearing a different shirt and tie, after Patton had finished). Patton and Argos\* took the stage to replicate a host of animal noises.

Finally, Misko returned from swimming across Lake Albano and saved the show with some traditional Irish folk songs.

### III

#### SHOTGUNNING THE TOWER

In Cowanland, a tradition exists among the warriors of Shotgunning cans of cheap beer at the top of The Phallus. It is an arduous journey up the stairs, even without a backpack full of beer; thus, it is necessary to have a freshman carry the beer, for they are young and spry.

One afternoon Hermocrates rounded up a band of young men to make the epic journey. Donny, Joe, and Quirk were among those involved. Little Tony was also present, as well as a warrior apprentice named Kolbe. Young Kolbe was hardly old enough to drink, even by student standards.

When they reached the top of the stairs, Joe introduced Kolbe to the men. Hermocrates, dressed in a brown check sport coat and brown knit tie, greeted him with a handshake.

Joe gave the introduction, “Kolbe this is our President, Hermocrates.” Of course he meant the President of the Houseboat Club, but Kolbe misunderstood. The naive young man believed that Hermocrates was, in fact, the president of Cowanland.

He thought to himself, “I just shotgunned with the President, this is the coolest place ever!”



## IV

### A JAILBREAK ON GROUNDHOG DAY

One must understand that in Cowanland, the Groundhog is to the students what Athena is to Athens; he is their patron, and a symbol of gaiety and hope. The arrest of the Groundhog was the last step in a long train of abuses and usurpations by PQ that pursued invariably a design to reduce students under absolute sobriety, and it was their right, their duty, to throw off such a regime, and to provide a new Guard for their future fun.

At the time, Cowanland suffered greatly under the oppression of a tyrant who called himself "PQ" which stood for President Queef. He built himself a colossal palace, uglier than the Wedding Cake, and had two three-headed hounds guarding the gate. He had a lackey in the Office of Student Agitation who proceeded to dry the place up of all beer and with it all the fun. PQ destroyed the hallowed woods and with them the Shire, whoring out the land to suburb-developers.

He thought his power so great that he could bludgeon the soul of UD, the core, and no one would stop him. Things came to a head when PQ sought to create a finishing school which would allow its students to graduate from the University with a B.A. without actually completing the core curriculum, thus undermining the worth of the UD education. There were Champions of the core, however; Hansen led the charge and was joined by others in the Faculty Senate. Students too demanded change.

On a cold and cloudy February morning, February second to be exact, the time for action arrived. It was Groundhog Day and the hog was in captivity. Hermocrates had had enough; he gathered 'round some trusted friends and declared:

On this Groundhog morning the hog sits in the hands of our oppressors!

This is the sign we await!

On Groundhog day they will honor his name.

With the light of rebellion ablaze in their eyes

With their candles of grief we will kindle our flame

On the tomb of Groundhog shall our barricade rise

The time is here!

Let us welcome it gladly with courage and beer!

Hermocrates, Herr Zepeda, Owen, and Tom Hand's little sister rose before the sun on Groundhog morning (this, mind you, was no easy feat after a full week of drinking).

Herr was the getaway driver, poised behind the Haggar building. Owen and Fraulein Hand were the lookouts. Hermocrates crept through the silent halls of Haggar, avoiding the guards.

He came to the Office of Student Agitation where the Groundhog was being held and with a mighty effort he kicked down the door. He unshackled the hog and together they dashed for freedom.

The outlaws cheered as they sped away. The first part of the plan had gone off without a hitch, but there was one last thing to do: the Groundhog still needed to look for his shadow! They raced to tap the keg before the sun rose.

When it did rise, the Groundhog stood in the Woods with a beer in his hand, swiftly approaching intoxication. Whether he saw his shadow or not no one could remember; the Groundhog was drunk and didn't give a damn. The second phase of the plan was a success; winter was over! Remember all, if the Groundhog is too drunk to look for his shadow or be afraid of it, spring is on its way! This is the whole point of Groundhog Day.

## V

### THE LIBRARY KEGGER

On the evening of the Norton Derby, Hermocrates and Slatts sat on the porch of The Traphouse overlooking the Circus Maximus. Over drinks, they discussed a moderately outlandish idea... suddenly they were interrupted by a gasp running through the crowd.

Mo, the houseboat secretary, had taken a mighty tumble as she rounded the final turn and sent Princess Sandra, her jockey, flying through the air. Basil let fly a vindictive howl as she galloped past her disabled competitors toward the finish line.

Returning to their scheming, Herm and Slatts concluded that it had been too long an interval between library keggers.

Throwing a kegger in the library, though somewhat fiendish, was not a novelty. It had been done before, but not for several years. Partying in the library, you see, was strictly forbidden as the Houseboat librarian called such activities “debaucherous” and “uncouth.” Thus the endeavor needed to be undertaken with the utmost discretion.

First, Hermocrates reserved two of the study rooms on the third floor under the alias “Chauncey.” Next, he obtained a pony keg and borrowed a large backpack someone had used in Rome. Stuffing the keg into the backpack, he planned to carry it right through the front door.

How he pulled this off, I still don’t understand. The massive backpack was conspicuous at the very least. Basil informs me that the exploit was only successful because at the moment Herm entered the library, Donny distracted the librarian by making a big fuss over his library fines.

Regardless, Herm made it safely to the third floor and the keg was tapped – beer flowed and all carried on “studying” for their final examinations with gaiety and cheer!



## VI

### THE GREAT REVOLUTION

After his escape the Groundhog was forced to go into hiding. However, he gave detailed instructions to a loyal few.

A meeting was held in a dingy little room somewhere in the destitute Science Building. Major Taylor led the meeting. The Safraneks were there, as were Kelly, Hermocrates, Donny, and The Kaiser of Schemes. Flynn made his appearance as well as Swift-footed James. Everything was arranged; there would be a protest – the first in Cowanland’s history – pamphlets would be disseminated, and finally, Kelly would give a speech. Cowan’s Army had arisen once more from the shadow of tyranny.

All of Cowanland was abuzz. Students crowded around pamphlets in the Cap Bar...

## **LISTEN!,**

**Some MEPHISTOPHELES has traded  
the soul of the**

**for**

### **CAP BAR–**

the impossibly good 'LOCUS AMOENUS',  
REFUGE of late-night STUDIES,  
OASIS of INDEPENDENT THOUGHT,  
MEETING-PLACE of LOVERS,  
BULWARK against BUSYBODIES,  
BASTION of LEISURE,  
BELOVED of SMOKERS,  
the University's WATERING-HOLE

### **ARAMARK'S**

'LOCUS TERRIBILIS',  
the soul-less,  
corporate,  
diarrhetic,  
the INSUBSTANTIAL  
plastic, cheap  
nothing

**There are STUDENTS who cared, and do care still for the SOUL of the SCHOOL,  
for the dream of PAT DALY, who out of LOVE for the UNIVERSITY established  
the CAP BAR 36 years ago, who**

**for the sake of the coffee  
for the sake of the faculty and students  
got his hands on an Italian espresso machine  
disassembled the machine  
and with the help of faculty  
brought back the parts to Irving**



**and there instituted the CAP BAR**

**for the good of the SCHOOL, without pretense.**

Word spread quickly: “Noon on the Mall.”

I was there when it happened, but being hesitant to outright rebel, I intended to participate only as a spectator. I could hear it before I saw them: the slow and melodic thundering of feet, drums, and the shouting of the crowd. As the protest drew nearer their voices became more audible. They were chanting!

*Will you join in our crusade?*

*Who will be strong and stand with me?*

*Beyond the hands of Queef Is there a world you long to see?*

*Then join in the fight That will give you the right to read the Odyssey!*

Bagpipes wailed to life as they marched onto the Mall. Blue and white banners flew overhead and the drums rang out in cadence. Something welled up in me: Cowanland pride, love of the core, whatever it was I began to sing and before I knew it my feet carried me forward. Soon I was swept up by the crowd. As we crashed through the Cap Bar a cry rose up from the mob:

*Long live the core! Long live our tradition! Long live Cowanland!*

The procession wound through Haggar then back onto the Mall where Kelly was waiting on the Science Building Balcony.

With reference to the speeches in this history, some were delivered before the war began, others while it was going on; some I heard myself, others I got from various quarters; it was in all cases difficult to carry them word for word in one’s memory, so my habit has been to make the speakers say what was in my opinion demanded of them by the various occasions, of course adhering as closely as possible to the general sense of what they really said.

## Kelly's Speech

Kelly's voice rang out from the balcony,

"Since the true cause of our disagreement lies in a misunderstanding of the rightful path of Cowanland itself, I will begin with its founders, our ancestors, if you will. These, having created the core curriculum and shaped our campus culture, by their steadfastness have delivered the same to succession of posterity, hitherto relatively intact."

"For this they deserve commendation, but our mothers and fathers deserve yet more: for that besides what descended on them, not without great labours of their own they have purchased this our present institution, and handed it down to us of the present generation. And then we, ourselves, assembled here today, who are mostly in the prime of life, have enlarged; and contributed greatly to the prestige of Cowanland so that we might boast that she is stronger than ever."

"But by what traditions have we arrived at this, by what form of education and by what means have we advanced Cowanland to this greatness? When I shall have laid open this, only then shall I descend to our immediate question. For I think they are things both fit for the purpose in hand, and profitable to the whole company, both students and faculty, to hear relayed."

"We have a form of education, not fetched by imitation of others; (nay, we are rather a pattern to them, than they to us); one founded essentially in the Western tradition and those pursuits which we call liberal. It may be said that, in a way, Cowanland is a continuation or even a protectorate of that great school of the Grecians. From its conception Cowanland was unique. The Catholic intellectual tradition is at the center of everything, with the Good, the True, and the Beautiful being the primary pursuits. It was foisted upon the world by men and women whose character can only be described as *Heroic*, though not in the Christian sense as one might immediately assume, but rather in that of an epic hero like Odysseus, Aeneas or even Achilles. They were bold, larger than life, daring, and unique; they were independent thinkers."

"Take the Cowans for example: Louise Cowan was instrumental in creating the four piece Lit-Trad series which is the cornerstone of the core. She believed that literature has the universal capacity to convey truth, goodness, and beauty; she worked out her own literary theory in the classroom, including her students in this process.<sup>2</sup>"

"Don Cowan was a kind of poet-physicist, a visionary and an original thinker. He was casual and welcoming, and he owned the position of president. He believed that you could build a university through language, and he did it.<sup>3</sup>"

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<sup>2</sup> Gregory

<sup>3</sup> Gregory

“The Cowans believed that Cowanland was destined to be an outstanding university, one that was going to change education in the United States; they believed Cowanland has its own special genius that is guided by the Holy Spirit and that is unconquerable.<sup>4</sup>”

“They were visionaries and leaders. When building up the faculty of Cowanland, the Don and Louise sought out genius. They formed an academic outfit of wild geese, professors spit out of the Ivys for their strong opinions, strong headedness, and the resulting controversies. Happily, they flocked to the beige hills of Irving where they found a refuge of intellectual freedom in Cowanland; with them, they brought to the young university disproportionate international renown. Don Cowans’ greatest feat was managing the peculiar faculty which put Cowanland on the map.”

“However, the founding of Cowanland was unavoidably volatile and its stability entirely dependent on Dr. Cowan. After two decades, some within Cowanland deemed his Peraclean governance unsustainable. During our father’s generation, there was a coup and regrettably Don and Louise were ousted. Those responsible thought it best for Cowanland’s longevity to suppress the eccentric magnanimity which dominated campus under their leadership and replace it with a prudent discipline.”

“The coup leaders were treacherous not just to Don and Louise, but more pointedly to the ideal of Greatness and the idol of Heroism. While the Cowans mused about creating a world renown center for learning, her new more practical leaders, aimed to make Cowanland the best institution it could be, to make it Excellent rather than Great. Thus, the Virtuous character won out over the Heroic character.”

“The fall of heroism was, in my opinion, inevitable and, though my heart longs for a return of our forfather’s daring spirit, not altogether a bad thing. Our fathers brought Cowanland’s traditions to new heights, solidifying events such as Groundhog Day, Charity Week, and Oktoberfest. Moreover, Cowanland matured as an institution.”

“Sasseen<sup>5</sup> brought temperance, stability, and organization to Cowanland when he was appointed president in 1981. He did this by solidifying the quality of academic standard across the core and by bringing to the university a dedicated liberal arts faculty.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, he purchased the Rome campus, a crucial move in continuing the program and safeguarding the future of the university.”

“The eighties were a new golden age in Cowanland history and this generation of Hoggies created the Cowanland that we know and love today. We would not be so

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<sup>4</sup> Norris

<sup>5</sup> Groundhogiad: Line 22

<sup>6</sup> Norris

proud of our institution if it were not academically rigorous; moreover, we would not be satisfied in our own intellectual pursuit. But most importantly, we will never part with the avant-garde drinking habits they started.”

“All this is to say that the heroic character was needed to found Cowanland, but the virtuous character was needed to keep it.”

“So what is the true path of Cowanland, where should we point our compass? I answer that we should aim for the golden mean between heroic Spiritedness and ethical Seriousness. Cowanland is in its truest essence a balance, or maybe even a struggle, between these two great aspects of the Western tradition. Here in Cowanland is where they converge; it happens literally in the classrooms. The heroic is poured into every Freshman in lit-trad one and at wine Wednesday in the woods. And yet, Western-Theo-Trad and Mass at the Vatican fill Sophomores with wonder at the history of the Church and the Early Church Fathers who solidified the Virtuous character. While studying abroad, students are flung from Rome to Athens, both centers of western culture that sought Temperance *and* Greatness. Must we choose one? Can we?”

“No liberal arts curriculum is complete without delving into both; here too lies the truth of Cowanland: Temperance, Prudence, Diligence, Piety, Truthfulness, Honor, Justice, and Charity are all intrinsic to our nature; but so are Greatness, Daring, Cunning, Joviality, Ridiculousness, Rambunctiousness, Wit, and Mischief. We are Virtuous *and* Heroic.”

“Cowanland, as an institution, requires stability and therefore our administration must, for the most part, possess the Virtuous character; however, it is impossible to graduate from the university without having some of both the virtuous and heroic sink into your bones. Therefore, the culture of Cowanland will always be a unique mixture of the two. It takes a special individual to understand this while not having graduated from the university, and many will simply not be able to grasp its peculiarity.”

“President Q, unfortunately, is such an individual who does not, can not, and never will understand the true nature of Cowanland. It is time for a renaissance, Cowanland. Stand up! Expel Queef; if he does not understand the true path of Cowanland how can he lead it in the right direction? He cannot, and therefore, he must go!”

“Indeed, if I have dwelt at some length upon the character of our university, I have done so that the character of the men and women who ought to lead our institution might be made clear. This image is now in a great measure complete; such was the Character of those who came before us. For all of us in the present generation, we must bring their vision of Cowanland to fruition!”

“You ought not to be less venturously minded in this pursuit; but contemplating the beauty of Cowanland, feed your eyes upon her from day to day, till

love of her fills your hearts and then, when all her greatness shall break upon you, you must reflect that what made her great were students and faculty filled with the Holy Spirit!”

“In the words of Dr. Cowen, ‘Indeed there is a spirit in these hills!’”

I will not bore you with the details of the bloody rebellion that ensued; we have all read the Iliad and have heard too much of severed heads, crushed skulls, and ribs pierced through with spears. In the end, PQ was expelled and a new president appointed by the Board of Trusted Elders: his name was Dr. Hibbs.

With Hibbs’ appointment, hope and happiness were restored to Cowanland. He was a man of the people, an intellectual, though approachable and humble. He loved Cowanland and more importantly, he understood it.

## VII

### STREAKING THE CAP BAR

According to Wikipedia, counting coup was the winning of prestige against an enemy by the Plains Indians of North America. Warriors won prestige by acts of bravery in the face of the enemy, which could be recorded in various ways and retold as stories. The most prestigious act included touching an enemy warrior with the coup stick and escaping unharmed.

Now the young warriors of Cowan's Army have their own form of counting coup. This, of course, consists of one running naked through the Cappuccino Bar without being captured by the Sheriff and his men. "Streaking the Cap Bar," as this event is called, is an old and well established tradition among the men.

On one particular summer evening, Archimedes, the houseboat club's treasurer, and Hermocrates drank themselves up to the task aboard the houseboat. Trent, shuffling drunkenly along the quarterdeck, happened upon one blue toga and a pair of breeches with an accompanying waistcoat. He thought nothing of it, however, as he was apt to misplace his own garments.

The two accomplices crept up the bank of the pond and darted across Northgate without incident. Crouching in the shadow of The Great Phallus, they fastened their beer-box helmets, and with a final thrust of courage galloped across the lawn towards the patio.

The door flung open and in burst the nude young men, roaring through the Cap Bar. With only a moment's pause for some jovial dancing atop the Bar, the naked bandits dipped out through the front of Haggar. They sprinted to cover behind *the* Phallus just as a spotlight swept across the Mall.

With hearts thumping, and a cool breeze blowing, the pair of renegades watched the Sheriff guide his horse onto the Mall. Now, if they could only make it back across Northgate they would be safe. As the Sheriff trotted past The Phallus, merely twenty-five meters away, they snuck around to the opposite side of the structure. Finally, their opportunity arrived; as soon as the Sheriff's back was to them the daring duo made a naked race for their escape.

## VIII

### A TYPICAL THURSDAY EVENING

On a typical Thursday evening, the houseboat Club gathers for a unique form of celebration. One rounds up all his friends and salutes to the end of the work week, for no one actually accomplishes anything on Fridays in Cowanland. One cheers "Thank Goodness It's Thursday!" The wondrous bard Basil, well known for her fishy lyrics, has described it best:

#### TGIT

Ahhh... TGIT.

Twas a merry affair and maybe too merry,  
But that shall pose no snare,  
In my describing how I got there.

Every week around ten,  
My phone would buzz: "Where the hell have you been!?"  
Achilles and Ahab, Homer and Hobbes  
Have kept me away from the merry mob!

From the periodicals of pain,  
I hear a sweet refrain  
That, like the sirens heard by Odysseus,  
Sing, "You don't want to miss us!"

I sprint home to the Mill  
Where I'm sure to get my fill  
Of cheap beer and cheap thrills  
That would make a snob sneer  
But only fill my heart with cheer

At 2090, I find the contents of the TGIT box  
A tutu, tiara, false locks  
strewn all across the floor  
And everyone else is ready to head out the door  
White claws in hand

Juul pods on demand  
And cigs of the best brand  
All prepared to hear a live band

Or at least, sing “Stacy's Mom” without reprimand  
But first, to the Butt Hutt for pre game galore,  
Before Jennifer Rayder throws us out the door!

11:00! Quick, to the dance floor!  
For the best and final hour  
Students stream past the tower

Filling the Rathskeller  
And dancing all together  
The Groundhog looks on with admiration  
At the goofy jubilation  
And intoxicated conversation  
While the administration observes with reservation  
This TGIT sensation

At the midnight hour  
Bells sound from the tower  
An ode is given to the nation  
And “Stacy's Mom” is sung in great exultation.



## IX

### ON STACY'S MOM

And jolly enough were the sights and the sounds that came bearing down before the wind, some few weeks after Seth's Committee Abolishing Beer (CAB) had banned "Stacy's Mom" from TGIT.

It was the Houseboat, which had just wedged in her last keg of beer, and bolted down her bursting hatches; and now, in glad holiday apparel, was joyously, though somewhat vain-gloriously, sailing round Old Mill Pond, previous to pointing her prow for home.

As this glad ship of good luck bore down upon the moody CAB, the barbarian sound of enormous drums came from her forecabin; and drawing still nearer, a crowd of her students were seen standing round. On the quarter-deck, the mates and ruggers were dancing with long-skirt girls who had eloped with them from the O'Connor Isles; while suspended in an ornamental boat, firmly secured aloft between the foremast and mainmast, three homeschoolers, with glittering fiddle-bows, were presiding over the hilarious jig.

Lord and master over all this scene, the captain stood erect on the ship's elevated quarter-deck, so that the whole rejoicing drama was full before her.

And Seth, he too was standing on his quarter-deck, sober and with a stubborn gloom; and as the two ships crossed each other's wakes – one in intoxicated jubilation, the other forlorn in sober toil – their two captains in themselves impersonated the whole striking contrast of the scene.

"Come aboard, come aboard!" cried Basil, lifting a glass and a bottle in the air.

"Hast seen Stacy's Mom?" gritted Seth in reply.

"Nope; only heard it, but you might find Emma on the quarter-deck," said the other good-humoredly. "Come aboard!"

"Thou art too damned jolly. Sail on."

"Oh, you! Listen here," cried Basil,

"We of Cowanland are not simply studious!

"After all," she added wryly, "the goal of liberal education is not to live in the library but to live well!"

"You're nothing but a motley, drunken crew!" accused Seth.

Turning to the crew, Basil asked, "We approach our studies with joy?"

"Aye!" sounded the houseboat crew.

"And our traditions?"

"Aye!" they cheered again.

"Don't you see?" Basil queried Seth, "We are fully alive only because we have balance."

"We chart a middle path between the pensive but gloomy life of Ahab and the thoughtless self-indulgence of The Bachelor."

Turning once again to the crew of the Houseboat, she asked, "Are we excessively jolly?" Then, snapping back to the CAB in a slow and menacing tone, "I think not!"

"But this 'Stacy's Mom!' How wanton, how ridiculous!" cried Seth.

"'Stacy's Mom,' may be a goofy song, but our traditions exemplify our spirit rather than only our intellect."

"How beautiful is the balance: between cultivating our intellect and learning to release our passions? How few others achieve it?"

"Sail on we will, henceforth and Cowanland-bound!"

"How wondrous familiar is a fool!" muttered Seth; then aloud, "Thou art a full ship and Cowanland bound, thou sayst; well, then, call me an empty ship, and outward-bound. So go thy ways, and I will mine. Forward there! Set all sail, and keep her to the wind!"

## X

### GRADUATION

This marvelous crew enjoyed many voyages, ventures, solemn moments, shenanigans, escapades, and near escapes, but the time came for them to leave Cowanland, despite their reluctance to depart. The leaders and guides of Cowanland planned a great ceremony to celebrate their time and mark their departure. It is formally known as Commencement, but it is informally known as a Graduation, as well as “Goodbye Forever.”

On the morning of graduation, students gathered early in all kinds of conditions. Many had poured abundant libations the night before and suffered as they collected their grad slips and adjusted their wrinkled robes. Some concealed libations under their wrinkled robes, others in the bushes by Gorman or in the alcoves of Haggerty for when the ceremony became too dreary. The drink of choice for the hydrated and well rested was mimosas or (semi) cold beers. The parched and fatigued, such as Hermocrates, tried unsuccessfully to mainline some coffee. He settled for drinking it one cup after the other.

Quirk, seeing Hermocrates by the coffee table, went over and clapped him on the back, saying “Dude, did you hear about Wolfpack?”

“What?” Hermocrates replied, eyes red and bleary.

“Wolfpack didn’t wake up this morning, so Kolbe had to run, wake him up, and drag him over here,” Quirk said with a goofy laugh.

As he chuckled over the idea of a freshman rallying seniors, Chai ran up to them and said, “Guess what, you guys? The girls bathroom is full of empty champagne bottles. They are even stuck in the tampon trashcan!”

As Quirk and Chai laughed over the methods of smuggling alcohol and Hermocrates winced, enforcers of Seth’s Committee Abolishing Beer scolded those not in line, not alphabetically arranged. So, Quirk, Chai, and Hermocrates shuffled into their places. The lucky stood between friends, while the unlucky stood among cloaked crusaders.

As the graduands walked out of Braniff, many were surprised and touched by the professors lining their path and applauding. Basil laughed and waved to her mentor, Dr. Hanssen, Donny raised his hands in mock-triumph, and Slatts, undercaffeinated, tried to smile. As they strode onto the Mall, family members and underclassmen joined the professors’ cheers, trying to catch the eye of their favorite baccalaureate.

Then came the speeches and awards. It is likely that they were poignant, profound, and well delivered. The awards were probably bestowed on the most worthy. However, the sweltering, infernal heat made attending to these farewell addresses impossible. Those who could confirm these details did not join the noble writers of this symposium. What we do know is that those who wore tropical shirts suffered less than the formal and fully dressed. But everyone suffered! The audacious fled to Gorman and Haggerty to collect their hidden spirits, while the meek perspired under the hot sun.

After degrees and laurels were conferred, the consanguineous clamored for photos and embraces. Amicii were surrounded by family and divided from one another, except for the photos that too-loving mothers arranged. Some scholars broke away to say goodbye to their Virgils, Beatrices, and St. Bernards. Slowly, the graduates dispersed with their families to feast and be feted. For many, it seemed strange to celebrate their four years in Cowanland without their companions.

That is why, that evening, many gathered on the houseboat to toast their studies, their friendships, and their antics. With the prospect of leaving the comfort of Cowanland, for graduate studies, careers, betrothals (some already married!), or yet other (mis)adventures, the mood was not melancholic, just a bit wistful. Who knew when they would all meet again? The first summer wedding seemed far off on the horizon.

So they cheered their memories, sang beloved songs, and embraced tearfully as the flow of wine and whiskey became a deluge.

Those who remained till the early hours of the morning raised a final toast to Cowanland: "To the core, to the Groundhog, to us!"

## AFTERWORD

As befits his choice of namesake, Thucydides of Cowanland has recounted moments of formation — moments that live as much in their felt effects as in our memories and histories. So the question remains: what in the name of Zeus have we been formed into?

In one sense, there is no point to seeking the answer when said answer will manifest itself in your daily life with distressing inevitability. You will know what I mean when you make a double entendre using a Shakespearianism and a quote from *Frogs* in your quarterly results overview meeting with senior management. The social discomfort will be palpable.

I think you will find, though, that the foibles are the flip side of a singularly valuable coin. We of Cowanland share in a quirky but beautiful communal identity. We go to Groundhog, we know what that means, and the sequence of numbers we use to describe our evenings come from the rings of Dante's inferno. Our Latin improves when we drink, a collapsed ceiling is just another evening at The Traphouse, and we invoke a muse before protesting a change to the coffee bar.

And now we return to the idea of formation. To put a turn on a well-known phrase, we made Cowanland and thereafter it made us. That may be one lesson to be learned from this Monumental history: we participate in shaping Cowanland, though our tenure as students is oh so short, the impact we have can be great, for having been formed, we are Cowans in our own right.