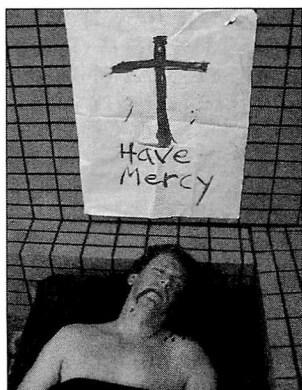


Part 3: Inquiry into instructional practices

Sebastian's journal: A short story about the darker side of learner autonomy



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ABOUT STEPHEN

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DEDICATION

For my mother, Mrs. Jean Davies, 1930-2006

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ABSTRACT

The following short story illustrates my interest in exploring alternative ways of framing academic discussions. It is a piece of fiction that critiques learner autonomy by focusing on the issues of power and control that are implicated whenever autonomy is discussed. Specifically, it explores the Foucauldian concept that power asymmetries are sustained, and replicated, through a range of surveillance practices that are used to monitor and control human behavior. In particular, surveillance is widely practiced in those institutions, such as prisons and schools, which aim to normalize behavior – the powerless are observed; the powerful, on the other hand, are the observers. Status, then, is directly proportional to the degree of freedom from observation; however, only God – All-Seeing, but Never Seen – is truly free from surveillance.

私は以前からアカデミックな議論をユニークな方法で行なうことに、関心を持っている。その一例として、この短編小説を執筆した。オートノミーが論じられるとき必ず問題になるのが、権力と管理の問題である。特にこの物語では、人間の行動を監視することによって権力の不平等な配分が維持・再現されるという、フーコーの概念について考察している。監視は、特に行動を正常化させることを目的とする牢獄や学校などの機関において、広く用いられてきた。権力のないものが監視され、権力者が監視者となる。監視されない自由と社会的地位が、直接比例する。しかし厳密に言えば、全能で神聖なる神のみが真に監視されない自由を持ちうるのである。

THE PROLOGUE

For several years now, I have been interested in the Panopticon, a special prison building that was designed by the English philanthropist Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832). Bentham was convinced that the Panopticon would revolutionize the treatment of offenders because of a unique feature – its observation tower. This tower had a number of ingeniously designed portals that enabled the prison guards to observe the prisoners, without the prisoners ever knowing whether they were *being watched or not*. This experience would, Bentham claimed, cause them to have a profound feeling of “portentous omniscience.” And this sensation – the feeling of constant, covert surveillance – would force the prisoners to use a variety of self-monitoring activities, designed to eliminate any deviant behaviours before they could be detected by the guards. In short, the prisoners would *regulate their own behavior*.

In fact, it was Bentham’s use of the words “portentous omniscience” that particularly caught my attention, since, some years ago, while researching social life in medieval monastic houses, I came across the same words used in a somewhat different context.

I had discovered, quite by chance, that the ancient Carthusian monastery at Lundz also had a most unusual building – a Learning Center constructed around a special observation tower. At first, quite naturally, I assumed that the Learning Center was simply a scriptorium; however, as I studied the drawing in front of me more closely, I began to notice a clear similarity to Bentham’s Panopticon.

Indeed, as I continued with my research, I began to realize that the Learning Center was, in fact, a facility for experimenting with behavioral control, organized by the Abbot of Lundz, Guibert the Venerable. And it was Guibert who had used the expression “portentous

omniscience” to refer, not, as one might have anticipated, to the power of the Almighty himself, but rather to the effects of the observation tower on the monks in the Learning Center.

As I pondered this odd pair of coincidences – the similarity in design of the Learning Center and the Panopticon, and also the use of the same words by two men who were separated by centuries of history – I began to wonder whether Bentham, had, indeed, paid a visit to the monastery at Lundz. Was it even possible that the Panopticon was not, after all, his original design?

With this and other matters in mind, after making all the necessary arrangements, I departed from my residence at Schadenberg and returned to Lundz, where, thanks to the generosity of the archivist, Gustav Mann, I was able to peruse at my leisure the many ancient texts that are kept in the town library.

Sadly, however, despite many hours of spirited researching, I was unable to find any solid evidence that Bentham had visited Lundz: In short, and not without a little chagrin, I was forced to abandon my fledgling theory.

Nevertheless, as is so often the case with research, when one door closes, then another one promptly opens: Indeed, before my very eyes, as I delved deeper into the texts that related the history of the monastery, a most remarkable story began to unfold – a story, in brief, about the writing of a very special book.

For Guibert the Venerable, the abbot to whom I have already referred, had a most grandiose ambition: He wanted to synthesize everything that was known about the universe into one summative text. This text was to be called, “The Book of All Knowledge,” and would, he believed, surpass all of the classical works, written by the ancient masters, that he had been forced to read in his youth.

Guibert understood, of course, that such a project was far too much work for one man; and so, without obtaining official authorization, he’d ordered all of the monks in the monastery to commence working on the task.

However, as time passed, the project began to run into considerable difficulties, chiefly because of what Guibert referred to as “gross indolence” on the part of several monks. Indeed, it appears that Guibert had been so frustrated with their slow progress – particularly with regard to translation duties – that he’d decided on a new policy: he would confine the less productive monks in the specially-constructed Learning Center.

There, day and night, the monks labored – and yet Guibert was still not satisfied. He was convinced that malevolent thoughts were clouding their minds, dampening their enthusiasm for their studies, and inducing lethargy; moreover, since the observers in the tower had no means of knowing what the monks in the Learning Center were actually *thinking* about, Guibert needed to find a new method of surveillance.

His solution was to order the monks to keep personal learning journals, in which they were to record a vast array of details in accordance with his instructions. Guibert regularly inspected these journals, often making copious notes in the margins, before returning them to the monks. He claimed that the purpose of the journals was to guide the monks on their journey towards spiritual salvation; and so he urged each and every one of them to critically examine his conscience, even if that meant revealing his darkest and most sinful thoughts.

Any deviations from the righteous path of learning could be rectified most effectively, Guibert insisted, by regular and rigorous mortification of the flesh. For this purpose, he advocated the use of a special instrument of correction: a whip that was called the *horribile flagellum*. This whip had small hooks attached to its ox-hide straps, making the pain from the

lash extremely unpleasant, far worse than the standard whip that was used for self-flagellation – the *normalis flagellum*.

In retrospect, it seems quite clear to me that if any of Guibert’s unorthodox methods had been discovered, then he would have been severely reprimanded, and quite possibly faced prosecution from the Church authorities.

However, I believe that two important factors greatly reduced the chances of this ever happening.

Firstly, although the Learning Center and the observation tower were visible from the Abbot’s house, they were located behind the monastery church, and so they could not be seen from the main gate, or from the guest-house where the few visitors stayed.

Secondly, Guibert himself was a noted eccentric, disliked and avoided by most in the Church hierarchy, and especially by his former friend, and immediate superior, Adselmo von Brock, Reverend Father of the monastery at Glasperlenspiel.

Nevertheless, on a cold November morning, many years ago, a certain event at the monastery had a profound influence on the outcome of Guibert’s grand project....



PART ONE: THE CARTHUSIAN MONASTERY AT LUNDZ

IN WHICH GUIBERT THE VENERABLE, ABBOT OF LUNDZ, LEARNS SOMETHING NEW

Guibert walked to the window at the side of his study and stared out at the enormous observation tower that rose high above the Learning Center. He noticed that a little overnight snow had settled on the roof of the tower, and that a few more snowflakes were spiraling down from the early-morning sky.

His study was quite cold despite the blazing fire in the grate, and, as he turned from the window, he shivered and coughed a couple of times.

He walked back across the room – slow, awkward steps – and sat down behind his desk; and then, with a sigh, he opened the Latin grammar book that was lying in front of him. It belonged to Herman.

Guibert turned the well-thumbed pages of the book. Recently, he’d been giving Herman some private tutorials, and he was very pleased with the young monk’s progress. In fact, the previous evening, after a particularly accurate piece of translation, Guibert had offered Herman a glass of wine.

“Thank you, Father. This will fortify me against the cold,” Herman said with a grin, before leaving for night watch duty in the observation tower.

Afterwards, Guibert had washed the empty glass carefully, smiling to himself.

Guibert looked up from the book, and glanced at the cabinet where he'd put the glass, and then back towards the window. Someone was running across the quadrangle towards his study – the sound of heavy footsteps got closer and closer, thumping up the stone staircase, and then there was a loud knock on the door.

“Come in, come in,” Guibert said.

The door opened and a young monk with powerful shoulders stepped into the room. His face was very red, and sweat gleamed on his clean-shaven head.

“Good morning, Tomas,” Guibert said, “How good of you to come. I've been waiting for some time. Where – ?”

“Father... I have some... terrible news...”

“What do you mean? What's happened?”

“It's Brother Sebastian.”

“Sebastian?”

“Yes... Sebastian's... dead.”

“Dead? Are you sure?”

“Yes, Father, I'm sure,” Tomas said.

“Tomas, calm down. Now listen to me. Does anyone else know about this?”

“Only Brother Herman, Father. I went to the tower and asked him if he'd seen anything, but he said no, and so I came straight here.”

“Herman was still in the tower? At this time?”

“Yes, Father.”

“Why? It's already morning.”

“He...”

“What, Tomas?”

“He was asleep, Father. I woke him and told him that Sebastian was dead, then I came to see you.”

“I see.” Guibert leaned back in his chair, and looked at Tomas. “All right. Tell me what you found in the cell. All the details, exactly as you remember them.”

“Sebastian was lying on his bed. At first I thought he was asleep, but then I noticed the blood –”

“Blood?”

“Yes. First I noticed blood on the bed. And then I saw the Cross and the words ‘Have Mercy’ on the wall. Written in blood. With his own blood, Father –”

But Guibert interrupted him. “Don't speculate, Tomas. I just want the facts.” He began to cough – a harsh, phlegmy rattle – and he raised a white handkerchief to his lips with his left hand. His right hand, as usual, was concealed under his habit. “Tomas, listen to me carefully. Did you find anything unusual in his cell?”

“No, Father; his Bible, his washing bowl and his... his whip”.

“What about his whip?”

“The horrible flagellum – there were some pieces of flesh on the hooks.”

Guibert paused for a few seconds. When he spoke again, there was a slight waver in his voice. “Sebastian must have mortified his flesh with exceptional vigor. I'm quite sure he died with

a clear conscience. But...what about his learning journal? You didn't mention it. Haven't you brought it with you?"

"Father, forgive me – I left it in the cell."

Guibert stared at Tomas, and his eyes narrowed with suspicion. "Why did you leave it?"

"I was in a hurry. I'm sorry, Father. I'll go and get it."

"Wait Tomas. First, I need to make something clear to you." Guibert stroked his chin a couple of times. He glanced up at the window before continuing: "Sebastian's death is, of course, most distressing for all of us. But there is something that you ought to know. A few days ago, I visited Sebastian," Guibert glanced at the window again and lowered his voice, "and he told me that he was having visions, and hearing voices. I inspected his journal – the evaluation sheets were normal, but he'd made some drawings of loathsome creatures – monstrosities, inspired, no doubt, by his frenzied imagination. I feared that the Evil One wished to possess his soul, and so I urged him to mortify his flesh, and to make a full confession to the Lord. Regrettably, the knowledge of his guilt must have driven him to excessive measures – he was unable to endure the pain, and, in his final moments, he desired to make a true gesture of penance."

Tomas shook his head, slowly. "Father, with respect, I know that Sebastian was suffering, but not from over-powering guilt."

"Tomas, we are all sinners, and so the Devil torments us."

"Yes, Father, of course you are right – but Sebastian had other problems."

"What do you mean?"

"He couldn't concentrate on studying. Months passed, and yet he produced very little useful work."

"Yes, I know – that's why I moved him from his regular cell, and placed him in the Learning Center. To encourage him to focus on his studies."

"But it didn't work, Father. He didn't respond to the isolation, to the stricture of silence. I gave him the simple task of classifying wasps – they are such a problem in the orchard, particularly with the plums – but he did nothing. He seemed to prefer writing sacrilegious slogans. He called them: 'The Commandments.'"

Guibert frowned and pointed at Tomas. "I know why he didn't respond. Among Sebastian's many sins, the most obvious was sloth. He was a lazy monk, and you were lax in punishing him. That's why he did so little."

"On the contrary, Father, I gave him several chastisements in accordance with your orders."

"Are you implying that my punishments caused his death?"

"No, Father."

"Then what are you saying?"

"Perhaps we can't treat all the monks in the same way, and expect the same results – we may need to try a different approach with some of them."

"A different approach? Are you crazed as well? There is no time for experimenting. The Book of All Knowledge is a massive project. I need results, not excuses. We are Carthusians, Tomas, following the ascetic tradition of St. Bruno; not fat, indolent Benedictines gorging ourselves on swan and mead and doing nothing." Guibert's blue eyes flashed angrily. "Go back to the Center and clean Sebastian's cell. Remove all traces of his blood. Get that journal that you so carelessly forgot, and bring it straight to me. Do you hear me?"

"Yes, Father."

Dismissed at last, Tomas opened the oak door, and stepped outside into the cold air. As he hurried along the pathway that led towards his own cell, Sebastian's journal, hidden under his habit, pressed against his ribs.

Thomas entered his cell through the narrow door, shook some snow from his habit, and, feeling thirsty, he filled a pewter mug with water from the conduit. He took a few gulps – the water was icy cold – and then he carried the mug to his desk. He sat down, lit a large candle, and opened the journal.

The first pages were physical self-evaluation sheets – Sebastian had recorded his daily bowel movements, hours of sleep, and the food that he'd eaten.

Tomas continued to turn the pages. The next section was: "Dialog With Self–A Critical Examination." Sebastian had used a scale to make daily recordings. There were seven categories: "self-regulation," "self-evaluation," "self-construction," "self-development," "self-reflection," "self-assessment," and "self-discovery." Underneath Sebastian had written: "The self is dialogic; I am a multiple of selves, and all of them is me."

The next section was: "The Development of New Learning Orthodoxies: The Commandments." Here Sebastian had written many sentences, double-spaced, in the form of a manifesto:

- The desire for God begat the love of learning.
- Surveillance is mine, sayeth the Lord.
- All are watched; but some are watched more than others.
- Blessed are the vainglorious, for they shall inherit the Earth.

Tomas studied the rest of the entries until, abruptly, they stopped. On the next pages were several drawings of monsters, the "loathsome creatures," that Guibert had described earlier.

The pictures were indeed alarming, but not original – they were copies of illustrations from a bestiary kept in the scriptorium. This bestiary, based on Pliny's *Natural History*, was intended for moral instruction – it described a variety of creatures in great detail.

Sebastian had spent many happy hours copying these illustrations, his quill in his right hand, and several pots of colored ink on the desk in front of him. The basilisk, with its power to kill with a mere hiss or a glance, had particularly fascinated him. "The power of observation is indeed miraculous," Sebastian was fond of saying. "Just ask Old Claw Hand."

Sebastian had done well in his early years at Lundz; he was popular with the senior monks, and they often asked him for favors. It was rumored that he came from a well-connected family, and that certain arrangements had been made to ensure his comfort at the monastery.

Indeed, after taking his solemn vows, Sebastian's waistline had begun to bulge alarmingly, and so he'd petitioned the Abbot to allow him to take daily walks.

Guibert had agreed, and soon afterwards Tomas began to see Sebastian walking through the orchard with Herman, or strolling along the banks of the river.

Guibert continued to indulge Sebastian in other matters, but as his demands grew and his work rate declined, the Abbot gradually began to lose patience.

One night in the refectory Sebastian had asked, smiling, when the next consignment of fish would be donated to the monastery. Furious, Guibert had roared: "Remember your vows!"

Tomas heard a noise outside his cell – the monks were gathering for their weekly walk – the spatium – when, for once, they were allowed to talk freely.

In the excitement, Tomas knew that he would be able to get to the main gate unnoticed.

He turned back to the journal. The last few pages consisted of diary entries, and some more drawings.

Then, reaching the last page, Tomas gasped with shock: Sebastian had drawn a picture of the Antichrist, complete with hooves, horns, a long serpent's tail, and a human face.

The face was unmistakable.

Underneath the drawing Sebastian had scrawled: "Non Serviam – I will not serve."

Tomas grabbed a quill, and an envelope. First, he wrote an address on the envelope in big, bold letters. Then he reached for a piece of parchment, dipped the quill into the ink again, and began to write:

Lundz
14, November.

My Dearest Reverend Father:

I am writing to request that you make an extraordinary visit to our house. I know that you are most concerned with the reform of abuses, and the picture I am enclosing, drawn by a brother in confinement, will illustrate the cause for my concern. There are also several other matters that I feel I must inform you about. . .

When Tomas had finished writing, he removed the drawing of the Antichrist from the journal, and placed it in an envelope with his letter. He affixed his seal, and raced through the snow towards the main gate.

He needed to hurry – first he would give the letter to the messenger, and then return the journal to Guibert.

PART TWO: THE MONASTERY AT LUNDZ. IN GUIBERT'S STUDY IN WHICH YOUNG HERMAN MAKES A CONFESSION.

Herman stared at the rows of books lined up neatly on the shelves behind Guibert. There were several classical texts among them, as well as a number of books on herbal potions and remedies. As he waited for Guibert to speak, a solitary tear ran down his cheek.

"So, you slept all night and you saw nothing?" Guibert snarled.

"Y-Yes, Father. I'm very sorry."

"Herman, frankly I'm disappointed in you. The death of a monk is a serious matter, and I hold you responsible. And this couldn't have come at a worse time – my book is nearing completion, and if word of this misfortune were to spread, the whole project could be placed in jeopardy." Guibert frowned and shook his head.

"I'm sorry Father, but I fear that the news has already traveled."

Guibert stiffened in his chair. "What do you mean?"

"Earlier this morning Tomas came to see you, didn't he?"

"Yes, he told me about Sebastian."

"After he left you, he went back to his cell."

"His *own* cell?"

"Yes. I know because I followed him. I was coming to see you, to apologize. But when I saw Tomas hurrying across the quadrangle, I was curious – I thought he was hiding something inside his habit – so I followed him back to his cell and I saw him reading the journal."

"Sebastian's journal?"

"Yes, Father."

"You're sure?"

"Yes."

Guibert exhaled slowly. "So that means Tomas was hiding it from me. Have you any idea why?"

"No, but there is something else."

"Go on."

"He tore a page from the journal."

"He tore out a page... Why? What had Sebastian written? Did you see?"

"No, not clearly. But it looked like a drawing."

"Of what?"

"Of some kind of...demon."

"A demon? Ah yes, those monsters tormented him. The boy was weak, and the Devil knew it – he was determined to seize Sebastian's soul. But why, I wonder, did Tomas want that particular drawing?"

"He put it into an envelope. With a letter."

"What?" Guibert hissed. "Tomas must be truly crazed. I told him so this morning when he tried to convince me that my methods weren't appropriate for Sebastian. What was it he said? 'We may have to try a different approach.' As if we can make an exception for every brother who has to endure a few hardships. Tomas knows our mission: to produce a text that will glorify our Lord's greatest triumph – The Creation. I don't want anyone to think we have monks possessed by demons. Just think of the consequences. We'll have every exorcist and inquisitor in the Church coming here and poking their noses into our affairs." Guibert stared at Herman for a few seconds, and then he asked in a calmer voice: "Where was Tomas sending the letter? Did you see the address?"

"He sent it to our Reverend Father, Adselmo von Brock. At Glasperlenspiel."

Hearing that, Guibert got to his feet, and walked to the window.

For the second time that morning, he stared at the Learning Center where the monks, confined in their cells, were busy with their various tasks: translating, illustrating, classifying, and composing.

Several further seconds passed in silence, and then he turned around saying: "Herman, you appear to have made amends for your earlier transgression – perhaps your powers of observation are not as deficient as I'd thought. Now, listen to me carefully. Say nothing about

this. To anyone. Do you understand me?”

“Yes, Father.”

“Good. Now, go and find Tomas. I want to talk to him.”

As Herman hurried from Guibert’s study, he noticed that there were several muddy footprints on the steps, and also that a large, strange-looking leaf was lying at the bottom of the staircase.

Curious, he bent down, and picked it up.

Stuffing the leaf inside his habit, he raced towards the Learning Center.

As soon as Herman had gone, Guibert reached into a drawer, and took out Sebastian’s journal. Slowly, he turned the pages. He looked at the bodily function logs, the self-evaluations, the learning manifesto, and the drawings.

Then, for the first time, he realized that the last page was missing.

PART THREE: THE GRAND ABBEY AT GLASPERLENSPIEL IN WHICH REVEREND FATHER ADSELMO VON BROCK, PRIOR OF THE ABBEY, RECEIVES A LETTER.

Someone knocked on the door.

“Come in,” Adselmo said, looking up from the book he was reading. The door opened, and an elderly man, around 70, stepped into the room.

“Ah, Josef, what is it?” Adselmo asked.

“A letter for you, sir.” Josef handed the letter to Adselmo.

“Thank you. When did it arrive?”

“A few minutes ago. I brought it straight to you. Is there anything else, sir?”

Adselmo glanced at the fire. “Would you bring some more firewood?”

“Yes, sir. I’ll be back soon.” Josef turned around, walked across the room, and stepped outside into the hall.

As soon as the door had closed, Adselmo opened the letter, and read it carefully. He studied the drawing, and then he pressed his hands together.

As he prayed, the embers in the fire burned bright red, like the sun that used to set over the seminary where, many years before, Adselmo had met Guibert for the first time.

From the start of his studies, Guibert had been dedicated to self-improvement. He had developed many special learning strategies, and became very intolerant of any weaknesses in himself, or, for that matter, in anyone else.

In particular, he despised the habit of sleeping late in the mornings. When Adselmo countered that even the Angelic Doctor enjoyed the benefits of a leisurely nap, Guibert had complained, “Why must you have an answer for everything?”

Guibert sometimes talked about his childhood: His parents had passed away when he was still young, and he’d been brought up by an impoverished bachelor uncle who lived in Saarbrücken.

Against the uncle's wishes, Guibert had kept a ferret in a shed at the bottom of the small garden. The ferret's name was Uriel, and Guibert fed it scraps of food smuggled from the kitchen. "Hungry, he was. Always. He loved chicken. He took it from my hand. He even let me stroke him. I was training him to keep guard – The Lord of the Shed. Uriel über alles."

But one morning, Guibert had forgotten to wipe the chicken grease from his fingers, and the ferret, dazzled by the light from the open shed door, had sunk its needle-sharp teeth into his right hand.

Unfortunately, the wound had become infected, and the local doctor used his bone saw to amputate three fingers.

While convalescing, Guibert remained indoors reading – and it was during this time that he first thought of his idea for a Book of All Knowledge – a text that would summarize everything that was known about the universe.

Of course, it would be a monumental task: He envisioned a community of learners, all pursuing their own avenues of inquiry, fuelled by intellectual fervor, working for the greater glory of God, and the production of the seminal text.

But Adselmo was not convinced: "A Book of All Knowledge? That's quite a project." He was walking with Guibert in the seminary garden, near to the lecture theater. "On the other hand, if you do get it written, you'll be as famous as Aristotle; after all, he had a similar idea didn't he?"

"Go ahead and laugh if you want to. You'll see. When it's published I'll be famous. No one will patronize me then."

"Patronize you? I was just making a joke."

"Not you. Dr. Doppelganger. The learned professor of divinity, prattling away in there," Guibert said, pointing at the lecture theater. "In my last tutorial he was asking me some ludicrous questions about how many angels can pass through the eye of a needle. When he'd finally finished pontificating – he always knows the answers, of course – and I got a chance to tell him about my idea for the book, he said: 'Such ambition, Guibert. Really, I'm astounded. Of course, if you are to succeed, you'll need to make full use of the seminary archives for your research – and I'm quite sure you'll agree that we've spared no expense in obtaining the latest texts. Perhaps, the next time you see your uncle, you might care to remind him of that fact; and also that your tuition fee for this semester is still unpaid.'" Guibert's voice was a shrill parody of Doppelganger's high-pitched tones.

The setting sun was already low in the sky, and a roosting blackbird, alarmed by the noise, burst from a lilac bush. "God made the world, not a synod," Guibert said, his eyes following the bird. "I've no more time for Doppelganger's tedious tutorials. Learning is suffering, and should be endured alone. Constrain the body, and liberate the mind. It's as simple as that."

And, from around that time, Adselmo had begun to see less and less of Guibert – he was always busy in the seminary archives – either reading a book, or drafting the first chapters of his "great work."

Adselmo, on the other hand, had always balanced scholarship with other, less rigorous activities – a fact that, many years later, he sometimes had cause to regret as he sat in his large, book-lined study at Glasperlenspiel, surrounded by a multitude of tomes, none of which bore his name on its cover...

There was a knock on the door. Adselmo looked up, startled by the noise. "Yes?" he said.

“I’ve brought the firewood, sir.”

“Thank you, Josef.”

Josef bent down, and put the wood near the fireplace. Then he selected a few pieces, and placed them in the fire. Next, he prodded the base of the fire with a poker. New flames flared up from the embers, and the wood crackled in the heat.

Satisfied, Josef stood up again.

“Josef, one other thing,” Adselmo said. “Tell the stable master to saddle a horse. I’m leaving for Lundz in the morning. I’m making an extraordinary visit to the monastery.”

“For Lundz, sir? But that’s a long way. The weather—”

“Yes, Josef, I know about the weather – I’ll just have to take my chances. If I wait any longer, there will be too much snow on Mt. Zauberberg. And will you tell the Procurator to prepare the necessary papers?”

“Very good, sir.”

**PART FOUR: THE MONASTERY AT LUNDZ. IN THE LOCUTORY
IN WHICH ADSELMO VON BROCK, AFTER A LONG AND TEDIOUS JOURNEY,
CONFRONTS GUIBERT THE VENERABLE.**

“A prison? At Lundz?” Guibert laughed; the sharp sound was like a fox barking. “And me as the jailer?” Guibert was about to laugh again, but then he changed his mind: “Reverend Father, I’m afraid that you are quite mistaken. Really, the whole notion of a prison and a surveillance tower in the middle of our peaceful community – frankly, I find the idea quite repugnant.”

“Is that so? Then perhaps you could explain this to me.” Adselmo reached into his case, and took out the letter from Tomas. He passed it to Guibert. “You know that Tomas sent this to me?”

“No, I had no idea. Please let me see it.” Guibert read the letter carefully, and then he put it down. “Reverend Father, this is fascinating, really quite remarkable – to think that Tomas would go to such lengths to lure you here. It really is appalling. However, in his condition, such deluded fantasies were only to be expected.”

“His condition? What are you talking about?”

“Reverend Father, I’m sorry but I have some bad news. Bad news, indeed. A few days ago, Tomas fell victim to a serious malady, a most noxious pestilence. The physician attempted the usual remedies – cupping, leeches and bleeding – but there was no improvement. He administered the usual potions, herbs and diverse elixirs; but, sadly, to no avail. Most regrettably, poor Tomas has been welcomed into the bosom of Our Savior.”

“You mean Tomas is dead?”

“Yes, Reverend Father. Quite dead. He passed away in my arms.” Guibert’s lower lip trembled, and he made the sign of the Cross.

A few moments passed while Adselmo waited for Guibert to recover: “Guibert, I appreciate that this must be quite distressing for you, but please listen to me. I need to be quite clear about this. You’re telling me that there is no prison here, no surveillance tower, and no confinement. That all of these things were figments of poor Tomas’s frenzied imagination? Hallucinations brought on by his sickness? And now he’s dead?”

"Yes, Reverend Father."

"I see. This is most unfortunate, and I have to add, not a little inconvenient since I was hoping to have a chance to speak with Tomas in private."

"Yes, I agree. It's most regrettable, particularly since you've come such a long way to visit us. However, I'm afraid that your time may have been wasted."

"No, not entirely – I intend to make a detailed inspection of the monastery."

"Unfortunately, Reverend Father, that won't be possible. You see the pestilence is still with us. Several of the brethren have fallen ill – that's why we are meeting here in the locutory, and not at my house. Indeed, I think the best course of action would be for you to leave as soon as possible. Forgive me, but I have taken the liberty of arranging for a guide to lead you back over Mt. Zaubenberg tomorrow morning, for I fear there will soon be a heavy fall of snow." Guibert smiled and began to get to his feet. "Please accept my apologies, but now I must tend to my flock. I've made arrangements for a brother to escort you to the guest-house. I trust you will find your lodgings comfortable enough. And now, if there is nothing more..."

"Guibert, I appreciate your concern for my well-being – however, kindly remember that this is an official visitation – I will decide when to leave the monastery. Now, the containment of this pestilence is clearly of the utmost importance, and so you must close all the gates. As for the sick, they must be isolated. Place them in the infirmary and..."

"Yes, of course, forgive my interruption Father, but I have already considered these matters, and taken the appropriate measures. But, as I've just said, my chief concern is for your safety, and that is why I must insist that you leave here tomorrow. After you have departed, I will lock the gates."

Adselmo leaned forward, and looked more closely at Guibert: "Very well, then. If the disease is as virulent as you claim, I would be foolish not to heed your advice; but you must inform me as soon as it has been contained."

"Yes, Reverend Father."

"Good. And now, before you go, there is one more thing that I wanted to talk to you about. It concerns your...scholarly works. You have established quite a reputation since we studied together at the seminary, haven't you? How many treatises have you published now?"

"I'm not sure – perhaps a hundred, maybe more." There was a touch of pride in Guibert's voice.

"One hundred. Quite remarkable – and on such a wide variety of topics. You really must have been very busy. A truly tenacious scholar."

"I'm not sure that I understand you. Are you implying that I have neglected my duties in some way? Because of my research?"

"No, not at all. It's just that, as you may know, my own studies have not been nearly so fruitful. It has even been said by some..., and here Adselmo paused, "that I lack a true scholarly identity."

"And so...?"

"I was wondering whether you could give me a few tips. Suggest a few areas of inquiry, a few topics that might be worth exploring."

"Reverend Father, you are surely jesting with me. I know that you are a most learned man, an expert theologian."

"Well, then, perhaps I could contribute something to your grand project?"

“My project?”

“Yes, the Book of All Knowledge. I remember how passionate you were about it. At the seminary. All those hours you spent in the library, while I was... otherwise preoccupied.”

“With what? I often wondered what you were doing,” Guibert said, smiling.

“I always aimed for a well-balanced life. Some scholarship, and some sport, and so on.”

“And not a little socializing. You see, Reverend Father, with respect, I never had the benefit of your... connections. As you know, my background was far more humble. For me, scholarship was my true hope of salvation, my passport to The Promised Land, as it were.”

“Yes, Guibert, I know – and you’ve eclipsed us all with your triumphs. But that brings me back to the topic of your book, and my proposal to write something for it.”

Guibert laughed: “Father, while I was at the seminary, and for some time afterwards, it is true, I continued to be preoccupied with that particular idea. But as the years passed, I began to realize that it was quite impractical. It was just a young man’s foolish dream.”

“I see... that must have been very disappointing for you. After all, it would have been your crowning achievement. Still, I must say you’ve certainly not wasted your time – one hundred publications is quite something.”

“Thank you. And now, if there is nothing else,” Guibert said, standing up and turning towards the door, “I really must go to the infirmary, and so I’ll bid you good night.”

PART FIVE: THE MONASTERY AT LUNDZ. THE JAIL IN WHICH HERMAN EXPLAINS HIS ACTIONS.

The jail was cold and damp. Herman stepped past the jailer who was snoring loudly next to an empty beer bottle, and reached for the large bunch of keys that were lying on the floor. He was carrying a candle in his left hand.

“Herman? What are you doing here?” Tomas asked, peering through the shadows at the approaching figure.

“We must talk to the Reverend Father,” Herman said, putting the candle down and fiddling with the keys. “Now, which one is number 7? Ah, yes...”

He unlocked the door and Tomas, relieved, stepped outside. He patted Herman on the shoulder, and the young monk grinned. Herman was about to speak, but then Tomas looked at the jailer, and pressed his finger to his lips: “Sshhh! We don’t want to wake him,” he whispered.

But Herman shook his head and laughed. “There’s no need to worry. None at all. He won’t wake up for another eight hours or so. I’m sure of that.”



"What do you mean?"

"I added something to his beer. A little mandrake."

"Mandrake? But that's poison."

"Yes, I know. But only in large doses. Mix a tiny amount with alcohol, and it causes a very deep sleep. Not death. That's why I slept all night in the tower – the night Sebastian died. Guibert gave me a drink of wine that evening, after my Latin lesson, and as soon as I got to the top of the tower I passed out. I slept like an angel."

"That's why you were still asleep in the morning. When I found you."

"Yes."

"But how do you know that Guibert put mandrake in your wine?"

"I found a mandrake leaf on the staircase outside his study. And then I remembered something else. The day before he gave me the drink, I was walking past the herb garden and I noticed a patch of freshly turned soil."

"So?"

"Guibert must have told the gardener to get a plant for him. And he dropped a leaf on his way up the stairs to Guibert's study. There were muddy footprints, too. On the stairs."

"And, if Guibert knew you were asleep in the tower..." Tomas said, "he could have visited Sebastian, certain that no one would see him."

"Yes."

"So you think Guibert killed Sebastian?"

"It's possible. But there's no real proof. But we should go and tell the Reverend Father what we know. Come on."

"Wait a minute. There's something else."

"What?"

"Somehow, Guibert knew that I'd taken Sebastian's journal. From his cell. Someone followed me, and saw me writing a letter to the Reverend Father. You wouldn't know anything about that would you?" Tomas said, stepping towards Herman and clenching his fist.

"Wait! Yes, you're right – I did tell him. About the letter, I mean. Tomas, I'm sorry. But please listen to me. I was terrified that Guibert would punish me for sleeping on duty. But when I realized he'd drugged me, I decided to come here to look for you. I knew he would lock you in here."

Tomas slowly lowered his fist.

Herman, relieved, followed Tomas out of the jail and across the quadrangle. A full moon lit the path as they hurried along, and, as Herman glanced ahead, he saw that a candle was still burning brightly in the guest-house.

PART SIX. THE MONASTERY AT LUNDZ. IN THE LOCUTORY IN WHICH ADSELMO TALKS WITH GUIBERT FOR A SECOND TIME.

Adselmo sat at the end of a wooden table facing Guibert. Next to him there was a leather case. Adselmo rested his hand on the case and said: "And so, Guibert, you must be wondering why I

asked to speak to you again. Am I right?”

“I assumed that it was a simple matter of courtesy. After all, you are leaving for *Glasperlenspiel* this morning, and so it’s only appropriate that we should say our farewells. I trust you slept well?”

“Unfortunately, no.”

“Were you disturbed by something? By the thought of the disease spreading?”

“Let’s just say that I was disturbed. Yes, ‘disturbed’ is a good word for it. I could have done with a potion of some kind, something to help me get some rest.”

“A potion?”

“Yes, you know the kind of thing I mean. Herbal medicine is one of your many areas of expertise, isn’t it?”

“Yes, it is...but if I knew of such a magic potion, I would surely bottle and sell it. After all, the Carmelites have done very well with their ales, haven’t they?”

“Indeed, they have. I have an empty bottle of their celebrated brew here with me. Herman gave it to me.” Adselmo opened the case, and took out a bottle.

“Herman gave that to you?”

“Yes. But, only after the jailer had drunk the contents. And slept very soundly afterwards, I might add.”

“I’ve already told you that there is no jail here.”

“On the contrary, there are two: one enormous jail that houses the monks who are laboring to write your book, and another one that confines the brothers you are punishing for other matters.”

“I don’t know what you are talking about.”

“No? Now, listen carefully to me. I’ve been very patient so far, but I’m growing weary of this game. Herman told me that you drugged him with mandrake. On the night that Sebastian died, he was asleep in the observation tower and saw nothing.”

“I told you...”

“Enough, Guibert,” Adselmo said, raising his voice. “Let me finish. Herman found a mandrake leaf outside your study. He added some of the leaf to this bottle of beer, and used it to drug the jailer. Then, when the jailer was asleep, he released Tomas from his cell. Tomas and Herman came to see me last night. They told me everything.”

“You are as crazed as Tomas was,” Guibert snarled, “and now he’s dead.”

“Really?” Adselmo said. Then he stood up, walked across the room, and opened the door.

Tomas stepped into the room.

“Look, Guibert. Here is the dead monk himself – risen, like our Lord, from the tomb. I must say he looks none the worse for the experience. Wouldn’t you agree?”

Guibert hissed: “What are you doing here boy? I’ll have you whipped.”

“Whipped, Guibert? Is that what you said? Just like you whipped Sebastian?”

“I had no reason to whip him.”

“Then how do you explain this?” Adselmo said, reaching into the case again, and taking out a piece of paper. He handed it to Guibert. “Why would a monk draw such a monstrous image, and crown it with a picture of your face?”

“The boy was...possessed. By demons. He told me he that he heard their voices at night.”

Calling to him. Telling him monstrous lies. I tried to comfort him..."

"Comfort him? That's a lie. You hated Sebastian. You envied his background, his friendship with Herman, but most of all, you hated him for not conforming, for not working on your book. And so you whipped him."

Some spittle rolled from the corner of Guibert's mouth: "You have no proof of that," he said.

Saying nothing in reply, Adselmo reached into the case for a third time, and threw a whip onto the table. "Look at it. The horrible flagellum. From Sebastian's cell. You gave it to him, and you beat him with it."

"Nonsense. Didn't our Lord suffer the scourge? That insolent boy needed some discipline. Self-discipline. I told him to whip himself – to strengthen his resolve, and to drive out his tormentors."

"*You* beat him with it. And then you left him to die, alone, in his cell."

Guibert snorted and thrust out his right hand – three of his fingers were shriveled, ugly stumps. "Look at this hand. It's a punishment from the Lord. A punishment for worshipping a false god, a feral beast in a cage. But my pain and humiliation only served to strengthen my faith, and I resolved to glorify the name of the Almighty through my endeavors. But, I ask you, could I use a whip with this hand?"

"With that hand, no. But you could with your left hand."

"But Sebastian was right-handed."

"So?"

"Think about this. If I beat Sebastian, then the marks from the whip would be on his right shoulder. But if he whipped himself, using his right hand, the marks would be across his left shoulder – the horrible flagellum must be used that way, to avoid injuring the eyes. Why don't you examine the body?"

"I have. Earlier this morning, I went to the mortuary. It was shocking."

"Yes, but where were the marks? On the left or the right?"

"Mainly, on the left."

A satisfied flash lit Guibert's eyes.

"But what if you stood behind him, Guibert? Then where would the marks be?" Adselmo asked.

"I don't know. I didn't stand behind him."

"Answer the question."

"On the left, and on the right."

"But mostly on the left, wouldn't you agree? After all, the direct blow is the most effective."

"Yes, and as I've said, Sebastian whipped himself and so the marks are on the left. You've admitted that already. You have no proof that I whipped him."

"Guibert, you've forgotten one important detail. Look at the whip. These hooks are regular, barbed fish hooks, are they not?"

"Yes, that's right."

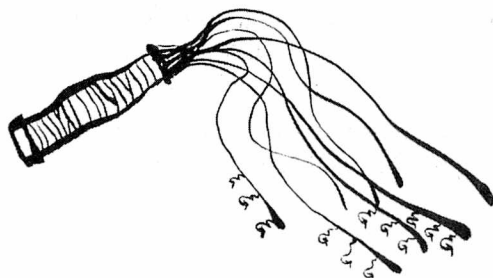
Guibert was about to speak when Adselmo raised his hand: "Say nothing. Just watch."

Adselmo handed the whip to Tomas. Tomas grabbed the whip with his left hand, and raised it above his head.

"What are you doing?" Guibert asked in a hollow voice.

“Guibert, stand up. Get away from the table. Now Tomas, go ahead. Do as I told you.”

With a powerful thrust, Tomas struck downwards with the whip. The iron hooks bit into the table. Then, with a swift, upward flick, he tore the whip free. The hooks ripped out several splinters of wood.



Next, gripping the whip in his right hand, he turned away from the table and crouched down. This time he struck over his left shoulder, and the hooks tore out more chunks of wood.

Adselmo pointed at the table. “Look Guibert. The hooks tore out pieces of wood. You saw that. But look at the marks. Here, at the place of the first strike, the biggest hole is at the top, and then the mark narrows.

Compare these marks with the second strike. Here the biggest hole is not at the top, it’s at the bottom. The opposite pattern. And this proves that the whip was used in two different directions. Now when I examined Sebastian’s body, the puncture wounds on his back were like the marks from the first blow that Tomas struck. That proves that someone else whipped him. And from the fact that the marks were on the left shoulder, that person was left-handed. You did it. You beat him, and you left him to die.”

For several seconds, Guibert stared stonily across at Adselmo and Tomas. Then, his red-rimmed eyes brimmed with tears. He knelt down on the stone floor and pressed his hands together, sobbing: “Forgive me, Reverend Father, for I am a sick man, with little time left to live. I wanted to see my project finished. The Book of All Knowledge.” Guibert sobbed again, and the tears spilled down his pale, hollow cheeks. “I urged the monks to do their best; to research; to write drafts; and to revise their work. But Sebastian was so slow. I ordered him to self-reflect, to critically examine his conscience, and to work harder. But he refused. In the end, I decided that solitary confinement was necessary, to chastise him, to get him to accept the rightful omniscience of the Lord, the ever-watchful one, the prescriber of tasks, and the giver of readings. But Sebastian never understood my methods...”

“Enough Guibert. Save your confession for the ecclesiastical court. You’ve brought disgrace to the Order, and given the Holy Father grave cause for concern. May God have mercy on your soul,” Adselmo said, shaking his head.

But then, for the first time, Tomas spoke: “Reverend Father, forgive my intrusion, but I have a suggestion to make – a simple compromise that may help us to avoid any unnecessary embarrassment...”

**PART SEVEN. THE MONASTERY AT LUNDZ. IN THE ABBOT’S STUDY
IN WHICH, AFTER SPENDING SEVERAL MONTHS AT GLASPERLENSPIEL, ADSELMO VON
BROCK RETURNS TO THE MONASTERY FOR A MEETING WITH TOMAS.**

Adselmo gazed across the quadrangle at the Learning Center – the warm, spring sunshine had already melted the last of the snow, and now the stone tiles on the roof of the observation tower

gleamed in the early-morning light.

Two crows wheeled above the tower, and their harsh cries echoed through the monastery buildings.

Adselmo watched the birds for a few moments – they seemed to be quarrelling about something, a piece of food, perhaps – but then he turned around and said: “Tomas, how are the monks performing over there? In the Center?”

“Very well, Reverend Father. All of them are busy with their tasks. By the way, did you have a chance to read any of the material that I sent you?”

“Yes, I did, and I was most impressed. The work was of a very high standard, a credit to the Order. I can see that the monks are responding well to your supervision. But what about Guibert? Has he produced anything worthwhile?”

“Well, as you can imagine, he’s taking some time to adjust. I put him in Sebastian’s old cell, and assigned him the task of classifying the smaller, carnivorous mammals.”

“And I’m sure the irony wasn’t lost on him,” Adselmo said, sitting down on a comfortable chair near to the fireplace. “Now, Tomas, tell me, how does it feel to be Abbot? Are you having any problems with your new role?”

“None whatsoever. I decided not to make too many changes to the system. I’m still following most of Guibert’s methods – they were working well enough, after all, before he became so obsessed. I’m sure the Book of All Knowledge will be finished before the summer.”

“Splendid,” Adselmo said, leaning back in the chair, and stretching his legs towards the logs that were burning in the grate. “But now I need to talk to you about a...rather delicate matter. You see there is still the unresolved issue of the authorship of the book. I am aware that Guibert began this project – he first told me about it years ago, in fact – but given the current circumstances, I think that we need to be cautious about giving him all the credit for the work. He’s clearly been suffering from dementia brought on by ill-health, and too much excitement at this early stage of his recovery would do him no good whatsoever.”

“Yes, Reverend Father, you’re quite right.”

“Good, I’m glad that you agree with me. And there is another thing to think about. There will be a huge furore when the book is published – it’s certain to be a major scholastic breakthrough, the biggest thing since the Holy Scriptures – and I’m afraid that, before long, all kinds of people, pamphleteers and their ilk, will be asking to interview the author. Now, if they were to think that Guibert wrote the book, then that would put us in a most awkward position...No, that would never do,” Adselmo said clearing his throat, and then continuing: “Now, I do realize that the work has been, shall we say, a collaborative effort, but, to simplify matters, I’ve decided that the book would look better with one name on the front. Mine. Written in big letters. You may think of me as the general editor if you like, although, as you know, I’ve no time or inclination for sorting out the fussy details. No, I’ll leave all that to you. To tell the truth, I have bigger fish to fry. I’m going to the Vatican in October – a new Cardinal is soon to be appointed – and the Holy Father has invited me for an interview. I’d like to have a copy of the book to show him – I’m sure he’ll be most impressed, and, with any luck, he may even decide to grant us a little more...autonomy.”

“That’s excellent news, Reverend Father,” Tomas said, standing up and walking towards a small cabinet. “Now, by way of celebration, perhaps I might offer you something to drink...?”

GLOSSARY

- Adselmo** The name is derived from Adso of Melk, a character in Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*.
- Angelic Doctor** Doctor Angelicus, St. Thomas Aquinas (1255-1274).
- Basilisk** A fearsome mythological creature; part rooster, part snake. Intended as an ironic metaphor for the power of observation.
- Book of all Knowledge** . . . The idea of synthesizing all knowledge into one text was first proposed by Aristotle (384-322). The current web-based encyclopedia *Wikipedia* is, I believe, the latest attempt to do this.
- Carthusians** A Christian religious order founded by St. Bruno in 1084. Considered to be the strictest order in the Catholic Church.
- Ferret** The story of Guibert and the ferret was inspired by the short story *Sredi Vashtar* by Saki (1870-1916).
- Glasperlenspiel** Magister Ludi, or *The Glass Bead Game* by Herman Hesse (1877-1962). This game also synthesizes knowledge in pursuit of truth.
- Guibert the Venerable** . . . Guibert of Nogent (1053-1124) was a Benedictine theologian, a historian, and an abbot.
- Non-Serviam: "I will not serve."** Attributed to Satan in *A Portrait of The Artist as a Young Man* by James Joyce (1882-1941).
- Locutory** A room for conversation; especially, a room in a monastery where the monks could talk.
- Mt. Zauberberg** "Der Zauberberg," *The Magic Mountain* by Thomas Mann (1875-1955).
- Procurator** An investigator.
- Spatiamentum** An extended walk, taken once a week, when Carthusian monks can enjoy talking freely together.
- Uriel** The Archangel Uriel, "The Flame of God."
- Wasps** An oblique reference to J.R.R. Tolkien (1892-1973), the master of fantasy, who compiled the entry on wasps in the Oxford English Dictionary.

CRITICAL READER RESPONSE 1

JUNE MILIANDER

There are similarities and differences between Sebastian's Journal and learner autonomy.

It is true that in modern society young people are confined to school for a very long time similar to the monks in the story. The aim, however, is not to turn the students into docile individuals whose aim it is to suppress their own personalities and talents under some authority or other, but to encourage them to exercise an influence on their own decisions and lives. Like Sebastian, there are, however, students who lack motivation and do not see the meaning in the work schools require from them.

I do not agree with the statement that autonomy includes surveillance practices to control human behavior, that the powerless are observed and that the powerful are the observers. There may be asymmetries of power in school where some teachers may misuse their position.

Supervision, however, may take different forms. In school the teacher needs to be a leader, a supporter, an encourager, and a reliable grown-up to help and guide the learners in their studies and personal development. Above all the teachers need to be knowledgeable and interested in their students. Learning diaries, today, are used partly in order to supervise and control but also as a means of getting to know the individual students and creating a relationship between teacher and learner.

Supervision can, furthermore, be seen as interaction and feedback where it is possible to share ideas. This is often a valuable learning opportunity for the teacher. To me *no* supervision would mean that the teacher is not engaged in his work and does not take on the responsibility that is to be expected from him/her. This will probably lead to anarchy rather than autonomy. Moreover, various forms of control occur as individuals control their own and others' behavior in social interaction in order to accommodate to others. Social control occurs in all kinds of communities: family, groups of friends, society.

Teaching is highly context based and very closely linked to the cultural and traditional situation where it takes place. In the story there is competition among the leaders and an ambition for fame that has disastrous consequences such as deceit and even murder. The focus of interest in the story is mainly on the leaders/teachers and how they maneuver for personal gains where collaboration occurs only to benefit the superiors. To me learning is not an individual enterprise but a collaborative endeavor based on individual needs and wishes. Collaboration should occur not only between teachers and learners but also among learners where the learners' social roles may play a greater role than academic success.

Autonomy cannot be successful if dictated from the authorities alone. It is a bottom-up movement. Autonomy has to be part of a philosophy of teaching and an attitude that includes self-concept on the part of the teacher; a desire for self-discovery in order to avoid the temptation of revenging earlier events and above all respect for the learner.

CRITICAL READER RESPONSE 2

ELLEN HEAD

This is not the first time I've thought that EFL teachers have something in common with the wandering scholars of medieval Europe. As an erstwhile Latinist and enthusiast of the medieval Latin lyrics of the *Carmina Burana* (sexy, boozy, and fun to sing at parties), I have occasionally thought, yes, this is what they'd be doing if they were alive now, living on their wits from contract to contract, singing for their supper, transient in a foreign land. Steve has welded this idea into an awesome, dark parody of a medieval murder mystery. He starts with the paradoxical idea that "status is proportional to the degree of freedom from observation." This is particularly poignant in Japan, where the idea of *seken*, or the gaze of society, has been a way of regulating social life for hundreds, if not thousands of years. Of course with the increasing use of surveillance cameras in the UK and the decreasing respect for *seken* among contemporary Japanese youth, Ruth Benedict's distinction between cultures of shame (regulation by external agency) and cultures of guilt (regulation by conscience) is less clear-cut than it once was (Benedict, 1946).

Be that as it may, Steve's parable holds a distorting mirror up to the world of scholarship that we may laugh and grow wiser about ourselves. The story attacks those who use the rhetoric of autonomy without substance or spirit. (It is nice that the narrator says his tale is the result of "some spirited research.") In this dark looking-glass world, all the values that I respect or that give me self-respect as a teacher are turned upside down. The learning center is a prison; learning journals are a means of surveillance, and "learning is suffering and should be endured alone," in the words of the evil abbot Guibert. However much I protest that this is the very opposite of my own classes, I have to admit that by teaching compulsory English courses to students whose decision to enter university might have been more their parents' than their own, I am acting as a gatekeeper rather than as the agent of enlightenment I want to be. What is more, I can't claim to be wholly free from the yearning for academic recognition that characterizes the monks. Even the good guy, Adselmo, is sneakily envious of Guibert's reputation and contrives to get his own name on the cover of the encyclopedic work commissioned by his rival. "I've decided the book would look better with one name on the cover – mine!"