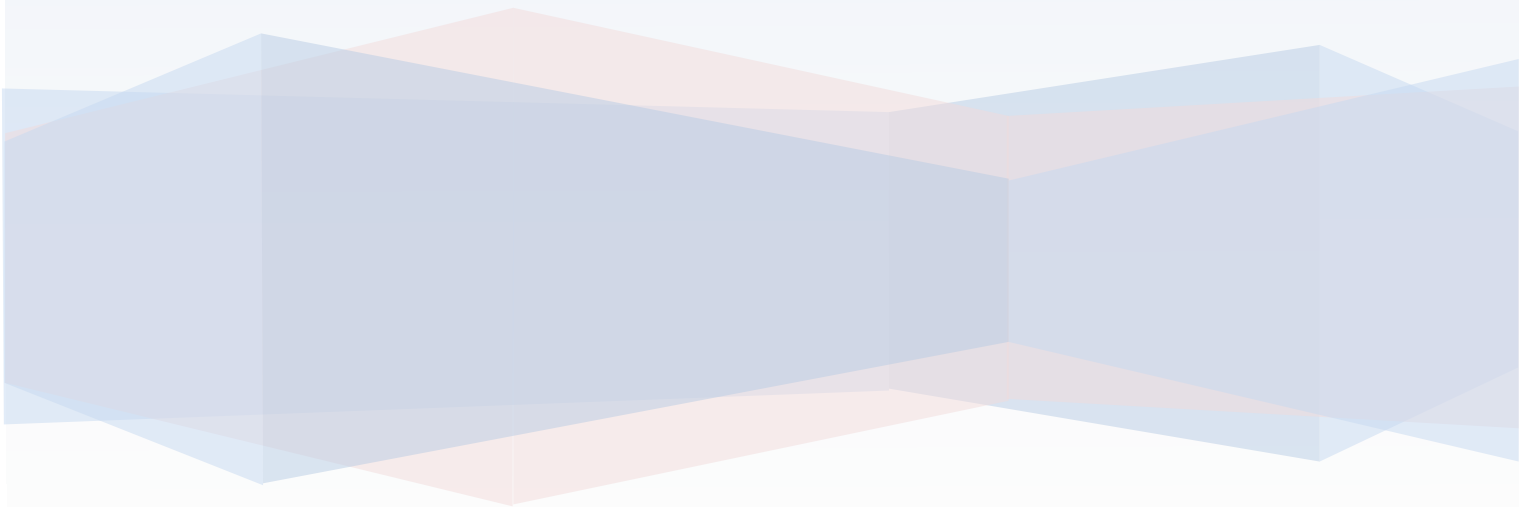


The Last Sin

Senior Thesis Project Proposal

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Concept

Setup: The Book of Genesis tells us that the Original Sin took place when Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate the apple from the Tree of Life. Most people believe, and I was taught, that the sin was the act of disobedience. However, each translation of the Book of Genesis makes the point that Adam and Eve, upon eating the apple, learned that they were naked and made clothes for themselves. If the sin was, in fact, the sin of disobedience, why include this information? It is unnecessary to point out they learned anything unless it was important. That little extra bit of information tells us that the apple contained information, which was then consumed by Adam and Eve, instantly altering them. Therefore the first sin was not merely the sin of disobedience but also the sin of consumption of information. It was the consumption of information that got them thrown out of the Garden of Eden, not the disobedience as the snake, whom did not eat the apple, was not thrown out of the Garden but only punished.

Jumping forward to today's world, we often hear segments of scientists warn that humanity stands at the tipping point of its continued existence. If humans continue to breed at the rate that we are then there will be more humans living on the planet than the planet can provide food for. If we assume this to be true, and assume that humans will not change their behavior, then the question becomes, what will humanity's last sin be?

Thesis: If the first sin was the consumption of information, then the last sin, as I see it, is the dissemination of that information not only to the four corners of the earth but the universe as a whole. Radio, TV and other signals are sent out from earth and continue onward throughout the universe. Everything we have learned we now shout to anyone and anything willing to listen. So then, if humanity is standing at the brink of its own destruction, is the sum total of our accumulated knowledge all the sin we want to present upon our deaths? Even if we were to stop learning entirely, we cannot unlearn what we know – we cannot undo the taint that we possess. We are sinners, we were born sinners and from the first day we learned to dress ourselves we learned to be sinners so there is no going back on this. Perhaps we should take stock in what we've accomplished in the last 50,000 years and decide if we're happy with what we have to show for ourselves. Personally I think humanity has a lot more to learn so perhaps we should find a way to save ourselves so we can keep sinning.

Lastly, what does all of this say about the true nature of God, heaven, the devil and hell?

Why

I have chosen this topic to pursue for several reasons. From 2001 to 2003 I was working towards a dual major in religious studies and psychology at The Ohio State University. While I am not religious personally, I have always been fascinated by religion so they project harkens back to my previous studies. Additionally, I worked in the computer industry for about 6 years. The use of computer cables and components is also related to my past.

Media / Proposed Artwork

The Tree of Life & The Apple(s)

To illustrate, visually, the concept that the first sin was the consumption of information as well as simultaneously showing that we continue that sin, I will construct a large Tree of Life out of discarded computer cabling and flex tubing (used the keep cabling neat normally). Three digital frames will be mounted on the tree. One frame will display images of humanity's downfall (bombing of Hiroshima, etc), one will show humanity's triumphs (landing on the moon, etc) and the third will show statistical information about the humanity's impending destruction. From the branches of the tree will hang four apples made of red computer cables connected to the tree via USB cables. There will be one apple made of copper to stand out as "the apple." The tree will stand approximately 6 feet tall. It will be half a tree as it will be against the back wall of the room where the exhibit will take place. The tree will be constructed in three segments so that it can be easily disassembled and transported as needed.

Genetic Alteration or USB-NA

Since the original sin involved instant understanding of Adam and Eve that they were naked, I've decided to illustrate this by an altered DNA molecule. The double helix will be made of copper pipes partially untwisted with the connecting base pairs made of USB connectors. At the top and bottom of the DNA helix small copper wires will be splayed out to give it almost a virus-like feel. The piece will mount in a wood base, which will be covered in resin.

Satellite "Flowers"

To drive home the idea that we are broadcasting our knowledge everywhere, I hope to create bundles of satellite dish 'flowers' to be placed around the floor and along the base of the tree. On the dishes themselves, phrases like "Learn, Sin, Broadcast" will be painted on the dish. The height of the piece will be approximate 4' tall.

Digital Heaven & Hell:

Dealing with the idea of the first sin and what it really meant raising an additional issue about the nature of heaven and hell. What is heaven if God didn't want humans to possess any knowledge? They say 'ignorance is bliss,' but perhaps that cliché is trying to tell us that ignorance is really on par with divine reward in the afterlife. To illustrate that heaven is a place where ignorance is rewarded, I will do a large digital piece. CG rendered angels will be placed in an idyllic woodland setting all holding Woodboro Baptist church-like signs with slogans like "God Hates Mensa" and "Thank God For Dead Scientists." Piles of burning books will surround the angels with more books being added by cherubim. The cherubim will hold two books that will be visible to the viewer: Darwin's "On the Origin of Species" and Richard Dawkin's "The God Delusion."

Hell, conversely, will be home to the fabled lost Library of Alexandria and home to iconic scientific geniuses like Einstein. The halls of hell will be covered with books and the demons will be prodding the geniuses to continue learning. Surrounding the physical canvas will be copies of Darwin's "On the Origin of Species" and Dawkin's "The God Delusion" among others.

Both Digital Heaven and Digital Hell will be two large digital prints mounted on opposite sides of the wall. Each will be 24" x 36".

Timeline

I am currently putting together budgets for the project. As I am not currently working, have a studio in my home and an additional outside studio as well as access to the sculpture studio at GMU I have ample work area. I have all the computer equipment needed for the digital portion for the project so I will have no need of the school's equipment. I hope to have the majority of the tree finished by mid-October. The piece entitled USB-NA should be finished by the end of September. The digital pieces will be finished by the end of November. The apples will be finished throughout the project, as will the satellite dishes.

Equipment

I will be providing my own equipment.

Special Challenges

I will need electricity to power the digital frames should that actually become a part of the installation. The tree, being only a half tree will cover a good portion of a wall. The digital pieces will also need to hang from a wall. I will be teaching myself a new 3D program for the digital prints as well as all the basic woodworking skills required to build the base of the tree as I've never built something on that kind of a scale.