

DOCTOR IN SCIENTIIS

Michal Lipson

Candidatam re vera illustrem spectatis, sodales, vel, ut rectius dicam, lucidissimam stellam in firmamento philosophiae naturalis. Nam eam genere parentes doctissimi motibus caelestibus et studio fervido quaestionum naturalium imbuere; num vero miremur a puella diligente MICHAL LIPSON physica facta sit peritissima, omnibus lucis proprietatibus audaci quaestione temptatis? Faustus quidem fuit dies studiis optices novis, quo haec discipula ab orbitis lentis stellarum longinque micantium oculos avertit ad velocitatem lucis terrestris, quae utilior atque utilior mortalibus fieret. Fulgebat tamen ipsa continuo, primum apud TEXNION Collegium Israhelis; micabat deinde inter omnes, quasi sidus laureis flammeis ornatum, in concilio illustrissimo sapientium Americanorum; nunc clarissimum lumen enitet in vertice artis ingeniariae apud Universitatem Novieboracensem a Columbo appellatam. Cultus ei est praecipuum scientiae et artis quam Graeci dicunt τηχνολογίαν νανοφωτονικήν, planius ipsa opticam scientiam ad particula minutissima pertinentem. Ut virtutes mulieris laudarem si uti vellem verborum proprietate quae deceat physicos peritos, nominatim dissererem de electrica et optica materie a silice quadam fabricata atque ingeniose conexas ad usum, vel de particulis lucentibus minutissimis tractandis et flectendis quocumque modo mulier sapiens, qua nulla usquam orbis terrarum est notabilior, invenire potuisset; sed iure me putaretis Sybillam Delphicam per arcana significantem. Liceat igitur, quaeso, exemplum trahere a poeta, ut planius dicam:

Sicut aquae tremulum labris ubi lumen aenis
sole repercussum aut radiantis imagine lunae
omnia pervolitat late loca, iamque sub auras
erigitur summique ferit laquearia tecti.

(Verg. *Aen.* 8.22-25)

Nunc quam maxime mens fingere potest, imagines illas facite celerrimas, loca autem angustissima, immo vix visibilia; nullo aere, nullo ferro, nil opus est nisi radiis luminosis qui vi pura ac velocissima radiantes quidquid transmittere volueritis secum trahantur. Sed forte iterum fallor, quod nimis poetice loquar. Ad candidatam ergo accedite, studiosi sodales, et stupentes (credite mihi) eam audietis vim quaestionis clarissimo tonitru nuntiatam fulmine quodam perspicue illustrare. Iam dudum eam sibi adiutricem voluere docti Collegae Rebus Artissime NαvoNexis dediti, ut familiariter dicuntur apud nos; iam tempus est, ut feriantur haec laquearia, dum festinanti plausu et nitida gratulatione cuncta Academia Dubliniensis eam acclamat Doctorem in Scientiis.

DOCTOR IN SCIENCE

Michal Lipson

Our first candidate is a leading light in the world of modern-day physics. The child of distinguished cosmologists, MICHAL LIPSON inherited an unbound passion for scientific inquiry, which she soon chose to channel into the marvellous study of light: ‘optics,’ she says, ‘is the perfect combination of physics and the real world.’ With her a new era was born for optical science. A graduate of Technion, the Israel Institute of Technology, she brought her brilliance over to MIT, Cornell University, and finally Columbia University, where she is Eugene Higgins Professor of Electrical Engineering. Her speciality is nanophotonics—or, in her own words, ‘optics on a very, very small scale.’ Scientists will tell you that she designs optical and hybrid opto-electronic devices with silicon-based fabrication methods; that she holds 25 patents on novel micron-size photonic structures for light manipulation; that she ranks among the top 1% most cited scientists in the world. Do you find their description cryptically Delphic? Let me enlighten you. Consider this poetic image:

Sunlight, or the radiant moon, reflected from water
Trembling in a bronze bowl, will glance and flit
All over a room—and then flash suddenly
Onto the coffered ceiling high above.

(Virgil, *Aeneid* 8.22-25)

Now multiply the speed of this mesmerising effect a million times. Reduce the size of the reflecting objects a million times. Replace metal with invisible fibres. Use them to channel light along with every information you want to travel with it—not the mere reflection of a bronze bowl, but the infinite data of your computer—and it will travel fast; what is more, it will burn no power. Do you find my description excessively vague? Attend one of our candidate’s classes, my friends. With crystal clear precision she will give you the essence of her discovery in twenty seconds, and the full implications of it in one minute. In an instant she grabs you, and you see the light. Trust me. We are proud to count this exceptional scientist among the advisers of our CRANN institute, the Centre for Research on Adaptive Nanostructures and Nanodevices. It is now time for the entire University to welcome her with beaming smiles and swift applause.

DOCTOR IN LITTERIS

Thomas Augustinus Kinsella

Mirum quod ... tam suavi velocitate, tam
dispari paritate, tam discordi concordia,
consona redditur et completur melodia.

(Giraldus Cambrensis, *Topogr. Hib.* III.11)

Fortissimus quisque poeta, ut scitis, tamquam in speculo inspicere solet hinc ima recessa animi sui, hinc vicissitudines ac temporum varietates, quae omnia apte arteque coniuncta imagines novas contemplantibus restituant atque perennes. Iam agnoscitis, sodales sapientes, vim poeticam et carmina candida quae velut libamenta Penatibus solvit THOMAS AUGUSTINUS KINSELLA, civis egregius Dubliniensis. Haud aliter Catullus ille civis Romanus variis modulationibus ardentia carmina effusit, nunc lyricus maestus nunc iambicus acerrimus, nunc flebilis tragoedus nunc comicus argutus, nunc denique heroum certamen ausus inire cum cantoribus vetustissimis. Sed, si recte iudicatis, utriusque poetae carmina varia ac dissonantia ad unum intendebant, ut numeris certis componeretur turba rerum obscura et confusa, quae tandem quid plani, quid veri reddere posset. Laetantes nos hodie in sinum Universitatis civem fidelem accipimus ut iam ipse nos: nonne puer nos hospites habuit apud Lares Phoenicis, nonne comites in Urbe perlustranda duce Jacobo Dubliniense illustri? Ipse vero nos ducebat ad illum portum quem lumine atque omnino spe destitutum maesti mirabamur; ipse autem nobis aperuit plagas civitatis suae nimio furore direptas. Audienti mihi elegidion huius patriam procul prospicientis, ubi inquit

Nox iam iamque rapit nos stultos insipientes
Frustra dum inania eheu ac vana petita tenemus

mutato sermone maerentem audire videor poetam veterem Romanum:

omnia fanda nefanda malo permixta furore
iustificam nobis mentem avertere deorum.

(Catullus 64.405-6)

Ut optimus quisque poeta libenter scripta aliena et legere et vertere solitus, candidatus noster liberaliter lectores longo itinere duxit per litteras optimas Hibernas, ab illo carmine soluto antiquissimo usque ad omnes recentiores modos mirabiles. In conspectu habemus, sodales, ingenium tam acutum quam numerosum, cui ars qualiscumque ποιητικὴ idem est ac vita ipsa. Otia tamen tanta virtute secutus negotia minime fugit. Bene enim meruit publicanus de patria Hibernia viginti per annos, totidem de universa re publica litterarum ex cathedra Templi Academiae Philadelphiensis, patriis litteris moribusque protinus excultis, nec non secretis motibus animi impavide inspectis. Tantum virum diu salvere iubemus vehementi gratulatione.

DOCTOR IN LETTERS

Thomas Augustine Kinsella

It is astonishing that with such sweet swiftness,
so unequal equality, so discordant concord,
harmony is accomplished and melody completed.
(Gerard of Wales, *Description of Ireland* III.11)

Poetry is a special mirror. On one side it reflects the recesses of the poet's soul; on the other it returns the ever-changing images of external reality. Each glimpse, each snapshot, each emotion finds in the poet's recollection the appropriate words and rhythm, and makes its way back into the world, where it lives on, transformed and immortalised. Such powerful poetics of 'inward' and 'onward' THOMAS KINSELLA has offered to this City and to his Nation, as once Catullus to the Eternal City and fellow Romans: voices of passion and disillusionment, of deep melancholy and bitter satire, of personal reminiscence and political denunciation; verses capable of fast fragmented pace, of intense drama, of grandiose narrative, in a constant effort at making sense of troubling realities. The Dubliner who honours us with his presence here today did not shy from opening the door of his childhood home at 38 *Phoenix Street* in Inchicore, from taking us for Joycean tours of the *Center City*, from pointing at 'the Sea of Disappointment' with the sharp foresight of a Nightwalker; but he has extended his gaze and tuned his lyre to embrace the expanses of national history:

It grows dark and we stumble
In gathering ignorance
In a land of loss
And unfulfillable desire.

The desolation of *Out of Ireland* is not far from the ancient poet's woeful vision of Rome (Catullus 64.405-6):

Then the mingling of all right and wrong in sinful madness
Turned from us the righteous will of the city.

All great poets are sensitive readers; our candidate is also a fine translator. He has artfully lent his voice to the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, the oldest vernacular prose epic in European literature; he has led us on *An Duanaire* through the modulations of early modern Irish poetry. We celebrate a poetic genius, a master of rhythm, a man who firmly believes that 'to be fully alive is to be creatively engaged.' His engagement has been incredible. He devoted twenty years of his life to the Irish Civil Service, the next twenty years to a distinguished academic career at Temple University, Philadelphia, and the whole of it to the interpretation of Irish culture and creativity, and to the fearless scrutiny of his own heart. May the warmest acclamation be a fitting tribute and token of our gratitude.

DOCTOR IN UTROQUE JURE

Catherina Corless

Historiam autem natam esse a parvula quaestione testatur Herodotus, ille pater verae indagationis, cum hoc principium fecit rebus gestis narrandis nationum Graecarum: ‘δι’ ἦν αἰτίη;’ quod sermone nostro dicimus ‘quare?’ Aures intendite, Academici, quod magna quidem persaepe a parvulis oriri haec historia Hibernica plane demonstrat. Erat olim in Galviae regionis vico quodam Tumulo (nomen omen vere dicunt) puella curiosa et benigna. ‘Quare ingens murus impendet cacumine vitreo minitante, si, ut dicunt, illud est hospitium benevolum matrum earumque infantium? Quare illinc numquam audivi dulces cachinnos, ut solent in ludis puerilibus, sed potius nescio quem clangorem ligneorum calciamentorum, ut in carcere solet? Quare magistra me vetuit illas puellas adducere, quod indignae sint iucunda familiaritate?’ Sic cotidie puella secum loquebatur, sed quid responsi minime repperit. Fugiebant anni, nec eam mulierem et matrem felicem umquam reliquebat quaestiuncula illa tenacissima: quare? Responsum igitur pervicaciter petivit, et, ut est curiositatis historicae, vera requirit a documentis testibusque. Quanta pericula inivit, quot lacrimas fudit ut horrida facta detegeret, illic esse perpetrata caedem infantium innocentium! ‘Quare?’ Quod eorum matres fuerant inuuptae? Utrum vero flagitium ex his scelestius fuerit, ut spero, omnibus patet. Nec id quidem satis erat opprobrium toti nationi Hiberniae. Candidata nostra certis indiciis demonstravit mille numero infantium venum abductos esse a matribus, vix totidem crudeliter neglectos fame inlue perisse in carcere illo infando: reliquias DCCXCVI miserorum ignobiles iacere (nefas!) in cloaca foedissima. Num istud fuit bonum auxilium? Immo pravissimum, inquam, et nefandum. Nec iam quare, sed quomodo venia, quomodo pax efficiatur quaecumque possit: id nunc quaerendum esse monet haec patrona piissima pudoris atque integritatis. Nunc demum ad nos venit mulier ipsa impavida CATHERINA CORLESS. Quae digna est summo honore ac decore, quae eximia pietate perserverantia causam tam iustam quam periculosam defenderit, quae exemplo fuerit omnibus nobis, ut auxilium vere bonum adducatur cuicumque adhuc deficient vires confectae sceleribus improbis. Miserrimo cuique, quem Parca crudelis funere mersit acerbo, sepulchrum et monumentum sanctum tandem aedificatur, ne id quoque orbatis invideatur, maestissimo munere fungi ex more antiquo. Ita sit ut fas est et semper fuit:

HIC IACET OPTATVS PIETATIS NOBILIS INFANS
CVI PRECOR VT CINERES SINT IA SINTQVE ROSAE,
TERRAQVE, QVAE MATER NVNC EST, SIBI SIT LEVIS ORO,
NAMQVE GRAVIS NVLLIS VITA FVIT PVERI.
ERGO, QVOD MISERI POSSVNT PRAESTARE PARENTES,
HVNC TITVLVM NATO CONSTITVERE SVO.

(CIL 9.3184)

DOCTOR IN LAWS

Catherine Corless

‘For what reason?’ This simple question marked the birth of historical inquiry (Herodotus, *Histories*, 1.1). This simple question returned, unanswered and anxious, to the mind of a young girl from Tuam, County Galway, every time she walked by an imposing stone wall on her way to school, and saw the glass splinters ominously glistening on its lofty top. Behind that wall, she was told, was the Mother and Baby Home. ‘But mothers play in the garden with their children,’ she considered, ‘you can always hear their merry voices across the fence; why does it never happen there?’ The only sound she could hear was the gloomy march of wooden clogs. ‘That’s no playground; it’s a prison,’ she said to herself, and wondered: ‘for what reason?’ At school they told her that those children were different, that they deserved no affection, no company, no treats. ‘For what reason?’ The girl grew into a woman, and a happy mother herself; but that question never ceased to torment her. ‘I want the truth,’ said the historian in her. And she searched for the truth. She fought for it. She cried for it. She uncovered and revealed it in all its horror. Behind that wall were the children of unwed mothers (‘For what reason?’). In the three and a half decades of its existence, that ironically named ‘home’ had torn a thousand children away from their mothers; nearly as many had been left to die, starved and neglected, surrounded by coldness, cruelty and indifference. To unspeakable collective shame, this fearless woman proved that the remains of 796 nameless children lay in the bleak darkness of a sewage tank. Innocent lives lost and abandoned in unmarked graves: can this be the meaning of the name ‘Bon Secours’ with which the home had prided itself? What reparation can be achieved, what reconciliation in the hearts of an entire nation? *This* is the question now. We hear it from the same voice who cried for dignity and respect all along her quest for historical and moral truth. She stands before us today, deserving of our deepest admiration and highest recognition: CATHERINE CORLESS is a woman of extraordinary courage and compassion, perseverance and commitment to justice. She asks us to stand up for the survivors of those crimes—many, too many in this afflicted country. For the dead she requests reverence—a sacred memorial for each and every child. In this saddest of duties lies the only possible consolation, from time immemorial:

HERE LIES OPTATUS, AN INFANT KNOWN TO ALL FOR HIS AFFECTION;
I PRAY THAT HIS ASHES BE VIOLETS AND ROSES,
AND THAT THE EARTH, WHICH IS NOW HIS MOTHER, BE LIGHT ON HIM,
FOR THE BOY’S LIFE WAS OPPRESSIVE TO NONE.
THEREFORE HIS HEARTBROKEN PARENTS HAVE SET UP THIS EPITAPH
TO THEIR SON, ALL THAT THEY CAN DO.

(Ancient Latin inscription from Southern Italy)