



Class 10a

PERFORMING MASCULINITY FROM POSITIONS OF IMPOTENCE

Revelation

Outline

Prologue (1:1-3)

Letters to the Seven Churches (1:4-3:22)

Part I of the Revelatory Experience (4:1-11:19)

- Visions of the heavenly court: one enthroned, and lamb
- Seven seals (6:1-8:1)
- Seven trumpets (8:2-11:19)

Part II of the Revelatory Experience (12:1-22:5)

- Visions of the dragon, the beasts, and the lamb (12:1-14:20)
- Seven plagues and seven bowls (15:1-16:21)
- Judgment of Babylon, the great harlot (17:1-19:10)
- Victory of Christ and the end of history (19:11-22:5)

Epilogue (22:6-21)

Revelation

Features of Apocalyptic

- social crisis
- private (or hidden) transcript
 - A story of an sage interpreting dreams symbols and visions to predict the future
 - Is written in the present to reinforce belief that God controls history and to promise an end to crisis
 - God does not directly reveal; instead, mediating angels do
- sense of urgency
- complex of mythic features

Revelation

Features of Apocalyptic

- Complex of mythic features
 - view of God as lord of history (with "tours" of time and space) *Rev 1:8*
Alpha and Omega
 - view of time as 2 ages (present evil, future good) *Rev 20*
1000 year reign of Satan will end
 - dualistic ethics (you're either good or evil; no in-between) *Rev 13:15-14:1*
Name/# of beast vs father's name
 - binary view of cosmology (heavenly and earthly planes mingle and fight) *Entire book!*
 - esoteric language of visions and symbols *Rev 13:18*
666

Assyrian Empire (709-649 BCE)



Neo-Babylonian Empire (609-539 BCE)



Persian Empire (550-330 BCE)



Hellenistic Empires after Alexander the Great's death (332 BCE)



Hellenistic Empires (200s BCE)



Hellenistic Empires and the Seleucid Expansion (195 BCE)



The Rise of the Roman Empire (14 BCE)



Roman Political Theology

1. Augustus presented himself as an agent of restoration, not innovation
 - stability
 - prosperity
 - moral renewal
2. His poets and propaganda praised him as a kind of heaven-sent agent
 - Virgil's *Aeneid* aligns Augustus with the founder of Rome
 - Augustus aligns himself with gods of peace, victory, abundance on coins and statues
3. In fact this propaganda was meant to offset the radical innovation that Augustus represented: breaking from republican traditions and establishing himself as the sole ruler



Ara Pacis Augustae, Rome



Ara Pacis Augustae, Rome

Octavian denarius



Winged victory on ship's prow
holding wreath/crown of victory



Emperor on chariot, holding olive branch
Inscription: Imp[erator] Caesar

Octavian denarius, 32-29 BCE

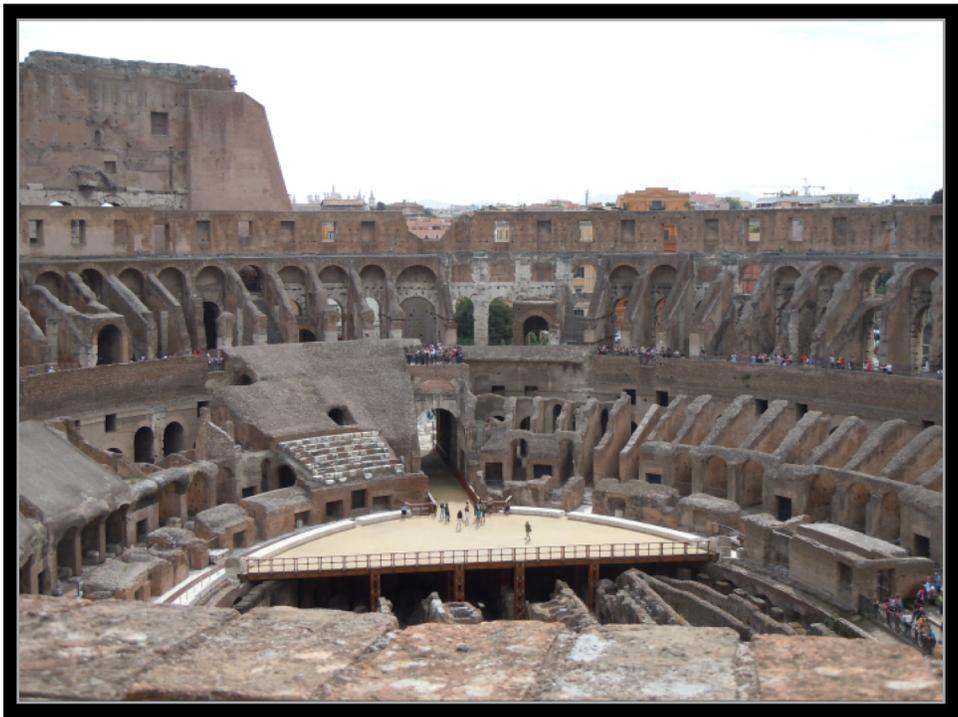


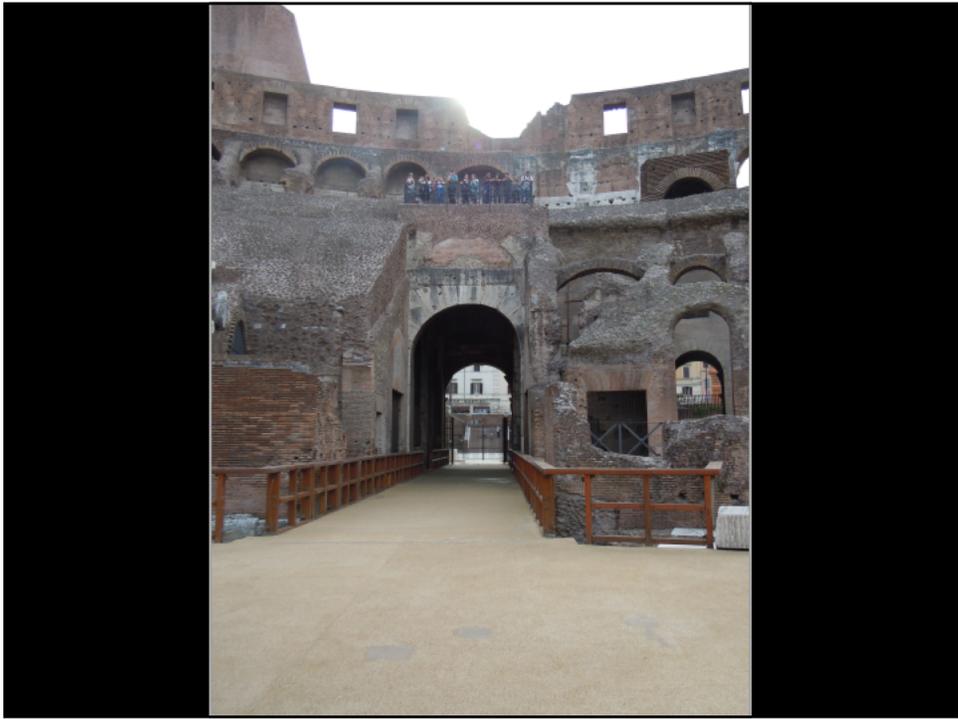
Bust of Octavian
(Augustus Caesar)

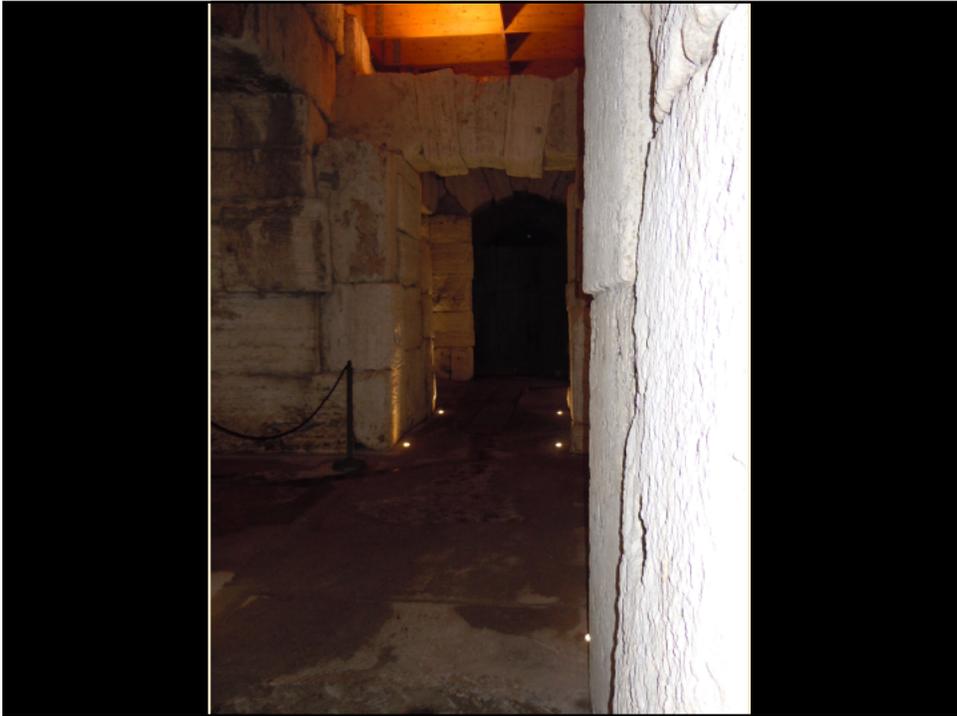


Pax, holding olive branch and cornucopia
Inscription: Caesar Divi F











The Spectacle of Martyrdom

Types of Spectacle

Gladiatorial combat

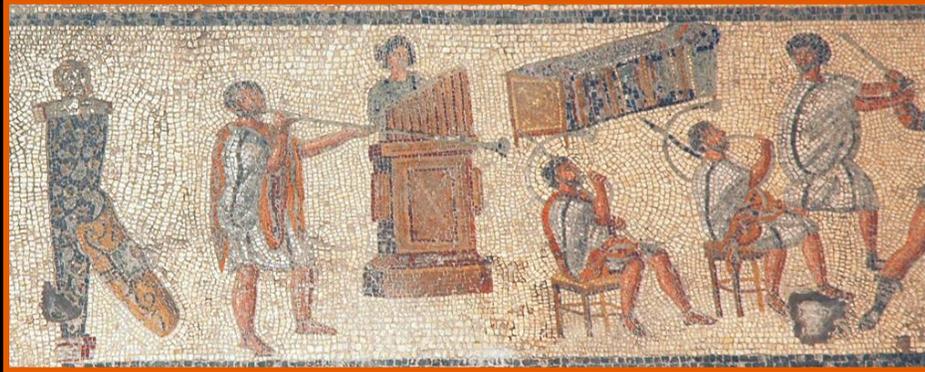
Reenactments of famous naval battles

Venationes – a staged hunt, with
combat between beasts or
between gladiators and beasts



Mythological Reenactments – Greek, Roman, or Egyptian myths
familiar to the audience would be played out on stage

Crucifixions, burnings, beheadings, etc.



Villa Di Dar Buc Ammera



Piazza Armerina, Sicily



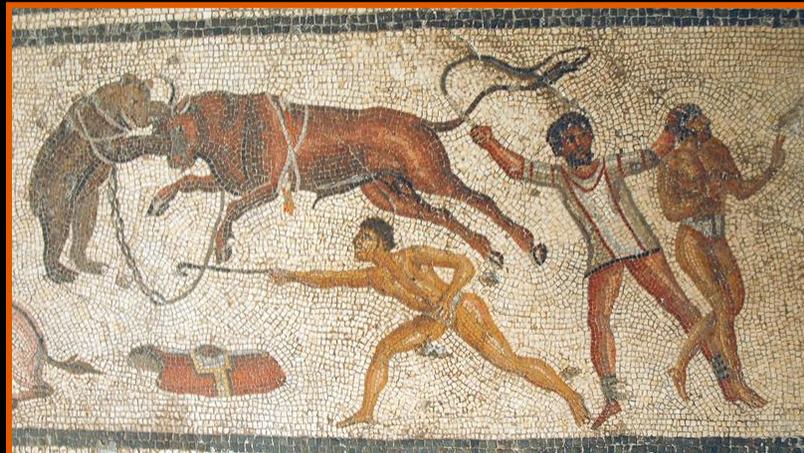
Piazza Armerina, Sicily



Piazza Armerina, Sicily



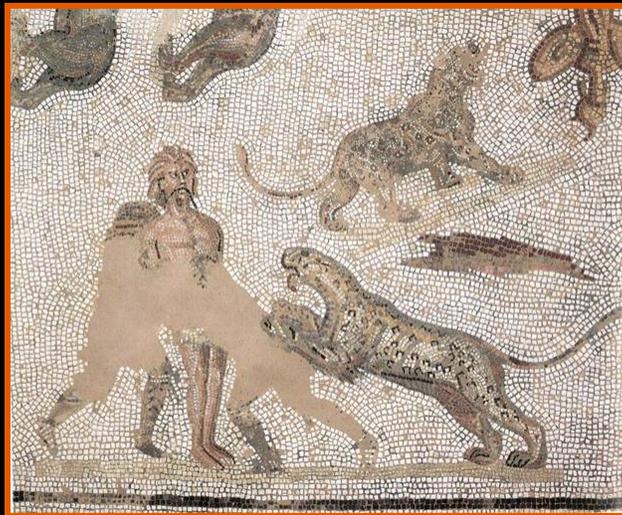
Piazza Armerina, Sicily



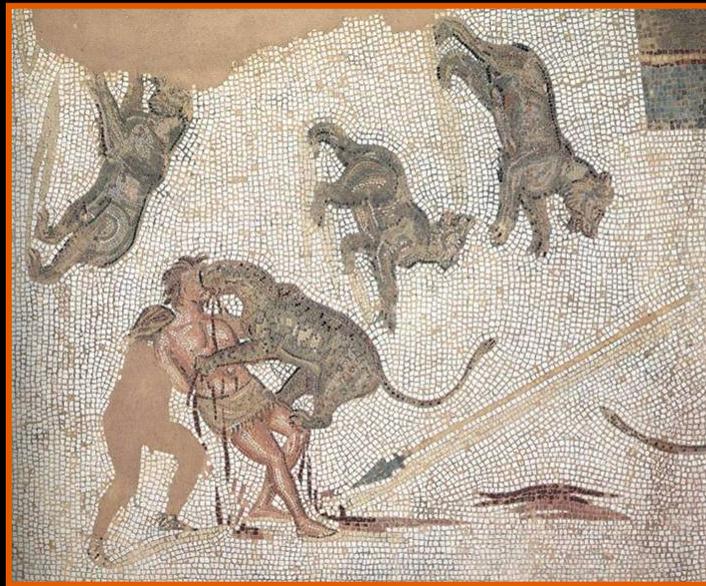
Villa Di Dar Buc Ammera



Villa Di Dar Buc Ammera



Domus Sollertiana, El Djem, Tunisia



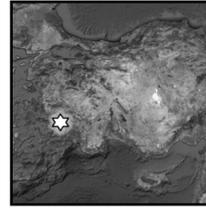
Domus Sollertiana, El Djem, Tunisia





Revelation

Historical Background



- Date 92–96 CE WHEN
- Place Patmos, Greece? WHERE
- Author “John” WHO
(but not John son of Zebedee or
the writer of the Gospel of John or
the Johannine epistles)
- Audience To the Christian churches FOR
in western Asia Minor WHOM

The victim as victor

PERFORMING MASCULINITY FROM POSITIONS OF IMPOTENCE

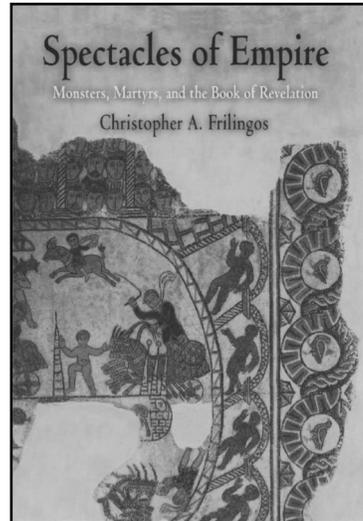
Reversing the Spectacle

The Arena in Revelation

Frilingos' thesis:

Revelation's spectacular, gruesome and graphic visions of the destruction of the Roman world and the triumph of the "new Jerusalem" mimic and thereby contest Rome's entertaining and gruesome demonstrations of power in its public spectacles (in which Christians were sometimes targets).

Christopher A. Frilingos, *Spectacles of Empire: Monsters, Martyrs, and the Book of Revelation* (Divinations Rereading Late Ancient Religion; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).



The Lamb Pierced & Slaughtered

Jesus as the Conquered Victor

Revelation 5:6-10

⁶Then I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered....

⁷He went and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who was seated on the throne. ⁸When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb [and ⁹they] sing a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation; ¹⁰ you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving our God, and they will reign on earth."

- Though penetrated, he is worthy to rule

Revelation 11:1-3, 7-13

¹ Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, "Come and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, ² but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample over the holy city for forty-two months. ³ And I will grant my two witnesses authority to prophesy for one thousand two hundred sixty days, wearing sackcloth." ... ⁷ When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, ⁸ and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that is prophetically called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. ⁹ For three and a half days members of the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb; ¹⁰ and the inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and celebrate and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to the inhabitants of the earth. ¹¹ But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and those who saw them were terrified. ¹² Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up to heaven in a cloud while their enemies watched them. ¹³ At that moment there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Revelation 13:1-18

¹ And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads; and on its horns were ten diadems, and on its heads were blasphemous names. ² And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And the dragon gave it his power and his throne and great authority. ³ One of its heads seemed to have received a death-blow, but its mortal wound had been healed. In amazement the whole earth followed the beast. ⁴ They worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?" ⁵ The beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. ⁶ It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. ⁷ Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. It was given authority over every tribe and people and language and nation, ⁸ and all the inhabitants of the earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slaughtered.

Revelation 17:6-9, 13-18

⁶When I saw [whore Babylon], I was greatly amazed. ⁷But the angel said to me, "Why are you so amazed? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her. ⁸The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to ascend from the bottomless pit and go to destruction.... ⁹This calls for a mind that has wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; also, they are seven kings.... ¹³These are united in yielding their power and authority to the beast; ¹⁴they will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful." ¹⁵And he said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the whore is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. ¹⁶And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the whore; they will make her desolate and naked; they will devour her flesh and burn her up with fire. ¹⁷For God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by agreeing to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled. ¹⁸The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth."

Revelation 5:6, 9-13

⁶Then I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.... ⁹They sing a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation; ¹⁰you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving our God, and they will reign on earth."
¹¹Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, ¹²singing with full voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"
¹³Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing, "To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"

Political Theology in Revelation

Rev 19:11-16



¹¹Then I saw the heavens opened, and there was a white horse; its rider was (called) "Faithful and True." He judges and wages war in righteousness. ¹²His eyes were (like) a fiery flame, and on his head were many diadems. He had a name inscribed that no one knows except himself. ¹³He wore a cloak that had been dipped in blood, and his name was called the Word of God. ¹⁴The armies of heaven followed him, mounted on white horses and wearing clean white linen. ¹⁵Out of his mouth came a sharp sword to strike the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod, and he himself will tread out in the wine press the wine of the fury and wrath of God the almighty. ¹⁶He has a name written on his cloak and on his thigh, "King of kings and Lord of lords."

Political Theology in Revelation

Rev 21:10-11, 23-25



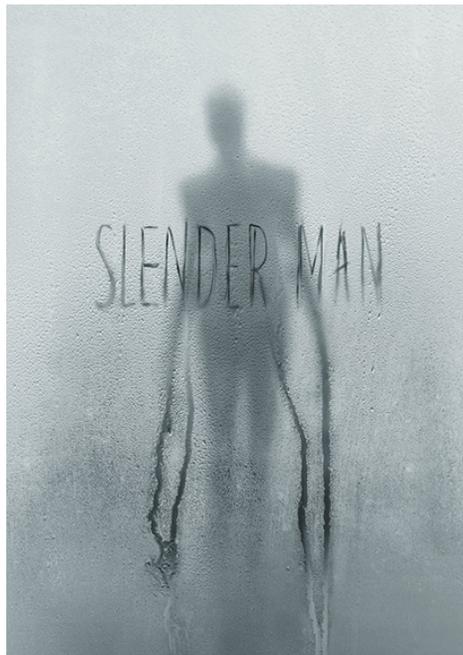
¹⁰He took me in spirit to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. ¹¹It gleamed with the splendor of God. Its radiance was like that of a precious stone, like jasper, clear as crystal... ²³The city had no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gave it light, and its lamp was the Lamb. ²⁴The nations will walk by its light, and to it the kings of the earth will bring their treasure. ²⁵During the day its gates will never be shut, and there will be no night there.

Political Theology in Revelation

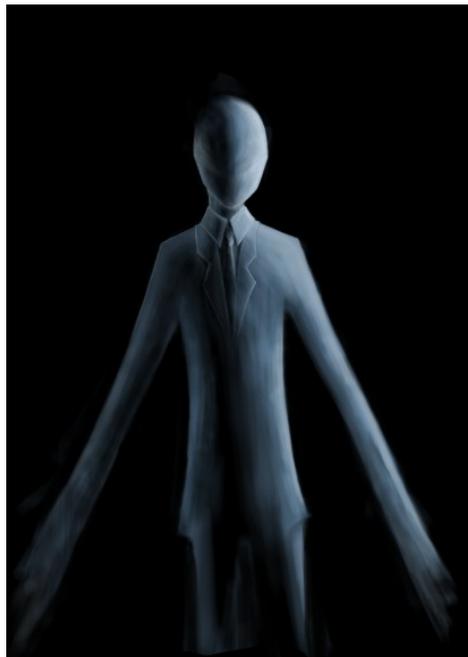
Rev 19:17-18; 21:1-5



^{19:17} Then I saw an angel standing on the sun. He cried out (in) a loud voice to all the birds flying high overhead, "Come here. Gather for God's great feast,¹⁸ to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of military officers, and the flesh of warriors, the flesh of horses and of their riders, and the flesh of all, free and slave, small and great...." ^{22:1} Then the angel showed me the river of life-giving water, sparkling like crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the middle of its street. On either side of the river grew the tree of life that produces fruit twelve times a year, once each month; the leaves of the trees serve as medicine for the nations. ³ Nothing accursed will be found there anymore. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴ They will look upon his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ Night will be no more, nor will they need light from lamp or sun, for the Lord God shall give them light, and they shall reign forever and ever.

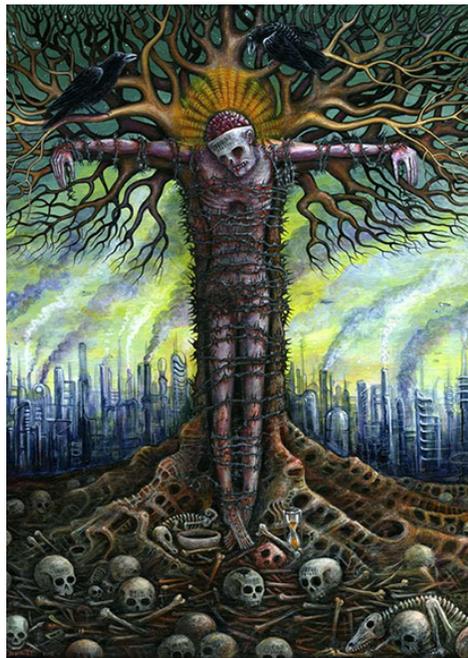


A Problem with Utopias
is that they require monsters



A Problem with Utopias
is that they require monsters

Who are ours?



Christianity puts the
monstrous at the center

Can this create an ethical
space where love embraces
the abject and deprives it of
its power over us?