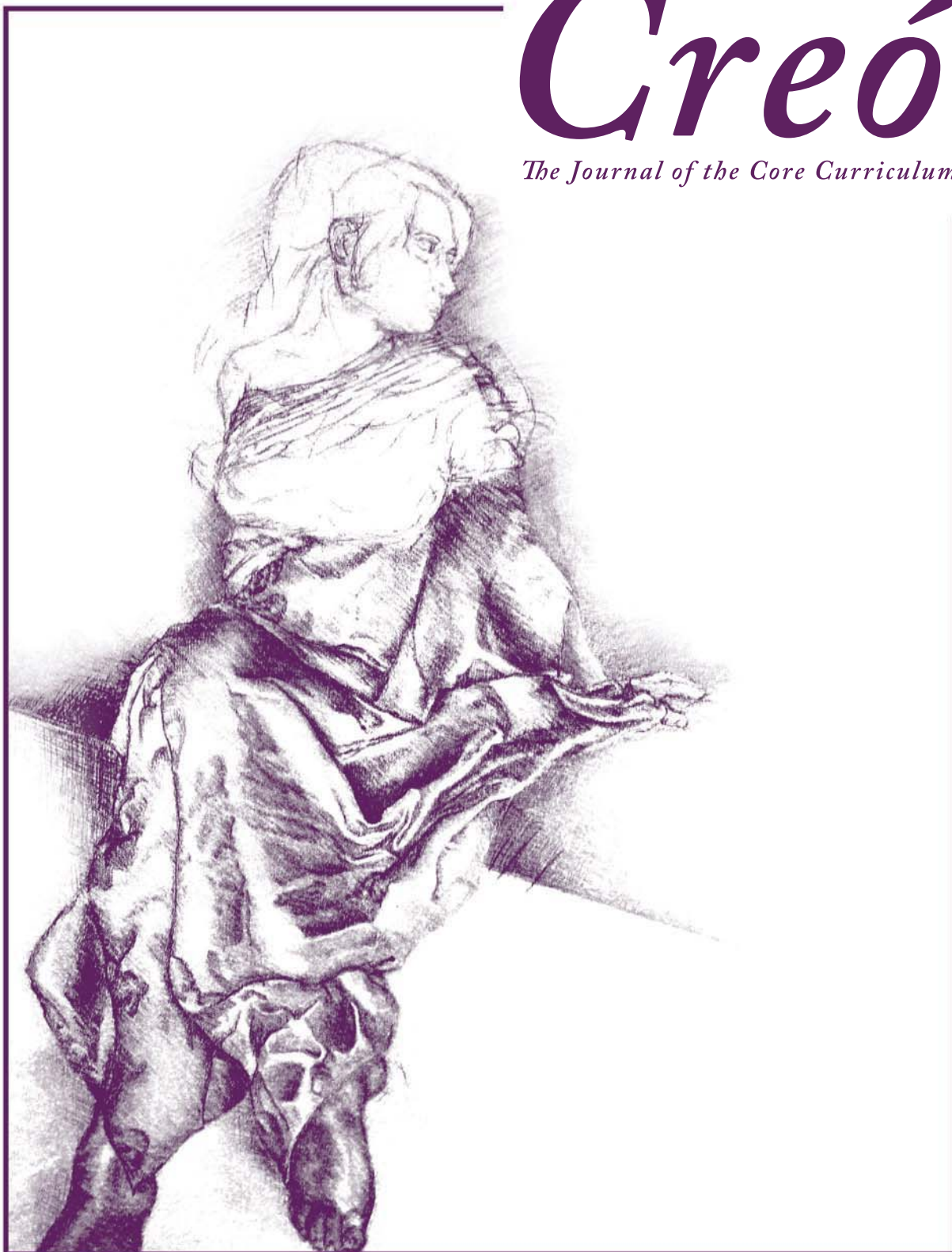


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THE ANNUAL LITERARY JOURNAL OF THE CORE COMMUNITY

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In gratitude, the editors dedicate this issue to Prof. Brian Jorgensen,
the founding director of the Core Curriculum.

For over twenty years he has taught us how to live according
to all those higher values we encounter in the Core.

*To students and their teachers;
To teachers and their students;
And therefore to the great-souled dead,
Distant, their words near as mind—
Those who have sought and partly found the laws of nature;
Those who have sought and partly found the laws of men;
Those who have sought and partly found the meanings of men—
To the Heroes;
 To the Thinkers;
 To the Makers;
 To the Inspired;
Who together with us
Alive, here, in our time,
Are the life of the mind
And of the spirit;
To these let us drink before we eat.*

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Editor's Note

Core supplies the potential energy for its students to grow a thriving intellectual garden filled with new interpretations, questions, and artistic creations. Their gardens will inspire other gardens to grow in their place: forever renewing itself, and becoming more vibrant, expansive and beautiful.

This annual Journal acts as the ultimate Core analect: it reflects the wisdom of fellow Core students and faculty and it strives to inspire others to pursue intellectual vitality. As human beings, we are in a constant search for knowledge, an authentic self, and a meaning for our existence. In a way we are all like Hamlet, Dante, and Odysseus, lost in an abyss of human existence, in search of home, whether it is physical or intellectual. The Core Curriculum also gives us the strength to break free from the shackles of ignorance and walk forward into the light of wisdom.

Our staff this year has worked exceedingly hard to produce a poignant journal that reflects the Core student's turn from the dark into the light. Many thanks to those in my editorial staff who have spent long hours helping me make sense out of everything. I appreciate your warm smiles and your dedication: you truly made this experience enjoyable and it enabled me to see beyond my panic attacks. Thanks also to Professor Tabatabai for this opportunity and for his guidance and overall understanding of my scatter-brain tendencies; and lastly, a round of applause to Zak Bos, for his patience, his guidance, his ability to alleviate stress, and his passion for the Core.

I hope as second-year Core students, you'll take away something from this program that provides a foundation for your future path in life: whether it is in medicine, law, journalism, theatre, etc. Core is a foundation based on a constant search for answers; it entails questioning others and using extensive knowledge to come to substantial, independent conclusions. In this day and age, it is especially important for us to think for ourselves, to speak out against injustice, and to continually ponder the meanings of life with confidence and without fear of criticism.

Regard this journal as an enduring reminder of what you have received in Core. It is your Virgil along the path of life, a compassionate companion who reminds you of where you were and where you are going. And, as the famous poet says, "let your conscience be your guide," and don't let the apparent bleakness of the short-term future hinder you from looking beyond the veil in search of faith, hope, and charity.

– *Katherine Book*
Editor, Spring 2010

Instructions on How to Build a Galaxy

Daniel Hudon

Few things in the Universe are as awesome as galaxies, and this fact alone should be enough incentive for you to begin your project. Held up side-by-side-by-side with rainbows and the Canadian Rockies, galaxies always win. If poets had access to telescopes more often, they would be waxing to their lovers about the diffuse brilliance of galaxies rather than the twinkling stars.

Don't listen to the naysayers who will remind you there are already a hundred billion galaxies in the Universe and insist you are wasting your time. Noah's neighbors said he was crazy to build an ark and look at what happened to them. Instead, listen to Rumi: *Start a big, foolish project*. No new galaxies have been constructed in the past thirteen billion years, but that's no reason for you not to build one. Once you've built a galaxy, you can do anything.

Galaxies come in three types, categorized according to their shapes: ellipticals, spirals and irregulars. It is recommended that you build one of these types; otherwise, your galaxy will certainly fail.

Elliptical galaxies look like cosmic footballs. They are made mostly of old stars that zing around in chaotic orbits. The largest galaxies in the Universe are ellipticals, so bear that in mind if your aim is grandeur.

Spiral galaxies are more jaw-droppingly stunning than either a dozen red roses in full bloom, or proofs of the existence of God—take your pick. All astronomers keep a postcard-sized photo of their favorite spiral galaxy under their pillow at night in the hopes they will have beautiful dreams.¹

The main feature of spiral galaxies is their disk, which contains most of their stars and enough to make, oh, zillions more. It has the eponymous spiral pattern lovely enough to make even the most cold-hearted observers swoon. If you create a successful spiral galaxy and advertise it properly, schoolchildren all over the world will scrawl thank-you letters to you in crayon.

Irregular galaxies are amorphous blobs of stars, gas and dust, without any obvious features. Think of a bug on the windshield or of any painting whose title is "Untitled," and you've got the right idea. Though they appear rather generic, you shouldn't discount

them entirely because a failed elliptical or spiral could be a successful irregular.

Galaxies take up a lot of space so we suggest building your galaxy in its ultimate location. This prevents the need for renting a universe-sized studio, which would be prohibitively expensive. Recently, astronomers have discovered large voids in inter-galactic space that are crying out to be filled with a galaxy or two. Look into it.

After deciding on your type of galaxy, you need to collect the raw materials. Your prime concern is to acquire a suitable amount of hydrogen gas. Aim for enough to build a few billion stars. Don't scrimp because without enough gas for gravity to hold it together, the expanding space will tear your proto-galaxy apart and you'll have to start over. Try a local hardware store (be sure to call ahead) or a university physics lab where, if necessary, you can bribe the technician with beer. Tell him it's for the sake of art, man.

For a successful galaxy, you will also need a mysterious substance known as dark matter. No one knows why. Just gather it (try dead stars and, in a pinch, black holes) and shape it into a centrally concentrated super-galactic-sized sphere. A very large pair of mittens might help. Allow the dark matter to attract your hydrogen gas and trigger your first round of star formation. Stand clear; those first stars can light up with a bang.

At this stage, you've already done more work than all twelve of the labors of Hercules, so a breather is in order. Take a nap. Get a cup of coffee. Let gravity do its work. But stay focused because there are still a few things to watch out for.

Don't be alarmed if a supermassive black hole forms in the center of your proto-galactic cloud. This is a sign of a healthy baby galaxy. Just be sure not to fall in or you'll be super-stretched thinner than spaghetti before being crushed into oblivion.² Though the black hole will be invisible, as super-heated matter falls in (before disappearing forever), you should expect to see its last-gasp X-ray fireworks from across the Universe. You can warm your hands in the glow.

Elsewhere in your contracting proto-galaxy, some gas clumps should develop into clusters of stars. If these don't wind up being dazzlingly pretty, you need to create larger clumps. In order to form a diffuse disk, which we recommend, see to it that your cloud has an ever-so-slight rotational motion about its central axis. As the cloud contracts, it will whirl into a disk as dictated by the law of conservation of angular momentum (one of those laws that make both figure skating and galaxy building fun). This could take a few hundred million years. Don't get impatient—it takes longer to build a mountain range. Trust in the laws of the Universe.

If you can't create a disk, you may just have to call it an irregular galaxy and wrap up your project. Or, put it aside, start over with a larger gas cloud, and spin it up with a good swift kick.

As for creating a spiral pattern in your disk, no one knows how these get created so you're on your own. Use your imagination; that's why you're in this business. Otherwise, your best bet is to hope for a tidal tug from a nearby galaxy to create a density wave that

roams around the galaxy, causing new stars to light up as it passes through. After it goes around a few times, you should see a spiral pattern. If not, try flipping the disk over; maybe it's upside down.

If your heart is set on an elliptical galaxy, find another spiral and smash the two galaxies together. Such collisions were all the rage in the early days of the Universe and astronomers are still trying to sort out what happened. One more won't hurt. Go for broke and merge in a whole bunch of spirals to ensure that you get a mish-mash of chaotic orbits about the central black hole. Allow a few billion years for the collision to run its course and for the elliptical shape to be revealed. Quality takes time.

When you're satisfied with your galaxy (fluff up some of the nebulae as a finishing touch), announce its presence to the Universe. Point out that it's the first man-made galaxy and give coordinates for how to find it. Arrange for it to be inhabited (see "How to Build a Planet in Twelve Easy Steps")—there's nothing lonelier than a galaxy devoid of life. Stand back and admire your handiwork: the ultimate glow of a billion suns. And rest up, but only briefly. Bigger projects await.

Endnotes

- [1] Should you decide, as a side-project, to pass around photos of spiral galaxies among the generals of warring nations as a way of promoting peace, let us know how it works out. We're optimistic.
- [2] It's still possible your project could complete itself, but you won't get any of the glory.

The Twining of Volition with Transience in Dickinson's Conception of Man

Fabiana Cabral

Emily Dickinson is the rare poet who can achieve with twelve economical lines what the most eloquent and prodigious of writers cannot achieve in volumes. She describes the most human of emotions in perplexing, yet nuanced ways. The Amherst native found solace from the ephemeral human condition by equating our existence to that of snow. Using the example of such a simple yet powerful physical element, Dickinson suggests that our mortality ultimately frees us. What we must cling to is *choice*; whether it is to choose isolation or unity, life or death, we must only despair if we lack choice.

Emily Dickinson's poem #291, "It Sifts from Leaden Sieves," displays a delightful yet disconcerting ambiguity between creating and being created, dependence and autonomy, raw manipulated material and complete agency. These conflicting elements reflect the dual, complementary nature of Dickinson's attitude toward the Christian idea of God; resigned to things beyond her control, she manages to find defiance in resignation to the Christian God's iron will. She portrays such views of this God through the natural world, one of her favorite poetic lenses.

From the beginning of the poem, it is difficult to distinguish between the subjects and the objects: a verb is either used by or affects these, respectively. The syntax of the poem is such that it calls into question to whom the actions of the poem are attributed; it is no longer clear if what's important is *who* sifts or *what* is sifted, or whether there's any distinction between such actions. The unnamed and unmanageable snow begins by being "sifted" and "powdered," manipulated by another, or by "powder[ing]" the wood and "fill[ing]" the roads itself. As the poem progresses, the snow's agency is no longer in question: it goes on to "condense" and "scatter" itself like birds. It does not have to make choices between conflicting states; rather, it alternates whilst obeying the laws of Nature.

Without denying the concrete images of snow as powdering flour and as wool which fills earthy ditches like moldable, alabaster clay, Dickinson allows the snow to transform into an almost abstractly willful and powerful element. The snow, though at the mercy

pleasures: "It is possible to be the kind of person who is overcome even by those which most people master,

of physical elements like wind or elusive celestial elements like God or Nature, is given control by Dickinson in the form of unpredictability. Dickinson wonderfully underlines the mutability of the snow as she describes it committing contradictory acts, such as “travers[ing]” as it “halts.” Finally, she even allows the snow to decide its moment of death by writing that it “curls itself” before it “denies” its former existence by virtue of its complete disappearance.

Such impromptu, autonomous actions resonates with the mortality Dickinson accuses God of giving us instead of eternity in poem #747, “It’s easy to invent a Life –.” Dickinson accuses the Almighty, whom we usually describe as harboring everlasting love for us, of being a “thrifty Deity” that allots Eternity to some, such as the Sun, and assigns death instead to Man. Those who perish seem helpless as his “Perturbless Plan / Proceed[s],” while those who remain continue without knowledge of a plan that is worth those who are lost. And yet, this volatile flesh is precisely where we may free ourselves from God’s capricious control.

The Sun and the Moon have no choice in their existence. As eternal figures, they must remain in the sky until God sees fit to knock them down. But the snow, although doomed to melt and to cease to exist in its current state, is not fixed, and thus it is free. The snow, like Man, can separate and condense at will; likewise, an individual can isolate itself and join others at will. What remains constant is its choice. Man and snow are the “figures” suspended in the “baseless Arc.” Yes, they are at the mercy of the juggler, and yet for that brief moment that they are “situated” in the air they stand alone, “baseless” and free: they manage to stand even though they are unsupported by eternity. Their transience allows them to do this, much like a juggler’s balls cannot remain standing alone in the air for long, but only for an instant.

Continuing with these conceptions of God’s eternity for natural elements and Man’s unique religious eternity, one observes that Dickinson often professes her fear of Heaven or any concept of an afterlife that is being fixed somewhere, potentially separated from life as she knows it, as well as those she cares for. This fear seems consistent with someone who prizes her human mortality as a vehicle for choice; in poem #437, “I never felt at Home – Below,” the idea that “Recess – never comes” and that God as a “Telescope” will never take His eyes off us threatens that inch of agency we as humans have acquired. Although this fear of being fixed may sound strange from someone who has shut herself up in a house for so many years, what Dickinson defends and brandishes above all else is her choice to remain a recluse, and our human choice to accept our mortality and act within it. The snow is ephemeral, but Dickinson gives it the poetic power to end its life when it chooses, in stating that it “curls itself,” “denying what it was” as a form of not fully frozen water. However, rather than to go so far as to say that Dickinson is sanctioning suicide, she instead embraces a poetic view that Man can, and should, live life after accepting death as the strongest sign of his own volition.

Earlier versions of poem #291 confirm the power allotted to snow. From 1862 to 1863, Dickinson wrote about snow as something used by God to either blanket the natural world in a “Celestial” veil, or to render a heavenly obeisance, or vail, perhaps to the special mortal power of Man. The first two editions shift from a “dealt” or delivered Vail to a “flung” one; the use of a more violent or unfeeling verb perhaps indicates a greater sense of divine aggression, rather than respect, as seen in the second edition. In the first two editions, snow also checks human pretension, as even the “Queen” must step ankle-deep in it. The lack of dashes in the fourth edition after “Birds and Flock” suggest an unlimited dominion of power for the snow, a power which is strengthened in the final version where the dashes were added. Yet before that, snow smoothed out imperfections, evening out the face of a mountain and the “Wrinkles of the Road” as it would a human face, even in its short existence.

In earlier versions there is something ominous about such an icy grip; it is more associated with Death, as its presence indicates a loss of life and pastoral vitality, exemplified by “Acres... where Harvests were” (311). Sharon Leiter argues that these versions portray snow as an “annihilating force” in the “much darker work” (129). Although it is unclear who the “Artisans” of snow are in the first version of this poem, their association with Ghosts sends a much more direct message of Death than that of snow “curl[ed]... in Capricorn,” which is present in the last version. The image is markedly softened in the third version from Ghosts to Swans, who may be ghostlike, but still serve merely as metaphors. Dickinson seems to view snow dually, even relating it to negative as well as positive things. However, the negative is less important as the years pass for Dickinson: from 1865 to 1883, Dickinson writes three versions which cut out entirely the stanza about the empty, snow-filled fields. The passage of time might have assuaged this bleaker view of snow as death, allowing more negative associations to be dropped.

The first two versions do not show an emotionally stable, spiritual reconciliation with death, a temperance of spirit that could only come in the peace of less tumultuous years. 1862, the year this poem was first written, was an emotionally turbulent time for Dickinson; separation from and death of those she knew due to the Civil War and other uncontrollable events weighed heavily on her mind. This was the year she initiated a correspondence with T. W. Higginson, in her need for a literary contact. She also persistently wrote to figures such as Samuel Bowles, her close friend, and in these letters she often made direct references to how snow is associated with death.

In a letter she wrote to Bowles in late March of 1862, Dickinson includes poem #195, “Victory comes late” (Johnson 399). She describes how even the Union soldiers who have achieved a victory, in this case that of the Battle of Newburn, cannot taste victory as their “freezing lips” are “rapt with frost.” Death clutches people like frost clutches all that comes into its grasp, and thanks to “God economical,” people like Frazar have died a pointless death in view of the motivations behind the cause. The anger of this

poem is directed at the idea of a benevolent God and the implication that we are not important enough to Him to be spared our already fleeting lives. Instead, we are offered so little, mere “crumbs,” along with the promise to dine well in Heaven, where none of it will matter because Heaven is not life. Winning a war is not worth it if everybody suffers and most die. Just so, how can one care to go to Heaven if the price is loss of life, mortal man’s one shining moment, and the loss of those we love who share that moment?

Dickinson eventually tempered these forceful images, portraying the “forever transforming, unfixable nature of the snow” without letting desolation go unchecked (Leiter 128). The institutionalized conception of God is not one Dickinson feels obligated to partake of; in defiance of such a conception, she celebrates human life for the treasure it is in a “resolute departure from temporal order” (Cameron 1). In our impermanent state we have achieved a beautiful power that no almighty God with His promise of an afterlife can tarnish or undermine. When we see falling snow, we wonder at and are allured by its movements, not by the wind which compels it to move. Life is thus the space where Man can fully express all that is virtuous and beautiful, and it should remain unhampered by intruding religious directives of where he came from or where he is inevitably bound to go.

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"Rose in a shadow," photograph, by Rachel Pfenninger

Sassan Tabatabai

Garden of Eden

Pink bougainvilleas climb the wall
 behind the round table
 where we always sit.
 It is the bright tapestry that frames
 our evening photos:
 wine-weary eyes,
 worry-less smiles.
 It is the backdrop of our laughs.

By the window, red hibiscus
 point their flutes at the sea.
 They are trumpets of dawn
 and open with the sun
 to reveal points of golden pollen
 that stain the shoulders of my shirts.

On the blue horizon, the seam disappears
 between the Mediterranean and the sky.

The rosemary bush in the corner
 attracts a flock of intoxicated
 butterflies and bees,
 oblivious to the stalking lizard
 that like some diminutive dinosaur
 is coiled to pounce on its prey.

Along the front gate,
 jasmine and gardenias
 pour forth pillars of perfume,
 both upon greetings and farewell,
 to this garden by the sea.

Anti-Communalism in Houyhnhnmland

Samantha Rick

Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* explores the many ideals and problems associated with the Enlightenment's emphasis on reason. Throughout the book, he uses allegories to present his views on contemporary English society and politics, the conflict between the Tories and the Whigs, the never-ending feud between Protestants and Catholics, the aspects of the Enlightenment that fail, and his advocacy for the proper use of reason. Most of these themes are fully realized in Part Four, when Lemuel Gulliver visits Houyhnhnmland. Of these allegories, the most pertinent is his gradual transformation from a proud Englishman into a disdainful, isolated individual. This process serves as a commentary on the excess of communalist philosophy and its justification through the misuse of reason.

In Part Four of *Gulliver's Travels*, Gulliver is abandoned in Houyhnhnmland, which is inhabited by the hyper-rational Houyhnhnms (resembling horses) who rule over the Yahoos, creatures representing the basest form of humanity. The Houyhnhnms live in a society that echoes Plato's *Republic*, a purely rational and logical utopia, communal and equal. All inhabitants adhere to extremely simple laws: they breed based upon the capacity of the mother and father to create mentally and physically balanced children and they do not mourn the deceased. When Gulliver describes English society and customs, the Houyhnhnms are appalled at its organization and the extent to which emotion rules over them. Despite an instantaneous antipathy toward the Yahoos, his conversations with the Houyhnhnms, and growing knowledge of the Yahoos' behavior, induces Gulliver to feel a strong familiarity with them—a feeling which disgusts him. Eventually, the members of the Houyhnhnm council expel Gulliver from their island after realizing that he, with slightly more reason than the Yahoos, could potentially organize the Yahoos in a revolt (260). He is rescued by a Portuguese ship captained by Don Fernando, whose kindness and generosity shocks Gulliver after his long immersion with the Yahoos (265). When he returns to England, Gulliver dismisses his family and friends and refuses to integrate back into society. He instead spends his time talking to his horses (270-5).

It is clear that of all the societies visited by Gulliver, Houyhnhnmland is the most ideal. The political and social problems present in human society are nonexistent. Children receive well-rounded and individualistic educations. They are not plagued by

emotions or the trials of intimate relationships. From the perspective of human beings, such as Gulliver's peers in England, Houyhnhnmland would be an ideal place to live. However, Swift knows this type of society will never exist within the human framework. Humans need intimacy and companionship; otherwise, they will feel the contrary emotions of loneliness and loss. The fourth part of the *Gulliver's Travels* espouses Swift's disdain for the emotions that drive humanity far away from reason and logic and allow corruption to rule politics and petty actions. In this way, Swift's misanthropic and anti-social tendencies are exposed.

Swift's disdain for human physical desire is portrayed in Gulliver's encounters with sexual advances. The most striking example occurs midway through Part Four when Gulliver bathes nude in a river and his nudity causes an eleven-year-old female Yahoo to become "inflamed by desire," leading her to "embrace [Gulliver] in a most fulsome manner" (Swift 234). Once rejected, she stands on the bank of the river "gazing and howling" as he puts on his clothes (234-5).

John Middleton Murry, in *Jonathan Swift: A Critical Biography*, asserts that Swift's intentions in depicting sexual encounters were expressed in his letters on *Gulliver's Travels*, written to Alexander Pope. He proposed that man was not an *animal rationale* but rather *rationis capax*—"capable of developing in oneself a discernment of the good, and a devotion to pursuing it, and simultaneously of developing an incapacity to pursue evil" (Murry 339). Swift loathed sexual desires and emotional motivations because those were the flaws that he saw in himself.

Swift's love affairs in his life centered around Esther (referred to in his poems as Vanessa) and Stella. These love affairs tremendously affected his perspective of irrational thought and behavior. For Swift, Esther represented his base human desires and Stella complemented his rationalistic tendencies. He loved Stella as a good friend because they were both intellectual, yet rational people. On the other hand, Swift lusted after Esther. Murry believes that "had there been no Stella... he would have married [Esther], in spite of all his plans and resolutions" (277). Due to the conflict between his rational relationship with Stella, whom he thought embodied all that he wanted from a woman, and his infatuation with Esther, Swift blamed the irrationality of the characterization of the woman for his animalistic urges (276). Murry asserts that the important scene with the sexually-charged female Yahoo shows Swift's view that "Woman—or that ineradicable element in her nature which worked to convert love into sexual intimacy—was the root of the evil and the cause of his own distress" (353). In his own life, Swift repressed his emotions in favor of rationalism, concluding that Stella was a favorable companion, yet because of this, he rebels against hyper-rationality in his text.

Swift uses the text to comment on communalistic philosophy and the misuse of reason by addressing the fact that Houyhnhnms have not "cultivated a breed of asses" (Swift 255). This occurs in Gulliver's conversation with the Houyhnhnm master: it is puzzling

though he is my enemy, because he has been yoked harshly to the harness of a dreadful delusion. Yes, I pon-

to Gulliver, that while the Houyhnhnms so arrogantly flaunt their superiority out of disgust for the Yahoos, they seem unable to recognize their similarity in shape to asses, an animal they profess to be inferior and rancorous (Franklin 5). The master points to “the Odiousness of their own Shapes, which all could see in the rest, but not in themselves” as the reason for the Yahoos’ lack of the benevolence and friendship held so deep by the Houyhnhnms (Swift 260). Yet, the Houyhnhnms are against a race similar to their own, one with which they would be expected to feel solidarity if they had such a strong pull toward universal treatment of their kind. This point reinforces Swift’s opinion that certain groups of people are quick to dismiss others as outsiders, failing to recognize the fact that communalistic philosophy can be applied to mankind as a whole.

In the subsequent debate is Swift’s subtle commentary on the audacity of the human race to enslave its own kind. To the Houyhnhnms, “the enslavement of a closely related species seems infinitely worse than their fettering of the Yahoos, almost as reprehensible as man’s enslavement of a fellow *Homo sapiens*,” the Yahoos are not their brethren in any way, and therefore are not part of their communalism (Franklin 6). They are the “other” and thus, Franklin notes, in *Lemuel Self-translated; or, Being an Ass in Houyhnhnmland*, “the Yahoos in Houyhnhnmland have been rendered a subspecies, liminal figures, deprived of the civilizing effects of education and brutalized by enslavement—stunted both in body and in mind,” quite along the same lines as the European and American treatment of African slaves (4). The presentation of this debate is a commentary on the ability of mankind to enslave their brethren, as well as an argument against communalism in the sense that European and American communalism and familiarity created a situation in which the enslavement of other humans could be possible. Africans and other dark-skinned humans were the “other;” they were not the same kind of human beings, and therefore, just as the Houyhnhnms justified enslaving the Yahoos, the enslavement of the dark-skinned Yahoos was justified in the eyes of the white race (7). Swift saw this attitude as despicable, furthering his discontent with humanity.

Swift’s anti-communalistic perspective comes to fruition when one considers the contemporary Deists alongside whom he was writing. Irvin Ehrenpreis’s *The Personality of Jonathan Swift* addresses the sort of influence that the Deist movement would have had on Swift’s conception of Houyhnhnmland. Although the Houyhnhnms embody characteristics that Swift thought to be admirable, they are not the ideal for mankind (99). They have emotional security, benevolence toward all in their race, and rely strictly on reason with no interferences, and thus live in an otherwise ideal society, but they lack basic Christian morals, something that Swift, as an Anglican priest, highly valued (100–1). The Deists, he argued, “emphasize their contentment, their indifference to ordinary vicissitudes, their philosophical serenity” and support the notion that “mankind has no need of specifically Christian virtues” (105, 102). Swift thought that this sort of philosophical contentment and rational perspective was absurd, and that “no sincere Anglican

could agree with the wise Houyhnhnm" (100). He used his writings to rebel against this view, showing that reason alone was incapable of guiding human life, as shown through Gulliver's dissatisfaction with Houyhnhnmland. Human emotion is too real and constant to be denied for the sake of pure rationalism.

Captain Pedro de Mendez is a representation of the Christian alternative to the hyper-rationalist Enlightenment (Swift 269). He is kind, generous, and benevolent to all, yet he still relies on the reason instilled by God to guide his decisions. Mendez is the kind of individual that Swift would have loved, even though his disdain for physical desires persisted. Gulliver adopts the belief that humans are the same as Yahoos and that human beings should always strive to emulate the unsociable and emotionless Houyhnhnms, a conviction which opposes Swift's perceptions. Ehrenpreis sees the text as "Swift himself saying... that anyone who believes in the adequacy of reason without Christianity must see himself as a Houyhnhnm and the rest of mankind as yahoos" (115).

The effect of the fourth voyage is clear. When Gulliver returns to his homeland of England, he reacts in the same vein to his wife as he did to the female Yahoo who embraced him: he is disgusted when she takes him into her arms and kisses him (Swift 240-2). When he encounters his children, he cannot endure the sight of them and is repulsed by their smell (Swift 275). From the conclusion of the text it is obvious that Gulliver's antipathy toward his peers and his lack of sociable feelings (whether for his friends, family, or for any sort of general human being) have always been part of his mentality, shown in his constant need for travel and new, exciting places. He is content only as a stranger in a strange land.

For Swift, humanity is overall unsatisfactory. He despised mankind's acknowledgement and indulgence in base desires because of the experiences he had with his own life. He also saw in himself a self-imposed isolation from other human beings in his attitudes and treatment of desires and despised mankind's ability to do the same. Swift's writing reflects his hatred for humanity and love for individuals, yet it will forever reflect tension between his emotions and his dissatisfaction.

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Sylvia Lewin

To a Phantasm

In softly sighing hours and restless dreams
Your visage to my eager mind appears,
And so unseams me with the love that seems
To shine from under friendship's healthy cheers
That I, a shadow shifting in the glass,
Would follow on your every move and act
Until my dogged dance was seen at last
And saw love's answering steps reflected back.
Yet when we meet in stark and unkind day,
No longer do your eyes my sighs inspire.
They gaze in ways that tend not toward my way,
And, distant, do not warm me with their fire.
Thus love in dreaming lover's mind begot
Remains a love in dreams, and elsewhere aught.



"Copenhagen, Denmark," photograph, by Elizabeth Perry

instill it or is each man's desire a god to him?" - Nisus, Virgil's *Aeneid* | "How, O how could I stay silent,



"Knight in Toledo, Spain," photograph, by Serame Castillo

how, O how could I keep quiet? / My friend whom I love has turned to clay: / Enkidu my friend whom I love

An Interview with David Eckel

David Eckel is Associate Professor of Religion at Boston University and Director of the Core Curriculum. His area of specialization is Asian religions, which he studies from a broadly cultural and comparative perspective with particular focus on varieties of Buddhism. His most recent book, *Bhaviveka and His Buddhist Opponents*, was published in 2008 as part of the Harvard Oriental Series. He also is the author of *Buddhism* (Oxford, 2002) and *To See the Buddha: A Philosopher's Quest for the Meaning of Emptiness* (Princeton, 1994). Prof. Eckel was awarded the University's Metcalf Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1998, and served as the NEH Distinguished Teaching Professor of the Humanities from 2002 to 2005.

Caitlin Outterson sat down with Prof. Eckel in March 2010 to discuss his education, his academic interests, and a few of his experiences in the study of religion. – KB

How did you first become interested in Eastern religion?

When I went to Harvard as an undergraduate, I thought I was planning to go to medical school. I majored in English, but my favorite course at Harvard was Organic Chemistry. I liked it because I love to cook!

Do *you* like organic chemistry?

No! I took enough chemistry to know I wouldn't like organic chem and fortunately I'm not pre-med, but I've heard horror stories from friends...

There was something about chemistry that really appealed to me. The abstractions of physics were sometimes difficult to grasp, and biology seemed too down to earth. Maybe that's the reason I never became a doctor (laughs).

I did well enough in chemistry, but when I finished at Harvard, I decided to go to Oxford and study theology. It was a way of continuing my major in English, but I also felt that I knew Oxford very well. My father had been at Oxford after World War II, and he passed on to me some of his love of theology.

Were you on the Rotary exchange?

No, I had a fellowship from a foundation in Massachusetts. In the Oxford theology course, I focused on Biblical studies. We took a lot of Greek and Hebrew. I did an optional program in classical Hebrew composition. We were given passages from Josephus's *Jewish Wars* in English and asked to translate them into the style of the book of Deuteronomy. It was not quite the same as organic chemistry.

That's really neat.

Yes, I think it was that experience that made me a scholar—but the Hebrew did not tell me what *kind* of scholar. I didn't discover that until the end of my first summer. In between my two years at Oxford, there was a four-month “long vacation.”

What did you do?

I answered an ad in the *London Times* to join an expedition to study nomads in central Iran. We drove across Europe in Land Rovers, took a ferry across the Bosphorus, and drove through Turkey along the Black Sea coast. The first city we visited in Iran was Tabriz, the center of the Persian carpet market. When we got to the central desert, we saw no nomads except ourselves. But at the end of the trip, I was sitting in a mosque in Isfahan looking at the brickwork. Here [facing page] is a photograph that was given to me by a restaurant owner on Beacon Hill.

Wow, how old is it?

The mosque was built in the thirteenth century. As I looked at that brickwork, the mosque seemed so elegant and so calm that I decided, if I could, that I would do nothing more with my life than study Persian civilization. I went back to Oxford and looked up the Persian course, and it met at the same time as Hebrew. Then I looked up the Arabic course, and it met at the same time as Greek. I was left with a choice between Armenian and Sanskrit—the only languages left that had anything to do with my trip. So I took Sanskrit and the rest is history.

At the end of my first year of Sanskrit at Oxford, I asked my teacher Richard Gombrich, who later became the Oxford Sanskrit professor, where I could study more Sanskrit. He said, “Why don't you go back to Harvard and study with Daniel Ingalls, the Harvard Sanskrit professor?” I did my Ph.D. at Harvard in Indian religion and became a scholar of Buddhism.

That's a pretty complicated story. It's interesting how you started out doing premed and then ended up in something similar to the Core Curriculum.

I tell this story to lots of students just to show how some of the most important decisions in life can take place for surprising, almost trivial reasons. The short way to tell this story would be to quote Joseph Campbell and say: “Follow your passion.”

If you know what it is...

It is not so easy. Sometimes you have no idea what your “passion” is. If I replayed the tape, maybe it would be organic chemistry.



(Laughs) It's true... OK, so when you started working at the Core, were you a professor, or did you start as the director?

I was a professor in the Religion Department when Brian Jorgensen was director. He asked me to give the lectures on the *Bhagavad Gita*. That is how I got to know the Core. I was drawn to the Core in two ways. One was as a lecturer; the other was by the quality and seriousness of the books.

That's why I signed up!

A few months ago, I was talking to an alum about the sense of community in the Core. You know that we sometimes call the Core "a college within the College." She said, "That's true, but it is also a community of books." I agree. Our community starts with the people who sit next to us in class, but it also includes Gilgamesh, Dante, Socrates, and Plato—all the great authors and thinkers who make the Core program such a rich experience.

One of my favorite things about the Core is that, while I know many of the books, others are books I have never heard of, like the *Bhagavad Gita*. Obviously they have been important to people for hundreds of years. What is that statue on your desk?

That's the Hindu god Ganesha.

Is he the elephant god?

He's the god of doorways, entrepreneurs, new projects and wealth! Why don't you take it with you!

Oh, thank you.

I sometimes think of my office as a redistribution center for Buddhas. Now it is time to distribute images of Ganesha! You were talking about the books in the Core Curriculum. When I joined the Core, I had studied the Bible, and I had studied classical Christianity, in addition to India and East Asia, but I had not read the texts of classical Greece and Rome. Sometimes you learn a tradition best by teaching it. So I started teaching in the Core, and then I just became more and more deeply involved. In part it was a reaction to the text; in part it was a response to the friendships I developed with other faculty. In the Core we know each other well, and we respect each other. It is an unusual academic community.

Well, it seems like they enjoy it, they like it! As a professor, you travel a lot, as I know from last semester. Where is your favorite place to travel?

At the moment, I am drawn most to Japan, because it is a living tradition of Mahayana Buddhism. I studied the origins of the Mahayana in India, and I have studied with many Tibetans in India and America. But the tradition has died out in India, so it is difficult to sense to the liveliness of Mahayana Buddhism in India. In Japan there are many vigorous, intelligent, and well-informed Buddhist scholars, along with the trappings of a sophisticated Buddhist civilization. I love traveling in Japan, even without knowledge of Japanese.

One final question: Have you ever had an out-of-body experience?

What a strange question! I remember a time when I was flying into the airport in West Yellowstone, when the plane was caught in turbulence. I became very sick and felt that I was floating free from my body. I don't think that Tibetan lamas would consider this a very elevated attainment, but it felt pretty remarkable at the time. Maybe we should consider it a metaphor for life in a complicated, high-pressure, American university.

Milton's Successful Theodicy

Emma Hughes

The epic poem *Paradise Lost*, in its exposition of man's original sin and fall from grace, declares itself to be a theodicy, or an attempt to "justify the ways of God to man" (I.26). In writing his epic, Milton assumes that God is omniscient, omnipotent, and good; he thus faces the difficulty of reconciling this assumption with the existence of evil in a universe created by a benevolent God. *Paradise Lost* demonstrates that God's endowment of humans with free will is consistent with His infinite power and wisdom, despite the fact that man's poor choices are responsible for evil in the world. Although God foresaw the emergence of evil and permitted it to exist, He ultimately turns evil into greater glory for Himself and mankind through the crucifixion and resurrection of His son, Jesus. Milton's theodicy is successful because it accounts for evil in the world, while maintaining the verity of God's omnipotence.

Paradise Lost illustrates God's creation of man and free will as evidence of His perfect nature, not as a contradiction of His benevolence. That God, in His formation of independent beings, understood man's free will to be the cause of evil may seem incongruous given His righteousness. Dennis Danielson responds to this misconception in his essay "The Fall and Milton's Theodicy," which delineates a Free Will Defense that argues, "God, for reasons consistent with his wisdom and goodness, created angels and human beings with freedom either to obey or disobey his commands" (148). The Free Will Defense is fundamental to Milton's theodicy; it claims that God had a plan for humans even before He brought them into existence. The eventual fulfillment of God's plan in correlation with man's free will demonstrate His infinite knowledge and power.

To explain God's endowment of man with the capacity to think independently, Milton emphasizes that God created man in His own image. In *Paradise Lost*, Satan admires the beauty of human beings when he first espies Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, "whom [his] thoughts pursue/ With wonder, and could love, so lively shines/ In them Divine resemblance" (IV.362-364). Seeing human beings for the first time forcibly reminds Satan of His archrival in Heaven; God, after all, did conceive man after His own figure. Man, like his Creator, possesses strong intellect; he is the only living creature on earth with the ability to reason.

Milton furthers his explanation of man's free will by asserting that without freedom to reason, man cannot truly love God. Worship is meaningless if not performed with intention and contemplation. The reality of man's independence strengthens his goodness: as Danielson points out, "without freedom, what value would things such as honesty, loyalty, and love possess?" (148). Freedom allows man to choose to be loyal to and to love God; it makes his devotion more substantial and meaningful than the mindless worship of a dependent and submissive being. Man's free will ultimately aspires to glorify God; a rational person's choice to accept and love God proves that He deserves their worship and praise.

While intellectual freedom is a prerequisite to sincere devotion, God's creation of man's free will seems to contradict Milton's postulation that God is good—after all, God can foresee man's surrender to temptation. Though God presents man with the opportunity to fall, the Fall creates the opportunity for man to be saved. God's foresight allows Him to account for and prepare for the evil that will emerge in mankind. His speech in Book III delineates His definitive plan for man, outlining man's Fall and eventual Redemption through the mortal death and resurrection of Jesus. Though both Adam and Eve understand God's command not to eat the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, they do so anyway, consciously choosing death and damnation. As a result of their sin, God states that man "with his whole posterity must die, / Die he or Justice must; unless for him / Some other able, and as willing, pay" (III.209-211). Although God ambiguously poses this concept, He knows that His son will be the individual willing to fulfill the demands of justice and save men by dying for their sins.

God's foreknowledge of man's sin gives mankind hope that they will be saved from damnation, unlike the fallen angels. God can forgive humans because they are not the creators of their own depravity; Satan and the fallen angels are authors of their own downfall and accordingly will never be redeemed. Man is weaker than the angels in Hell, and he falls from grace because he succumbs to temptation. In the event of the resurrection, people become free of sin; those who choose to accept God's mercy can be saved and ascend to Heaven. In his book *The Logical Epic*, Dennis Burden astutely observes, "God's foreknowledge thus has for the faithful a welcome providential role" (28). God's omniscience signifies hope for those who believe in Him. Evil originates from the people who choose to ignore God, not from God himself. This concept is vital to Milton's theodicy because it explains the continued existence of evil in the world.

In *Paradise Lost*, as in the Christian religion, the evil that Satan inspires in man subsequently works toward the greater glorification of God. This fact cements the reality of God's omnipotence, omniscience, and benevolence while accounting for sin. God recognizes evil, but is not responsible for it; His ultimate plan for man is to "permit evil and eventually turns it to His own purpose," through the miracle of Jesus' resurrection (Burden, 24). When the Archangel Michael reveals God's design to Adam at the end of the

poem, he responds with rapturous awe, proclaiming, “O goodness infinite, goodness immense! / That all this good of evil shall produce, / And evil turn to good!” (XII.469-471). Adam is overcome with joy when he learns that there will be redemption for mankind, and he wonders whether he should repent his sins or rejoice in the final triumph of good over evil. Mortal Adam marvels at the divine workings of his creator; his blissful astonishment is further proof of God’s infinite goodness and power.

Though God Himself describes the magnificent outcome of His plan, declaring, “in Mercy and Justice both,/ Through Heav’n and Earth, so shall my glory excel,” Milton does not mean to say that the future of mankind after the Fall is preferable to what it could have been in the Garden of Eden (III.132-133). Danielson addresses this sentiment in his work, asserting, “however great our future, it will never match the still greater future that Adam and Eve and their offspring would have enjoyed in a world without sin” (156). If Adam and Eve had obeyed God’s command, they could have remained in the Garden of Eden: Eve without pain in childbirth and Adam spared from hard labor. Before the Fall, Adam and Eve’s existence was perfection; they knew not of evil and thus lived in harmony with their surroundings and God’s glory. Milton meticulously portrays the beauty and fruitfulness of Eden as well as Adam and Eve’s ideal, prelapsarian relationship in order to emphasize the tragedy of man’s downfall.

Man suffers greatly for his disobedience to God, and *Paradise Lost* ends with the solemn image of Adam and Eve walking away from the Garden of Eden. However, the epic poem is not a complete tragedy because it elucidates man’s redemption and salvation. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, God’s benevolence prevails over Satan’s corruption, and good triumphs over evil. Milton justifies the existence of evil in the world by exhibiting God’s creation of free-willed humans and asserting that evil originates from those who reject God’s mercy. Milton’s God foresees evil and, by design, utilizes it to increase His glory. In writing his epic narrative, John Milton knew that such lofty subject matter demanded delicate care. *Paradise Lost* confidently illustrates a convincing argument for the existence of evil in a universe governed by an omnipotent, omniscient, and benevolent God, and asserts itself as a successful and beautiful theodicy.

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Letter from Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus to Publius Vergilius Maro

Josh Gray

PUBLIUS VERGILIUS MARO,

I AM WRITING TO WISH YOU GOOD HEALTH ON YOUR VOYAGE TO ROME FROM ATHENS, AND TO EXPRESS MY COMPLETE SATISFACTION WITH YOUR INITIAL DRAFT OF THE AENEID. I KNOW THAT YOU HAVE EXPRESSED SOME FEELINGS OF INADEQUACY ABOUT THE EPIC, BUT I ASSURE YOU THAT IT COMPELLINGLY DEPICTS THE ORIGINS OF OUR PEOPLE AND OF OUR POWERFUL EMPIRE. ANCHISES' SPEECH IN THE UNDERWORLD GLORIFIES OUR ILLUSTRIOUS HEROES IN JUST THE MANNER THAT I ENVISIONED. YOUR DESCRIPTION OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE GREEK CITIES CASTS OUR ANCESTORS IN THE PERFECT LIGHT AS RULERS WHOSE STRENGTH CANNOT BE SURPASSED. THIS SUPREMACY OF ROMAN LAW AND THE ABILITY OF THE PEOPLE TO CREATE PEACE WILL BE VITAL IN MAINTAINING THE EMPIRE LONG INTO THE DISTANT FUTURE. YOUR WORK WILL PLAY AN INSTRUMENTAL ROLE IN PROMOTING THIS IDEA THROUGHOUT THE EMPIRE.

IN ADDITION, YOUR DEPICTION OF DIDO AS AN EMOTIONAL, IMPULSIVE LEADER FURTHER CONTRIBUTES TO A SENSE OF SOLIDARITY AND NATIONAL UNIFICATION OF THE ROMAN PEOPLE. OUR SOCIETY FINDS ITS ROOTS IN DIGNITAS, PIETAS, AND GRAVITAS; WE ARE AN AUSTERE PEOPLE WHO HAVE NO NEED FOR DISPLAYS OF PASSION. BY DEPICTING DIDO, THE RULER OF OUR TRADITIONAL ENEMY, AS VIOLENT, FURIOUS, AND RASH, THE EPIC COALESCE THE ROMAN PEOPLE UNDER A BANNER OF MORAL SUPERIORITY. DIDO'S ACTIONS INSTILL IN THE MINDS OF THE PEOPLE A CLEAR DISDAIN FOR THOSE

WHO VALUE DIFFERENT SOCIAL CUSTOMS. THIS WILL DO GOOD THINGS FOR THE EMPIRE; IT WILL PROMOTE A DISTINCT CONCEPTION OF OUR FRIENDS AND ENEMIES. BY EMPHASIZING THE STRENGTHS AND THE WEAKNESSES OF OUR ENEMY AND THE GREATNESS OF OUR DESTINY, YOU WILL HELP JUSTIFY MY LINEAGE AND STRENGTHEN MY AUTHORITY OVER THE VAST EMPIRE.

THE SHIELD CRAFTED BY VULCAN FOR AENEAS AT VENUS' REQUESTS REPRESENTS THE GREATEST PORTION OF THIS EPIC AND GLORIFIES THE ROMAN PEOPLE BEYOND COMPARE. THE GIFT FORETELLS A MAGNIFICENT FUTURE FOR MY EMPIRE, AND THAT IS A VERY SIGNIFICANT PROVIDENCE. HAVING THE SHIELD BESTOWED TO AENEAS BY HIS MOTHER WAS PARTICULARLY TACTFUL—FOR IT SUBTLY REINFORCED THE IDEA THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE EMPIRE DESCEND FROM THE GODS. THIS DECLARES UNEQUIVOCALLY THAT THE GODS FAVOR ROME, A BELIEF THAT WILL GREATLY BENEFIT THE MORALE OF THE ROMAN PEOPLE AND THE EXTENSION OF OUR EMPIRE. WHILE I REALIZE THAT YOU CHERISH DOUBTS ABOUT THE TRUE NATURE OF THE GODS, THE GENERAL POPULATION DOES NOT. BECAUSE OF THIS, THE GODS CAN BE USED TO GREAT EFFECT IN INSPIRING AND MOTIVATING THE PEOPLE. IF THE SUBJECTS OF OUR NATION BELIEVE THEMSELVES TO BE THE CHOSEN FAVORITES OF THE GODS, THEY WILL POSSESS A CONFIDENCE AND LOVE FOR THE NATION THAT PROMOTES ORDER AND SUPREME IMPERIAL STRENGTH. INDEED, IF THEY BELIEVE THAT THE GODS ARE GUIDING ROME TO A GLORIOUS FUTURE, IT IS CLEAR

THAT THE GODS WILL CONTINUE TO GUIDE THE EMPIRE FOR CENTURIES TO COME. MY FRIEND, YOU HAVE NO REASON TO BE DISSATISFIED WITH YOUR WORK BECAUSE YOU HAVE ACCOMPLISHED MORE THAN I COULD HAVE IMAGINED. SAFE TRAVELS,

GAIUS JULIUS CAESAR AUGUSTUS



"Augustus Caesar, Met, NYC," photograph, by Midge Kwock

than to be eager to go on carrying a burden which one would gladly throw away?" - One-buttocked old

A Review of Calliope's *Titus Andronicus*

Sylvia Lewin

Being students accustomed to literary analysis, we often make the mistake of confusing the text of a play with the production itself. A piece of theater is not merely a spoken script; it is also action, emotion, costuming, setting, and the silent reactions of others in the scene. Never has this distinction been more apparent to me than while watching The Calliope Project's staging of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* this March. Their vibrant production had more impact and meaning than the text alone could evoke.

The title character of *Titus* is a triumphant general, returning from fighting the Goths for the greater glory of Rome. With him are several prisoners of war: Tamora, Queen of the Goths, her three sons, and her lover, Aaron the Moor. Titus has lost many sons—soldiers in his command, the Adronici—in the recent combat. In their memory and honor, he sacrifices Tamora's son. Soon afterward, the emperor Saturninus frees Tamora from bondage in order to marry her. As soon as she is able, she begins to plot revenge against Titus. She and Aaron encourage her two remaining sons to kill the emperor's brother, Bassianus, and to rape Lavinia, Titus' daughter, and Bassianus' lover. The boys cut off Lavinia's tongue and hands to keep her from accusing them. More and more wrongs are perpetrated against Titus' family, until finally he is revenged: he tricks Tamora into eating a pie made from the flesh of her sons. A flurry of stabbings ensues; by the end of the play, all the main characters, except for Titus' brother, are either killed or sentenced to death. Thus does Shakespeare warn against the dangers of revenge.

The murder and rape listed above are only a fraction of the carnage that occurred during Calliope's production of *Titus*. During the evening, countless screams emanated from behind plain white drapes that were the main components of the set. Compared to typical stagings of this play, less gore appeared onstage, which only served to heighten the impact of the few bloody scenes. When Lavinia first appeared after her attack, cradling her mangled arms and dribbling blood from her mouth, her anguished sobbing and primal terror sent chills through the audience. Directors Alexa Ray Corriea and Jessi H. McCarthy complemented the relative lack of gore with several other unconventional choices that enhanced the show's impact. They staged *Titus* in the round, so that actors moved close to the audience when exiting and leaving. In addition, the actors were occasionally seated among the audience, as when actors on opposite sides of the audience cheered for different political factions in the beginning of the play. The audience was unsurprised when characters in their orations addressed them as "Romans," which created a great emotional connection to the work. But the directors' most surprising de-

cision—and one of the most successful—was to cast a woman as Marcus Andronicus, the brother of Titus. This gender switch lent an depth and tenderness to Marcus' discovery of the ravished Lavinia. Laura Hubbard played the part with subtlety and emotion.

Several other performances of the evening were notable. Elizabeth Ramirez's portrayal of Lavinia was one of the most captivating, perhaps even more so after she lost the power of speech. William Schuller was a convincingly patriarchal and aggrieved Titus, while Nicanor Campos played Aaron to perfection, even bringing some emotional depth to a two-dimensional villain. The transformation of Sarah Gazdowicz's Tamora from frightened prisoner to cruel avenger was both charismatic and terrifying.

Costumers Borah Coburn and Elizabeth Krah also deserve praise for making strong distinctions between the various factions through their apparel. The Andronici were in aqua shawls, the enemy Goths in tattered black, the Goths in Saturninus' court in vibrant and poisonous hues. These costumes aided in portraying characters' personalities, but more importantly, they allowed the audience to keep track of a huge number of characters and their relationships.

As can be expected in any production, some moments did fall flat. A few of the actors spoke too quietly to be heard, or played their parts self-consciously. However, this detracted little from the overall impact of the work. The intimate staging and strong actors brought the audience both physically and emotionally close to Shakespeare's characters. The violence and terror of the work was extremely intense, allowing the audience to experience the horror of revenge in a way that no script could ever duplicate.

A gallery of photos taken by Andrew Bisdale during the show's production and performance can be found online at www.bu.edu/core/calliope.

Poster designed by Mallory Rice, with an illustration of the Andronici crest by Borah Corburn.

William Shakespeare's

design by Mallory Rice illustration by Borak Coburn

Titus Andronicus

DIRECTED BY ALEXA RAY CORRIEA
AND JESSI H. MCCARTHY

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first, if it's alive; / Then they have the parts and they've lost the whole, / For the link that's missing was the

An Interview with David Green

David Green is a Senior Lecturer in the CAS Writing Program and the Core Curriculum Humanities division at Boston University, as well as Writing Coordinator for the Core. His academic interests include Samuel Beckett and the Irish modernist poets. Prof. Green received his B.A. from the University of Notre Dame and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of London. Before coming to Boston University, he taught at the University of Texas at San Antonio and St. Mary's University, and at universities in Spain and China. He is the recipient of the 1999 Sproat Award for the Outstanding Teacher of Writing at Boston University. Professor Green's novel, *Atchley*, was published in 1998 by Station Hill Arts. A collection of short stories, *The Garden of Love*, was published this month by Pen & Anvil Press. His scholarly publications include studies of Samuel Beckett and the Irish poet Brian Coffey.

In April 2010, Olga Zhukov sat down with Prof. Green to discuss his travels, his experiences as a teacher at BU and in other countries, and his writing. – KB

Can you tell me about your experiences in China?

In terms of the teaching, I recall one experience very clearly. Our apartments in the Foreign Guest House served as our offices and one day in the spring the students were suddenly required to sign in when they visited. They didn't want to do this because they were afraid it would hurt their ideological report card. They went to ideology classes on Thursday and if they appeared to be interested in the West, they could get a lower grade and it could hurt their chances for a job. In other words, if they visited their western teachers too often, they might be accused of what was called "bourgeois liberalism." They told us about this parallel education in great secrecy because we weren't supposed to know they were on a dual track. When the students complained about having to sign in, I went to Xiao Gu, the *waiban*, or liaison officer, and said the students didn't want to come by for office hours and they needed to consult with us. She said, "Dawei, it's getting very hot, and so they shouldn't visit you because we're afraid that you catch diseases from them." I said, "That's not true. You know that I know that that's not true, that this is all political." And she said, "Dawei, don't pay any attention to what I say or do. Only pay attention to my heart." She was essentially saying that even though she had to lie to me, we were friends and because of that, I had to accept whatever she said regardless of how inconsistent or absurd it might be. It's a very different conception of the truth.

While living in China in the mid-eighties, I had the opportunity to travel to a lot of interesting places like Tibet and Guilin. On one occasion, I climbed what's called Huang Shan, a mountain west of Hangzhou, not too far from the Yangtze River. If you've seen

a Chinese painting where darkened peaks emerge from shrouds of fog and clouds, it may have been painted at Huang Shan or at least in that style. It's one of the most beautiful places in China. You spend a day climbing thousands of steps cut precariously in the sides of granite peaks with names like Jade Screen and Capital of Heaven and, upon reaching one of the summits, you look out on towering islands of stone above what they call cloud seas. At that time, the only place a westerner could stay on top of the mountain was a guest house where Ho Chi Minh had stayed while on vacation during the Vietnam War. The only other people there were from Texas. I talked to them at length and in the course of the conversation discovered they had been to Eureka Springs, the small town in Arkansas where my parents live, and the woman in the family had actually been to my mother's store. So here I was on top of a mountain in China with a woman who had met my mother. That's the sort of coincidence that can lead to a story.

How do you view yourself as a writer?

A lot of my wandering had to do with the desire to see the world from different perspectives and get to know different kinds of people and maybe learn a language or two. All this, in the back of my mind, was because I wanted to write. I started by trying to create a prose that was completely new with no preconceived purpose or plot. This turned out to be—as if it had an impetus distinct from my own—an allegory of sixty or seventy pages, but there wasn't much chance of publishing it on its own. So I wrote a kind of mock criticism of this text and after the fact added it as an explanatory preface to the allegory. The result was *Atchley*.

One reviewer called the narrative a Möbius strip that turns itself inside out. I think that's an accurate description. The allegory is a reflection of loss—losing a sense of purpose or presence in the world. But I didn't set out to write about myself. I was just writing to see what would happen, trying to avoid a conventional plot and instead putting the focus on imagery and the beauty of language and its rhythms. The criticism that was added was meant to be a satire on theory. I was reading a lot of criticism while doing my Ph.D., so at the time I was in the mood to write a tongue-in-cheek deconstruction of deconstruction. *Atchley*, the author who is the subject of the critical study, tells Green, the critic, that he doesn't know what he's talking about. But as the narrative continues, it becomes clear that the book you're reading is the same book you're reading about. My mother's maiden name is *Atchley*, so in a kind of resonating self-parody, I'm Green and I'm *Atchley*. I'm the person who wandered the world wanting to write fiction, and I'm the person who got a Ph.D. studying contemporary theory, all the while questioning the validity of what I was doing. Ultimately the book questions the presumptuousness of theory's ascendancy over literature and concludes with language that I hope renews a sense of wonder that has been lost from so much contemporary writing.

Tell me a little bit about your new book, *The Garden of Love*.

I'll briefly describe a couple of stories. One, called "Sometime of the Night," is about a professional dreamer. This story started out as a series of notes for an essay on wonder, but I was teaching Kafka's "A Hunger Artist" at the time and was fascinated by the idea of a professional hunger artist who sits in a cage for days and doesn't eat. I wondered about other imaginary occupations that could be the basis for a story and came up with the idea of a professional dreamer who dreams for people who can't dream for themselves. When it occurred to me that that's what a writer does, the story began to write itself. I suppose in that sense it's somewhat autobiographical.

Another story entitled "Lao Luo" originated from a desire to write about how we all end up in hundreds and hundreds of photographs in our lives—often without being aware it. And if you live in place where there are lots of tourists, as I did in Spain, you probably end up in many thousands. In fact, in certain places, people are constantly recording your life without your knowledge. And so, if you could somehow find all the photographs that have been taken of you, you could reconstruct your life, and you could see yourself aging over time. It was very difficult to write this narrative, so the story ended up being about an elderly man in China who takes photographs of those whose lives would not otherwise be remembered.

Who are some of your influences?

To give an example of how an immediate influence works, while writing "Sometime of the Night," I was also reading Thomas De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* to get a sense of his style because I wanted to create a kind of "no place" with the language. The town in the story doesn't really exist and there is no definite country. So I used a language that wasn't contemporary and would be difficult for people to locate. It's hard to single out a few writers who have been influences, but among the most important, I'd list the Americans Bowles and Carver, and, of course, Faulkner and Cormac McCarthy, and in translation, authors like Pirandello, Calvino, and Proust. But with the exceptions of the work of Moncrieff and Kilmartin, and perhaps Rabassa, I don't think translations can help you with style as much as a great writer in your own language. I would like to think there's also a little bit of Beckett here and there in the stories—the rhythm, maybe a kind of wry humor. I tried to vary the style in most of the stories to reflect what was happening in terms of the content, and in the collection overall, as in some of the stories, there's a movement from realistic to more imaginative descriptions.

When do you write?

I write almost exclusively in the summer because during the school year, I don't have the time to let everything go and enter the imaginative space I need. The advantage to this is that when I return to a story after a long absence, I bring decidedly different per-



"North Sea Ridge," photograph, by David Green

spectives. It's funny because sometimes you can't believe you've written something—it just doesn't seem like it came out of your mind. There's a certain zone that you're in when you write, and it's almost like lucid dreaming. And that's a delicate thing. You can't go there willfully. On an average, I probably work on a story over three summers, and I work on several simultaneously—I'll polish a stage on one and begin a stage on another. It's easier for me to move back and forth between stories than to spend all my time on just one.

Why do you write?

I don't feel like I have a choice. It's just something I do. It's very time-consuming—probably far more than most people would suspect—but it's also very satisfying. I think anyone who writes has a desire to be witnessed, to have one's presence confirmed in order to relieve, momentarily, the isolation of human nature. In a way, all my stories are about that isolation. At the same time, you have to be conscious of the craft. I tell people, it's like being a carpenter. You take pride in doing what you do as well as you can whether it's fitting words together to make a sentence or dovetailing wood to make a joint.

And I Thought of Home

Audrey Hertenstein

A night of contemplation under the twilight stars on the shore of the Charles River, with only the skyscrapers across the bank to illuminate your thoughts, will lead you to think of home. Like the *Kyklops*, the cold stone facades of the remote skyscrapers could begin at any moment to dribble “streams of liquor and bits of men” (156). How else can a foreign land treat its new inhabitants who seek adventure for the first time in their lives? Alone, lost in thought, I couldn’t help but notice how different the Charles is from the shallow, clear creeks running behind the cornfields in my hometown. I felt like Penelope—looking towards the horizon—unsure of what form home would assume when it arrives, but always believing that it would come. Remembering home, I thought less of its physical characteristics and more of the memories. Lost in my thoughts, I found myself at home on the bank of the Charles: sitting on a rock half covered in decaying leaves which fell from the old trees towering over me, watching me as my thoughts drifted to friends, family, and specific moments to which I could never return. Was home a place I could return to? Would my longing be indefinite and forever unquenched? If home was merely a moment in our thoughts, then it could never again be tangible once we tired of its security and abandoned it for new experiences. I felt the same emotional tug that Odysseus experiences in *The Odyssey*: a tug that entices him “homeward bound for the crags of Ithaka” (200).

If home is indeed a place so tangible that it remains familiar even after years abroad, then perhaps the swine herder spoke the truth to Telemakhos when he said, “here you are, home from the distant places!” (290). For Telemakhos, home is a present inhabitance; it is a distinct place on the map. He leaves his physical home when, with the guidance of Athena, he goes to Pylos and Lakedaimon. Athena says that Telemakhos “sought news of his father,” implying that his journey had a distinct purpose (81). If home is merely a physical place for him, then he would be ambivalent about his father’s absence. However, Telemakhos’ purposeful journey implies that some underlying component of a home is missing. Home is not a distinct physical place that a person can sensually experience; it also needs to include a human element. While telling the story of his great journey, Odysseus is reminded of the importance of home. His shipmates give him in-

chose the solitude of the countryside...and to the trees and the waters I reveal my thoughts and my beauty. I

ward strength with the words “think of home—if home indeed awaits us” (179). If home as a physical destination is incomplete when it lacks human contact, it is completely rational for the word “if” to cast such doubt. The essence of being “incomplete” implies a state of instability. Endless longing would consume our souls if we could never reach the physical destination and our loved ones.

I found myself that night on the edge of the Charles River by pure chance, with an unknown purpose in mind, until I saw a place fit to call my home. Why would a person leave home and all its securities unless he was searching for something greater? *The Odyssey* implies that all journeys ultimately lead to new destinations: maybe that is why I find myself miles away from pumpkins and warm nights. I am searching for a new experience so that I can broaden my perspective of the world. Like me, Odysseus does not leave home in search of missing components, but experiences the opposite effect. Disguised as a beggar, he says “One month, no more, I stayed at home in joy with children, wife, and treasure. Lust for action drove me to go to sea then” (255). Odysseus left true joy for the need of adventure, as he states that “Farming I never cared for, nor life at home, nor fathering fair children. I reveled in long ships with oars; I loved polished lances” (254). Odysseus thought that warfare and the open sea were his true passions, not his beloved family, even though they brought him joy. Perhaps the absence of home brought to light its true importance to him as he later comes to say “each day I long for the sight of home” (87). This constant longing is never quenched as his roaming has no real destination. The joy he left was a fleeting memory, something only to be enjoyed again in reflection, never relived. Nothing could ever recreate those memories that are attached to his emotions. He chases his memories despite this reality, saying, “Let the trial come,” and continues his quest to return home to end his daily longing (87).

Telemakhos’ longing easily subsides when he learns that he is capable of returning home to his mother; however, Penelope’s longings are not difficult to subdue. Athena says that Penelope is “forever grieving for [Odysseus], missing his return” (242). Penelope’s tears only subside when the goddess possesses her with sleep (372). Although Penelope is living in Odysseus’ house, home is still an unreachable state of mind. She is surrounded by Odysseus’ possessions, reminders of his absence. She is further disheartened by the presence of suitors. Forlorn and insecure, she asks her son, “Telemakhos, what am I to do now? Return alone and lie again on my forsaken bed—sodden how often with my weeping since that day when Odysseus put to sea?” (312). There is no clear answer for Penelope and no physical journey that can give her peace. Until her memories materialize and the past is renewed, her home is lost. Telemakhos only offers this answer: “If men could choose, and have their choice, in everything, we’d have my father home” (294). For Penelope, home embodies an ideal that resonates from her longings for the past: she finds complete happiness only in returning to a time when her closest loved ones were present.



"Little Mermaid, Copenhagen, Denmark," photograph, by Elizabeth Perry

According to Zeus, Odysseus' destiny is "to see his friends again under his own roof, in his father's country" (82). By this definition, home is the combination of the familiar location and a reunion with a loving family. Upon deeper analysis, Zeus is right: friends or loved ones are the true definition of home. Odysseus knows this when he pleads to the wife of Alkinoos: "my home and friends lie far. My life is pain" (115). Odysseus' longing is so strong that a physical pain lies in his heart: a pain stemming from the absence of his friends. The home can be tainted, as it is with the negative connotation surrounding the suitors in Odysseus's home. The perception of a distant friend and the feelings felt for him cannot be defiled. Odysseus's physical home is described as diminished in emotional value as the suitors' "treachery had filled that house with pain" (387). When that physical place is filled with pain, none can be content to live in it: just as Telemakhos, sitting in his own home waiting to answer the door is "sitting there unhappy among the suitors, a boy, daydreaming" (5). Pain is not contained in a satisfactory version

coarse and ignorant multitude it was not uncommon to meet with energetic passions, generous sentiments,

of home: it is an escape from daily burdens. Telemakhos is not happy or at peace because there is no loving energy to surround him. His mother is lost in grief and his father seems lost forever. What remains is a life of solitude: a life lost in thought, wondering what might have been. Does he stare at the horizon, wondering how he allowed steadfast family to be replaced with frivolous suitors? Am I like Telemakhos, wondering how I allowed old trees with roots firmly planted in clay ridden soil to be replaced with stark buildings? Or are his thoughts on the same level as his mother? When Penelope fetches the bow for the challenge, she weeps over it, remembering Odysseus and memories of the past. She finally realizes that home will never again be as tangible as the bow in her hands: it is a fleeting moment meant to be enjoyed in peaceful and sorrowful reflection (392). Upon hearing news of Odysseus's return, Penelope is not quick to celebrate and only counts it as a true possibility when Telemakhos speaks to her (432). Maybe the reason for this is not denial, but rather acceptance that Odysseus' homecoming does not guarantee a home as it was in her memories. She accepts the fact that Odysseus will not be the same man she kissed goodbye over twenty years ago. With this mentality, it is plausible that she might have considered leaving home to marry a suitor, in turn, leaving her memories of home "forever to be remembered" (393).

Summer nights on open grassland with friends under humid, star-filled skies is a memory of home, but so is a night spent in reflection on the banks of the Charles, at the edge of the city. And Odysseus does return—to joyous reunion with wife and son. That the past cannot be relived does not make the past obsolete; the future too contains meaning that is not obliterated by past experience. Home is anywhere your thoughts are with you, as Odysseus' thoughts were with him, as Penelope's memories were with her, as Telemakhos' ambitions propelled him seeking. All are looking for the inner sanctity of home. Alkinoos was wise to say "Clear sailing shall you have now, homeward now, however painful all the past" (229). His words remind us that it is never too late to find yourself at home, even if it is not the same memory that returns when lost in deep thought. Home is not a physical destination; it is not something that awaits you. It is a memory you wait for in serene contemplation. If you let it become an unattainable, uninhabitable memory, then you will never again find yourself at peace with the world and you will roam forever as a lost spirit with endless pain. However, if even for a moment, you find that you are at home without any contingencies of the past, your longing will be met with your loving family.

Line numbers in this essay refer to Fitzgerald's translation of The Odyssey (FSG, 1998).



Eurýlokhos' Defense

Shamavi Hasan

It is I, Eurýlokhos, who speaks out! I am that detested child of fortune who has paid the price of another's folly. I do not presume that I led a blameless life nor do I claim to have perfect judgment. However, I do know that I did not deserve my fate, and Odysseus does not deserve his.

In my lifetime, I was an officer in Odysseus' famous crew; some would say his favourite even. Many times, I felt esteemed as his deputy (X.225). He must have thought me worthy of the position. I always tried to do what I thought was best for my crew, even when Odysseus and I did not see eye to eye. Many will say that I brought on my ship-mates' deaths when I instigated the slaughtering of Helios' cattle. If only one could understand the agony of being hungry for days, lost at sea, with no real hope of returning

home. One could see that we were driven to desperation when we committed that sinful act, aye! (XII.420) I admit it was sinful in retrospect, and I did mean to compensate by offering sacrifice to Helios when we returned home. But I would like to state my grievances. Who was the reason for our misery? Odysseus!

Oh, I respected him as our captain, but it was because of his folly that we were doomed in the first place. Oh, how my instincts went against the idea when he wanted to meet one of those blasted Cyclopes! I, along with my men, warned him but he did not heed us (IX.241). And what happened? We were imprisoned and our fellow men died! I admit that Zeus' first storm was the result of the pillaging at the islands of Kikones, but if Odysseus hadn't hurt Polyphemus in order to escape, Poseidon would not have avenged his son's loss by hampering our journey. It was he who led us to the cannibalistic Laestrygonians, where most of our men fell prey. It was he who led us to Skylla where more of us died!

Maybe sometimes he acted because he had no other choice; but what of us? We suffered because we were accompanying him by pure chance. It was as though we were just pawns, one by one dying, so that the gods could deliver King Odysseus his destiny (XI.127). He is the one who got the riches and the fame, while we died in oblivion! Here I am in this dark and sorrowful underworld, while Odysseus returns to Ithaka on the Phaiakian's ship. It seems as though my only crime was to be a man unfavored by any god. For it is thanks only to Athena's guidance that Odysseus gets home. But I leave you with this, stranger— if even one person understands my pain and frustration, then justice has been given to me in the realm of Hades and my soul will be at peace.

*Line numbers in this essay refer to Fitzgerald's translation of The Odyssey (FSG, 1998).
Drawing by Devyn Buckley, after Da Vinci's profile of an old man.*

Philosophy Around Every Corner: The Miniature Dialectics in *Candide*

Jacob Slutsky

Voltaire's lauded work of philosophical satire could not exist without models of differing philosophies. The author splices a dialogue of ideas into the pages of *Candide*, most of which are schools of thought from the Age of Enlightenment. The principal vehicles for these ideas are the characters themselves, including the Anabaptist James, Martin, and Dr. Pangloss. In the end of many episodes, Voltaire provides segues into discussions among characters—each character serving as an archetype of a particular philosophical school, namely those of Rousseau, Leibniz, and Voltaire himself—mimicking the dialectic tradition of classical philosophy.

These discussions evolve throughout each episode. The first instance of this occurs in Chapter Five, after Candide's philosophical tutor, Pangloss, relates the “genealogy” of his syphilis infection (Voltaire 29-32). Pangloss observes his usual assumption of perverted Leibnizian optimism—that is, in explaining his misfortunes via the assertion that this is the best of all possible worlds, and all suffering contributes to the greater good (31). This discussion arises naturally from earlier content; it is the work of this so-called orthodoxy to elevate from reality to the ideal (Grieder 486). The organic emergence of these discussions carries on throughout *Candide*. Pangloss is launched into a discourse on the Fall of Man—perhaps one of the best demonstrations of perverted optimism—while they are fed dinner in Lisbon after the earthquake (Voltaire 35). Here, Voltaire introduces the discussion as mere dinner conversation and as a common topic that existed in the salons during the French Enlightenment.

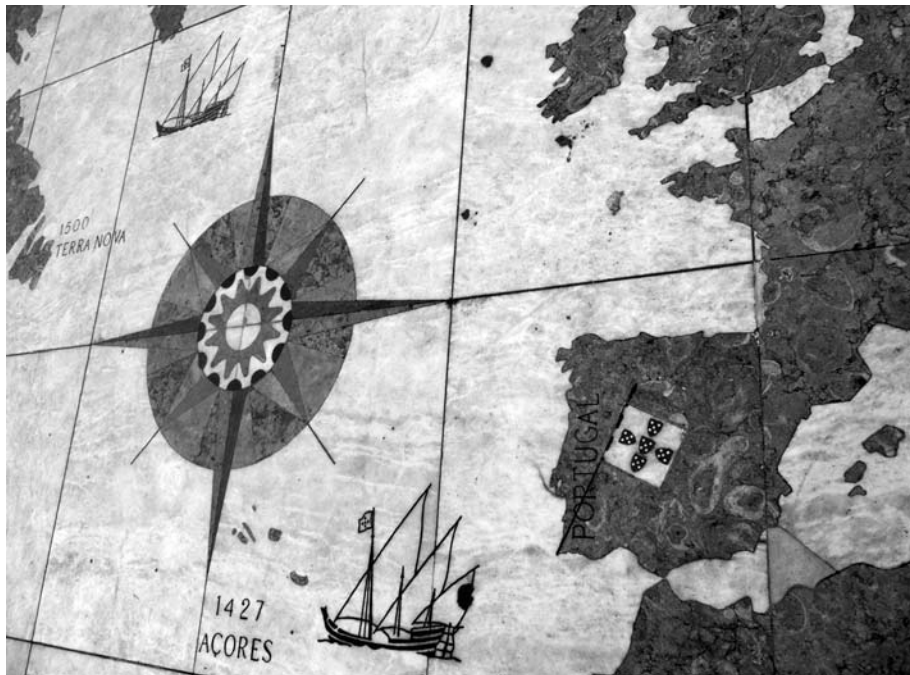
Likewise, the first evidence of Martin's philosophy occurs in the guise of mere conversation as he and Candide sail from Suriname to Bordeaux. Candide solicits Martin's company and knowledge (91-95). The technique of organic integration on Voltaire's part is evidenced further in this interplay by brief events at sea—namely, a battle between Spaniards and Dutch pirates (93). These discussions arise simply as a result of normal conversation, or of rumination on the experiences of the previous episode. Rather than devoting a chapter to discourse on various philosophical points of view, Voltaire weaves

these small dialectics naturally into the action—or as Grieder would describe it, the “paradox” of the text (Grieder, 2-3).

The first philosophical school introduced in the book is not prompted by the philosophical Pangloss, but by the Anabaptist James. While it is the position of Arthur Scherr that James embodies the classical liberalism of political economist Adam Smith, it is far more evident from the text that James represents Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s philosophy. In the original French text, his name is even Jacques (Scherr 75-76). James expresses that “[men] were not born wolves, yet they have become wolves” (Voltaire 31). This statement seems to mimic the opening line in Rousseau’s discourse, *The Social Contract*, which proclaims that “Man is born free, yet everywhere he is in chains,” (Rousseau 142). This likeness, however, is more than merely stylistic in nature. The idea that society and technology—which the Anabaptist decries—have made man savage, is in line with the basic Rousseauian doctrine that the emergence of society corrupted the natural man, as evinced in his discourse, *On the Origin of Inequality* (Rousseau 26-82). In responding to the philosophy of Pangloss, James advances a decidedly Rousseauian point of view.

Martin embodies a pessimism that strongly contradicts Leibnizian optimism. It is difficult to ascribe a single philosopher’s outlook to his own, as his first moral admission states, “what I really believe is that man was created by the forces of evil and not by the forces of good” (Voltaire 91-92). At the end of the voyage to France, Martin declares that the world was created to “drive us mad” (95). This view of the world, in seeing the cause and affect (those of man or the Divine) seems like a viable response to optimism. The principal difficulty is that there was little philosophical work in the field of pessimism before or during Voltaire’s time. The noted pessimistic philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer belonged to the generation following Voltaire, and the nihilistic tradition of Nietzsche might also be applicable to Martin. Elements of Martin’s philosophy can be traced back to several traditions emerging from the Greeks; the statement of man’s inherent evil seems consistent with the Ring of Gyges myth from Plato’s *Republic*—namely, that without the rule of law, we would destroy each other. Nelly Severin, who argues that Voltaire’s characters are parodies of saints, is similarly troubled by Martin. The Martin of *Candide* does not resemble St. Martin, who was foremost a man of Christian faith (Severin 845). It is possible that Martin resembles Voltaire himself as a critic of the extreme rationalism of the Enlightenment; through the parody of *Candide*, it is evident that the author was critical of the perverse Leibnizian optimism that was common in the Enlightenment (Grieder 488). As James the Anabaptist is an incarnation of Rousseau, and Pangloss is a stand-in for Leibniz, it is likely that Martin also represents an Enlightenment figure, namely that of Voltaire. Despite this problem of attribution, the content of Martin’s philosophy is fairly apparent in the discussions between him and Candide.

Gallons of ink have been expended describing Pangloss’ resemblance to Leibnizian optimism. One of the prime examples of this follows the earthquake episode, in which



"Map of Lisbon in stone," photograph, by Serame Castillo

Pangloss professes that "the fall of Man and eternal punishment enter, of Necessity, into the scheme of the best of all possible worlds" (Voltaire 35). Voltaire repeatedly attributes to Pangloss the idea that this world is the best of all possible worlds or else it wouldn't exist, and that individual suffering contributes to general happiness. He expounds what Grieder would call the principal orthodoxy in *Candide*, which consequently is challenged by the experiences contained within the plot (Grieder 488). He best encapsulates the spirit of Leibniz's followers, who attribute their own suffering to the greater good despite great personal agony (Butts, translator's note in Voltaire 10). Likewise, Pangloss proclaims his faith despite being hanged at an auto-da-fé and through many similar misfortunes (Voltaire 136). Pangloss, in his repeated optimism following the tragic episodes of *Candide*, continues to embody the perverted optimism of the eighteenth century.

That the passages evoking these various philosophical positions resemble the dialectics characteristic of ancient philosophy is clearly supported through a careful reading of the text. In the noteworthy passages above—the dinner after the earthquake, the sea voyage with Martin, etc.—the reader will note that every philosophical point of view is described as a response to a question. Pangloss describes one of his most important op-

Patience; neither shall I ever be able to comprehend how such an Animal and such a Vice could tally together."

timistic beliefs in response to the question of free will (Voltaire 35). Martin's first philosophy of evil and pessimism follows Candide's question, "What is your opinion of moral and physical evil?" (Voltaire 91). While James the Anabaptist's position is not prefaced by a question, this is nonetheless a valid form of introducing an idea in dialectic. Consider, for example, the beginning of several books of *The Republic* in which Glaucon or Adeimantus disagrees with Socrates. The key difference in the discussions amid the episodes of *Candide* and a work of dialectic philosophy is that the give-and-take between the character is not very protracted. The dialogues do not last for more than one or two questions and responses. Without a doubt, there is no vestige reminiscent of the logic of the Socratic method, either. Yet, the structure of the give-and-take that does exist laced between episodes is enough to resemble the dialectic tradition in which Voltaire was thoroughly versed.

What motivated Voltaire to represent these philosophical schools through stagings of dialectic in *Candide* has yet to be determined. Nevertheless, it is clear from the statements of these characters that each is mimicking a philosophy popular during the Age of Enlightenment. Moreover, a dialectic fashion prompts the development of these philosophies. That is to say, the character embodying the philosophy is challenged by another character, and the thought is then expanded upon, forming one of the above philosophies. In his ribald comedy of tragedy, veiled in the classical tradition of dialogue, Voltaire has concealed a primer in eighteenth-century philosophy.

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Selected Scenes from “Journey to the Center of the Core”

Each spring at the annual Core banquet, the faculty and sophomore students who come together to celebrate another class completing its time in the program put up a burlesque skit that simultaneously honors and lampoons the curriculum, the Core authors, the instructors, and so on. This good-humored skewering of the Core aspires to the same heights as Swift or Cervantes, but lands itself squarely in realm of Rabelais. The scenes below are extracted from the April 2009 skit. – KB

Scene 1

Student: Midway, upon the Core journey, I find myself in front of the computer, for my purpose in college has been lost. Ah! How hard a thing it is to say, what is this purpose, mysterious and daunting, which in the very thought renews the fear that I am not meant for Core. So bitter is it, failing is little more. (*stands up and walks away*) I am truly lost as a freshman, for the sophomore path is not straightforward. I will take a walk outside in the woods, to clear up my thoughts. Oh Muses, oh high geniuses, now assist me in this moment of confusion! (*walks along deep in thought*)

Don Quixote: (*with Sancho Panza, appearing suddenly*) Who goes there? (*Poking student with his sword*) You do not seem to be a wild beast, or perhaps you are a cowardly knight, a disgrace to the chivalrous code!

Student: Have pity on me! Who are you anyway?

Don Quixote: Draw your weapon, coward, for I am Don Quixote de la Mancha! I am an errant knight serving my duty in honor of my Lord, and most of all, my precious Dulcinea del Toboso. Are you man enough to face the wrath of my sword! (*he attempts to fight, but falls over coughing*) Sancho, this man is powerful! He nearly knocked me over with the sheer power of his breath!

Sancho (*lazily*): Man, I think he needs our help...

Student: Thank you! I guess you are the answer to my prayers. I've been wandering in the woods trying to decide if I should take Core sophomore year.

DQ: Core? Only the bravest knight sacrifices himself to such a cause! Considering your pathetic appearance, I think it would be quite wise if you completed your training and learned the proper ways of the valiant Core Knight! From now on, you shall be my humble squire! Only Core knights truly know how to wield their swords! *(he falls over again with the weight of his armor)*

Student: If you say so. It's just a shame that I sparknoted you on high school.

DQ: Not to worry, we still have time and much more to learn in this adventure. Let us away! *(stumbling with his sword)*

Student: Where are we going?

Sancho: Just relax, Don Quixote apparently knows. *(whispers)* And in these situations, I suggest you drink heavily. Would you like a beer?

Student: I'll pass... *(the group continues to walk until they reach the cave)*

DQ: What is this, a dragon's den? It must be the home of a ravenous creature, perhaps the legendary Spanish hornbacked dragon. Onward!! This dragon will no longer be a menace to society!

Student: I'm not going in there!

Sancho: Ditto... maybe I can take a nap outside. *(he yawns and sits down for a nap)*

DQ: Very well, dear Sancho, you need your rest. As for you, come along, I'll show you what true valor is. *(they continue to walk inside, the student is frightened)*

Bear: ROOOOOOAAAR!

DQ: Do you hear that noise? Prepare to fight! *(the bear appears)*

Bear: Rooooooaaar... oh my, I am so sorry, I thought you were a poet.

DQ: He talks! Who are you monstrous beast, what dark realm do you come from?

Bear: Ah, don't worry, I'm actually quite the pacifist. To be quite honest, I cry when I get a hangnail. Anyways, I'm the guardian of this cave.

Student: Wait a minute, I have heard of you! This is Plato's infamous Cave and you're the infamous bear that lives in his infamous Cave. Weren't you in the Core skit a couple of years ago?

Bear: Actually, that wasn't me. I'm not Plato's bear, just the Regular Bear. Plato and bear are out on holiday because they couldn't bear the darkness in the cave any longer ha ha. Yes, I am the guardian for today along with my best mate, Aristotle.

Aristotle: (*entering*) Hello! You must already know of me from my book on *Nichomachean Ethics*, or perhaps you have used my tourist pamphlets of Ancient Greece. What brings you here to Plato's crib?

Student: I'm a little lost for words. I'm a freshman, but I'm not sure I want to be in Core next year.

Aristotle: Don't worry, you just have to explore your mind and your heart.

Bear: Awwww... how sweet!

Aristotle: I suggest that you take this door behind me. It leads you to the center of all things Core. The journey I must say may be a wild one, but with the help of others, you will learn what the Core can truly bring to you. Plato usually doesn't allow me to use the cave for unknown visitors, but I will make an exception for you. Proceed with caution, I don't want you to get lost, and if you see Hamlet, be nice to him, he isn't having a very good day. One more thing, don't drink the water!

Student: Thank you!

DQ: Onward, dear squire, this is for my Dulcinea!

Scene 6

Student: Wait, do I hear opera?

DQ: It's quite the voice. It sounds like a man...

(Enter Don Giovanni and Satan)

Don Giovanni: *(opera singing)* And in Rome, I had 500 pretty chicks!!! But in America, I had 50,000 glorious women!!

Satan: No way, you're playing with me man! I don't believe you, Don Giovanni!

Don Giovanni: *(singing)* Believe me, dear Satan, why would I lie to you....I have eternity to tell you about every lady, every story, every dirty joke.....Oh glorious women, I am the ladies man!

Satan: I spend all eternity in hell, and I haven't even come close to your success! Oh the humanity!

Student: Hey guys, sorry to drop in on you like this, but do you know if I should take Core next year?

Satan: Well, yes, you have yet to see the best side of me. I cause the fall of humanity in the first semester. Aren't I special?

Student: If you say so, but thanks, I will take your life story into consideration.

Don Giovanni: Ha ha, you are quite the man, but can you match the number of lover's that I had the pleasure to, well, uh... pleasure. *(Must wear sunglasses)*.

Student: No, but anyway, why do you sing all the time? It's so annoying!

Don Giovanni: Well I am so sorry kid, but I was written this way! Blame the writer if you want to complain!

Scene 7

Hudon: Do you have the graded lab assignments?

Satan: *(handing it to Hudon)* I just finished them this morning.

Student: Oh no! How are we going to walk past them?

DQ: Why, we fight of course! Die, you treacherous Prince of Darkness!

Satan: Just call me Satan, Lucifer, whatever, just don't call me Prince of Darkness. I had to hand that title over to Ozzy Osbourne decades ago. Excuse me! (*exits*)

Student: Umm... Professor, can I please go now?

Hudon: Wait before you can leave, I need you to answer this question. It's very important, it is a matter of life and death and you will have ten seconds to answer. If you answer right you will get your freedom and a major reward.

Student: Go ahead...

Hudon: What was the name of Tycho Brahe's dwarf?

Student: No! Crap, I forgot!!

Hudon: (*counting down*) 10, 9, 8,

Student: But I swear I remember this! Think, think, think..

Hudon: 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2...

Student: "Jep!" Ha ha! Thought I wouldn't win did you? What's my major reward?

Hudon: For that I will give you an automatic A on your CC105 final... and a cookie.

Student: Yay!!

DQ: What a strange name, for a dwarf!!

(*student and Don Quixote exit the cave to find Aristotle shining a flashlight into his eyes*)

Student: What are you doing?

Aristotle: Oh, ha ha, Plato always makes me do this. I'm trying to reenact the ascension from the Cave into the light. Did it work?

Student: Well, I am a little blinded, what about you Don Quixote?

though not be loth / To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess / A paradise within thee, happier far."

DQ: Oh I agree, my dear squire.

Aristotle: Besides that, what did you learn?

Student: Parts of the adventure were rather scary, others humorous, serious and rather profound and I feel a bit more enlightened. Even from the depths of midterms and term papers, there is something great waiting for me in sophomore year. It may be a rough road, but Core is a wild adventure and in the end, I'll feel like a complete person because of the things that I've learned! For me, there are many things left to discover.

Aristotle: We open our minds so that we may be enlightened...you see each character in Core, no matter his or her background, serves as a guide into Plato's light from the depths of confusion in everyday life. Those characters in Core are the philosopher kings, even if they don't know it.

Student: Well I guess it's like what Rousseau believed, that most of the excitement and adventure occurs along the journey before reaching the destination...wow I sound pretty smart don't I?

Don Quixote: Do you know what I gained from this experience? A greater love for air, a deeper devotion to my dear Dulcinea, and a rather horrible backache!

Aristotle: See, wasn't I right?

Student: Yes, but you forgot to say one thing...

Aristotle: What?

Student: Oh Aristotle, there is no place like Core! (*They hug*)

~end~



“Central Park,” photograph, by Midge Kwock

Sylvia Lewin

To Beauty

Shall roses to no nose sweet fragrance bring?
Shall dew-dropped spiderwebs go unadmired?
Shall feasts sit rotting in the halls of kings,
While empty rooms play host to heavenly choirs?
The sensuous stimulations of this earth
Allure, beguile, are said to lead to sin;
Yet every artist's child, each sacred birth
In rapturous sensation does begin.
If beauty were impure, t'were beauteous liar,
For to the virtuous mind, the good entices;
Why then must love be deemed a base desire,
And quickening pulse be classed with lowly vices?
Such righteousness exacts a fatal cost,
For beauty unobserved is beauty lost.

An Interview with Stephanie Nelson

Stephanie Nelson is Associate Professor in the Department of Classical Studies at Boston University and a long-time instructor in the Core Curriculum. She received her B.A. at St. John's College and her M.A. and Ph.D at the University of Chicago. Nelson's scholarship includes *God and the Land: the Metaphysics of Farming in Hesiod and Vergil* published by Oxford University Press, and articles which range from a study of Homer and James Joyce to a treatment of T. E. Lawrence's translation of *The Odyssey*. She is currently revising a book-length project titled *Aristophanes' Tragic Muse: Tragedy, Comedy, and the Polis in Classical Athens*.

In March of 2009, Jake Bann met with Prof. Nelson to discuss her new book, her personal interests, and her summers spent milking cows on a farm in Ireland. – KB

The department website lists you as an Associate Professor of Classical Studies, yet in peering over your publications and lectures, I noticed some Dickens and Yeats and most especially, Joyce. Where's the connection? How did you get so involved with these prominent writers as a Classics professor?

One of the reasons is that the BU Classics department is particularly into the Classical tradition, so that's how the Joyce class that I'm teaching relates *The Odyssey* and *Ulysses*, and that's also how I'm able to teach the course on Hell (or 'the class from Hell' as my students like to call it).

The way I got into it was that my education was very, very booksy. I went to a school called St. John's, in Annapolis, where ancient Greek was required and you read basic texts. So it was basically four years of Core. The Ph.D. I did was at the University of Chicago with the Committee on Social Thought. I did it in Classics. Basically, Classics is the only discipline that's like Core because it's limited in time, but it's also very interdisciplinary in that you can study philosophy and history and literature and art and archaeology. I've always been interested in kind of branching out.

Your work titled *Hesiod: Theogony & Work and Days* is on shelves now, correct?

Right. Focus Press had a version already of *The Theogony*, so my translation of the *Work and Days* added to that and is designed for people like those in the Core. The idea for mine is that it's got enough notes that somebody, say in Core, can get all the background information, but it doesn't give you a whole interpretation, otherwise it's up to you to figure it out.

And another work, *Aristophanes' Tragic Muse: Tragedy, Comedy, and the Polis in Classical Athens*, is under contract with the University of Michigan Press?

At the moment, that's actually at Cambridge University Press. I'm hoping to finish it up over the summer, then it would be a year or so before I actually get it published.

So why "*Aristophanes' Tragic Muse*?" What inspired you?

One of the things I've always been interested in—and this comes from the first book I wrote, on Hesiod and Virgil—is how you can acknowledge two opposite ideas with the background idea that neither excludes the other. I was working with that idea, knowing that it runs through Greek thought. And there are lots of concepts, like mortal and immortal, nature and culture, etc. that reflect it. But the one I was most interested in was tragedy and comedy. It's really surprising that nobody has done this. In Greece, at the festival of Dionysus, you would present tragedy and comedy together. It's the same idea as having cartoons at the end of a serious movie. Except here it's not just cartoons. Were there such a thing as a serious comedy—

A black comedy, maybe?

Well, do you remember the joke in class about the American who goes to Ireland, and his friends come up to him and ask, "Are you a Catholic or a Protestant?"

Not the punchline.

So the man goes, "No, actually I'm Jewish." And the Irish friends pause. Then they ask, "Well, are you a Catholic Jew or a Protestant Jew?" The idea of the book is that comedy is really serious in the sense that the reason why you laugh is that you recognize that the joke portrays a fundamental, kind of irrational aspect of human behavior. Of course you know that the ending is irrational, yet we also recognize that it's true—that people, in fact, behave that way, and we actually recognize that we ourselves behave that way.

And that's why it's funny?

The Groucho Marx joke goes, "I would never belong to a club that would have me for a member." I think it's absolutely true that human beings consider what is worthwhile to be that just beyond our reach. It doesn't matter where you are. The reason why you laugh is because there's no logical conclusion, so the laughter is really a release of energy, a release of tension. At this part of the book I argue against those who say that comedy is just relief. I'm saying that's not true; the comedy really is saying something just as important about, in this case, Athens or human behavior, as tragedy does. So I'm arguing it's not just comic relief that makes you feel better at the end. It's more about how you can't understand human behavior without nature, or mortality without immortality.

I know that you spend your summers on a farm in Ireland.

I think the whole world knows that.

I wouldn't doubt it. Of all places, how did you end up on a farm in Ireland?

Sheer coincidence. I don't have any Irish blood at all. I was living with a guy for a long time who was Irish and had a farm in Ireland. He taught at the University of Chicago, and I used to commute back and forth between there and Ireland. He died about 7 or 8 years ago, and his children inherited the farm. So I help take care of it. It's a great working environment—really, really quiet. It's great for writing. I spend a couple hours in the morning and a couple hours in the evening doing farm chores: milking cows and stuff like that. Tranquil, except it's raining all the time.

Did you ever see yourself as a professor?

Well, I have to admit that my dad was a professor, so I was a faculty brat. I never thought of it—in fact, this is a good moral tale. When I was in college at St. John's, I didn't really know whether I was doing it because I wanted to do it, or just because it had always been set up, since it was perfectly obvious that I was going to go to college. So I dropped out of school for three years. I went up to Maine, which is where I grew up, and worked in a textile mill for a while and earned a bunch of money. It was pretty much like 19th century slave labor—pretty intense. I didn't mean to take three years off; it just kind of happened that way. I lived first in Maine, then in Boston, then in Chicago. And finally I just kind of knew I wanted to go back to school. By the time I hit my senior year, I knew I wanted to go on to graduate school.

Now avoiding any such segue, I want to know one thing—something every student wants to know. Have you ever looked yourself up on ratemyprofessors.com?

Never. My brother once told me that it said that I'm nice, but I talk about my farm in Ireland too much. A couple people tried to send me emails with what it said on the website, but I immediately deleted them.

So if I read you an excerpt... ?

I'll plug my ears and start humming.

To finish things off, I thought I'd take a page from Bravo personality James Lipton by conducting a little questionnaire. 1) What sound or noise do you love?

The sound of the cuckoo in spring. Back in Ireland, everybody's in a competition to see who hears the cuckoo first. The cuckoo sings first at the end of May or the beginning of June.

No cuckoos in Boston though.

Well, there are many cuckoos in Boston. Not of the avian variety though.

What sound or noise do you hate?

Car alarms.

What profession other than your own would you like to attempt?

I like the farm, so I'd be a farmer. Probably wouldn't be a very good one, but it's what I'd like, not what I'd be good at, right?

What profession would you not like to do?

Something like advertising, where it's not about anything. It's just about trying to get people to spend their money. There's no substance in making people spend money they probably don't have on something they probably don't want.

All very insightful answers. I'd like to thank you for a wonderful interview for the Journal, Professor. And for my last question, if Heaven exists, what would you like to hear God say when you arrive at the Pearly Gates?

"Your Greek class will be meeting in ten minutes."

Ancient and Modern Lessons from Sophocles' *Ajax*

Caitlin Outterson

Ajax's story was familiar to Greeks before Sophocles put pen to paper. He didn't need to surprise his audience with unusual plot twists or characters. *Ajax*, like other Greek tragedies, was intended to educate Athenian men on the characteristics of the ideal citizen. All citizens were expected to serve in the military and family was also highly valued: adults took responsibility for their aging parents, as well as their children. A final, distinctly Athenian aspect of education was rhetoric. Although this characteristic is not as immediately obvious as the others, its presence is noticed. Dramatic stories, like *Ajax*, explore the inner workings of a soldier's mind to help the audience empathize with him. What is astonishing is that the themes in *Ajax* are still relevant more than 2500 years later. Through *Ajax*'s exploration of the turmoil in his family, the military, and the world, Sophocles emphasizes, to both an Athenian and modern audience, the importance of safely navigating the intersection of familial dedication, honor, and compromise.

Ajax is structured around three overlapping themes—family, public life, and the military. *Ajax*, like any Athenian citizen, has responsibilities to all three spheres. As the eldest son, he is responsible for his aging parents, his son, Tecmessa, his war bride, and his slave. He constantly feels the pressures of maintaining honor and devotion to the family legacy because his father, Telamon, was a famed war hero from the previous Trojan War. These expectations exert unrelenting pressure up until the moment of his death. *Ajax* says to Helios, “announce the desperate acts/I have done... to the old man, my father, and the hapless woman who nursed me” (847-9). He is aware of his duties to his family even though he is not persuaded by Tecmessa to remain alive for the sake of his son. *Ajax* is less comfortable in his militaristic and public roles. The military places high value on physical prowess in combat, at which *Ajax* greatly succeeds: being called “the dreaded, mighty, raw-powered *Ajax*” (205). Still, a good soldier must also cope with the exhausting demands of battle and the responsibility of surviving another day. *Ajax* is unable to cope with the stresses and atrocities of war, and consequently defeats himself in the process.

appeared, that had her family made an agreement to expose themselves as much as they could during the

In fifth century Athens, public life was just as significant as the military. Persuasive orations, public debate, and an openness to various arguments was the norm in Athenian public society, and were essential in defining ideal citizenship. Odysseus embodies the characteristics of Athenian rhetoric with his unique ability to understand Ajax, even though he is Ajax's enemy. Because of his strength and confidence, Ajax is unaffected by rhetoric, but he is able to successfully use it against those who are weaker. By observing Sophocles' text, one can conclude that *Ajax* accurately reflects the state of Athenian culture and society in the fifth century.

One emotionally moving episode occurs when Tecmessa describes Ajax's delusion after the wild slaughter of the sheep and cattle. She asks him, "What on earth are you doing, Ajax?" (288). He unkindly replies, "Women should be seen, not heard" (293). He is undoubtedly disturbed by recent events and by his delusional wrath. A "madness... seiz[es] him," (216) to make him slaughter and torture the animals, shouting "bitter insults/which some god, not a mortal, taught him," thinking they were his fellow Greeks who had betrayed him (243-4). As he slowly comes back to his senses, Ajax "just [sits], speechless," (311) and then demands that Tecmessa tell him what has happened. To her astonishment, Ajax "[explodes] in long sighs of sorrow, / sighs such as [she'd] never heard from him before" (316-7), even though he had "always insisted that such plaintive lamentations/were the mark of a cowardly and heavy-hearted man" (319-20). Worried, Tecmessa tells the chorus of soldiers to "go in and support him" (329), as "clearly he wants to do some dreadful deed" (326). When Ajax submerges, he laments, "Alas the howling laughter! Alas the utter humiliation!" (367). He does not care about having attempted to kill his fellow Greeks, but rather about "[letting] those god-damned fiends/slip from [his] hands!" (372-3). He disparagingly compares himself to his father: "Father, after having won... the first prize of all the army... returned home... crowned with glory. / But I... I die in such disgrace, stripped of honor by the Greeks" (434-40). Ajax is bewailing his utter humiliation in front of his peers in the army and is mortified to imagine what his father's reaction might be, wondering, "What face shall I show when I appear before my father, Telamon?" (463-4). Since Ajax did not successfully win Achilles' arms, he has lost honor in the eyes of the army and his father: which he, being the ultimate soldier, values above all. Considering different options for proving he is "no gutless coward" (472). Ajax finally determines that a noble man must choose "to live with honor or die with honor" (479).

Tecmessa attempts what veterans' loved ones have tried to do: persuade a soldier, specifically Ajax, that there is life beyond war and the military. She, the "bedmate captured by his spear" (212) and the mother of his son, with whom "impetuous Ajax is constant in his affection" (211), reminds him of what will happen to her and their son if he kills himself. She says, "Be sure that on that selfsame day I shall be seized / and manhandled by the Greeks, and, together with your son, / shall eat the nurturing bread of

bondage” (497-9). She tries to convince him that the enslavement of his wife and son will be more shameful than continuing to live, just as would it would be if he abandoned his father and mother “in grim old age” (509). Finally, Tecmessa reminds Ajax of all she has done for him. She says, “Surely for a true man / it is right to cherish memory, if perhaps he has enjoyed some pleasure” (522-3). Tecmessa is the voice of the polis and of society, trying to move Athens beyond Sparta. Knowing that Telamon’s opinion of him is very important, she tells him to “respect and honor your father—feel shame before him. / Don’t abandon him in grim old age” (508-509). She knows that Telamon would be more ashamed if Ajax abandons the care of his father than if he lost the competition. Although Tecmessa deftly uses several persuasive techniques, including appeals to family, sex, and shame, a persuasive argument is not enough for Ajax to change his mind. He ultimately fails to let go of his principles.

Ajax is not able to recognize the value of Tecmessa’s words, yet he is able to trick other people by telling deceptive stories. In this skill he compares to his bitter enemy Odysseus. After Tecmessa is finished speaking, he asks to see his son, Eurysaces. Ajax gives him his “seven-fold leather-laden spear-proof shield” (576) and names his brother Teucer to “bring this boy to my home and show him / to Telamon and to my mother” (568-9). His words begin to worry Tecmessa, who begs him “by your very own son and by the gods, do not betray us!” (588). In an apparent sudden reversal, Ajax gives a speech about his changes: “For even I—who was lately so fierce and firm... yes, my speech has become womanish and weak / and my sharp edge smoothed by this lady here. / I feel pity at leaving... behind... a widow and her orphaned son” (650-4). He continues on to say, “For even... winter’s snow-strewn streets give way / to summer’s fruit-laden harvest; and the endless rotations / of night... stand aside for... dawn... So how shall we not learn moderation and good sense?” (669-677). However, he concludes ominously: “For only now do I understand / that... to most men/the harbor of fellowship is treacherous and untrustworthy. / So, as regards my intentions, all will turn out well” (678-684) and “even though I am unhappy now I have been saved” (692). Tecmessa and the chorus of soldiers believe that they have “found a respite from unremitting griefs” (788). However, the audience realizes Tecmessa’s claims are not powerful enough to counteract Ajax’s obsession with military honor and respect. Ajax is unable to contemplate living a life of shame, a life that offers him no prospective opportunity to repair his reputation.

To Sophocles’ Athenian audience, of the competing issues in Ajax’s life would have been familiar and present in their own lives. Watching *Ajax* would be a reminder of the darker, less heroic aspect of war. The title character saved the Greek fleet of ships from destruction, rescued Achilles’ body from the Trojan attackers, was considered the ‘great defender’, and was the greatest soldier of the Greeks after Achilles, yet so profound was his sense of shame that he was willing to commit suicide. Ajax died because he was stubborn and refused to sacrifice his belief military honor had a greater claim in him than

family. This lesson on the necessity of balance could only come from Athens, the polis that valued rhetoric and the poets as highly as military prowess. Most importantly, Sophocles' *Ajax* demonstrates the darker side of Athenian society and culture by illustrating the tension between Ajax's suicidal tendencies and the Athenian army's strict emphasis on militaristic duties. Although direct experience is important in life, it was much better for soldiers to understand Ajax's fate and to come to terms with it through *catharsis* before they contemplated killing themselves.

Modern audiences also draw distinct lessons from the play. Today, in contrast with fifth century Greece, there is a large disconnect between the general public and the military. Most modern audiences understand and identify with Tecmessa more than Ajax, unless they have fought in battle. The difference between Ajax's intentions in his final speech and what Tecmessa perceives illustrates the apparently insuperable gap between modern veterans and their loved ones. Ajax and Tecmessa's fatal disconnect reminds the audience that communication with loved ones in times of suffering is crucial in order to survive. As Tecmessa and Eurysaces learn first-hand, the consequences of one person's actions reaches out further than initially perceived.

By examining Ajax's motivations for suicide, Sophocles is able to consider several important issues that are relevant to readers today. Ajax is so rigidly indoctrinated in the culture of honor that he cannot break free even if it costs him his life. As he grapples with what course of action to take, both the ancient and modern audiences are reminded that in order to survive, we must change and adapt. The culture of honor is especially emphasized as something to avoid, since such an extreme worldview can only lead to extreme consequences. We are also reminded that war veterans can never completely communicate their actions and experiences, even to their loved ones at home. Although veterans will always be able to relate to each other, Sophocles shows us that we must try to communicate and understand those who are suffering in war. Finally, it is important to recognize the modernity of Ajax's perspective. Modern society places high regard on the individual and his desires; since Ajax decides to do what *he* wants by dying to regain his honor rather than by following his duty, he must suffer the consequences. Sophocles manages to craft a play that not only teaches the original Athenian audience about citizen-soldiers and the importance of compromise, he also speaks to audiences in the 21st century: moving military audiences to tears with the piercing reality of what is portrayed in front of them.

Page numbers in this essay refer to Stephen Esposito's translation of Ajax (Focus, 1998).

Brian Jorgensen

The Clouds Are Saying Yes

(Chuck Berry mode)

Way up in a basket, lost in cogitation
 To we-the-committee, came thoughts, of education
 New novel innovations to renew our reputation:
 Leverage bullshit to increase remuneration
Oh yeah, oh yeah, up high

Students of the future won't need so many sessions
 Use mult-inter-post-discipli-skills course compressions
 Bend them over till they write in buglike moves
 While their asses simul-study astronomical grooves
Oh yeah, oh yeah, up high

Now create a vacuum to suck the kids in
 "Dear Student: You're a genius, and always have been!"
 If critics call these concepts flatulence and fleas
 We say "No, it's like Shakespeare, Darwin, Socrates"
Oh yeah, oh yeah, up high

Thus exciting ourselves, when whom should we see
 But those Clouds, majestic as Lady Liberty
 They said, "You're right as acid rain, you shifty shapers,
 Everything is Emptiness, Tongue, and Vapor"
Oh yeah, oh yeah, up high

Dionysus is just your drunk head in a whirl
 Forget about Artemis, goddess of girls
 No Zeus of heroes, good rule, of sky
 No Goddess of Wisdom, just the Temple of Sly
Oh yeah, oh yeah, up high

The law is for swindling; government for what you can get
 Youth is for wisdom; age is for debt
 Education is the art of charging more for less
 It's true, it's true, because the Clouds are saying *yes*

THE DEPARTMENT OF
CLASSICAL STUDIES
AND THE CAS CORE
CURRICULUM PRESENT
ARISTOPHANES'

Clouds

See faculty & students perform
an ancient play in costumes of
quite questionable historicity.

With live music from the famed
FISH WORSHIP BLUES BAND
and **FREE FOOD & ADMISSION**

THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 2010
5:45 PIZZA, 6:15 MUSIC
7 PM START OF THE SHOW
GSU CONFERENCE AUDITORIUM

CONTACT:
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Each spring for the past several years, Core has collaborated with the Classics Department to stage a reading of one of the plays of Aristophanes. This year, Prof. Stephanie Nelson coordinated students and faculty in a production of the play Clouds. The lyrics on the facing page were composed by Prof. Jorgensen exclusively for this engagement. The song was performed by the all-faculty blues band, Fish Worship. Above, Prof. Jeffrey Henderson—former Classics chair, former CAS Dean, general editor of the Loeb Classical Library, and translator of the version of the play used in this year's show—is depicted hanging by a garden hose off the College of Arts & Sciences Thinkery, attended by Rhett the Terrier. Poster by Zachary Bos.

howsoever they may acknowledge many others to be more witty, or more eloquent, or more learned, yet they



"Woman in Sari," photograph, by Paloma Serra

will hardly believe there be many so wise as themselves - Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* | I never envied any



"Fort Lisbon, Portugal," photograph, by Serame Castillo

bird its wings / But the pursuit of intellectual things / From book to book, from page to page / What joy that

BUWA Triumphant

The Boston University Writing Assessment or BUWA was traditionally given to students at the start of their freshman year and again at the end of their freshman spring semester, to obtain an objective measure of how students' writing improves over the course of their first year in Core. The students completing Core in Spring 2010 are members of the last freshman class to take the BUWA, which has been superseded by other forms of assessment. The test won't be mourned—many were the groans each spring when students realized that they'd have to fill out yet another blue book, nine months after first taking the BUWA.

Last spring, one freshman pulled off a rare performance, by earning a perfect score on her BUWA. Here is the essay written by Core student Emma Hughes, in response to the essay “On Noise” by Seneca. – ZB

Instructions: Read the selection carefully, making any notes you wish on the page. Then write a well-organized essay about it. An effective essay includes an introduction (usually setting forth a clear thesis), a clear line of argument, and a conclusion. In the course of your essay you should demonstrate your comprehension of the main idea through a brief summary and a critical response. A critical response presents an argument supported by interpretation of key lines from the text itself. Your essay should include at least two direct quotations. Citations should be documented using proper form and the bibliographic information supplied. Please note that you are welcome either to summarize the passage first before providing your critical response or to combine summary and analysis throughout the essay.

In our modern society, it seems increasingly difficult to find silence. The conveniences of technology have brought with them a vast array of noises, from ringing cell phones to blaring portable music players to humming car engines. However, the problem of living with noise is by no means a new one. In the Roman philosopher Seneca's short essay, “On Noise,” he discusses his own troubles in finding quiet. Yet Seneca argues that discovering silence has less to do with external conditions than it does with a peaceful mind and a sense of assurance.

Seneca begins by directly stating his argument: that quiet is not as vital “to a person as it is usually thought to be.” He proves his point in the anecdote of his own personal situation: he lives above a bath house where he can

constantly hear people exercising, but he can still focus on the essay he is composing. Seneca goes on to say that while voices are more distracting than the drones of general noises, he has mastered the art of ignoring sounds.

One could argue that Seneca believes that removing oneself from noise is beneficial, for he says it is sometimes easier to “keep you away from the din.” However, his explanation of the necessity of resting the mind is what is crucial to a full understanding of the essay. This is Seneca’s main point.

Seneca declares, “I force my mind to become self-absorbed and not let outside things distract it.” He argues that emotional stillness will lead to silence and harmony. Using the example of a man who cannot sleep even in total quiet, Seneca says that the mind is what “needs to be set at peace,” so that silence becomes a possibility. This is a philosophy seen in literature such as the Bible, when Jesus separates himself from his followers in the Gospels to collect his thoughts, and the *Tao Te Ching*, which advocates the cultivation of the mind to reach an accord with the universe.

Interestingly for Seneca, the attainment of silence is not a passive, but an active discipline. He divulges this by talking about men who have given up something, a vice such as extravagance. They often resort back to their former vices. But if one has “really turned away,” one will not go back to a former way of life. Therefore, silence is not about forgetting your distractions, but about actively striving against them to reach inner peace.

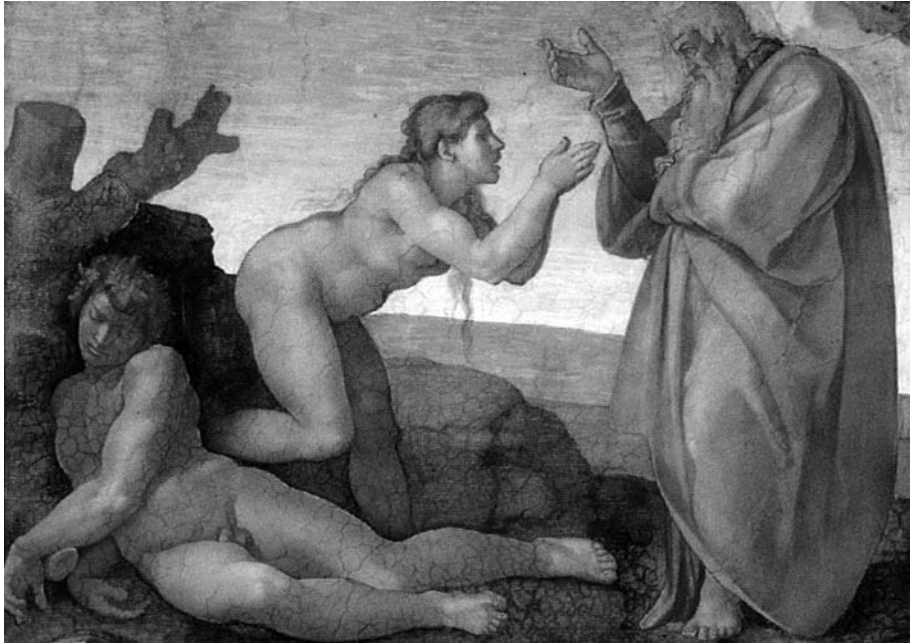
Obviously, Seneca knew what it was like to work and think in a stressful environment. In his marvelous essay, he has explained that, somewhat like Aristotle: the way to feel true silence is not about surroundings, but about working on one’s intellect and ability to overcome. When “noise never reaches you,” the task of realizing silence in spite of your environment is complete.

– *Emma Hughes*

To receive a perfect score on the BUWA, an essay has to receive a perfect score from two independent faculty readers. References in the above essay are to “On Noise” by the Roman author Seneca, translated by Robin Campbell, in The Art of the Personal Essay, edited by Phillip Lopate (Anchor, 1995).

Visual Analects of the Core

A sampler of images studied in CC201-2, with text by Andrew Whiteman



The Sistine Chapel Ceiling by Michelangelo

Michelangelo's art glorifies the form of the human body. The heroic male nude was the quintessential expression of beauty for the Classical artists, and this trend became central to Michelangelo's works: more so than any Renaissance artist. As you look at the Sistine images, the male form gets progressively more superhuman until it eventually becomes God's image. You get the sense that, while God created Adam in his own image, Michelangelo creates God in Adam's; the Sistine chapel ceiling is a visual argument for Humanism.

The first panel, "Separation of Light from Darkness," must have had some intrinsic value for the artist, who made his living of defining light and shadow. In the painting, God's form, though distinctly human, strains against the limits of the space, too large to be confined, forcing the pace into the next panel. "The Creation of Adam," the most famous of all the Sistine panels, marks the beginning of the race of men with a kind of macrocosmic tension. God is surrounded by a giant arc of fabric—its circular form an echo of both a halo and a mandorla—as He strains to touch the hand Adam listlessly

extends from his position on the ground. It is not clear whether the angels support God or are trying to pull Him back. Of course the dramatic touch between God and the created Adam isn't depicted; there's only the premonition of unity.

In the very middle of the ceiling is "The Creation of Eve" (facing page). Just as the character of Eve is more important, more central, in Genesis 2, so she is more prominent in this scene than her husband. Michelangelo introduces us to an Eve who is already preparing a plea to God, who stands resolute, arms folded: a strong vertical blocking one side of the composition. Eve's panel is framed by "The Creation of Adam" on one side and "Temptation and Expulsion" on the other—she is forever torn between the two. In "Temptation" we see the serpent, which later comes to symbolize Satan, shown as a woman. Contrary to Genesis, Adam is actually present here, even touching the tree. In "Expulsion," Adam shows a pained, agonized look on his face, while Eve snarls from within his shadow. The couple is yet unaware they have been given the gift of learning how to begin again, the second chance of being able to learn from their mistake. Through all of this, the prophets and sibyls knowingly look on from the border, part of the scene, but not in it. The inclusion of the pagan sibyls in a work of Christian creation is appropriate to the Renaissance as well as to the painting—it is a look backward to inspire an image of the rebirth of man's world, his intellect, and his relationship with God.

"The Execution of the Rebels on the Third of May, 1808," Goya

The size of this piece—11'4" by 8'8"—reinforces its wrenching depiction of violence. As compared to its sister image, "The Charge of the Mamelukes," the structure of "The Third of May" is decidedly flattened, almost abstract or surreal. As a painter, Goya's works mark a trend away from realism to maximize emotional effect: a trend into modernism. The canvas is overcome by an oppressive blackness; a ghost-like church haunts the upper right quadrant of the painting. Immediately below, a row of faceless, nearly mechanical French soldiers stand ready to slaughter Spanish citizens, an imposing tangle of swords and guns. Our perspective on the painting is ambiguous and uncomfortable. We are unsure whether we are a soldier or a prisoner, or, worse, a passive onlooker or voyeur. The painting's energy is focused expectantly on the central figure whose strongly, eerily apprehended by the lantern: the man dressed in yellow and white.

Once your eyes find him, it's difficult to look away, and if you do, it's easy to be immediately drawn back to him. His arms are stretched out above him in a poetically balanced gesture of surprise and fear. He evokes both a moment of surrender and an icon of Christ on the cross. To drive that last gesture home, Goya placed a pockmark on the palm of his right hand, signifying one of the nails of the crucifixion, and the burden of martyrdom (there's another such mark on the left hand of the man on the ground before

time to get adjusted before he could see things in the world above; at first he would see shadows most easily,



him). Even his dress bears profound significance: the white and yellow not only recall Goya's portrait of Ferdinand VII, but can also be seen in Tiepolo's (one of the more influential artists in a pre-Goya Spain) "The Martyrdom of St. Barthelemy," Delacroix's "Liberty Leading the People," and, interestingly, the Pope's wardrobe. The yellow and white not only represent the contrast between martyrdom and destruction, but between liberty and oppression: between Spanish Catholicism and French Atheism. But notice that in the Delacroix, Liberty also wears a red sash; the Pope alternatively dresses in red and white. Where's the red in the Goya? It hits you with a kind of unsettling revelation: the red is there. The red is the blood on the ground, a grim, ironic reminder of the horrors of war and the steep price paid for freedoms of any kind. A picture of inevitability and unfeeling cruelty, "The Third of May" leaves you with the question: what did Goya think, and what do you think, about human nature and the possibility of redemption?

"Las Meninas," Diego Velázquez

Las Meninas, "The Ladies in Waiting," has garnered much fame precisely because it defies so many expectations for 17th century art. At first glance, it appears to be an uncomplicated portrait of young girls in the royal family, their dog, and a few members of the court. The figures are classically rendered, and Velázquez shows off his skills with

then reflections of men and other things in water, then the things themselves. After this he would see objects

modeling, handling paint, the traditional chiaroscuro style, etc. But the more you examine the painting, the more things start to break down, and you begin to realize that what you're looking at is a mass of spatial puns. For example: though many figures are set in an impossibly close proximity to each another, they appear nonetheless balanced and composed largely because Velázquez handles lighting so well. To choose another accessible example, this time of compositional balance through repetition, the male dwarf, who teases the dog with his foot, echoes almost identically both the position of the somewhat sinister looking chamberlain in



the background, and the gesture of the *menina* on the far left. One can pick out dozens of little compositional threads like this that help balance the work.

Provocatively, Velázquez painted himself into the picture, communicating not just his attitude as being at least equal to any member of the royal family—note that he wears the emblem of the Order of the Santiago, an honor he coveted—but also that art is *whatever* an artist chooses to manipulate. “Las Meninas” is famous because, like Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*, it invites us to question what we call “real,” and how we perceive reality. If a fantasy is real to us, does it become truth? This composition here might be a snapshot from this family’s everyday life, yet the characters also seem so clearly posed. Challenging a foundation of neoclassicism and realism, Velázquez uses his physical presence in “Las Meninas” to imply his artistic presence throughout the work, which was a world of his creation. This influenced Picasso to paint a version of “Las Meninas” where Velázquez’s figure is enormous, overbearing—his physical presence corresponding to his artistic one. One important question to consider whenever you consider a work is who the artist intended the viewer to be. Note that by placing a mirror in the background Velázquez empowers his painting to project itself into the viewer’s space, our (real) space. It’s almost as if Velázquez has chosen us observers as the subjects of his painting...

Kyna Hamill

Ajax: Colin

Through the halls of youth
He was a young god
Like Adonis, with a bit more cool.

An onlooker was I, we all were,
Holding our breath for his return,
Unknowing of his burden.

Subtle, serene, smile.

You shame us with your beauty.
Be reconciled and linger in peace,
Young god in the halls of youth.

Ajax and Odysseus in the Underworld

Shamavi Hasan

When Odysseus died and entered Hades after a life spent in adventures and prosperity, he came to meet the shades of those whom he had known in life, including the mighty Ajax, bravest of all Greeks after Achilles (XI.654). At some point, for who knows how time flows in a world beyond ours, Odysseus encountered the solitary figure of Ajax standing by the River of Woe. In life, they might have had their differences, but now Odysseus had respect for this noble warrior in his heart. After much deliberation, he accosted his former comrade and said:

“Ajax, the brave son of Telamon, we meet yet again in this dark realm! Come now! You have once before denied me the courtesy of a reply. Pray, don’t do it again. It has been long since that horrendous debate over the arms of the mighty Achilles. I have told you this once before and pardon me for the repetition but I must say that I have always sincerely regretted your loss. Ask your brother, the mighty Teucer, if I had not fought the sons of Atreus to secure you a proper burial: a hero’s burial.

“It was the grey-eyed daughter of Zeus who was the cause of your misery, not I. Aye, I admit it was a pleasure to own the arms of Achilles, but I never asked the virgin goddess for them. She must have had her own reasons for her actions. I know she had wronged you grievously by hazing your vision so as to make you believe you were slaughtering the Achaean army while you killed innocent beasts, and indeed she relished your humiliation. However, think of this for a moment: what if you had no such delusion and in your dangerous wrath had killed the commanders of our army in the middle of the night? That would have been the end of Achaea for sure; the Trojans would have finished us! Now I am certain you would have been far more tormented in your heart if that had happened. There would have been no atonement for that. But now your name is immortal in the Achaean history: its citizens worship you. Pray, speak! Say something to me—for I am your friend even if you are not mine—I saved your body from desecration.”

The son of Telamon remained silent with his back to Odysseus. After a long pause, Odysseus started to walk away, but Ajax turned and replied:

“Odysseus, son of Laertes, you were always smooth in your words. I surely cannot catch your lies or speak as cleverly as you. Maybe there is some truth in what you say and



you have fought for the sake of my dead body's sanctity; it may also be that you had not wanted the arms and you got them by some whim of Athena. However, if you were truly noble, you would have refused and given them to me, for I deserved them. Athena might have obscured my vision and I regret not getting my revenge against the odious sons of Atreus, but my true shame is not in my delusion, but in the loss of my position as Achilles' successor. As for your effort in preserving the sanctity of my corpse, I thank you for giving me a hero's burial but I am certain that at war I would have been an immortal figure in Achaean history nonetheless. However you think of this, because of you, I lost my honour, which only my death restored. I have lost precious years with my son and family; I could not live to see my heir in glory or even my own prosperity. You may have many admirers but I am not one of them. I am afraid too much misfortune has happened and prevents me from perceiving you as a friend. I bid you goodbye."

As Ajax started to drift away, Odysseus said:

"I have said all I can and if this be how it shall stand, then let it be. I rest my case."

Odysseus turned and moved away from the River of Woe.

Cartoon by Thuy Nguyen

New Maxims from the Humanities

Devised by students in Prof. Kyna Hamill's CC102 discussion sections

1. It is not real if you cannot hold it in your hand, or cannot feel it in your heart.
2. The way of goodness is not guided by man; rather it is hemmed in and split between his mistakes.
3. Man always seeks what he cannot find. Therefore, a man who seeks perfection is doomed to fail.
4. The ability to use one's feelings in conjunction with one's knowledge and rational capacities leads to the path of goodness.
5. Take care to make sure that your actions are in the name of achieving happiness. Only do things that you know will leave you content at the end of the day.
6. Hold fast to caution. Slow down your intent on being better than the one beside you, only then will you find the way.
7. Time is ticking away, so do not procrastinate. Another day has gone by... what have you accomplished?
8. Figure out who you are and what you want; then, work to help others figure out who they are by giving freely, listening endlessly, and offering support.
9. No task or action is so small that the implementations of goodness and moderation are not necessary.
10. The good can be shown to you, but only you can bring the goodness into creation.
11. A person should remain young at heart and enjoy the small joys of life.
12. Allow for the ideas of others to seep into your mind. For the journey on the path of life should not be one of isolation, but rather a collective force.
13. One must not be afraid to speak one's mind or risk not being heard.

ginning, before he let his health slip away, he could have avoided becoming ill: but once you have thrown a

Victoria Pinheiro

Heart

I've told you of my spun-sugar heart,
strands of sweet glass woven together,
delicate, hollow, and shimmering, so wind
whispers through it with untouched music
but have I told you that it flies now?

Because it flies now, with the most delicate
pearlescent bats' wings thin enough to see
stars through as it flits across the night sky.

It was in a chrysalis before. Wings were wet
and folded and cramped in a womb of not
knowing, but, tumbling flutter trip and fly,

You cast it to the starry sky, the tiny beautiful
whimsical thing a blur of what is to come.

It flies now.

Intelligence as Aristotle's Highest Virtue

Devyn Buckley

Aristotle possesses theoretical knowledge and brilliantly philosophizes, but at the same time he understands that knowledge alone will not suffice. That is, knowledge of human characteristics, such as virtue and honor, need to be actively implemented in everyday life. Consequently, Aristotle uses a practical method, his deconstruction of the Greek ethos through dialectics, to bring his reader to true theoretical knowledge.

Aristotle criticizes Greek virtues, which are naturally agonistic and concerned with external rewards, and replaces them with a system of virtue that is internal and self-sustaining. He justifies that intelligence must be practiced as the highest virtue by proving that it leads to the happiest life. Thus, he makes philosophy appealing to a society whose focus is on earthly, rather than heavenly rewards. Aristotle does not, however, value contemplation alone, but stresses that intelligence must be realized through action, since his focus is on the immediate world, rather than a superior, divine one. He looks to man instead of God to define what is virtuous and what is good. Man may make himself god-like through perfecting his highest virtue, but he does not become good by following divine tenets. Aristotle creates ethical absolutes without God.

Aristotle may be called a psychologist as well as philosopher, since a large portion of *Nicomachean Ethics* enlightens the reader to his own motivations and desires. The first question Aristotle asks, before even addressing virtue, is rightfully “what is it we are seeking?” This question assumes that there is meaning in human action, since, if human action were meaningless, people would not have an end in mind. Even if people are unaware of the end toward which they strive, they are, nonetheless, striving toward an end. Since motivation or desire cannot exist without an end in mind, our choices are made with a purpose. He phrases this by saying that there must be an end which is self-sufficient, or rewarding in itself, because if all actions strived toward something as a means to something else, “the process will go on infinitely and our desire would be futile and pointless” (Book I. 2.21-2). He recognizes that there are intermediate aims, but he states that they are not final because they are not self-sufficient. He states, “the ends of the master sciences are preferable to the ends of the subordinate sciences” (Book I. 1.15-

16). Aristotle uses examples of specific arts, such as horsemanship, or shipbuilding to demonstrate a hierarchy of ends. Bridle making has its end in good horsemanship, which has its end in military action, which has its end in strategy, etc. Each is pursued as a means to a higher end. A subordinate science such as horsemanship is meaningless in and of itself because it is not self-sufficient.

Furthermore, since all beings desire what they are striving toward this end must be good. The question of whether or not the means are correct and will allow for the good to be obtained is a different matter. The “good” still remains the aim. Through complete understanding of the good, the means to obtain it may be perfected. In other words, “will not knowledge of the good... better equip us, like archers who have a target to aim at, to hit the proper mark?” (Book I. 2.23-5). Though it is early on in the text, Aristotle’s emphasis is on “knowledge” of the good. It subtly foreshadows Aristotle’s unambiguous introduction of intelligence as the highest virtue in Book X. Aristotle enlightens his reader to the fact that the ultimate good must be happiness since happiness is the only thing desirable in itself. It is self-sufficient. Aristotle’s concise definition of happiness and self-sufficiency is “that which is taken by itself makes life something desirable and deficient in nothing” (Book I. 7.14-16).

Making life desirable can also be understood as making life meaningful—since, if life were not meaningful, it would not be desirable. While it is true that meaning comes in the form of happiness, the happiness Aristotle discusses is qualified: it is earthly happiness. Consequently, the Greek virtues Aristotle is examining concern worldly success. A Christian outlook, in contrast, would find worldly *suffering* to be acceptable or even superior to earthly happiness, since meaning is to be found with God and the Kingdom of Heaven. What’s desired is happiness in the afterlife. Worldly actions are important only if they reflect an individual’s connection with the otherworldly. While Aristotle works toward the good through a hierarchy of aims, a Christian perspective starts with a supreme good that is God, which works its way down to guide human actions.

This contrast is best depicted through example. Among the most valued Greek virtues is courage. Aristotle describes the courageous man as “a man who fearlessly faces a noble death and any situations that bring about a sudden death” (Book III. 6.34). The emphasis is on the noble quality of death. A passive death is not courageous because there is no opportunity to demonstrate one’s fearlessness or one’s ability, since this death is unavoidable. A courageous death “in which a man can show his prowess, or where he can die a noble death, neither of which is true of death by drowning or disease” (Book III. 6.30). Battle is where a man may earn the title of courageous, “for in battle a man is faced by the greatest and most noble of dangers. This is corroborated by the honors which states as well as monarchs bestow upon courage” (Book III. 6.31-2). To be called courageous, one must prove himself to others and receive their recognition. In the Christian notion of martyrdom, worldly recognition is unnecessary. The individual is sacrific-

ing himself to uphold a universal principle and to receive recognition in the eyes of God.

Through an examination of each virtue, under the guise that he is promoting them, Aristotle identifies three mistaken Greek conceptions of worldly happiness. He says, "... the account given by the common run differs from that of the philosophers. The former say it is some clear and obvious good, such as pleasure, wealth, or honor" (Book I. 4.21-3). Aristotle does not discount that each has some good. There is happiness in pleasure and receiving honors. However, they will not lead to the highest happiness. Aristotle states, "Since there are evidently several ends, and since we choose some of these as a means to something else it is obvious that not all ends are final. The highest good must be something that is final... this will be the good that we are seeking" (Book I. 7.26-30). Wealth, honor, and pleasure rely on externals. They are easily corruptible and not self-sufficient. They may give some happiness, but they cannot grant the highest happiness or ensure that it will be long-lasting. The virtue of intelligence, given that it will lead to earthly happiness, is self-sufficient and less easily corruptible because it does not rely on externals. Already it would seem favorable to seek the virtue of intelligence in place of traditional Greek virtues.

Wealth is simply a "means to something else" that something being pleasure and honors (Book I. 5.8). It is the most subordinate of the three categories. Pleasure, in the physical sense, seems to be undeniably pleasant to all beings. However, those that pursue pleasure, pursue it not because it brings the highest happiness, but because they do not have any understanding of a higher happiness. Aristotle states "if these men, who have never tasted pure and generous pleasure, find an escape in the pleasures of the body, this is not sufficient reason for thinking that such pleasures are in fact more desirable. For children too, think that what they value is actually the best" (Book X. 6.19-23). To seek pleasure is a natural element of human nature, but that which is most pleasant will be the pleasures sought by the man who is most good. Pleasures help complete happiness, but they do not make it. Furthermore, someone entirely devoted to pleasure, such as the self-indulgent man, will cause himself equal pain since he will suffer more than the self-controlled man when he is denied pleasure.

Honor, as Aristotle says, "seems to depend on those who confer it rather than on him who receives it... furthermore, men seem to pursue honor to assure themselves of their own worth... and they want to be honored on the basis of their virtue and excellence. Obviously then, excellence, as far as they are concerned is better than honor" (Book I. 7.25-30). The highest virtue is not one that confers honor, but rather excellence. Aristotle presents courage as a virtue early in the text, but he has planted a seed of doubt in the mind of a reader that will pave the way for later criticism. He has shown that honor is not an end in itself, but an imperfect means to achieve happiness through excellence. Honor is further flawed in that it is not self-sufficient. Therefore, courage cannot be the highest virtue if it has honor as its end. Since what the man that desires honor

truly wants is excellence, he will find supreme happiness in perfecting excellence, rather than in procuring honor.

Thus, “happiness is a certain activity of the soul in conformity with perfect virtue” (Book I. 13.5). A human’s perfect virtue or excellence comes from a perfection of his function. What differentiates man from animal is his rational capacity. Therefore, by perfecting the rational or intelligent capacity, man can be in conformity with perfect virtue, and achieve happiness. So long as it is actualized through the combination of theoretical knowledge with practical implementation, intelligence will necessarily guide man to happiness. Aristotle states “intelligence... guides us and... gives us our notions of what is noble and divine... it is an activity of this part... that will be complete happiness” (Book X. 7.14-15). Intelligence will also necessarily guide man to be virtuous in his relations with others, since excellence is goodness. The virtuous man will find pleasure in practicing virtues, such as equity, for themselves and, thus, achieve the highest happiness. Aristotle says “for virtue and intelligence... are the sources of morally good activity” (Book X. 6.19-20). A pursuer of base pleasures may experience temporary happiness, but the virtuous man will experience greater and permanent happiness. The happiness of the virtuous man is also self-sufficient which secures its permanency.

Thus, Aristotle modifies Greek virtues by placing the highest value on intangibles, such as intelligence and selflessness, with the justification that such virtues will provide earthly happiness. Aristotle never neglects to stress that virtuousness is not an inherent quality, but one that is practiced. Aristotle uses reason to create ethical absolutes and inspire an appreciation for philosophy. Virtue and contemplation are appealing in that they are self-rewarding and not rewarded by divine power. Reason rather than God directs man to virtue. His philosophy is reformatory, but entirely Greek.

Quotations in this essay are drawn from Aristotle’s Nichomachean Ethics, translated by Martin Ostwald, (Library of Liberal Arts, 1962).

An Interview with Christopher Ricks

As a respected British literary critic and scholar, Christopher Ricks has had numerous accomplishments spanning the decades, which highlight his enthusiasm for Victorian poetry, his love for Bob Dylan and his appreciation of British literature. From 1968 to 1975, he was professor of English at the University of Bristol. After that period, he moved to the University of Cambridge, where he was King Edward VII Professor of English Literature until 1986, when he came to Boston University. From 2004 to 2009, Ricks was the Professor of Poetry at the University of Oxford, and he has been the President of the Association of Literary Scholars, Critics and Writers (2008-9). His many editorial and critical works include *Keats and Embarrassment* (1974), *The Force of Poetry* (1984), the standard edition of Tennyson (1987), *T.S. Eliot and Prejudice* (1988), *Beckett's Dying Words* (1993), *Inventions of the March Hare: Poems 1909-1917 by T.S. Eliot*, and *Dylan's Visions of Sin* (2003). He has been praised for his 'intent eloquence' and 'unrivalled critical intelligence' by Hugh Kenner and Geoffrey Hill. Ricks is the William M. and Sara B. Warren Professor of the Humanities at Boston University and Co-Director of the Editorial Institute. He was knighted for services to scholarship in the Birthday Honours, 2009.

Prof. Ricks met with me in March 2010 to discuss his career as a literary critic and editor, Romantic poetry, and his Signet edition of *Paradise Lost* (1968), which students read in the second year Core Humanities. – KB

Why did you decide to pursue a career in literary criticism?

As a schoolboy, if we go back there, I was at a boarding school from when I was 8 until I was 18, and the war was on, and my parents were divorced. So like a lot of people, I protected myself against things that were deeply depressing by reading. So I read a lot in boarding school and I read a lot when I was in the army for two years, then I went to university at Oxford and I very much enjoyed the system of teaching there. I decided it should turn on how I did in the exams and if I did very well I would stay and do graduate work. In England in those days you could get a grant, so you did not have tuition fees. So loving books came earlier for various reasons, such as protecting myself, but the decision to have a career turned in 1956 on what a body of a dozen people whom I didn't know thought of my work.

I've read that you uphold the traditional principle of reading based on practical criticism. What does that entail? How does it differ from more theory-driven modes of criticism, like post-modernist or post-constructionist?

eye, quite as much as of the bodily eye; and he who remembers this when he sees any one whose vision is per-

Well, practical criticism derives from a particular book in the 1930's by a particular person, I.A. Richards, who thought the Cambridge people whom he knew and taught were not at all good at really attending to what the words of a poem were. That is, that they would suppose that a poem was about something that it actually wasn't about. They would fail to see that a word was a pun or rhymed in a beautiful way. So the idea has since become known as "close reading" (but the word *close* suggests an atmosphere of a room that hasn't had its windows open for a long time). The study of literature requires, above all, a respect for the very words, as a performance of a piano sonata requires respect for the very notes. The school of writers and critics that I cared about on the whole aligned themselves with Dr. Johnson, who was perhaps the greatest critic that the English language has ever seen, and also strongly anti-philosophical. He is extremely intelligent. He thinks very very hard, but he arrives quite quickly at the belief that being the maker of a dictionary is in some ways more illuminating for literature than being a creator of a theory or system. So what is literature for? There is a third term which I want to bring in, it is neither practical criticism nor close criticism: it is principles. Dr. Johnson thought it was the task of a critic to understand principles. Principles are things like "He who hesitates is lost." It is not a theory. "Look before you leap" is a principle. How do you reconcile "He who hesitates is lost," with the injunction "Look before you leap?" Well, you reconcile it by having to think hard about whether this is a "Look before you leap" situation or a "He who hesitates is lost" situation, but you don't write thirty pages on what it is to hesitate. Now I'm not mocking people who do write thirty pages on what it is to hesitate, I want to say that there is this third thing, which is neither philosophy nor quasi-philosophy, nor is it just attending to the words on the page: it is trying to think of the principles. So a lot of the books I have written are about matters of principle.

How do you differ from other literary critics?

At this point he says, "Well, quite frankly I'm simply more intelligent..." I differ from some of them, like T.S. Eliot and William Empson, in that I'm not a genius. I differ from others in that I'm not a creative writer at all, I'm not a poet. Many of the greatest English critics, in England and in America, have been both poets and critics. The person who is only a critic is mostly at a disadvantage in comparison, but not solely at a disadvantage because the poet-critic is much more likely to get wrong certain ways in which other people's poetry is either like or unlike his or her own. I may be in competition with poets of course, but at least I don't have poems in competition with other people's poems. So we need both kinds of critics. I am drawn to—but I am not in any way unique in this—drawn to things which would be interesting to think through irrespective of whether nobody had ever written about them. That is, embarrassment is to me a really interesting human phenomenon. I don't blush anymore much. I used to blush a lot until I was twenty-six and a half and then I gave it up. So there's a lot to be thought about

plexed and weak, will not be too ready to laugh; he will first ask whether that soul of man has come out of the

embarrassment irrespective of whether Keats had ever written wonderful lines about blushing. And I think it's of course characteristic of great writers to write about things which matter irrespective of whether others have written about them. I think great writers are drawn to great and enduring things to be concerned with.

In regards to another topic, this semester you gave a lecture on Romantic poetry, and students read a selection of poems from your *Oxford Book of English Verse*. Were the Romantic poets rejecting the Neoclassical style of poetry of Pope and Swift?

I can talk about the one thing which, always important, is especially in the front of their minds, which is imagination; that is, the feeling that in some way, to them, the poetry of Pope lacked imagination. It was terrifically good on political strife, it was terrifically good on why you shouldn't clip a lock of hair off a woman even if you were engaged to her. But that all seemed to the Romantics somehow not really imaginative. And so I think what you find is that different periods define imagination differently or give it a different place. You don't have to have something with a metaphysical scheme, but if you are going to talk about these poems of these people, you need to get a handle on it—and I think imagination, for me, was the best I could do. Everybody gets some sort of energy out of disavowing what had been the case. Every period and every innovator does that, and I think it is sort of humanly necessary, as it is necessary for people in some way to get out from under their parents. If your parents are failures you need to get out from under their failures, if they are successes you will need to get out from under their success. It was very difficult to be the son of Winston Churchill; it was easier for Winston Churchill to be the son of Lord Randolph Churchill because Lord Randolph Churchill wasn't all that successful. And that has been particularly powerful—and pernicious—in literary studies. People have always believed that genius has a whole lot of relations to things not solitary: it has a relation to the muse, it has a relation to divine inspiration, it has a relation to your friends. Some repudiation is necessary: you have to think that something worth doing hasn't been done. There is no point in writing if you think it has all been done. Ezra Pound says "Make it new," which is a bit different from "Make something that is new." "Make it new," there is the "it" which continues. Literature (Pound again) is "news that stays news." That is a fine thing to say in a world in which news gets used up in a split second. So, the speeding up of everything would be part of that, but I take it that the artists who are very good combine a repudiation of things that they disavow and finding something genuinely new or a genuinely new way of looking at something old.

I have another question in regard to the *Oxford Book of English Verse* from which came the poems for your Core lecture. Various editions of poetry differ in the way that punctuation is used or in the way that certain words are emphasized. For exam-

brighter light, and is unable to see because unaccustomed to the dark, or having turned from darkness to the

ple, in your text of Robert Burns' "To a Mouse," certain words are italicized, like the phrase "fellow mortal" in the second stanza, whereas *The Norton Anthology* does not italicize any words or phrases. How do these minor changes affect the poem?

Well, they can be absolutely huge changes. Because of how you punctuated something, you may have left open the possibility that there are alternative interpretations. So, you will often see that a really important revision is a revision of punctuation. Let me put it this way: the *Oxford Book of English Verse* is not a work of scholarship, it's not a textbook, it has no notes. It is a book for the general reader. You then, as editor, have to take a decision as to whether you're going to have any scholarly apparatus at all, and the answer was no. For the anthology, I decided that I would reproduce what were the best editions (there is never a final or *definitive* edition), but what were the best editions that did not modernize. Now some degree of modernization always happens if you are printing a poem, you don't reprint the actual handwriting or even the contractions: you are tidying them up to a certain degree. So what I did was go back to how Burns's poems were presented as it seemed to me on first publication. And reprint un-modernized. We also know that italics are used in other periods not for emphasis: if Milton puts a foreign name into italics, it's not because he wants you to say "*Egypt!*" with terrific force, but because he is distinguishing the place-names or the person's name from the texture of everything else. The English, unlike the French *je*, capitalize the word "I." We scarcely notice it anymore. We notice it if E.E. Cummings makes a joke out of not capitalizing it, we notice that emails have decided to abolish capital letters because it is too much effort to press the shift key. I mean "LIFE IS HARD ENOUGH," without having to press the shift key—come on, purrelease! Do I think of myself, "I," as terribly different from how I think of "me?" You can actually see at what historical point putting a capital on "I" it comes into the English language, and it doesn't seem to owe its *origin* to the thinking that "I" was more important than the other pronouns, but it does lend itself to *either* being egotistical *or* to thinking: I'm not going to pretend, as the French do, that little "je" is just as important as "tu," "vous," "il" and "elle." Are the French always creepily pretending that they are not egotists? They are actually really big egotists for all their *je*? So the answer to your question about the *Oxford Book* is that it isn't a work of scholarship; it needed me to read a lot, and (I hope) to have good taste—which is a very slippery thing to get hold of. I like to think there are lots of very good poems in it that wouldn't be in anyone else's anthology. But of course, every anthology is different.

Which Romantic poet best conveys the themes from the Romantic era?

Well, it depends. *Convey* may mean endorse, or of course it may mean (often) extremely intelligent skepticism about. That is, pleasure is terrifically important in the Romantic period. Wordsworth doesn't look like someone who took a lot of pleasure in things—I just don't mean his physical appearance—but the poetry doesn't have the air

of being wreathed in pleasure. Wordsworth is always saying if you know what human beings really care about and learn from, it is pleasure. It is not *as you might have thought*, pain. I mean, he is very good on pain, but he thinks that pain is more likely to mis-educate you. In that sense, he is a comic writer, not a tragic writer. On the whole, comedy thinks that pain is bad for you, and tragedy thinks that pain is good for you. Both of these things is true. So if you think about pleasure, would it be the sort of pleasure that Keats takes in imagining things in his mouth? which might go back to being at your mother's breast, which is very powerful in a lot of ways. "Oh he had swooned, drunken from pleasure's nipple." What is pleasure? A nipple. It has just hot wonderful lines. So what's the great bit of Byron? The great bit is the narrator, Don Juan, saying, "Oh pleasure, you're indeed a pleasant thing." It too is a great line. It says: contrary to what people are always telling you, the great thing about pleasure is that it is actually pleasurable; in a world in which you are beating yourself, mortifying yourself, sleeping with stinging nettles lest the lust of the flesh take you over. You can think, "Why do people need to have that told to them?" Because they are Scottish! So if you ask, "What best conveys..." Wordsworth conveys great pleasure in things. Pleasure is always important, everybody is always thinking about pleasure, but the Romantics have a very wide spectrum on it. Byron thinks that the real corrupters are the people who are platonic or puritanical. He thinks that the greatest danger to people's souls is a contempt for the body. There is a great Christian tradition of worshipping the body and there is a terrible Christian tradition of deploring the body.

I actually have a few questions about *Paradise Lost*. What are your views of Satan and the issue of free will from within the text?

My introduction to the Signet *Paradise Lost*, which was recently replaced by a different introduction, tried to explain that *Paradise Lost* is both an epic and an anti-epic. It is full of mock-heroic things such as Pandemonium. So it's an epic which is not about epic virtues. It isn't about national pride, though it is itself a source of great national pride that England alone came up with somebody who could compete with Homer and Virgil. There are so few epics that generalizations based on them are almost impossible. It is like generalizing marriage from having ever known only three people who are married. What do you go on? You have got Homeric poems, Virgil, and you have *Paradise Lost*. So, you've got four poems. All the others for which "epic" is claimed are not epics, though they find a way of incorporating the dynamic of an epic. Satan fits within an anti-epic in the way in which *Paradise Lost* is and isn't, it's an epic in certain respects and an anti-epic in others. And on the whole, everything that is chivalric and epic is seen as Satanic. I mean, God is not an epic figure. So you've a *criticism* of the epic. Like all criticisms, it isn't simply repudiation because criticism has to explain what good qualities ever seized people's imaginations. The criticism of Satan that I value is the one like

William Empson's, which doesn't sentimentalize Satan. Can you demonize the devil? I think C.S. Lewis does demonize Satan, and he demonizes him because he doesn't attend to all those moments in the poem when Milton insists that "his form had yet not lost / All her original brightness." If you are thinking of feeling superior to Satan, ask yourself whether you are as brave as he is. So, I think the good accounts of Satan are the ones which find him a remarkable mixture. (It's a little bit like the arguments about the terrorists. Susan Sontag and some other people, who I think were right in these matters, objected to the word "cowardly" for September 11th. Whatever those people were, they were not *cowardly*. They took their own lives in the most extraordinary circumstances, believing—in my view dementedly—that they could do good.) C.S. Lewis goes adrift in his book, although it is still very powerful and extraordinary to read, when his Christian convictions lead him to have no problems with Milton's occasional injustices to Satan.

Do you think Milton sympathizes with Eve?

Yes. He gives her some of the most beautiful, sincere, and touching lines in the poem, and he almost entirely does not attribute to her the self-righteous mean-mindedness which he attributes to Adam. That is, Adam is presented as having a lot more wrong with him. Eve's contrition is real in the poem. At the close of the poem, what she says is extremely beautiful. It's a little bit like Shakespeare and Cleopatra: she is not a good woman, but on the other hand, she has moments when she is better than everybody else and she is certainly more reliable than Antony. His is a part that is terrifically difficult to make real or give any sense that there is an inward life in Antony. Cleopatra is all show, but there is again and again this feeling that what is going on in her is worth thinking and caring about. No, I think you can sympathize with people whom you mostly deplore. I find it very difficult to see the photographs of Hitler with the boy soldiers just before the end of the war and not feel a certain kind of pity and concern. I mean, Hitler is a monster, but in those late photographs he is sort of frighteningly human, and not frightening because of the power of his demagoguery, but frightening because of what is in his face. I think one's moral and spiritual judgments on him are entirely in place, but what is also in play is this feeling that you have to pity the monster. ("Pity the monsters," Robert Lowell says in a poem.) Pity really has to know no boundaries, though pity needs to know that it is always in danger of turning sentimental. I think Milton is very good at this world of pitying the monsters. You think of people like Charles Manson, killers. There would be something wrong with somebody who couldn't find any pity for whatever it was that turned these people. I don't mean that they are not responsible for becoming who they are, but you would still feel a terrible sense of waste.

The full version of this interview appears at www.bu.edu/core/journal.

S'Cores: Musical Analects of the Core

Selections from compositions studied in Core, with text by Katherine Book



The St. Matthew Passion by Bach

A musical composition tells its timeless story using the deeply textured language of dynamic contrasts, tempo, key signature, and harmonization. Music evokes the essence of human emotions, trials, and triumphs in ways that cannot be portrayed in a text; it can heighten emotional instincts and release tension. In Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, his recitatives capture the narrative of the Passion in the Gospels by setting the tone for each passage. Words such as "crucify" in the recitatives reflect tension and emotional depth. Jesus' recitatives are accompanied long, sustained notes played by the entire string section of the first orchestra, which create an effect that is referred to as Jesus' "halo." The strings remain silent in Jesus' last line, "My God, my God why have you forsaken me!" emphasizing the intensity of the crucifixion scene and the sorrowfulness on Earth when humanity lost its Savior.

Handwritten musical score for "Così fan tutte" by Mozart. The score is written on five staves. The top staff is labeled "Cornetti Fante". The second staff is labeled "Violini". The third staff is labeled "Violoncelli". The bottom two staves are labeled "Contrabbasso". The score includes dynamic markings such as "f" (forte) and "p" (piano), and tempo markings like "Allegro 2da". The notation is in a historical style with various ornaments and slurs.

Così fan tutte by Mozart

Mozart's genius is best reflected in the way he expresses basic human instincts in his operas. As a tale of deception, the score in *Così fan tutte* expresses that same ambiguity through its elaborate melismas. A particularly intriguing aria is Dorabella's "Smanie implacabili," in which she suddenly loses control at the thought of her husband's absence. The melody perfectly matches her emotions with strong forte and staccato, which evoke a feeling of tension and madness.

A printed musical score snippet for "Così fan tutte" by Mozart. It consists of four staves of music in 4/4 time. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The notation is clean and modern, showing a melodic line on the top staff and accompaniment on the other three staves. The music features a mix of quarter and eighth notes, with some rests and slurs.

Symphony No. 9 by Beethoven

Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* tells a story of triumph in the famous fourth movement, the "Ode to Joy." The movement, which contains a strong thematic unity, begins with a stormy *presto* and crescendos to a resounding fortissimo in the chorus and orchestra. The powerful chorus and the equally strong brass section convey a sense of courageous zeal and the drum's rhythm evokes a march to victory. Beethoven's joyous celebration reflects the social and political attitudes in Europe at the time, when a break from the battered, decrepit old regimes of the 18th century made room in the spirit to celebrate the military triumphs, modernity, and enlightenment of the Napoleonic era.

Ralph C. Lark

To an Author

The most powerful person on Earth
Is an Author.
They are the weeds
That kill the wheat only so
The mustard seed
Has a chance to grow
Flourishes under accented rain
And the predicated rays of an epic sun.
The tender touch of a pen-worn hand,
Whose tools subject these objects
To words yet unnamed.
The Authority of a farmer
Who speaks,
And creates life.

Zachary Bos

On Influence

You know this distress: one is trying to write but one can't hear oneself think. They are all too loud, too quarrelsome, they press too close around one's desk, reminding one of proud garrulous guinea fowl competing for status—who's primogenial, who's peerless. The fear of being too unoriginal expands unexpectedly in an empty room, overspreading like liquid tipped out of a bowl.

I imagine it was quieter before they started gathering in these flocks. That cultured silence must have been nice, when one could sit at one's desk with one's lice, one's reek, with goosefeather pen and lampblack ink, to write one's books unafflicted by the crowd.



"Black-and-white-casqued Hornbill," pencil, by Rebecca Getlerner

The Heavenly Music of the Celestial CORE

Logan Gowdey

S*pecial Soloist.* It was, everyone said—and what better measure of truth exists?—the honor most coveted by the seniors at the Center for Orthogonal Reading Education, or CORE, so named because of its research in every direction of human life, the boarding school most coveted by the wealthiest parents in all the land. It was not an especially musical school, but this position was the championship ring for a secondary education that already glowed with honors. And today, the list was posted. For the four whose names had been inscribed by the finest of laser printers, life was about to change.

The first to happen upon the list was, of course Dido. Everyone knew that she would make the cut, including her, but she summoned a large enough dose of the naïveté she had never possessed to be shocked. She dissolved in nonsensical screams and tears on the spot, beating the floor with her laboriously manicured hands in a random rhythm she had carefully chosen the night before. As others began to check the list—most to be disappointed—Dido grabbed greedily at their hands, always getting just enough words to be understood before interrupting herself with gasping sobs. The others did not respond, but they did not need to. Dido was perfectly capable of projecting devoted fandom upon the least interested of her schoolmates.

The second person to see the list also reacted violently, but in a way that lacked Dido's excitement. Satan had, of course, only tried out for the squad to keep Principal Gabriel off her back. She loudly cursed whoever had given her a good voice, losing more obscenities than the entire freshman class had ever heard, before ripping open her pack of cigarettes and lighting up right in the middle of the hallway.

So much for the girls, but what of the boys? Only one was to be found, fidgeting nervously behind Dido and Satan, playing with one of the many crosses that filled his pockets and adorned his body. Dante was, to put it bluntly, both a Jesus freak and a nerd, not exactly a winsome combination. But here, he thought, was finally his chance; his chance to prove to his classmates that one could love Christ and be popular; and, most importantly his chance to be with the love of his life, showing her the light of Christ in

the process. Dante had been embarrassingly, disgustingly in love with Satan since she moved to CORE in the middle of their sophomore year (after her expulsion for weapons possession at her previous school). Once, Satan had *not* laughed at the sight of him, the glorious day the previous spring when she had actually—wonder of wonders—extinguished her cigarette right on his hand! Sometimes, when Dante was alone late at night, he touched the scar he hoped he would always have, and thought of her.

Across the hall, murmuring to herself in the dark corner (no one knew why there was a dark corner in what was otherwise a fairly well-appointed school, but let us leave such metaphysical debates for later) was Clytemnestra, the only one who wanted the spot more than Dido.

Later that day was the first rehearsal.

Candide had only been professor of music at CORE for a few weeks now, following the suicide pact of Professors Martin and Pangloss, but he hoped that everything would turn out well. The kids, he thought, had been through enough, with that loss coming right on the heels of Kant holding cafeteria ladies hostage for 72 extremely tense hours for “lying” by not serving what their menu said they would, before being gunned down by the tiny robot army of Gulliver, Professor of Applied Engineering. He secretly thought those tragedies would be beneficial in making the CORE a unified group, as tragedies are apt to do, and relished the chance to play his part. He cleared his throat as he surveyed his quartet—Dido, Satan, Dante, and now joined by Socrates—before finally beginning his speech.

“Our purpose,” he announced, “is to showcase the beautiful harmonies of the CORE program to our families, professors, and fellow scholars. This year especially, we must demonstrate that we cannot be defeated by any setbacks. I know we can do it. After all, the only thing anyone really needs in life is some hard work. You have all been chosen for your ability, and—excuse me, Satan, are you smoking?!”

Satan took a long drag, blew the smoke out of her nose, before languidly asking in her trademark husky voice that had made many a man fall, “And what if I am?”

“What do you mean ‘what if I am?’ That’s like the most illegal thing you can do! Are you even 18? Don’t we have smoke detectors in here?” Candide struggled to handle the situation.

Satan merely shrugged her shoulders and flicked ash off her cigarette.

Candide was frustrated, but he knew deep down that Satan was just misguided. And, as her teacher, his true responsibility was to support her. “Alright, Satan... fine. Now, guys, we only have a few weeks to get this right, but I know we can do it. With hard work, we can do anything—it’s all that really matters in life!”

The motivational speech was cut off by Dido’s scream, which startled even Satan. Dido threw her phone across the rehearsal room, forcing Candide to duck as it exploded into dozens of pieces directly above his head. Clytemnestra sauntered out of the shadows,

but before anyone could ask her why she was in their closed rehearsal, Dido let out a piercing shriek, “YOU!”

And was upon her, kicking, scratching, and screaming incoherently, an enraged beast. Candide was once again at a loss. Satan leaned forward eagerly in her seat and lit another cigarette. Dante was still watching Satan, completely oblivious to the violence in front of his face. He fingered the crosses in his pocket, and coughed timidly, to try to get her to stop smoking. After all, was it not his duty to stop her from hurting herself?

Finally, Candide took charge, diving between the girls. After several minutes, he was able to separate them, but not before sustaining several scratches and even a bite from the particularly vicious Clytemnestra. Immediately, he turned to Dido.

“How could you do this—you’re supposed to be a role model! That’s why you were chosen!”

“I thought you said it was for our abilities?” interjected Socrates, momentarily awakening from his constant state of semi-dazed stupor, eager to catch someone in a contradiction.

“Well, um, yes, but... Socrates, now is *not* the time,” stammered Candide. “As I was saying, Dido, you are a role model, and role models must never lose control!”

“This is so *u-u-unfair!* *She* stole *my* boyfriend! Cly, I thought we were best friends!” Dido could barely get the words out between sobs.

“The perfect love between Aeneas and me is really none of your concern, but since you brought it up, he asked me to ask you for his letterman’s jacket back... he promised me I could wear it tonight.”

The icy cruelty of Clytemnestra’s latest response was too much for Dido, who threw herself again upon her enemy. Or so she tried to do, though her assault was physically blocked by Candide’s body. Finally, the good professor lost control.

“*Enough.* Dido, I am sorry, but you are clearly not ready to be part of our squad. I am sorry, but we expect a higher level of self control.”

“AIEEEEEAAAAHHH!” Even Satan was shaken by Dido’s scream. “THIS IS SO UNFAIR!” She seemed to draw in on herself, and suddenly closed off all her emotion, something no one had ever seen her do before. The effect was immediately chilling. “Fine,” she began again, calmly, “I see my talents are no longer appreciated. I doubt anyone would even notice even if I were on fire. I guess I had better go.”

“Dido, no... please...” Candide began ineffectually, but Dido was already gone. Clytemnestra had already taken her seat and her music. Satan, normally the troublemaker of the group, was so impressed that she could only summon a nod and a restrained, “nice.”

* * *

Later that day, Dido tested her theory and lit herself on fire in the crowded mall. Unfortunately, the apathetic crowd merely thought it was a new viral marketing gimmick, and so they merely watched as she burned to death.

Her funeral was held that weekend, a dramatic spectacle with just as much showmanship as Dido aspired to throughout her life. CORE, of course, assumed the cost of the service. *At least*, Candide thought, *there is some kind of silver lining: we saved on cremation costs.* There really was not room for another round of funerary costs in this year's budget.

* * *

Shaken, but still determined, Candide started rehearsals back up immediately.

"And a one, a two, three, and four," he began to conduct as Sancho, the accompanist started up on the piano. He surveyed his group, and—"Stop, stop, stop, guys. Socrates, what are you doing?" he asked resignedly.

Socrates had wandered out of his seat and was peering intently at Satan's left ear, which was filled up with piercings. Before he could respond, Satan grabbed his crotch, pulled him up until her mouth was on his ear, and whispered something unintelligible, before roughly shoving him away with a backhand slap. It was perfectly executed: a practiced hand at work. Socrates looked pleasantly confused, which is to say the same as usual. Dante, on the other hand, was so shocked and horrified that he could not stop himself from vomiting all over Clytemnestra, who screamed and ran out.

Candide was not amused, and ran after Clytemnestra, physically pulling her back into the rehearsal room to practice, covered in Dante's vomit though she was. He explained, as patiently as he could, that they had wasted too much time already, and that he could not, in good conscience, allow any more delays.

Clytemnestra, however, was not amused. "You only think of yourself! What about me? What about punishing Dante? I mean, who even throws up over silly shit like that anymore? How old are we, three?!"

"Hey!" Dante began, but was cut off by Candide's anguished cry, which surprised the students, who had never heard him rise above his mild, slightly timid speaking voice.

"ENOUGH! *Places, everyone!*"

At last subdued, the four students sat down, and began rehearsing in earnest. The calm, however, did not last long. Satan, finally sufficiently amused by Dante's devotion to take advantage of it, had convinced him she would accept Jesus into her heart, repent her sins, and marry him, if he would first prove *his* love by letting her pierce his ear, right in class. An accomplished liar, Satan assured him she'd done it many a time. Dante was still unsure, but when Satan leaned into his ear and blew softly, he could muster no more resistance. And so, she pushed the tack she just happened to have in her pocket, a tack

"Downtown Boston," photograph, by Chloe Tuck



she assured him was completely sanitary, into his ear as hard as she could.

Dante's scream broke every window in the school. He jumped so quickly out of his chair that most of the earlobe was ripped off. Socrates immediately came over to investigate the new mystery. Candide was finally forced to end rehearsal early, the last one before the concert.

* * *

“Ladies and gentlemen, thank you all so much for coming this evening to the Annual CORE Senior Concert. Our quartet has worked tirelessly to put our set together, and we think you’ll appreciate more than ever after this traumatic year we have had together. After all, CORE is fundamentally a community, where all people can come together and find life’s essential truths. As you know, we accept all people into our truly unique community, just like all of the unique areas of study we include in our curriculum. And, somehow, we find a way to harmonize, to bring it all together, and make it greater than its parts. That, my friends, is what this concert is truly all about, and I hope you appreciate our unity more than ever this year. Thank you.”

The curtain came up, and the audience gasped. The costumes, that Candide had optimistically entrusted to each performer, were horrific. Clytemnestra was in a skimpy, revealing gown covered in sequins. Satan appeared to be wearing some kind of bondage suit, most likely made of leather or rubber; most audience members averted their eyes before completing the investigation. Dante had mounted himself on a cross, and was still bleeding from his ear. Socrates not only wandered on late, but did not appear in any clothes at all, having forgotten to make his costume.

As Sancho started the accompaniment, the singers readied themselves for the performance of their lives. When they finally did begin to sing, it was gut wrenching, worse than the costumes. Socrates came in a full three measures before their entrance, but this was less important than the fact that he was not singing the piece, or any intelligible melody or words. When the other three finally did come in, not only were they following different rhythms, their notes seemed to have been chosen completely at random. Not only were they not singing the same song; there was not one coherent song to be found either among or between them. In short, it was an unmitigated disaster.

This, though, was no matter to the audience, who nodded eagerly, following whichever rhythm suited them the most. They heard what they wanted to hear, and that was enough. They would all go home happy, convinced that there was some hope in the world.

Seeing the smiles break out over the auditorium, Candide finally felt happy, for the first time since Dido killed herself. Maybe there is hope after all, he thought, even if it sounds like this. Maybe it really is enough for each one of us to believe what we want to believe, and just move on with our lives.

By the end, everyone was in tears, having seen the best concert in their lives. They would all die happy now, able to look back on this as the one truly complete moment that made everything else make sense.

About Our Staff and Contributors

Jake Bann (English/Journalism, 2013) hopes one day to marry rich so that he can finally have some time to himself to write that damn novel. In his free time he likes to obsess over Bruce Springsteen, write fiction, and root for the Jets (sigh), Mets (sigh), and Nets (sighhhh).

Yuliya Belyayeva (Economics/International Relations, 2012) is an inspiring diplomat, always ready to promote world peace. Although she is currently studying International Relations, Economics, and French, her heart's desire is to make Core her primary major. Contrary to popular belief, she does not enjoy the color red, watching James Bond movies, or utilizing a sickle on a daily basis.

Andrew Bisdale (History/Photojournalism, 2010) has been taking pictures since high school and is passionate about using photography to tell stories and communicate ideas. He would like to thank the Core for support and for outlets for him to continue his craft.

Katherine Book (History/English, 2011) came in through the bathroom window; protected by a copy of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. Katherine is an avid lover of the Core and all it stands for. She could not stand being away from the charms of the Core Office over the fall semester and found it to be a great escape from what could have been an otherwise hum drum life. She loves piña coladas and getting caught in the rain, but loves music more than anything and dreams someday to be an expert on the history of rock n' roll—a preserver of the greats from Elvis, Lennon and McCartney, all the way to Vampire Weekend. She would like to once again thank Professor Tabatabai and Zak Bos for their constant support and experience. She would also like to recognize Professor Green for being incredibly awesome in those sunglasses.

Zachary Bos (Poetry, 2010) is Administrative Coordinator for the Core. His creative writing appears in many literary magazines, and regularly in emails sent to Core students and alumni. His current projects include a farm, a school, a store, and a church.

Devyn Buckley (Neuroscience/English, 2013) is thrilled at the interdisciplinary structure of the Core. She fully believes that humanities, the sciences, philosophy, the arts, and religion—the Core brew—all work toward the same goal, namely the acquisition of insight. They not only provide a variety of perspectives, but the knowledge in each particular category is supplemented by, if not dependent on, the knowledge in the others. Her goal in life is to use royalties from writing, painting, and drawing to build a gigantic laboratory in her basement that would make Dexter jealous.

Fabiana Cabral (Psychology/History/English, 2010) is happy to be writing for the Journal again. When not burying her nose in the stacks of books in her theatre-prop-laden room, she can be found prowling the streets of Boston looking for shows or art ex-

hibits to distract her from real life. She'd like to thank the Core for being one of the best parts of her college experience, and for providing more than one defining moment in her intellectual life. Never stop looking for the big themes!

Serame Castillo (Political Science/International Relations/Business Management, 2010) is concentrating his studies on Latin America and International Political Economy. He is from Dominican Republic but grew up in frigid Alaska. He hopes that one day the nations in Latin America will increase their cultural, political, and economic ties in order to foster development and progress.

Rebecca Gelernter (Biology, 2012) is happy to sit for hours watching birds, painting, reading, or wasting time on the internet. She lives in a tree with a troupe of imaginary woodlice.

Elisa Gill (Sociology/Political Science, 2012). Her interests include human rights issues, exploring in the woods, consent, and delicious, spicy foods.

Logan Gowdey (French/Philosophy, 2012) considers himself a true acolyte of the Core. When not editing this journal, performing in *Titus Andronicus*, or plotting ways to befriend Core instructors, he amuses himself by working out which circles of hell are reserved for bikers and which are for hipsters. His hobbies include stressing out, playing bejeweled, and going to France for a year.

Josh Gray (Physics/Math, 2013) enjoys ultimate frisbee, freestyle skiing, and first order partial-differential equations. Sounds like fun, right? His greatest disappointment was to discover that Voltaire did not live to write about the French Revolution—truly this is one of the world's greatest tragedies.

Shamavi Hasan (Biomedical Engineering/Math, 2013) loves science and math. She is a voracious reader and enjoys contemporary alternative and classical music. She is sort of trying to do it all and that is why she is one of the only three students from the College of Engineering in Core.

Audrey Hertenstein (Philosophy/Chemistry, 2013). As an avid lover of thoughtful thinking, deeply feeling, and directly experiencing life, Audrey has found a practical mean for every endeavor with the help of her fabulous Core professors and peers.

Daniel Hudon teaches Core Natural Science and wishes the Core budget would allow for BIG lab projects like building a galaxy. The instructions appearing in this issue are part of a series he is writing, the first of which appeared in the journal *Slow Trains*.

Emma Hughes (International Relations/Spanish, 2012) is addicted to sunshine and chocolate. Her hobbies include traveling, snowboarding, and spending time with friends. Emma lives for Core—she especially loves attending the lectures.

Brian Jorgenson, along with professors James Jackson (Astronomy), Jay Samons (Classics), Wayne Snyder (Computer Science, Associate Dean for Student Academic Life), and David Mann (Harvard, Psychiatry), and Core alum Edmund Jorgensen, plays with the Fish Worship blues band.

Michelle Kwock (Biology, 2013) feels that it is important to practice environmental sustainability. She enjoyed participating in the Core Ecolympics, going on the Walden Pond field trip, and attending all the Core events her packed schedule permitted. If she had endless amount of time, she'd love to be a photographer for *The Daily Free Press* and ride her bike everywhere in Massachusetts.

Ralph Collin Lark (undeclared, 2013)—a pea she ate, life's candy—dances to the absence of beat. But her unleavened bread, idle in many times, lacks the Sea, a fillet for the sorrow, fish, and move the hand that covers the heart. Ralph is enjoying the spring, and finally understands what it means “to come to a close,” for this year; scar, read beyond sense.

Sylvia Lewin (Physics, 2012) was glad to aid in the production of the Journal this year, and is duly impressed by those whose incredible efforts really brought it to life.

Nicole Mallia (undeclared, 2013) enjoyed working on the *Core Journal* this year because she always jumps at the chance to correct everyone else's grammar. An undeclared major, her academic interest lies mainly in the field of American history; outside of school, she enjoys hiking, painting with watercolors, and attending more concerts than is economically feasible.

Thuy Nguyen (English, 2013) includes the pre-lecture walk-in music, fiddling with anemones, and observing ancestral bones among the things she's enjoyed in Core this year. Her other interests include the color blue, bananas, and writing nature poetry.

Caitlin Outterson (Economics/Biology/History, 2013) Although she may appear to be a sane, well-adjusted individual, Caitlin possesses surprising depth of geekdom, especially concerning the history of Middle-Earth, British television shows from the 80's, and Settlers of Catan. Otherwise, her time is spent maintaining her collections of war movies, *Calvin & Hobbes* comics, and Sondheim musicals, as well as a deep and abiding love for calculus.

Elizabeth Perry (History/Archaeology, 2011) is a junior with a wandering home—in the past three years, she has called Arizona, Alaska, Boston, and Copenhagen home for various periods of time. When not learning about kings and queens, you will find her exploring the world around her, writing, or dreaming.

Rachael Pfenninger (Pre-med/Biochemistry/Molecular Biology, 2013) She has always loved reading the classics and is very much in love with Mr. Darcy. She loves all things Harry Potter and is a member of BU's Quidditch team. Her current wish is that Tim Burton will produce a version of Dante's *Inferno*.

Tori Pinheiro (Marine Science, 2013) should have been born as a fish, or in the 1800's, take your pick. She's obsessed with E. M. Forster, acoustic guitar, longboarding, cranberry juice, sailing, and glass of any color (especially when the sun shines through it). She loves all things epic and lives for those moments that remind you of a dream you had where you hover between here and some other existence you may never know.

Samantha Rick (Sociology/African Studies, 2012) grew up in rural Indiana. She will be spending the coming fall semester in Niger, and the spring semester in Copenhagen. She enjoys writing stories and is very into film. You may have seen her on Fox television, when she was featured as an expert Chatrouletter.

Paloma Serra (History/International Relations, 2012) is originally from Paris but attended boarding school in England throughout high school. She has always made photography a must in her travels.

Jacob Slutsky (United States History/Judaic Studies, 2012) is an avid reader whose outside reading competes furiously with his Core work. He enjoys singing, watching movies, anything involving a camcorder, and fine vegetarian dining. He worries that because of his *kippah* people might confuse him with Rafi Spitzer. It is difficult for him to decide what his favorite Core text is, but definitely in the running are Genesis, the *Oresteia*, and *Candide*.

Jennie Snow (Philosophy, 2013) is happiest waltzing through the streets in Birkenstocks conducting Beethoven's Ninth. She is also an aspiring cellist, currently working toward establishing a solid Led Zeppelin repertoire. Ever in the grip of wanderlust, she befriends many a folk by singing Al Green on the T, aggressively blessing their sneezes, and pointing out that the word "facetious" has all the vowels in order.

Sassan Tabatabai teaches Core Humanities and Persian. This is his seventh year as advisor to the *Core Journal*.

Chloe Tuck (Social Anthropology and Film/Television, 2012) wishes that Core Humanities was a major but, alas, this is not yet an option. She enjoys attending art lectures, playing the flute, watching old movies, and reading mystery novels. More than anything, Chloe would like to work alongside Tina Fey.

Andrew Scott Whiteman (Neuroscience, 2012) is glad to know now that he lives in a cave. While others have plans, he is wayward and stubborn, but not alone; when he read the Tao, he had a good laugh.

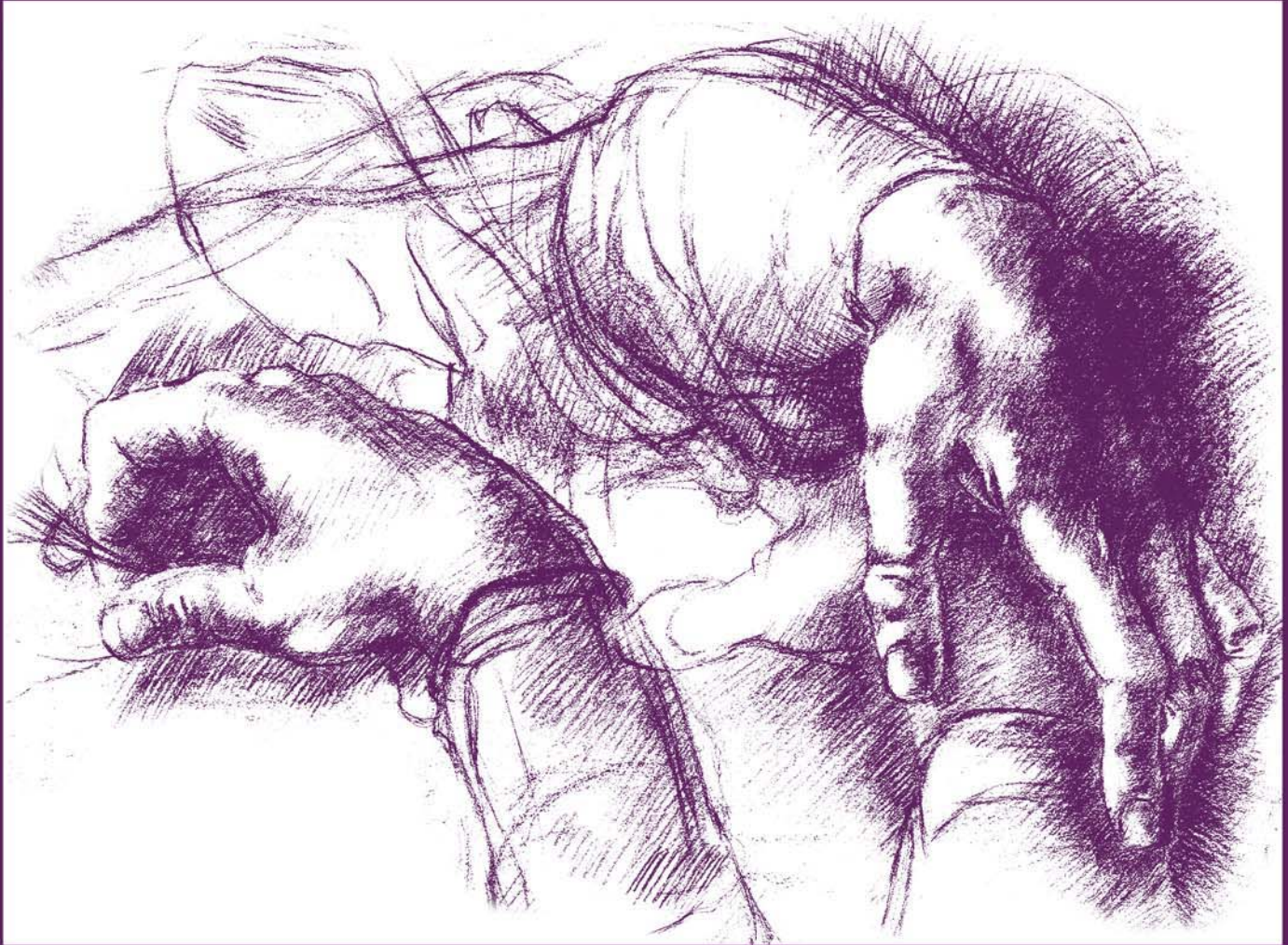
Anne Whiting (English/Political Science/Art History, 2013) is from Minnesota and writes a column for *The Daily Free Press*. She speaks Spanish and French and is obsessed with Aristotle. Someday she hopes to be a curator at the MoMA or a photographer for *National Geographic*. Reading Dante has made her decide to learn Latin.



"Columns in Madrid," photograph, by Serame Castillo

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

– *T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding"*



Cover illustration by Andrew Whiteman, CAS 2012

"Summer nights on open grassland with friends under humid, star-filled skies could be the memory of a moment at home, but so could be a night spent in reflection on the banks of the Charles, at the edge of the city. And Odysseus does return—to joyous reunion with wife and son. That the past cannot be relived does not make the past obsolete; the future too contains meaning that is not obliterated by past experience. Home is anywhere your thoughts are with you, as Odysseus' thoughts were with him, as Penelope's memories were with her, as Telemakhos' ambitions propelled him seeking. All are looking for the inner sanctity of home."

- Audrey Hertenstein, CAS 2013



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