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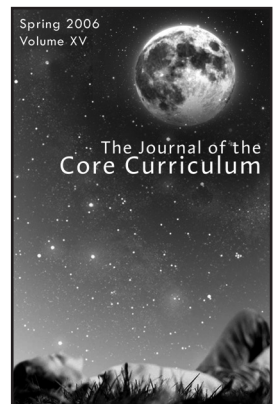
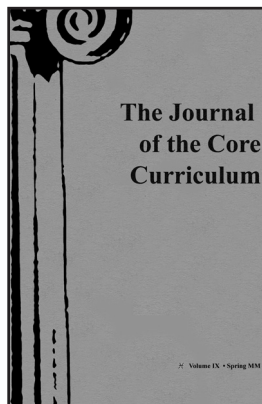
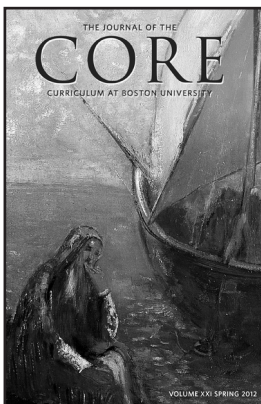
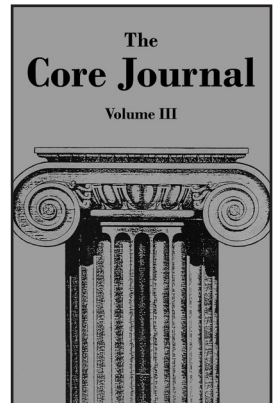
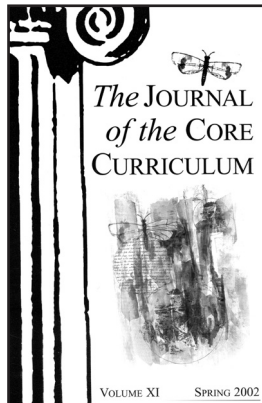
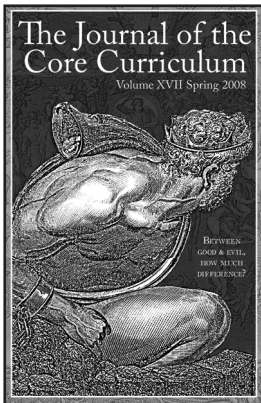
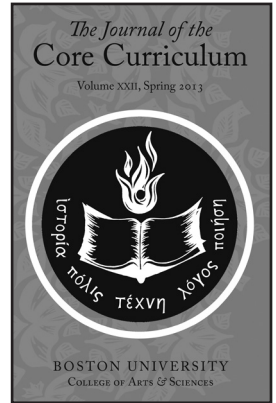
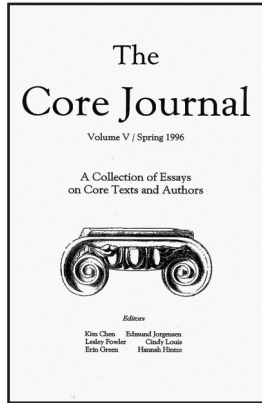
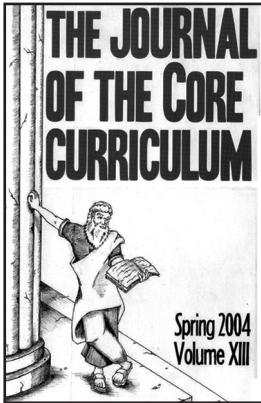
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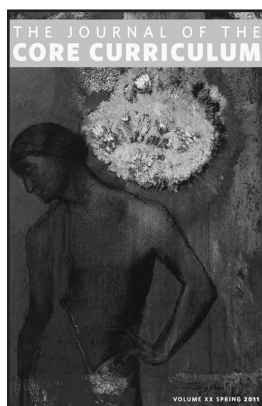
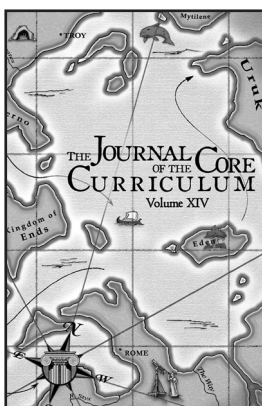
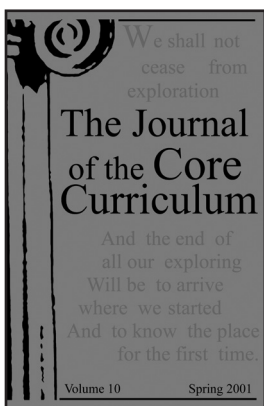
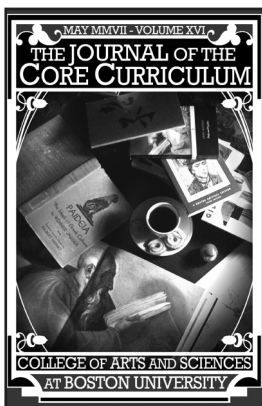
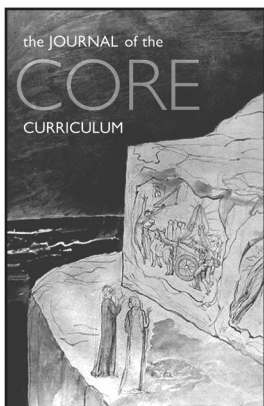
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the Journal of the Core Curriculum

vol xxiv spring 2015





CELEBRATING TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF CORE: 1989/90—2014/15

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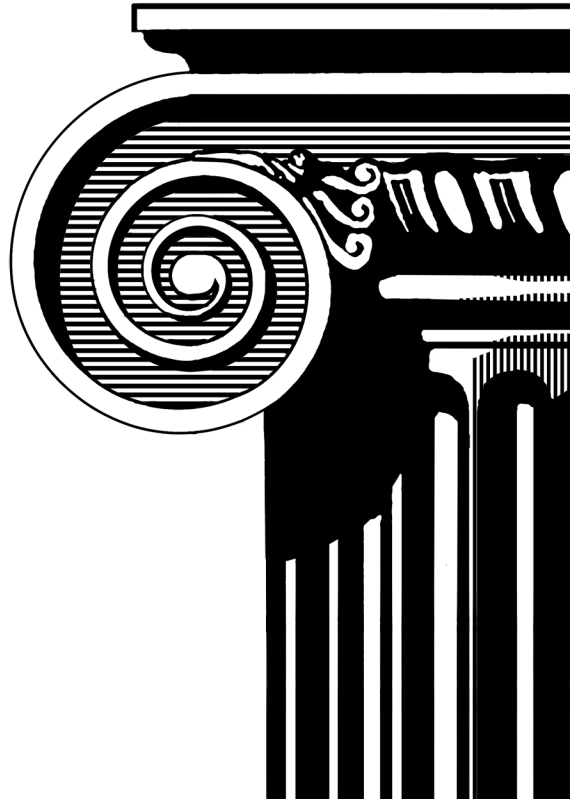
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The editors dedicate this issue to
the thousands of students and
hundreds of faculty members

who, over the past twenty-five years, have
shared great books & great questions
in the Boston University
Core Curriculum

*

*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

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Editor's Note

Way back in 1992—a year before I was born!—the first issue of *The Journal of the Core Curriculum* was distributed at the spring banquet. Its contents were typed on word processors, with page numbers inked in by hand, and was held together by a brittle plastic comb binding. The simple black-and-white cover bore only an image of the “Core column”—the Ionic capital with spiraling volute and egg-and-dart molding that has become an emblem of our program.

Though the production methods used back then may seem primitive to us here in the next century, the quality of the essays didn't suffer for being published using ‘analog’ technology. The writing in that first *Core Journal* was eloquent, intelligent and probing, and reflected a passion for “great books, great questions, and great ideas” like the one seen in Core classrooms today.

This academic year, we celebrate a quarter-century of Core at Boston University. Over that stretch of time, thousands of students and scores of faculty have come together, fall and spring, for the lectures and seminars that are the pillars of the Core experience. True, students do a lot of their reading from screens nowadays instead of paperbacks, but even so I think it's safe to say that continuity is a tradition of our community. A lot has changed, but we're still mindful of the advice given out at the start of every year:

“ READ THE BOOKS; COME TO CLASS. ”

On behalf of all the students and alumni who contributed to this issue of the *Journal*, and to past issues, I'd like to acknowledge our hard-working and dedicated Core directors who have supported us over the years: Brian Jorgensen, James Johnson, David Eckel, and, currently serving, Stephanie Nelson. This publication couldn't have thrived as it has without their guidance and sponsorship.

Thanks *also* need to be given to our Managing Editor, Zachary Bos (2015 Boston University Supervisor of the Year!), who worked on *his* first issue way back in 2001. And to Core admin Rose Grenier, who graciously finds room in the department budget so that pizza may be brought in to feed hungry editors during their late-night work sessions.

And of *course*, thanks and appreciation to Sassan Tabatabai, who has served as Faculty Advisor to the *Journal* for the last decade, as well as Font of Wisdom, and Boxing Coach, and Poetry Guru, and, when his red pen gets itchy, The Merciless Punisher of Inattentive Proofreaders.

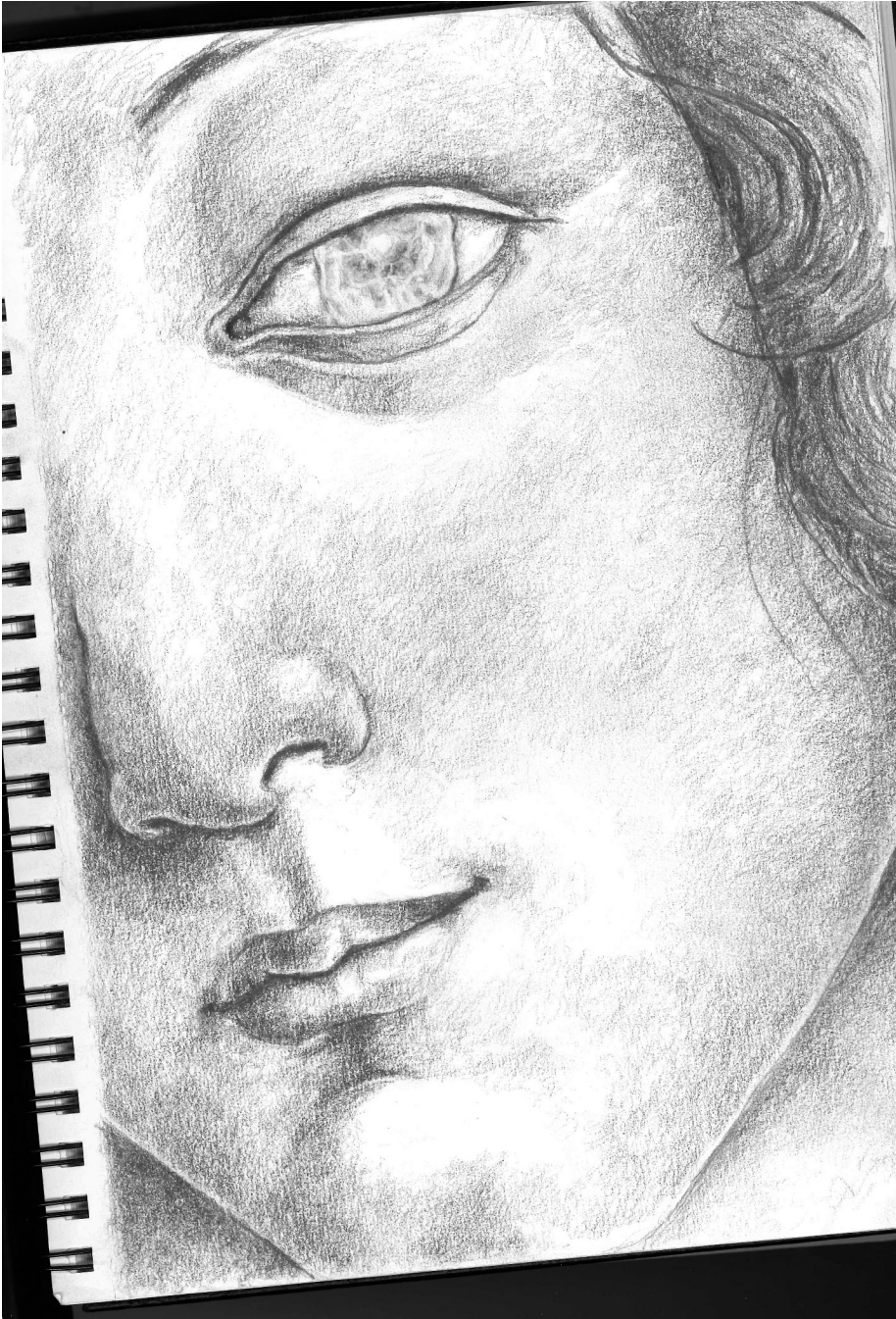
While we eagerly await the 25th Anniversary Celebration this May—see you there, right?—I invite you to enjoy this year’s issue of the *Journal*. Inside you’ll find exemplary essays by current Core students as well as noteworthy pieces reprinted from previous issues. This blending of the old and the new connects nicely to the imagery of “dawn” that you’ll see depicted on our front cover: renewal within continuity. These themes also connect to something Prof. Nelson likes to say, and which every Core student will recognize the truth of: “The classics live on.”

Core-dially yours,

Madeline Aruffa
Core '13, CAS '15

*on behalf of the entire 2015
editorial committee*

THE JOURNAL OF THE
CORE CURRICULUM



ANDREW GORDEN

Penelope, Unsung Hero

One of the key attributes of an epic hero is that he is almost always a man. *The Odyssey* challenges this traditional paradigm in that Penelope, wife of the protagonist Odysseus, is portrayed as an equal counterpart both in the pain she endures while he is away, as well as in the commonalities of their superior wit as a means of triumphing over their enemies. Indeed, Homer elevates Penelope to the heroic stature of her husband by giving them both the heroic traits of having a strong heart (emotional heroism) and mind (mental heroism). Nevertheless, her triumphs at home are often overshadowed by Odysseus's mythological feats away (which is likely why Odysseus, rather than Penelope, is this epic's namesake).

After twenty years of separation from Odysseus and without any knowledge of his whereabouts or if he is even alive, the forlorn Penelope never loses faith that her wayward husband will return home. Odysseus, however, is more remembered for his long wait to return home than Penelope is for waiting for Odysseus because he not only faces the emotional turmoil of separation, but also the bewildering obstacles in his way. This would be a fair treatment of their respective situations if it did not fail to take into account the fact that by the time Odysseus reaches Hades, he knows that Penelope is still alive whereas Penelope has no idea of the condition of Odysseus the entire time he is away.

Still, the fact that Odysseus and Penelope have a mutual faith that the other has not moved on shows an almost supernatural trust and love of heroic proportions. Indeed, just as Odysseus is a forlorn prisoner on Calypso's island, Penelope is on an island of her own solitary confinement, day by day wondering when Odysseus will return. Penelope's resolve in spite of this uncertain future therefore strengthens her heroic heart as the anguish she feels is marked upon on numerous occasions. For instance, when Eumaios says, "always with her the wretched nights and days also waste her away with weeping."¹ The significance

1 Homer. *The Odyssey*. trans. Robert Fitzgerald. New York: FSG, 1998. Book 16, lns. 38-9.

of Penelope crying night and day but still remaining resolute in her faith that Odysseus will return further solidifies her emotional heroism. The reciprocal nature of Odysseus' and Penelope's emotional heroism is shown by the lengths they would go to be reunited: they would both give their lives to see each other again. While Odysseus forgoes the prospect of immortality proposed to him by Calypso noting the beauty that lies in death by saying, "My quiet Penelope-how well I know-would seem a shade before your majesty, death and old age being unknown to you, while she must die" (5.225-8). Penelope appeals to the goddess Artemis asking, "How I wish chaste Artemis would give me a death so soft, and now, so I would not go on in my heart grieving all my life, and longing for love of a husband excellent in every virtue" (18.202-204). The emotional aspect of the Homeric hero is presented as equal in Penelope and Odysseus as they would both courageously give their lives to be together again, which transcends normal love.

Penelope achieves a heroic status in the cleverness she shows in the face of the adversity that the gluttonous suitors present her. Though Odysseus' triumphs over monsters such as the one-eyed beast Polyphemos or the sea monster Skylla are perhaps more exciting and memorable, his feats are no more valiant nor require more wit than do Penelope's efforts in delaying her marriage with the suitors. With her son Telemachos not being quite old enough to ward off the suitors and her husband ostensibly trying to make his way home, Penelope uses her mind to out-manuever her adversaries, just as Odysseus does his. Certainly, Penelope displays the mental aspect of the Homeric hero when she intentionally unravels a burial shroud for Odysseus' father Laertes after claiming that once she finished making it she would pick a suitor. Homer emphasizes her cunning mind when Antinoös, one of the leading suitors who finds out about her trickery says, "Wits like Penelope's never were before" (2.129). Penelope's intelligence is highlighted by fact that, in a society in which honor (*kleos*) was paramount, Antinoös still commends her on her superior wit even after being duped. Again, Penelope exemplifies the mental aspect of the Homeric hero when she comes up with the contest for the suitors to shoot an arrow through twelve axe heads using Odysseus' bow, a task which she knows only Odysseus could accomplish. Her mental fortitude is shown in her coura-

geous and firm tone when she addresses the suitors saying, “suitors indeed, you commandeered this to feast and drink in, day and night, my husband being long gone. You found no justification for yourselves—none except your lust to marry me” (21.72-76). Here it is clear that Penelope is confident in her scheme otherwise she would not dare speak so boldly and derisively. Thus, like Odysseus, Penelope time and again uses her quick wit to subdue her enemies therefore equalizing their heroic statuses.

Penelope does not fight monsters; she does not incur the wrath of the gods; she does not journey to the depths of Hades to be reunited with Odysseus. What Penelope does is wait. She waits for twenty years without a clue as to where her husband is, whether he will ever return, and whether she will be forced to take the hand of one of the despicable suitors. Because Odysseus undergoes countless obstacles, continuously exhibiting his heroism on his journey home, Penelope’s heroism at home can be overlooked. This, however, is a grave injustice to Penelope. It is with Penelope’s mental fortitude that the suitors are kept at bay and with her indomitable heart that she never gives up hope Odysseus will come home, by which she achieves a heroic status equal to that of Odysseus. ■

ANALECTS OF THE CORE

Laozi : He who knows others is wise; he who knows himself is enlightened.

Bhagavad Gita: Dwelling compassionately / Deep in the self, / I dispel the darkness born of ignorance / with the radiant light of knowledge.

Paradise Lost: Long is the way and hard, that out of Hell leads up to light.

FROM VOLUME XX: DANIEL HUDON

How to Build a Universe

We're not talking about building some quaint little microcosm. We're talking about building a top-of-the-line big-ass universe—with exploding stars, black holes, and things that go bump in the night. If you're thinking that it's been done, or that one universe is enough, think again. At the moment, a mysterious force called dark energy is tearing the universe apart, and in as little as ten billion years there might be nothing left but black holes. Nothing to see in any direction in the sky at night!

While it's possible that black holes could be portals into other hitherto unknown universes, Stephen Hawking isn't betting on it, and you shouldn't either. So, with the fate of our universe in jeopardy and you with time and energy to spare, there's no time like the present to begin building a new universe.

Consider first the type of universe you'd like to build. Be decisive. Don't spend half a lifetime thinking about whether you want a universe of nothing but purple daisies or iridescent soap bubbles—just build one that works. Stick to the obvious: your main choices are finite and infinite.

If your goal is to construct an infinite universe before you die, you probably should have started by now. The time frame for building such a behemoth could very well be eternal, so you've really got your work cut out for yourself. If you're not yet dissuaded, be sure to will these instructions to your progeny (and their progeny) who can continue your legacy. Nobody wants to see a half-built universe.

Building a finite universe, on the other hand, should not be seen as a project for people who can't handle infinity. A finite universe is perfectly respectable, and its successful completion would make any artist proud. You can hold your head up. One thing to be aware of, however, is that like massive dead stars, civilizations and houses of cards, finite universes tend to collapse. This can be avoided in two ways: (i) by making it infinite (see above) or (ii) by making it expand (see below).

Contrary to what you might think, the best way to create a finite universe

is to begin with nothing. Creating something out of nothing—let alone an entire burbling universe—is not a matter to be trifled with, so tread carefully. Exploit the fact that in physics, empty space contains miniscule energy fluctuations that pop into and out of existence. If conditions are right, these can expand to cosmic proportions, ultimately creating galaxies, stars, and planets with purple daisies. Unfortunately, the right conditions might depend on using string theory, the latest eleven-dimensional “theory of everything” which, it’s safe to say, absolutely no one understands. Just create a positive, nurturing environment and hope for the best.

You can generate some empty space by forcing all the air out of a balloon and then stretching the balloon, making sure that no air molecules sneak back in. No one knows how wide the balloon needs to be stretched for energy fluctuations in the empty space inside to do their thing. Pretend you’re Christo, stretch it across the country and see what happens. If the space inside the balloon begins expanding, stand clear because there’s a reason astronomers called the Big Bang big. If it doesn’t expand, seed the inner surface of the balloon with yeast. Who knows? It could work. (According to string theory, you may also need to clear the space out of the space, so that you truly start with nothing. Good luck with that.)

Note that an expanding universe in the middle of the country could very well be a threat to civilization as we know it, so investigate channeling it into other dimensions until you’re ready to show it off. Ask a string theorist if you need help, they are always itching to feel useful.

An expanding universe should be able to take care of itself, but you have a couple of things to watch out for. If it expands too fast, matter—forming out of the energy fluctuations—won’t have time to clump and you’ll never evolve stars, planets, plants or people to water them. Similarly, if it expands too slowly, then gravity will gain the upper hand and re-collapse your universe before you reach your next birthday. Why our universe exists in the middle of these extremes is a big-ass cosmic mystery whose solution is best left to the experts. Whatever you do, aim for a cosmic expansion rate, also known as the Hubble constant, in the Goldilocks range—you can fine tune on the fly if necessary.

Make sure, too, that your universe has its own laws of physics. Keep them

hidden so that any future scientists who evolve in your universe can have the joy of discovering them. Everybody loves a good mystery.

Finally, as it expands and cools, your universe should convert energy into matter and in no time you should have stars alighting out of the primordial gas. This is a good sign. Your universe is underway. Congratulations.

But before you go onto projects like building galaxies, say, or managing a hotel with an infinite number of rooms, factor some advertising into your budget so that people can actually see the wonders of your universe. If you just broadcast the existence of your newly invented universe to all and sundry, people will likely see you as a crackpot, so we don't recommend that. Instead, try the poetic approach, e. e. cummings-style. Whisper to your companion, "Listen, there's a hell of a good universe next door; let's go." Worry about where exactly "next door" is when the time comes.

You should also decide if you actually want anyone to know about your universe. There's a lot to be said for having your own secret universe. Those people you see on the bus smiling while listening to their headphones? They're probably smiling about their own secret universes too. ■

ANALECTS OF THE CORE

Paradise Lost: What is dark within me, illumine.

Emily Dickinson: Not knowing when the dawn will come / I open every door.

Virgil: Optima dies . . . prima fugit ("The best days are the first to flee.")



Which Way? Not Wuwei.

The Analects of Confucius and Laozi's Daodejing present polar views of the order with which one should regiment his/her life. In the Analects, goodness consists in following the appropriate rituals in all matters. To his disciple, Confucius explains, "If it is contrary to ritual, don't listen to it. If it is contrary to ritual, don't utter it. If it is contrary to ritual, don't do it" (12.1). Ritual propriety, or *li*, as the Confucian would call it, begins with one's family, through which the superior inculcates the values, manners, and customs passed down over generations into the inferior. This is the emperor who exerts his moral authority over his followers, the microcosm of which consists in the parent exerting a similar influence over his or her children, who may then upon interacting with others behave according to what they have been taught as proper.

Wuwei is the antithesis of this. It translates, literally, to effortless action, meaning that one must act without effort and behave harmoniously, and, hence, unintentionally with nature. The water analogy from the Daodejing describes this aptly: "The highest excellence is like water; Water excels at benefiting the ten thousand living things while not competing against them... That is why water is close to the Dao" (8). Both philosophies claim to lead its followers to a life of goodness. However, ritual propriety is the more persuasive path to goodness because it is compatible with human deliberation, and considers humanity to be the most important aspect for achieving virtue.

In practicing *wuwei* one lives spontaneously, unintentionally, and without reason or deliberation. The Daodejing makes this clear when it says of the sage that, "He brings those with/knowledge not to dare to act. Acting non-intentionally, nothing is not in order" (3). This poses an immediate problem. If one can extricate the rational element from the mind, one feels as if *wuwei* demands s/he live in a Rousseau-like state of nature that is primitive and in accordance with his/her instincts. This would mean having to compete with other animals for survival in a severe and cutthroat kind of social Darwinism.

However, it is because of the ability of mankind to reason far more proficiently than any other species that it has hitherto survived and achieved reproductive success. Discarding its ability to reason would surely threaten its survival, as people would be made easy prey without their cleverness. Could one live, in the interim of such a loss in reason and his or her death, a life of goodness? No. A Darwinian society is a stressful society, in which the need for one's over-sized adrenal glands, a necessary adaptation for humanity's primitive and stone-wielding ancestors, would become far more pressing than in a society which allows for humans to reason.

Confucius take a completely opposite attitude towards human reasoning. Everything that the Confucian does is in accordance with a ritual propriety s/he constructs and learns through reason, practice, and intention. The writer discusses the problems of ritual propriety later, but it is evident that with ritual propriety social Darwinism is not a valid criticism as it most clearly is for wuwei. Furthermore, the passivity that wuwei encourages conflicts with findings of modern science, and Taoism, as a result, becomes unfeasible.



Like



water



on



rock

One must imagine the Taoist who practices wuwei as analogous to the natural flow of water as it maneuvers and evades the obstacles obstructing its path, while sustaining its flow and the force of its current. Thus, when adversity strikes one must adapt passively as the Daodejing makes clear when it states: “The pliant and supple are companions of life... pliancy and softness occupy the superior position” (76). According to wuwei, one must maintain a submissive and non-resistant attitude towards nature. This follows directly from the Taoist conception of nature: the Dao represents a natural harmony with which the Taoist becomes unified when s/he aligns his/her life with its natural current. Two important perspectives from modern science shed light on the problems of this attitude when one takes it to its logical extremes. The law of entropy states that all things tend towards disorder. Particulars within the universe may be highly ordered relative to the universe itself, but the general tendency over time is towards disorder. Living creatures are such particulars, which are highly ordered and need sustenance in order to maintain this precarious order. The sustenance from which these creatures survive is scarce, and this scarcity forces different organisms that draw sustenance from the same resources to compete for survival. The law of entropy and the theory of natural selection are in this way linked. Thus, the order that living creatures require in order to exist proves, according to the laws and theories of modern science, that their very existence resists the current of nature that is becoming increasingly disordered.

For the Taoist to preach passivity with respect to nature poses an immediate and dire consequence: do nothing and let the body naturally wither away (despite what the human impulses may motivate, as these are programmed to resist the disorder of nature). This analysis may seem unfair, but it is taking the most probable interpretation of passivity in the Daodejing, and drawing from this its logical conclusions. The closest feasible approximation to passivity with respect to nature comes through the practice of meditation, which the Daodejing hints at when it describes how channeling one’s *qi*, or breath, brings one unity with the Dao.

Through meditation one may feel as though s/he were one with nature and absolved of any sense of self, but it is also the case that meditation requires mastery over the very faculties that the Daodejing admonishes mankind to

do without. A Zen-like intentionality is necessary not only during the process of meditation, but also in the realization that channeling one's qi in order to become one with the Dao so as to avoid the misery of unending desire is something one should do. Wuwei must tolerate some degree of intentionality in order to be compatible with meditation, so that one may at least feel as though s/he is in a flow with a supposed harmony. Taoism must make not only an allowance for deliberation in the case for meditation, but also in order so that s/he may live with his/her Taoist friends in a noncompetitive environment in which they allow themselves to reason and communicate in order to sustain their lives with food, shelter, and clothing. Without intentionality, wuwei is unethical and impractical; it results in social Darwinism and/or the entropic ruin of the body. With intentionality, it is no longer wuwei.

If one is to accept wuwei, one must prioritize living in accordance with nature over living in accordance with humaneness. Unlike the Daodejing, which values nature more than it does humanity, the Analects regard ritual propriety as simply a means to humaneness, and not the end in itself. Hence, the Confucian emphasizes ritual propriety so long as it works to the benefit of humanity as the Master says, "A human being who lacks humaneness—what is ritual to someone like that?" (3.3)

Nevertheless, ritual propriety as a way to virtue faces at least two strong criticisms. The first is that the Confucian presumes that the tradition of his ancestors and the morality one derives from it and from the mandate of heaven are good. If not, then there is no criticism or scrutiny that one may place these under, and so must take them as infallible and absolute. One realizes now the consequences society faces from those who claim to hold such divine revelations, exclusive only to those who entitle themselves as the privileged, and one must look upon such persons not with submission and naiveté but with suspicion and incredulity. In other words, one must recognize a sense of morality within him or her that does not depend on any mandates or external sources set in scrolls or tablets.

Loyalty to tradition without critical reflection ensures credulity and the submission of the mind; that perpetuates not only the memory of one's ancestors but their dominance over those who still have breath to spare. A quick

glimpse at North Korea, where a celestial Big Brother resides hovering over his blind followers, reveals the gravamen of this threat to a free culture. The second criticism attacks the rigidity of ritual propriety. One would look upon ritual propriety more favorably if it could allow for the modification of traditional and customary methods when it would be efficient to do so. It should not be necessary to uphold outmoded rituals simply by virtue of their having been part of tradition. Hence, one must relax the strong tone of conservatism that underlies ancestor worship and the rigorous inculcation of past values so that s/he may promote a society that demonstrates the free expression of ideas along with a propriety that the culture allows itself to modify.

In this way, ritual propriety loses the rigidity for which one often harshly criticizes it, and presents itself instead as a set of habits and behavioral tools that facilitate life rather than constrain it. Despite these criticisms, ritual propriety values thinking, learning, and the innate pleasures and desires of human beings that add depth to life and give it meaning beyond its mere existence. It encourages interference with worldly affairs, and though suffering is concomitant with this, if one wishes to love then one must also be willing to struggle and suffer for that love. It is because the Daodejing prefers a false harmony without this necessary struggle, and imposes, in its nostalgia for unity, its own framework onto nature, that the philosophy of Confucius is the better for humanity. ■

ANALECTS OF THE CORE

Walt Whitman: A morning-glory at my window satisfies me more than the metaphysics of books.

BRIAN JORGENSEN

Stay a Little Longer in Crazytown

This original song was performed by the Fish Worship blues band as a prelude to the Spring 2015 Classics & Core co-production of Plautus' *Menaechmi*, (a.k.a. "The Brothers Menaechmus"), directed by Sophie Klein.

As I walked down a foreign street, all newly come to land
A lovely stranger called my name, she took me by the hand
She swore I was her lover, her ways were deft and winning
She then proclaimed I was insane. The dream was just beginning...

This town is crazy, it's nuts-o-rama
Strangers know me, out of nowhere there's a fray
I'm someone else, I'm in the wrong drama
If I were me, I would sail away

Chorus:

I've got to stay a little longer in crazytown
Even though everything has crossed the line
Staying for the answer: are you here somewhere
Or where in the world are you, brother of mine?

Yes, I'm looking for my brother, no, I never met him
Our broken brotherhood needs to mend
Whoever he is, I can't forget him
If he's like me, we're the best of friends

(*Chorus*: Got to stay a little longer in crazytown, &c.)

Free sex, free lunch, it's a drunkard's dream
 If I'm not me, who am I to say no?
 With accusations from the nightmare side
 Tigers down the tunnel while the spectators crow

(*Chorus*)

Are they spraying hallucinogens into the air?
 Am I on TV? Is this "Who Are You?"
 Some up-to-date insanity containment camp?
 Look out, I'm gonna have to get crazy too

Thank you, Professor Klein, and her class
 Thanks to them, Plautus, you are no has-been
 Thank you actors, it beats the Colosseum
 Here comes the tale of the Menaechmi twins
 Here comes the tale of the Menaechmi twins

 The Fish Worship line-up at this show: James Jackson, Astronomy, lead guitar and vocals; Jay Samons, Classics, bass and vocals; Wayne Snyder, Computer Science, harmonica; Edmund Jorgensen, Core Curriculum alumnus, keyboard; David Mann, Psychiatrist, drums; Brian Jorgensen, Core, guitar and vocals; and special guest James Uden, Classics, guitar and vocals.

To view photos and video from this spring's performance, find Fish Worship on YouTube, or visit <https://www.facebook.com/classicalstudiesatbu>. ■



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Two Conceptions of the Core

If you know where you've come from, you can better understand where you're going. In that spirit, we present to you this fascinating memo from the history of the Core Curriculum. We discovered it while rummaging around in our extensive collection of archived materials—reports, syllabi, minutes, and so on—from the pre-Core era, when an interdisciplinary committee of faculty brought together from every corner of the campus was tasked with figuring out what the new Core program should be, and how it would fit into the life of the University.

Sometimes it can be difficult to describe in a succinct way what the unique characteristics and interests of the Core Curriculum are, which distinguish it from other academic departments. We have a more difficult time than folks in Earth & Environment, for example, who can simply say: “We study rocks!” Classics: “We study ancient Greek and Latin!” Pardee: “We study, globally!” Sure, these kinds of reductionist descriptions can be misleading, but they are convenient starting points.

Whereas, what can we say about Core that doesn't just raise many more questions? “We study the best of what has been written, said, thought, discovered, and created!” “Our faculty talk with us, not at us!” “We read the books and go to class!” All those are true, but Core is so much more.

In light of this problem of definitions, we were especially interested in this particular memo, since it gives a pretty great, two-part definition for what a Core Curriculum should be: namely, a program that connects students to the ideas and values they inherit as members of a cultural continuity, while at the same time alerting them to the context of disciplines and discoveries in which that continuity exists. Continuity and context: that sure sounds like the Core we know!

The Editors

Core - as COMMONALITY or LARGER CONTEXT

I. The Core Curriculum as **COMMONALITY**: "common intellectual heritage," "perennial questions or issues," "shared values and knowledge"

- Commonality suggests a centripetal force, a convergence upon. What is converged upon may range from data, ideas and concepts, traditions, discourses, etc. Commonality requires that pluralization be held in check through some means.
- A program in "history of western civilization" should present the conclusions of the perspectives of history, philosophy, art, classics, etc. This could be achieved through the "piling up" of specialties ("vertical coordination") or the "spreading out" of specialties ("horizontal coordination"). Questions of integration, inter-disciplinarity, are not central or decisive matters, if the main intent is to help students compose a fundamental historical narrative with major axes well lighted and minor axes ignored or actively suppressed.
- Connections & relations are assumed here; they are not rendered problematic.

II. The Core Curriculum as **LARGER CONTEXT**: "integrate knowledge," "reduce fragmentation," "show connections"

- Larger context suggests a centripetal and a centrifugal force; connecting and connected contexts of interpretation may derive from disciplines' conclusions, i.e., what each one has converged upon; or, the connecting work may depend upon the horizons of the disciplines, not the individual or collective points of convergence. The construction and enjoyment of a larger context does not require that pluralization be held in check.
- A program of "great books, great ideas, and history of ideas" should present ideas whose meanings are specified by the perspectives of history, philosophy, art, social theory, literary studies, etc., through an integrated pedagogical format. Connections and relations are rendered problematic here and are not assumed. If core-as-commonality is a container for conclusions derived from the disciplines, then core-as-larger-context is an explosion of that container. This not only frees the ideas from ownership by any one discipline, but begins examination of the relationship between a discipline and "its" ideas.
- Internal and external connections are no longer taken for granted as they were in core-as-commonality.



FROM VOLUME XII: JESSICA ELLIOTT

Searching for Reality:

Western & East Asian Ideas of the True Nature of the Universe

We belong to a race of philosophers and, as such, instinctively struggle to answer the basic questions of our existence. We wonder how we fit into the world around us. Do we affect the universe, and does it affect us? What is the relationship between our bodies and the environment? Our first step has always been to articulate these questions; only then can we begin to seek answers. By uniting mankind across lines of race, class, and sex, this search takes on even greater significance. Although different cultures often focus on separate issues, and, therefore, reach diverse conclusions, we search together for an underlying meaning in our lives. Do connections exist between the traditions? Can systems as varied as Chinese medical theory, Western quantum mechanics, and Taoist mysticism work together in order to illuminate the nature of reality? By examining whether or not the universe (conceptualized as energy) can be explained by traditional cause and effect relationships, one begins to see parallels between the systems.

Chinese Medical Theory

According to established medical theory in the West, illness is causal; one is exposed to bacteria or a virus, and this exposure leads to sickness. Western medicine “starts with a symptom, then searches for the underlying mechanism—a precise cause for a specific disease.”¹ Westerners think of disease as something to be isolated and destroyed; it interferes with our lives, and we have someone get rid of it for us as soon as possible. We assume that every case of the flu is the same, and we have no qualms about borrowing our neighbor’s decongestant. After all, our symptoms are the same, and we probably “caught” the flu from the same person—why wouldn’t the same medicine work for both of us? Chinese medical theory, however, instructs that illness is non-causal.

1 Kaptchuk, Ted. *The Web That Has No Weaver*. Contemporary Books, 2000. Page 3.

The Chinese physician does not assume that patients presenting similar symptoms suffer from the same illness and require the same treatment; instead, he searches for “what Chinese medicine calls a ‘pattern of disharmony’” (4). He finds this fundamental pattern by investigating all aspects of the patient’s life.

The Chinese physician divides his examination into the following four categories: looking, listening and smelling, asking, and touching; these examinations allow the physician to discern an underlying pattern of disharmony in the patient. The physician begins by examining the patient’s general appearance, bodily secretions and excretions, facial color, and tongue (not necessarily in that order). The physician then notes the patient’s voice, respiration, and bodily odor before asking the patient about his other symptoms and general medical history. Chinese physicians traditionally consider the last examination, in which the pulse is felt, to be the most important. These examinations allow the physician to discern the complete pattern of the patient’s life; the physician can then understand the patient’s underlying disharmony (176–94).

As illness is believed to be non-causal, physicians do not need to “treat” the patient’s disease. The Chinese physician does not search for a disease—causing agent in order to cure the patient; neither does he merely ease a cough or reduce the patient’s fever. Symptoms are part of the overall pattern, and by addressing the underlying disharmony, the physician and patient render these symptoms irrelevant. According to Ted Kaptchuk, the Chinese doctor uses “his or her specialized skill to try to restore health—to achieve balance and harmony within a living organism” (19). He re-harmonizes the patient’s Qi, aligning the internal energy with the Qi of the universe. When one’s energy flows smoothly and interacts properly with the Qi of heaven, there is no disharmony and, therefore, no illness.

This inherent connection between the internal and the external—the idea that illness is associated both with a lack of harmony within the body and with a failure to align oneself with the Qi of heaven—inspires one to wonder if a distinction between the two worlds truly exists. If external agents do not cause illness, how, exactly, does one’s internal health reflect one’s environment? Can energy “communicate”? If energy, in fact, can process information, one must wonder whether other aspects of the universe are not as they originally appear.

Western Quantum Physics

Classical physics² has always attempted to explain the nature of reality, and despite frequent failures, most classical physicists remained confident that they had the tools necessary to discover the long-sought Grand Unified Theory—one that accounts for every principal process in nature. Unfortunately for these physicists, increasingly surprising research necessitated the development of a “new” physics—quantum mechanics—that recognized the incompatibility of Newtonian principles and the subatomic realm.

In 1803, the physicist Thomas Young attempted to uncover the true nature of light. When passed through two vertical slits cut into a solid screen, sunlight illuminated the wall “with alternating bands of light and darkness” (61). This phenomenon—interference—is a well-documented property of waves; light, therefore, must be wave-like. However, by experimenting with the photoelectric effect, Einstein demonstrated that light is particle-like. We “know” that something cannot be both a particle and wave. What, then, is light exactly? The question becomes even trickier when Young’s experiment is run with photons (60-62). Let us imagine that we cover one slit, fire a single photon through the other opening, and mark where it hits the wall. We realize that the photon has hit an area of the wall that would be in the middle of a dark band if the other slit had also been open. Somehow, the photon “knew” that it could land in a location that is always off-limits when both slits are open. If the second slit is reopened, a photon will never land in the darkened area. One way or another, the photon was able to gather information and to use this information to influence its future behavior. Zukav mentions that a photon’s ability “to process information and to act accordingly” (63) allows it to be classified as organic; therefore, counterintuitive as it might seem, studying energy quanta may perhaps allow us to learn something about other organic life forms—even ourselves! (62-64)

Perhaps even more important, wave-particle duality is what saves us from a deterministic universe. According to the theory of classical causality, “we can predict the future of events because we know the laws that govern them” (64).

² Defined by Gary Zukav as “any physics that attempts to explain reality in such a manner that for every element of physical reality there is a corresponding element of the theory.” In *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*. Bantam, 1979. Page 22.

By knowing everything about a particle at a specific moment in time, we could predict its actions far into the future. In theory, if we knew everything about the universe at the moment of the Big Bang, we could predict everything that would ever happen within the universe. Free will would not exist; instead, everything would be determined by prior conditions. Fortunately, the double-slit experiment has shown this theory to be false; it saves us from the dreary fate of inhabiting a universe in which all is preset and unchangeable.

In two-slit experiments, despite knowing everything possible about the initial conditions, we are unable to accurately predict where a photon will land. In both experiment one (one slit covered) and experiment two (both slits open), the initial conditions of the involved photons were the same. Both photons “start from the same place, travel at the same speed, go to the same place, and therefore, are moving in the same direction just prior to passing through slit number one” (64). Newton’s laws of motion tell us that both photons should land in the exact same location; herein, however, lies the fundamental problem—they do not hit the same location. Although the “initial conditions pertaining to both of them are identical and known to us” (65), the photon from experiment one lands somewhere that the photon from experiment two can never hit. We cannot accurately predict the behavior of individual photons; we can only predict the likelihood of finding one in a specific place (64-65). Apparently, simply knowing initial conditions is not enough. Something happens at the subatomic level of which we have no knowledge. The universe is not something to be figured out with equations and formulae; rather, physicists have been forced to “adopt a much more subtle, holistic and ‘organic’ view of nature.”³ We have learned that, on their own, the individual components of the universe are not very significant; a light “particle” means little without its associated wave function. The universe gains significance only when seen as a dazzling, intricate web connecting all the diverse parts of the whole.

Taoist Mysticism and Its Connections to Quantum Mechanics

At a very high level, the distinction between science and religion becomes

3 Capra, Fritjof. *The Tao of Physics*. Shambhala Publications, 1991. Page 54.

blurred; in both cases, one eventually transcends mere technique or ritual in favor of something greater: true comprehension of reality. On both paths, the truly dedicated eventually reach a point where their current knowledge is simply not enough. Understanding is often revealed to the adept in a great flash of insight, and this direct experience of ultimate reality can be so shocking that it unsettles one's entire worldview. The physicist Niels Bohr, in his *Atomic Physics and the Description of Nature* (Cambridge University Press, 1934) wrote the following:

The great extension of our experience in recent years has brought to light the insufficiency of our simple mechanical conceptions and, as a consequence, has shaken the foundation on which the customary interpretation of observation was based. (2)

His language, so similar to that of an Eastern mystic, reveals that perhaps divisions between quantum physics and mysticism do not truly exist; at its highest level, each becomes simply a search to understand the true nature of reality. Taoist mystics realize that something beyond conventional knowledge is necessary in order to understand the Tao. Lao-Tzu wrote the following in the *Tao Te Ching*:

Tao endures without a name. Though simple and slight,
No one under heaven can master it.⁴

The Taoists understand that true wisdom can never come from logical reasoning; the Tao cannot be discussed and “mastered.” Instead, mystics turn away from the man-made world and focus on nature, knowing that the true order of the universe is revealed in the natural world. Quantum physicists have also learned that true understanding can only come through intuition; the world is not as it originally appears. If the universe could be understood purely through reason, its laws would make more sense. However, we inhabit a universe where

4 Translated by Addiss and Lombardo: Hackett Publishing, 1993. Page 32.

laws that accurately describe the macroscopic world—e.g. Newton’s laws of motion—mean nothing at the subatomic level; a universe where something can be neither a particle nor a wave and yet, somehow, at the same time be both. The physicist, much like the spiritual seeker, learns to wait for inspiration.

Both traditions also recognize that human language is inadequate to describe knowledge that is essentially nonverbal and intuitive. We persist in describing our world to the best of our ability, although “the direct experience of reality transcends the realm of thought and language, and, since all mysticism is based on such a direct experience, everything that is said about it can only be partly true” (Capra 42). Often, the “paradoxical nature of reality” (43) cannot be verbally expressed without sounding utterly nonsensical. Taoists often embraced these paradoxes in order to expose the limits of human communication (43). In light of this aim, the following passage from the Tao Te Ching can be understood:

Reversal is Tao’s movement.
 Yielding is Tao’s practice.
 All things originate from being.
 Being originates from non-being. (40)

Our language is completely inadequate to describe what must be comprehended through direct experience and insight. Similarly, the modern physicist recognizes that his models and theories are necessarily inaccurate; they also describe something that can only be imprecisely illustrated (Capra 44). These theories are the “counterparts of the Eastern myths, symbols and poetic images” (44), and they help us wrap our minds around ideas that are, in essence, incomprehensible. However, these models are only helpful if we remember that they are mere approximations; one cannot understand verbally the nature of reality. On both paths, the moment of comprehension is represented as an instant of great insight. The universe is revealed to the seeker in all its dazzling complexity. As Brian Swimme wrote, one realizes:

The vitality of a dolphin as it squiggles high in the summer sun, then, is

directly dependent upon the elegance of the dynamics at the beginning of time. We cannot regard the dolphin and the first Flaring Forth as entirely separate events. The universe is a coherent whole, a seamless multileveled creative event.⁵

Things do not cause other events to occur. Everything is interconnected, and individual aspects of the universe only make sense when viewed in light of each other. It is the complexity of the whole—not the individuality of its parts—that we find so moving. Once we escape the limits of verbal communication, the universe can be appreciated in all its transcendent intricacy.

Conclusions

As we learn more about the subatomic realm, we realize the impossibility of precisely defining or predicting anything, which is exactly what mystics have been saying for centuries. Perhaps the most we can hope for is a reasonably helpful metaphor; we say, this illness is associated with Internal Wind, or that photon is represented by this probability wave, or “Tao called Tao is not Tao.” Using different languages and metaphors, all of the systems described—Chinese medical theory, Western quantum physics and Eastern mysticism—attempt to describe the same thing: energy that somehow manages to arrange itself in patterns and to process information. Quantum physicists use a different method to discover what Asian mystics, perhaps, have always known: we inhabit a universe composed of energy—a universe that is a complete, dynamic whole. ■

5 Swimme, Brian and Thomas Berry. *The Universe Story*. HarperCollins, 1992. Page 18.

TONY JIANG *translating* CONFUCIUS

Selections from the Analects

孔子：論語

from BOOK 2, no. 15:

子

曰：

“学而不思则罔，

思而不学则殆。”

The master said,

*learning without thought induces gullibility,
thought without learning induces perplexity.*

from BOOK 7, no. 16:

子曰：

“饭疏食饮水，曲肱而枕之，乐亦在其中矣。不义而富且贵，于我如浮云。”

The master said,

happiness is in eating simple food, drinking water, and bending your own arm for a pillow. Riches and status through unlawful means, to me, are no more than floating clouds.

from BOOK 7, no. 29:

“互乡难与言，童子见，门人惑。子曰：“与其进也，不与其退也，唯何甚？人洁己以进，与其洁也，不保其往也。”

The villagers of Hu are seen as nefarious and hard to talk to, yet one of their young was invited by the master to see him. This baffled his disciples. The master said, I am only to compliment his progress, not admonish his error. Why should we be so harsh? He has corrected his mistakes, and we should complement his progress instead of clinging to what he had done in the past.

_____ *from* BOOK 9, no. 8:

子曰：“吾有知乎哉？无知也。
有鄙夫问于我，空空如也。
我叩其两端而竭焉。”

The master said, am I erudite?

No, I am ignorant.

Whenever a plebeian asks me a question, I have no answer.

*I can only tackle the question by exploring it from end to end,
step by step, and then come up with an answer.*

_____ *from* BOOK 15, no. 24:

子贡问曰：“有一言而可以
终身行之者乎？”

子曰：“其恕乎！
己所不欲，勿施于人。”

Zigong asked,

is there one word a person can carry for his entire life?

*The master said, that would be 'forgiveness'! If you don't want
something to happen to you, don't let it happen to others.*

from BOOK 13, no. 23:

子曰：

“君子 **和** 而不
同，小人 **同** 而不和。”

The master said,

the gentleman harmonizes but never conforms.

The petty man conforms but never harmonizes.

from BOOK 9, no. 28:

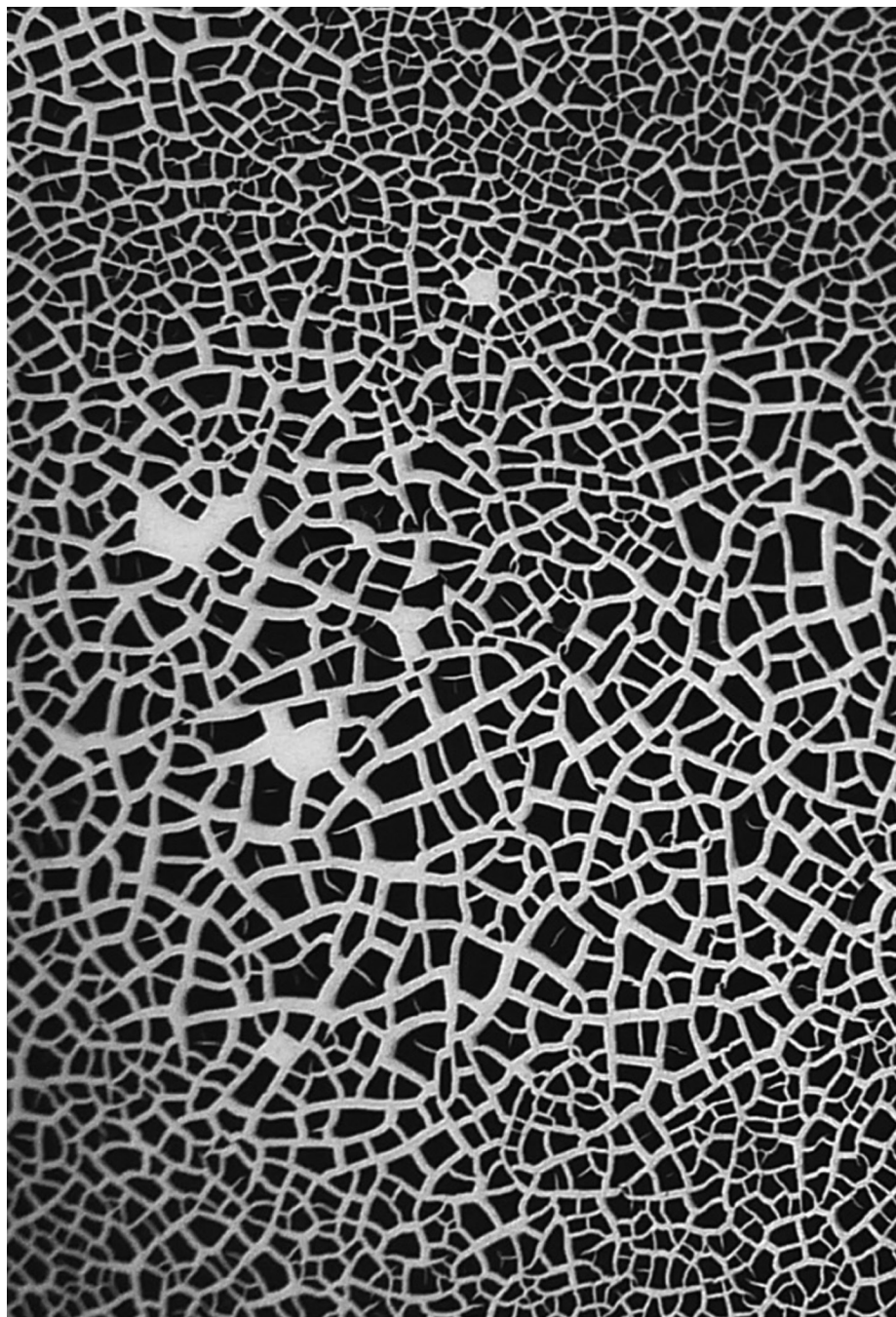
子曰：

“岁寒，然后知松柏
之后彫后也。”

The master said,

only when it comes to harsh winters shall we see

that the pine and cypress are the last to lose their leaves.



from BOOK 15, no. 27:

子曰：
“巧言乱德。小不忍
则乱大谋。”

The master said,

*clever words corrupt virtue. Lack of tolerance
over small issues will lead to the disruption of large schemes.*

from BOOK 15, no. 40:

子曰：“道
不同，不相为谋。”

The master said,

*if your way is different from another,
you two should not work together.*

GISELLE BOUSTANI-FONTENELE

The Spanish Touch

In the Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid. GEORGE, an old, round man with thick, equally round glasses, and his wife, LILIAN, argue in front of Velazquez's 1623–26 "Philip IV of Spain." Other paintings surround, including Velazquez's 1620 "La Venerable Madre Jerónima de la Fuente", his 1622 "Portrait of Francisco Pacheco", and his 1628–1629 "The Triumph of Bacchus."

LILIAN. (*groaning*) Forty-seven years of this. I can't stand it anymore.

She storms off, leaving her husband looking at the plaque mounted beside "Philip IV of Spain." Just before GEORGE is about to move on to the next painting on the wall, PHILIP begins to speak aloud with irritated urgency:

PHILIP. (*in a thick Spanish accent; think Antonio Banderas*) I cannot stand it anymore.

Behind the lenses of his glasses, GEORGE's eyes widen in bewilderment to such huge size that he seems transformed into a lemur. He gawks at PHILIP.

PHILIP. That is right. You heard me.

GEORGE. (*in an awestruck and aggressive whisper*) Did you just *speak*?

PHILIP. Of course I spoke. What do you think I am—a doormat?

GEORGE. But, in *English* you spoke??

PHILIP. I have 'picked it up', as you foreigners like to say. You all adore to, uh, *cómo se dice*, 'talk behind my back' in English.

GEORGE *begins to cough as if he has begun to choke on his dentures.*

GEORGE. *(to himself)* This isn't real. This isn't real. This isn't real.

PHILIP. *(ignoring the man's obvious disorientation)* I am forced to stand here from nine in the morning to five in the afternoon, six days a week, and all you people do is look at me for five seconds. Excuse me; your wife looked at me for seven.

GEORGE. *(sadly)* That's longer than she can bear to look upon me...

PHILIP. Face it. If I had not spoken to you, you would have finished reading that little plaque, taken a last quick glance, and moved on. Or you would have taken a—eh, *cómo se dice*, a selfie?—a picture of yourself with me, looked at your picture for longer than you looked at my painting, and then moved on. This is what most do. Oh, I especially hate those people that come in big groups and look at the tour guide for longer than they look at me. *I am the work of art here, people, not Valentina.*

LILIAN *approaches.*

LILIAN. George! Would you stop looking so mesmerized? It looks like you've just seen your mother's ghost, for God's sake. Oh, *this* painting. Poor boy. He's got quite an unfortunately-sized head, no?

PHILIP. If I hear another one of you say that my head is too small and my legs too thin, *juro por dios*, I will...

LILIAN. *(sbricking)* Agghh! George!

PHILIP. You are not going mad, Lilian. You are hearing me correctly. Look, I am just tired of not being paid any attention. I was just telling your husband...



LILIAN. *(still shrieking)* Geooorge!

GEORGE. *(aside to his wife)* Shh, Lilian, please. I know. I know it's strange. But, look, this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity! This is the kind of thing you see in the movies. And it's happening here, now—to us! Nothing ever happens to us.

LILIAN is not unaffected by this last statement of her husband, yet is still cross. This is as usual.

LILIAN. *(crossing her arms)* Fine. But let's make this quick. The bullfight starts at seven and I'm not going to be late.

Meanwhile, PHILIP has continued talking aloud, if only to himself.

PHILIP. ... in the last decade people have truly become less interested in me. And not only me. Francisco Pacheco, Jerónima, and *los borrachos* all agree. *(indicating 'the drunks' depicted in a painting hanging on the opposite wall, "The Triumph of Bacchus")*

Francisco is lucky; last week someone sat and sketched him for an hour. Bah! One hardly sees that anymore. It seems like you are all more interested in your mobiles—that is how you say it, yes? 'Mobiles'?

LILIAN. Well, we call them cellphones in the U.S., but I know what you mean, Philip. May I call you that?

PHILIP. Of course, I never liked the title anyway. Far too royal.

LILIAN. My granddaughter is glued to the thing. She even brings it to the dinner table, like it'll help her digest.

PHILIP. Ha! You know, I once helped a woman digest. About ten years ago,

there was a woman who would come to visit me three or four times a week, during her lunch hour. No clicking away at her 'cellphone', no taking pictures. Just her. Some days she fidgeted, others she sat still. Some days her eyes smiled, some days they visited dark corners of her past. Over time, she looked at me differently. I could feel myself evolving in her eyes, changing along with her ever-changing self. She does not come by anymore. I like to think that she moved away. Spain did not treat her well.

LILIAN. Do you think about her often?

PHILIP. I do think about her. I wish her well. But, of course, she was a special case. Not many of us ever have the fortune to experience that with a human. Yet I believe that we are all intended to be appreciated for long periods of time by at least one.

[Beat.]

Only then do we shed our superficial function of decorating a room or acting as publicity for a noble. Only then does our greater meaning arise.

LILIAN. How do you mean?

PHILIP. Well, I know that when I am looked at quickly, I appear as a lanky prince, with tiny head, skinny legs, pale hands, an ill-fitted outfit. I have heard it thousands of times. Or, I am not given even a glance, and instead reduced to the description in that plaque next to me. What does it say, anyway?

LILIAN dons her glasses, pushing GEORGE aside to peer at the plaque.

LILIAN. It says that Velázquez was commissioned by your family to draw portraits of you, your family members, and the dwarves in the household. It says that you were the eldest son and that you married a thirteen-year-old

when you were yourself only ten. (Oh, my! And I thought marrying George at seventeen was early.) Then it says that before ascending to the throne of Spain you studied painting and drawing under the guidance of a Dominican friar, Juan Bautista Maíno. And you're made of oil on canvas.

PHILIP. Haha! Maíno! I miss that guy! Truly a genius, that man. Just the other day I spoke with two of his angels in his "Adoration of the Shepherds." They are up on the third floor so we do not see each other much, but when we do it is a party.

GEORGE. You guys *party*?

PHILIP. Of course! Why do you think museums close so early? We need release. But we are digressing. Do you see what I mean about the plaque? It says nothing about the painting or myself, except, of course, what I am made of. It is just a big distraction with little to say.

GEORGE. What do you think it should say?

PHILIP. It should not say anything. It should not even be there. That way people will have no choice but to actually pause before me and study this image that I work so hard to maintain. Do you think it is easy, standing in one place for eight hours on end? Thanks to God the museum hires massage therapists for after hours. I do not know how I could do it otherwise.

Meanwhile, LILLAN has taken PHILIP's advice, and is engaging with different aspects of the painting.

LILLAN. Philip, if you don't mind my asking, what is that paper you're holding in your hand?

PHILIP. Ha! That's it! *Que maravilla!* Keep going!

LILLAN *laughs*. *She is enjoying this after all. She thinks for a bit before asking her next question.*

LILLAN. How did you feel about ascending to the throne at such a young age?
Do you show it in your face at all?

PHILIP. Haha! That is it! You have got it!

LILLAN. Why does it seem like you're looking down at the viewer? Maybe it was a deliberate choice by Velázquez?

PHILIP. *Si, finalmente!*

The feel of the conversation has grown akin to that of a game show, one that LILLAN is competing on and coming close to winning millions of dollars.

LILLAN. Oh, I know! The paper is for your wife! You're telling her about your time away from court learning how to paint with Maíno. Oh no, no, no... Maybe you don't even like your wife. You were forced to be with her. Oh I don't know. But you must like someone...

[Beat.]

George, what do you think?

PHILIP. Yes, *Jorge*, what do you think?

GEORGE. I think he loves his wife. *(looking intently at LILLAN)*

The atmosphere changes. GEORGE is no longer mesmerized by PHILIP. He's moved on to something better.

LILLAN. Oh, George. *(laughs timidly)* You think so?

GEORGE. I know so. I've known for forty-seven years.

LILIAN and GEORGE look at each other the way they did on the first night of their honeymoon in Spain years ago.

LILIAN. (*coyly*) All of a sudden I'm not so interested in the bullfight.

GEORGE. Oh, Lilian, how I've missed you.

He offers his hand to LILIAN. She places her hand in his, and he lifts it for a kiss.

GEORGE. I think I'll take it from here, Philip.

PHILIP. I knew you would, *hermano*. You just needed a little help from the Spaniard, you know? The Spanish touch.

They laugh, nodding knowingly at each other like old comrades. GEORGE and LILIAN head out. Another museum-goer, JOSÉ ANTONIO, acknowledges them with a friendly gesture as they pass. He indicates the painting, and speaks to them with a heavy Spanish accent:

JOSÉ. *Ai*, but that *Felipe* is a good one. If it not were for him, I never would have confessed my love to Yolanda. And we have been together fifteen years, you know. I need Felipe's help because the in-laws are in town—you know how that goes. And maybe I will even introduce them to Felipe—those two torture each other like it is the *inquisicion*.

PHILIP. *¡José Antonio! ¡Hombre, cuánto tiempo!* ("It's been so long, my friend!")

JOSÉ. *¡Felipe! ¡Mi querido!* ("My dear friend!")

PHILIP. *¿Qué tal, hermano?* ("What's up, brother?")

JOSÉ. *Ah, lo de siempre. ("Oh, nothing much.")*

PHILIP. *¿Y Yolanda, como está? ("And Yolanda, how is she doing?")*

They carry on in conversation as GEORGE and LILLAN walk out of the exhibition hall, hand in hand.

End. ■

ANALECTS OF THE CORE

Emily Dickinson: It was a quiet way - / He asked if I was his - / I made no answer
of the tongue / But answer of the eyes - / And then He bore me on / Before this
mortal noise / With swiftness, as of Chariots / and distance, as of Wheels. /
This World did drop away / As acres from the feet / of one that leaneth from
Balloon / Upon an Ether Street. / The Gulf behind was not, / The Continents
were new - / Eternity was due. / No Seasons were to us - / It was not Night nor
Morn - / But Sunrise stopped upon the place / And Fastened in Dawn.

Ralph Waldo Emerson: Write it on your heart that every day is the best day in
the year.

Jorge Luis Borges: Subsequent events have so distorted the memory of our first
days that they are impossible to put straight.

The Conference of the Birds: Where is the loved one to relieve my pain? /
Where is the guide to help me turn again? / Where is the strength to utter my
complaint? / Where is the mind to counsel calm restraint?

ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION:

What is *your* favorite Core book?

Jamie Afghani, Class of 2018

IF I HAD TO PICK just one book, it would be the Five Books of Moses.¹ The Bible as a *whole* has a lot going for it; but the New Testament tends to borrow from the Old, and I prefer to read from the root and not the leaves. The Pentateuch has been a success for so many years because lends itself to interpretation, allowing it to be used for both good and evil purposes, as most great texts are. This malleability allows people to relate to it as they encounter conflict and need in their own lives—the way, for example, a married couple grappling with the crisis of infertility might find strength in the story of Sara and Jacob. ■

Frances Gossen, Class of 2018

ALTHOUGH IN THE SPACE OF a second this decision could be easily overturned by the next best Core book I think of, one work that has stayed with me with particular sharpness is *Paradise Lost*. In our humanities sequence, so much of the reading focuses on an elevation of the human world—Plato’s ideal society, the Way of Laozi—that the scope of Milton’s epic poem seems almost humble. Yes, the history of the Fall could easily be thought of as elevated, but Milton’s *telling* of the story is decidedly human. When Adam realizes Eve has taken that fatal bite from the fruit of the tree of knowledge, his reaction is relatable. He is shocked. Unlike Eve, he spent their time apart picking roses for her. So innocent! When he realizes that the innocence is gone, and he must choose his future, the ending could not be more touching:

They looking back, all th’ Eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late thir happie seat,

¹ Clever trick, picking one that is actually five books. —Eds.

Wav'd over by that flaming Brand, the Gate
 With dreadful Faces throng'd and fierie Armes:
 Som natural tears they drop'd, but wip'd them soon;
 The World was all before them, where to choose
 Thir place of rest, and Providence thir guide:
 They hand in hand with wandring steps and slow,
 Through Eden took thir solitarie way.

This is not the Fall as we are used to thinking of it. Milton gives us an ending that is actually a beginning, one leading to all that humanity has done, its successes and failures both. This to me seems hopeful, much as leaving for University did, four years ago, so long ago now. ■

Stefanie Grossano, Class of 2016

I OFTEN JOKE THAT I live in a closet. My single in a freshman dorm (nevermind that I'm a junior) has barely enough room to stand with my arms outstretched. Despite the limited space, I found a corner for my box of spine-splintered, marked-up, dog-eared Core books. Why, you might ask, would I squander such precious square footage on books from classes I've already finished? Partly because I'm sentimental—like that blanket you smuggled to college. My Core books are also a memento. They are a portal back to some of the most intellectually stimulating moments of my undergraduate life so far: the day we chanted *Hare Krishna* in discussion section; our discussing the future of democracy as a culmination to Plato's *Republic*; that lecturer who told us about the origins of the universe, and how we're all actually made of star dust. (Crazy, right?) I cherish my Core books for more pragmatic reasons as well. The ideas in them do not die. They nourish my GPA and feed my soul. When my non-Core professors describe something as 'Machiavellian', or allude to the Allegory of the Cave, I smile a little to myself, knowing that I do not have to scratch my head. And just as Core has prepared me for the intellectual world, it has prepared me for the real one as well. I can open Aristotle in the busiest hour and remind myself the importance of balance and modera-

tion. I can thumb through *The Life of the Buddha* and recollect the liberation of detachment. When I re-read *Categorically Unequal* I am reminded of my privilege and this renews my dedication to fight injustice. So there my Core books are, shoved into a cardboard box, occupying a tiny spot in my room and a larger spot in my mind. I look forward to the day when I leave this coffin of a room—not only so I can move around freely, but also so these transcendent tomes can occupy a space more fitting of their value. ■

Hannah Hamilton, Class of 2017

I FEAR THAT THE QUESTION, “Which one Core text is your favorite?” is a disguised way of asking a different question: “To which single ideology do you most tightly subscribe?” Therein lies the rub, for in Core we are not asked to align ourselves with any one viewpoint, but are instead challenged to explore many, to question everything, even our most deeply held beliefs. We are asked by the *Ajax* to confront the suicide of military personnel. Cervantes demands to know what societal forces we think keep us in place. We discuss the beginnings of the universe and the ecology of our own tiny blue dot of a planet. From the facial recognition of lobsters to the melting of ice in spring on Walden Pond, we contemplate, meditate and appreciate the world for what it is, and what it could be. I have read of faithful Penelope, and of the slave girl Hagar, of Confucius and Vergil, Plato and Locke. How can I pick any one book? That would be like picking one particular point-of-view, and I know that the truth is my point-of-view has been informed by *all* of them. ■

Justin Lievano, Class of 2016

DO I HAVE A FAVORITE Core book? A *favorite*, yes, but a *book*, no. I found a favorite *author* in Core. I find Emily Dickinson’s verse sublime. For a writer who rarely left her home and who never left Amherst, her poetry captures an extraordinary breadth of human experience, and in so doing, captures me as well. The question of her ‘book’ is an interesting one. Dickinson published only a dozen or so poems in her lifetime, all in periodicals. The poet, how-

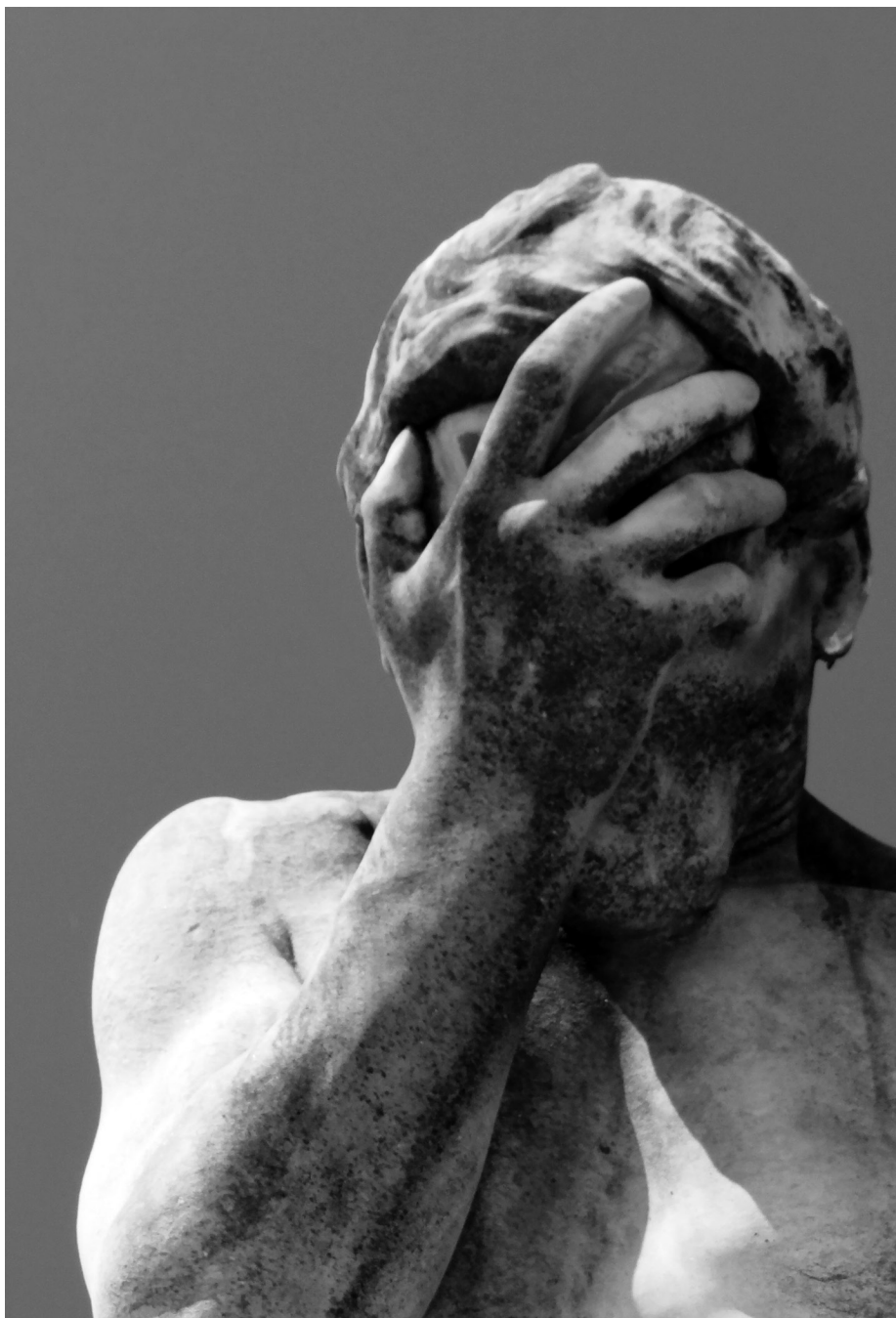
ever, engaged in a kind of bookmaking on her own. After completing a poem, Dickinson would transcribe the working draft onto fine stationary, creating fair copies that she would stab-bind with needle and thread. One might refer to these booklets, often called fascicles by historians, as Dickinson's book, for they represent a lifelong project of writing and crafting. Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote in a journal entry: "Make your own Bible. Select and collect all the words and sentences that in all your readings have been to you like the blast of a trumpet." In Dickinson, I find those verses that call to me, that seem to account for what my life wants, meaning that in a sense, Emily Dickinson's poetry *is* a book, the book that is *my* bible. ■

Lydia Erickson, Class of 2017

MY FAVORITE CORE BOOK, WHICH I encountered just this semester, is William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience*. Tolkien believed that there was no such thing as writing for children, and I think Blake would have agreed, at least with regard to his poetry. His verse is written in a style that seems on the surface to be something like nursery rhyme—but in its deceptive simplicity, the poet finds a way to combine Otherness with Intimacy. The results are haunting, and often conceal deep layers of social critique. The sounds, and rhythms, the accessible style and complex themes—I just love it. Most of all, I love how well Blake combines his criticism of humanity with a celebration of humanity. The experiences of life, whether good or bad, are all somehow sacred, Blake seems to say. ■

ANALECTS OF THE CORE

Don Quixote: Finally, from so little sleeping and so much reading, his brain dried up and he went completely out of his mind.



FROM VOLUME III: DAVID CROGHAN

The Lost Canto

an epilogue to Dante's Divine Comedy

Having been released from that divine rotation,
in which one would without pause consent to remain,
I was led along by the will of angels' songs of elation.

So lovely it was to hear these brilliant beings sing a refrain
which expressed the joy of being in the Lord's eternal presence
that my glistening tears were impossible to feign.

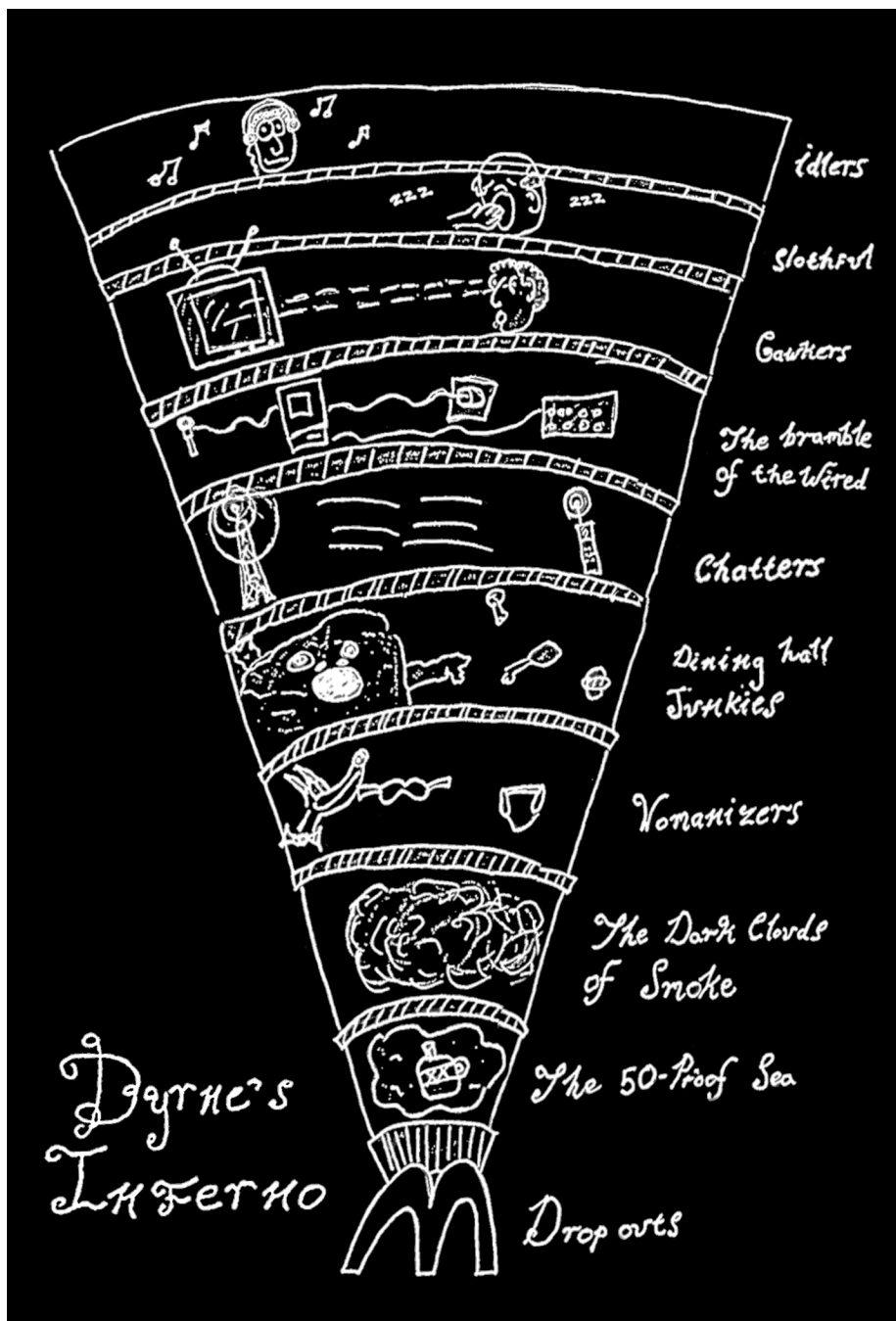
But far from seeming inappropriate, I had the sense
that those angels saw my reaction to their voices as a sign,
preceding any future sins, of my imminent repentance.

As streams of cathartic waters flow through the Rhine,
so did salty drops run down my pink cheeks,
bearing testimony to my awe and reverence of the Divine.

These angels set me down in the place every journeyman seeks –
Home; which, while not Heaven, certainly is not as wretched as Hell,
and which is wholly welcome after a trek that seemed to take weeks.

But it has been just four days, from when into God's inferno I fell,
proceeding through the stages of unconfessed and unforgiven sin,
with each sinner punished by means of a custom-made cell,

By which I mean each penalty was its crime's kin.
Having been led out of that woeful place by Vergil, Italy's pride,
I climbed atop repentant Purgatory's rim.



And on that mountain, seeing the souls of those who died,
I was compelled to continue unto Paradise by that form of light,
the one named Beatrice, who I once would have as my bride.

When I beheld her, I could not stand the intensity of the sight,
nor that of the Celestial Rose nor the three rings of the trinity;
so beautiful were those sights, and so terrible; each way, a delight.

Now, back home, I try not to let memory limit me,
as I commit to words what I saw and felt on my mission,
as I realize my fortunate fate as an observer of divinity.

Bernard said to Mary: "I ask of you: that after such a vision,
his sentiments preserve their perseverance"; this I promise to do,
through my thoughts and acts and poetry, improved by revision.

I was blessed with the lucky opportunity to experience such a view,
of the good, the bad, the ugly, the sorry, the pained, the proud;
of the planets, the moon, the sun, of the transcendent, too.

My knowledge can now serve those not similarly endowed,
for I was able to ask many questions as I went on my way;
some answers were clear, others hazy; some subtle, some loud.

I wondered how my God, who created the beautiful light of day,
could create a place as vile and desolate as eternal Hell;
had He made us all good, we could avoid such an unpleasant stay.

But being once lost, now I see; my vision and God's being parallel,
I know there must be a place for those who sin against His grace,
a place for those who are penitent, and a place for the angels' Noël.

These places are distinct, and have their own character and face,
and the degrees of virtue in man, the evil in man, exists for a reason
that after me will be creatively expressed by that future poet, Joyce.¹

He says suffering leads to love and compassion in every one,
pain and death leads to redemption; he suggests Romans 11:32,
a verse to make even the lowest man look hopefully at the rising sun:

*“For God has consigned all men to disobedience,
that He may show His mercy to all.”*

Pain and suffering and Hell and Purgatory make a two-way inquiry,
a way for the Lord to test our love for Him and for man to test
His love for us – will He save us from the flame so fiery?

Or will we be so evil as to be condemned to an existence of no rest?
Some are given a chance in Purgatory to ask for God’s pity,
and the rest are welcomed into His sacred nest.

I offered my reader the famous in literature, in politics, in history,
as examples of how our actions place us in the cosmos,
as a prism of all who revel in Satan’s fire, or bathe in God’s glory.

Having read my poem, this question to the reader I shall pose –
is it not clear which acts will have you eating fire with Judas,
and which will fill you with the same spirit on which Christ rose?

1 In Joseph Campbell’s *The Power of Myth*, Campbell discusses the recurrence of the number 1132 in the writing of James Joyce, and his discovery that Romans 11:32 summed up Joyce’s philosophy in *Finnegans Wake*. Also, bodies fall at 32 ft. per second, a fact mentioned by one of Joyce’s characters; and 11 is the number of a renewed cycle after 10—you are back at the beginning. It’s the Fall and then Redemption, sin and forgiveness, themes similar to those of Dante.

I also found knowledge of the beauty that's found in every glass
that reflects the face of one graced by the Lord, be it the image of
an elderly man, a beautiful woman, or a fired-up young lass.

All are equal, all are the same, to the divine maker above,
and what was once a lustful passion for Beatrice is
now a higher love for the divine in everyone, a love of God's love.

We love our family, our neighbors, our spouse, and all are His;
we write and we paint and we sing, and His skills are ours;
we look at one another with sympathy and devotion, and so He lives.

In telling you what I saw and who I met, I have filled up the hours
and, I pray, fulfilled my ordained duty to those I know and love,
by enlightening them and their descendants to God's powers.

Here, in my study, I will take up my pen again and rise like a dove,
flying higher and farther than I had before my pilgrimage;
and I will keep my eyes fixed on the stars above.

CHRISTOPHER GROVER

Friendship Is Moderation

or, The Lesson Taught by Aristotle, Mozart, Sancho Panza & Gulliver

Throughout time people have been questioning the nature of good and evil. These questions have formed various religious beliefs while others answer in secular terms. Among the issues humans have discussed and written about on what they believe makes a good person. One such Greek philosopher, Aristotle, wrote the *Nicomachean Ethics*, which outlined his description of what makes a good person. In the treatise, he states that to be a good person one needs to have happiness, the highest good because it is noble, and this happiness is reached by virtue ethics. Two themes that are most relevant to being this type of person are moderation and friendship.

One of the key elements to have happiness is to have virtue because happiness is considered the highest good because it is noble and an end to all things. In order to be virtuous, actions must not be either too extreme or too passive in order for just decisions to be made. Aristotle believes that “moral virtue is a mean and in what sense it is mean; that it is a mean between two vices, one of which is marked by excess and the other by deficiency; and that it is a mean in the sense that it aims at the median in the emotions and in actions.”¹ Having moderation in one’s actions you mean having control of one’s emotions, which permits one to react virtuously depending on the situation. To clarify, Aristotle provides examples such as the emotion of anger. A man deficient in anger is considered apathetic, if he is excessive he is considered short tempered, but if he is in the mean he has “gentleness.” The gentleness position is considered virtuous as good and just decisions can be made when one is not easily angered or showing lack of interest in what may happen around him. With these good deeds one is able to achieve the highest good, happiness, and the participant will know that he has done “good” because of his focus on the mean of his emotions.

1 Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1962. Pages 49-50.



In addition Aristotle's plea for moderation can also apply to our desires. While placing our emotions in the mean is one method of having virtue, controlling our desires and pleasures is another challenge. Philosopher Richard Kraut of Northwestern University states:

It might be asked why Aristotle thinks our enjoyment of physical pleasures should be kept within a certain limit. So long as one is eating, or drinking, or having sex, why not get as much pleasure as one can?... It is clear that a similar assumption lies behind Aristotle's call for moderation in our enjoyment of physical pleasure... it is best to keep one's desire for physical pleasures at a moderate level...²

Kraut questions of the legitimacy of the happiness in human and material pleasures. While one can get pleasures out of food, sleep, exercise, sex, etc., there can still be a problem with having excess enjoyment in these activities which creates an obsessive desire for them which does not make a good person. Too much food and you become gluttonous, too much sleep and you become lazy, and too much sex makes one lose self-control.

One example of how obsession with physical pleasures does *not* make a good person is Don Giovanni from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Based on the fictional figure Don Juan, Don Giovanni spends most of his time seducing women to fulfill his ever demanding desire for sex.³ In his lifetime he sleeps with over a thousand women. His ravishing ruins women's lives, but he keeps on seducing to satisfy a pleasure that is so short in happiness. The word "don" in his name is supposed to symbolize his nobility, but Aristotle would completely disagree that there was any bit of nobility in Don Giovanni. Don Giovanni is considered a bad human being in Aristotelian ethics because there is absolutely no moderation in his pleasures and no self-control in his actions toward women. Excess in his pleasure prevents him from doing "good" as compared to a man who is able to restrain himself. There is no moderation, no virtue as a

2 Kraut, Richard. *Aristotle on the Human Good*. Princeton: Princeton University, 1989. Page 341.

3 Fisher, Burton. *Mozart's Don Giovanni*. Miami: Opera Classics Library, 2002. Page 20.

mean of actions, no happiness, and therefore, no good from such a man.

One can observe, however, that Kraut and Aristotle do not frown upon the pleasures of these activities and desires but rather promote their limitation. This is rational because while a man can become obsessed with food he cannot deprive himself of it or else he will be malnourished. Some actions that are rarely practiced are also not an issue because a person who does not have sex often or abstains from drinking causes no harm to himself or others. These activities can give pleasure, but none are essential for the sake of having a virtuous life.

Another theme presented by Aristotle that identifies the good apart from the bad is true friendships. What is unique about happiness is that it needs friendships to be true and good. To have friendships one must have justice and to have justice one needs the understanding of moral virtues.⁴ Aristotle elaborates on the benefits of friendships by explaining:

And the best works done and those which deserve the highest praise are those that are done to one's friends... Friends help young men avoid error... friends enhance our ability to think and to act... Friendships also seems to hold states together... When people are friends, they have no need of justice, but when they are just they need friendship in addition. In fact, the just in the fullest sense is regarded as constituting an element of friendship. Friendship is noble as well as necessary: we praise those who love their friends and consider the possession of many friends a noble thing. And further, we believe of our friends that they are good men. (Aristotle 214-15)

What Aristotle means is that the happiness flowing from friendship provides uncountable benefits to the friends, society, and state by all the characteristics associated with a noble friendship. Friendship as the answer to long term happiness is rather brilliant, but the question arises of what makes a true friend.

⁴ Speight, C. Allen. "Aristotle on Choosing a Life." Lecture delivered to the students of CAS CC 102 at Boston University, January 2013.

According to Aristotle, friends must have similar virtues in order to have a common ground of what justice is in order for the friendship to be good and noble. With this in mind, he emphasizes the significance of friendship above all other things and since happiness is the highest good and friendship requires happiness to exist in its truest form, Aristotle is able to offer true friendship as a long term source of happiness. This goes beyond all other actions, desires, and pleasures regardless of their moderation because their meaning only becomes important if they are able to establish friendships which will then provide that long term happiness and will then create good deeds and good men. The significance of his philosophy allows one to observe his fellow man to interpret which person is a true friend rather than one motivated by utility or pleasure. The man who befriends another out of utility will only be a friend until that person is of no use to him, so there is no virtue or good that comes out of such a friend or friendship. Likewise, a person who becomes a friend because the other gives him pleasure of some sort will abandon him if that pleasure ends. Any person that forms friendships for this reason is not considered a good person.

An example to illustrate a true friend is Sancho Panza from Cervantes's *Don Quixote*. Sancho is presented initially as unvirtuous friend as he joins Don Quixote to escape the life of poverty and servitude that he had. This to Aristotle would make him a bad person as he demonstrates the friendship of utility but as the story progresses Sancho's character changes. There is a scene when he and Don Quixote are in a cage due to a trick planned by a priest and a barber to get Don Quixote home. In a passionate rant Sancho condemns the actions against Don Quixote and talks against the religious authority saying

I've said all this, Senor Priest, just to urge your fathership to take into account the bad treatment my master is receiving... and make you responsible for all the boons and mercies my master... can't do while he's in the cage.⁵

Sancho recognizes the agony of Don Quixote to the point he forgets his own

5 Cervantes, Miguel de. *Don Quixote*. Trans. Rutherford. New York: Penguin, 2002. Page 410.

place in the cage and speaks out against a religious leader. He speaks with the intention of shaming the priest's and barber's actions and condemning the lack of justice in the situation. Aristotle would interpret this as an example of true friendship for two reasons. First, Sancho shows care for his friend more than for himself, an ability that can be executed with certain knowledge of moral virtue and justice. Second, both Sancho and Don Quixote have the similar goal of administrating justice in a society where classes are very divided and unequal. By speaking against the priest and testifying to the injustice that has been done by him and the barber, Sancho makes a bold attempt for the sake of Don Quixote to see that justice be properly implemented. This pursuit of justice is a trait found in friends and since justice needs moral virtue to be identified one can conclude that the friendship between Don Quixote and Sancho is true and thus Sancho is a good person.

So, taking into consideration the different types of friendships, Aristotle believes that the truest of friendships exists when two individuals are able to share the same moderation of actions for the sake of virtue and in doing so are able to have similar ideas of what justice is, leading to productive collaboration for the two. We also know that these friends do good and just things because of their pursuit of virtue and moderation, so their friendship is good and genuine.

This concept of true friendship also conveys the idea of how civil society can benefit from friends that are leaders and politicians. Philosopher Suzanne Stern-Gillet notes:

... it [friendship] affords them a semi-theoretical insight into the nature of moral life. Through the process of making another self they gain not only an awareness of themselves *qua* morally actualized, but also a deeper insight into the nature and variety of moral experience... universal justice is complete virtue in relation to another; in a perfect state it will be co-extensive with law-abidingness... Aristotle describes justice as "the bond of men in states; for the administration of justice, which is the

determination of what is just, is the principle order of society.⁶

Stern-Gillet recognizes that Aristotle believes that without proper understanding and execution of justice, civil society cannot exist. By his reasoning, in order for civilization to form, there needs to be justice, like friendships, and also the knowledge of moral virtues. In order to have such knowledge one will need to be conversant on the subject and devote his life to pursue happiness, the highest good, which, in return, requires friendship. Everything is so beautifully connected to suggest that the best government that can perform justice appropriately will be one that has members of true friendships.

Such a government is shown perfectly in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. When Gulliver travels to the land of the Houyhnhnms he finds that their society and government is heavily influenced by the philosophy of what makes a good person. Gulliver even comments that "Friendships and Benevolence are two principal virtues among the Houyhnhnms... universal to the whole race."⁷ Establishing civil society that places heavy emphasis for all members to pursue friendship and benevolence would receive an official stamp of approval from Aristotle. Laws and way of life is based on virtue and with this norm everyone will have an equal sense of justice which will promote acts of good will, friendship, and in the end result in a society of good men.

Paul Schollmeier (University of Nevada) expands on this idea, writing that

... people who are unanimous are political friends of the good kind because they exhibit two marks of friendship. The arguments show that unanimous people exhibit the first mark of friendship—to act for the sake of happiness of another (see. *Eth.* 9.4.1166a2-4)—and that they exhibit the fourth mark—to have same tastes as another... Because they exhibit these marks of friendship... they would appear to act for the sake

6 Stern-Gillet, Suzanne. *Aristotle's Philosophy on Friendship*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1995. Pages 147, 155.

7 Swift, Jonathon. *Gulliver's Travels*. London: Penguin, 2003. Page 246.

of happiness of one another⁸

By Schollmeier's interpretation, one can still claim that Aristotle will approve of the Houyhnhnms' society; however they lack a great element to guarantee true friendships in government, democracy. Professor Schollmeier understands that if people are able to make unanimous decisions, they are able to demonstrate friendship by making laws in the name of justice for the sake of each other's happiness. Since representatives are sent in the name of the people, the decisions made by them will also be for the happiness of society. Unanimous votes on laws also suggest that the politicians have similar moral values. This means that they will have a similar idea of what justice is and in result will be doing acts of friendship for the sake of happiness and, of course, doing the acts of good men.

In short, Aristotle's discussion of moderation and friendships in life gives an explanation of what makes a good person. Both of these elements are connected to virtue and happiness which allow people to live happy lives and to be good persons. A good person is happy because he has friends and he has friends because he knows justice and virtue and shares these with others who have a similar pursuit of happiness. ■

8 Schollmeier, Paul. *Other Selves: Aristotle on Personal and Political Friendship*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1994. Page 76.

A WRANGLERS ESSAY: MARIE ZIEMER MCCARTHY

Calvin, Milton, & the Fall of Man

John Calvin and John Milton lived one hundred year apart, yet both dealt with similar topic in their writings. John Calvin, born in 1509, founded the Calvinist sect of Protestantism and helped instigate the religious wars that shook Europe throughout the sixteenth century. John Milton, born in 1608, belonged to the Puritan sect of Protestantism and helped reform England by working for Oliver Cromwell during the latter's short regime as ruler of England after the revolution of the 1640's. Both gained fame through their use of words. Calvin gave fiery speeches that convinced his followers that his way was the only way. Milton, after Cromwell's regime had failed, wrote the epic poem *Paradise Lost* to explain in detail the fall of man from God's glory.

The fall of man, its cause and its effects, obsessed both Calvin and Milton. Their views on the force behind the fall are quite different. Calvin wrote "Adam slipped into sin." For Calvin, the only cause of man's fall was man himself. Man went against God. Man's sin was not one of choice, however, for Calvin said that God had foreknowledge of all, so man must "consider his will the truly just cause of all things" (211). Calvin did not believe in free will. Calvin's God allowed the fall because that was the way things would be. According to Calvin, "all things always were, and perpetually remain, under (God's) eyes, so that to his knowledge there is nothing future or past, but all things are present" (926). Anyone who questioned why God did not decide to prevent the fall was, in Calvin's eyes, a doubter of the greatness of God.

Milton believed in free will, and his belief was fundamental to the way in which he saw man fall from grace. Milton, like Calvin, believed that the Bible was the word of God and therefore told the truth. They both took the Biblical story of Adam and Eve in the Garden literally. But, where Calvin saw Satan's tempting of Eve with the apple as proof that man was destined to fall, Milton saw the entire situation as proof that man has free will. Milton believed that God created man with free will, and that free will cannot exist without a choice between good and evil, between paradise and damnation. God put the Tree

of knowledge in the Garden and forbid Adam and Eve to eat its fruit precisely to give them this choice. Milton believed that God had foreknowledge as well, but did not believe that this meant predestination of any kind. To explain this believe in man's free will, Milton gave the character of God the following speech in *Paradise Lost*:

...if I foreknew,
 Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,
 Which had no less proved certain unforeknown.
 So without least impulse or shadow of fate,
 Or aught by me immutably foreseen,
 They trespass, Authors to themselves in all
 Both what they judge and what they choose; for so
 I form'd them free, and free they must remain,
 Till they enthrall themselves...

Calvin saw man as solely at fault for his own fall, and therefore damned forever. Milton, however, introduces the character of Satan, who seduces Eve into eating of the Tree of Knowledge. Before Satan spoke to her in her dream, Eve had never thought of going against God's word. When she awoke, she told Adam that she had dreamed "of offense and trouble, which my mind knew never till this irksome night" (150). Satan had told her in her sleep that if she ate of the tree she would be "...henceforth among the Gods/ Thyself a Goddess" (151). These thoughts, in Milton's view, may never have occurred had Stan not come to the Garden.

When Eve finally ate the apple from the Tree, it was because Satan, in the form of a serpent, had convinced her that the knowledge of good and evil that she would gain would be beneficial to her. She would then have the knowledge of God. Adam, seeing that Eve had fallen, decide to fall with her because his love for her was greater than his desire to remain in paradise. Milton saw the fall as bad, but understood the reasons that the two chose to fall, and was sympathetic of them. Adam's internal speech upon first seeing the fallen Eve is so deeply honorable as to suggest that Milton, while condemning the fall itself,

respected Adam's choice to eat the apple and join his wife. Milton wrote for Adam:

...for with thee
 Certain my resolution is to Die;
 How can I live without thee, how forgo
 They sweet converse and Love so dearly join'd,
 To live again in these wild Woods forlorn?

Calvin's Adam would never have made such a speech, for his Adam was the father of all sin, and Calvin would not let him have such beautiful words.

Man, said Calvin, as a result of Adam's sinning, "was stripped and deprived of all wisdom, righteousness, power, life" and left with only "ignorance, impotence, death, and judgement" (Calvin 16). Man is so far removed from God that "if we outwardly display anything good, still the mind stays in its inner state of filth and crooked perversity" (16). This does not mean that man cannot commit any good acts, but any good acts are the workings of God and not of man. "The knowledge of all that is most excellent in human life is said to be communicated through the Spirit of God" (275).

Many sins that did not exist before the fall came into being after it. Calvin lists fornication as one of these "fruits of sin." Milton would have vehemently disagreed. Adam and Eve in the Garden in *Paradise Lost* had sex often. Milton wrote of their "youthful dalliance as beseems/ fair couple, linkt in nuptial League" (Milton 130). Sex in the Garden was a celebration of marriage, love, and God. It was pure and clean. The fall brought about the "guilty shame, dishonest shame/ of nature's works, honour dishonourable,/ Sin-bred" that makes sex the lustful act it is considered to be today (129). Calvin did not see that sex could ever have been good.

Calvin called man "ignorant and bereft of God, perverse, corrupt, and lacking every good" (Calvin 16). Milton was not so hard on man. Immediately after the fall, God, though angry, thinks kindly of Adam and Eve, and tells the angel Michael to reveal the future of the world to Adam and then "send them forth, though sorrowing, yet in peace" (Milton 131). Calvin's God gave man no peace,

but left them in torment over the fate of their souls.

Milton's God left Adam and Eve with a means to happiness in this world.

...add Faith,
 Add Virtue, Patience, Temperance, add Love,
 By name to come called Charity, the soul
 Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loath
 To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
 A Paradise within thee, happier far. (337)

Milton saw human sympathy and the ability to forgive, as Adam forgave Eve, as signs that man could do good and gain redemption.

Both he and Calvin believed that Christ took on human form and sacrificed his human life in order to take all of man's sins upon himself, thus allowing man to be redeemed. Milton said that God would forgive man and not the fallen angels because the angels

... by their own suggestion fell,
 Self-tempted, self-depraved: Man falls deceived
 By the other first: Man therefore shall find grace,
 The other none... (103)

While Milton believed that man could be saved by following the guidelines in the above excerpt, Calvin said that no man could do anything to save himself. "The way to the Kingdom of God is open only to him whose mind has been made new by the illumination of the Holy Spirit," he wrote. This illumination could only be gotten by intense Biblical study and supreme faith in God's almightiness, and it was nearly impossible to achieve, because of man's miserable post-fall state. Even if a man did find this illumination, it was no guarantee that he would get to heaven. Calvin believed in predestination: God has already determined the fate of each man's soul and there was nothing anyone could do about this. One could not even know if one had been saved. "Election remains inviolable, although it's signs do not always appear" (Calvin 929).

Of Milton's statement that man could find "a paradise within," Calvin would have replied, "man will find in himself only unhappiness, weakness, wickedness, death, in short, hell itself. Calvin's description of the post-fall man is strikingly similar to Milton's description of Satan. Milton wrote of Satan:

... horror and doubt distract
 His troubl'd thoughts, and from the bottom stir
 The Hell within him, for within him Hell
 He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell
 One step no more than from himself can fly
 By change of place... (Milton 292)

Satan says "Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell" (122). This sounds like Calvin's description of man as utterly damned, with hell inside as well as out.

Calvin said that man could do no good because he was so thoroughly rotten, and Satan admits that, were he to ask and receive God's redemption, he would still possess a hatred of God that would "lead me to a worse relapse, / and heavier fall." Calvin describes man as "swollen with arrogance and ambition and blinded by self-love" (Calvin 16). This is an accurate caricature of Satan in *Paradise Lost*. He was so ambitious as to try to take God's place, and it is pride and vanity that prevent him from asking for mercy. Satan is too proud to be forgiveness, and is too vain to admit to the other fallen angels that he might have been wrong or regrets his actions in anyway.

Satan differs from Calvin's man in one way: Satan has free will. While Calvin's man was destined to fall, Satan chose his own doom. He said to himself

Hadst thou the same free Will and Power to stand?
 Thou hadst...
 ...against his thy will
 Chose freely what it now so justly rues. (Milton 122)

Calvin wrote "there is no middle ground" (713) when speaking of our feelings towards the world. He felt that we could only see the world as worthless or love

it too much. The phrase “there is no middle ground” applies to all of Calvin’s teachings, and explains why his man is so similar to Milton’s Satan. Calvin sees everything in yes or no terms. Man is either saved or damned; man is rotten, so he is thoroughly rotten. There is no room for a man who can do some good in and of himself.

Milton did have a middle ground: man. God was the ultimate good, Satan the ultimate evil. Man stood in between, capable of Godly actions like forgiveness and Satanic feelings like lust. Milton’s man and Calvin’s are completely different beings.

Calvin and Milton were both products of the Protestant faith, and so they both firmly believed that the Bible told the absolute truth. Yet Calvin took this truth to mean that man’s existence was harsh and hopeless, without redemption, while Milton gave man the possibility for peace and hope. Milton even said that man was still in some way blessed, for it was through a human woman that Christ, the redemption of mankind, would come into the world. Calvin was an orator whose words were persuasive, but he was not a poet. Perhaps the sightless Milton’s poetic soul allowed him to see the good in which Calvin was blind. ■

ANALECTS OF THE CORE

Faust: Do not the heavens over-arch us yonder? / Does not the earth lie firm beneath? / Do not eternal stars rise friendly / Looking down upon us? / Look I not, eye in eye, on you, And do not all things throng / Toward your head and heart, / Weaving in mystery eternal, / Invisible, visible, near to you?

Mary Shelley: Seek happiness in tranquility and avoid ambition, even if it be only the apparently innocent one of distinguishing yourself in science and discoveries. Yet why do I say this? I have myself been blasted in these hopes, yet another may succeed.

POOJA PATEL

Relenting Verbose

Lately I've been writing, much more, more than before.
 It seems after I left you, my words within me soared.
 The pain seeped through me then, through skin into my veins.
 It flowed and spread until it came right into my brain.
 Somehow this pain it cumulated, hardened and condensed.
 I grip my pen so often now, waiting in suspense.
 The words they flow right out of me—unsuspected grave currents.
 A blessing and a curse this is, to have these thoughts relent.
 Persist they do, on and on, seething in my mind.
 A script is all they need to keep up, words can find.
 Ever since I left you, ever since you stabbed me fierce—it
 seems that words have found a way to stem your ruthless pierce.
 Woeful day, sleepless nights, these words flow on and on.
 Sometimes I even lose myself to never-ending song.
 Random times these words come in—attack me now, attack!
 Some say I am lucky—but God please take it back!
 Back to that dark deep black abyss that haunts me even now
 Stop this show, close these curtains, leave me with a bow.
 Persist, relent, surpass—surpass I cannot do
 And I blame it sweet, wholeheartedly, completely just on you.
 I left, I won, you found, I lost replace me? Yes you did.
 Oh but darling please do tell will this poem have a lid?
 Pages on and on will these words keep leaking out.
 You punctured me, my ship is sunk—I'm flailing all about.
 Persist, relent, surpass—surpass I cannot do.
 I blame it, sweet, wholeheartedly, and completely, just on you.

FROM THE ARCHIVES: OCTOBER 19, 1992

The Founding of the Wranglers

From this Fall forward, the College of Liberal Arts Core Curriculum will proudly carry on a tradition that has enhanced and protected the life of the mind for more than four-hundred years: the tradition of an undergraduate society devoted to intellectual research, discussion, and debate. Taking our cue from distinguished predecessors from the seventeenth century onward, we plan to call ourselves the Wranglers Society.

We, the Wranglers Society, are looking for serious-minded students, from within or without the Core, dedicated to the pursuit of ideas, poignant inquiry, and structured discussion. The Wranglers Society is not restricted to Core students. ALL SERIOUS STUDENTS ARE INVITED TO APPLY.

The society seeks to enrich its members through direct and thoughtful discourse on a wide variety of issues, with a view towards the history, philosophic underpinnings, or place of the issues in the great tradition. By directing attention to specific topics of intellectual appeal, The Wranglers hope to facilitate the potential development of each member as an individual thinker, thereby affording all members the opportunity to better define their thought.

Students who wish to apply for membership should submit a typewritten work of intellectual interest and competence to the Core office at Room 109 in the CLA building. The submission, which may but need not be a paper previously written for a course, should be from approximately 3 to 15 pages in length. We would like to have all submissions by Monday, November second.

The Wranglers Society will be advised by Dean Brian Jorgensen (CLA), and Professor James Devlin (CLA). A minimum of one written paper each year, to be read and discussed at a Wranglers' meeting, is expected from each member. We plan to publish each year's papers in a Wranglers Society Journal. The Wranglers will meet once every two weeks so as not to interfere with any hectic schedules. This, we hope, will be conducive to the level of interest we are seeking.

Thank you for your time.

Joseph Waterman
Core 1991, CAS 1993, GRS 2003

Satu Hummasti
Core 1993, UNI 1995

RICHARD DRISCOLL

The Principality & the Republic

Machiavelli's Protectors of Liberty

The breadth of Machiavelli's contribution to the history of political thought is often overshadowed by his discussion of ruling in *The Prince*. This text, which provides cruel governing tactics to autocrats seeking to maintain their power, negatively portrays Machiavelli as a proponent of tyranny. However, this one-sided portrayal of Machiavelli's political positions ignores his support for freedom and republicanism in the lesser-known *Discourses on Livy*. At face value, the principle themes and arguments of *The Prince* seem to conflict with those of the *Discourses*. Nevertheless, both texts focus on the practical administration of the state and the necessity of liberty. Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* as a practical solution for restoring the liberty of the political subject. He uses the *Discourses* to provide key political theories that assert the republic's role in preserving liberty. Machiavelli's concern for liberty connects both texts: it is the main theme of the *Discourses* and the final goal of *The Prince*.

A casual reader of *The Prince* might dismiss the proposition that Machiavelli supports freedom of the citizen, citing the countless oppressive tactics that he offers. One should, however, consider the entirety of the book and examine Machiavelli's scholarly career in order to recognize that liberty is *The Prince's* primary goal. Machiavelli himself acknowledges the potential for his book to be misread. Just before arguing that it is better to be feared than loved,¹ he expresses his hope "to write a book that will be useful, at least to those who read it intelligently" (48). Machiavelli primes the reader to carefully examine his work, which initially seems to endorse tyranny, but ultimately endorses liberty. The course of Machiavelli's scholarly career also reveals his republican sympathies and motives. Machiavelli champions liberty and republicanism in the *Discourses*. In contrast, he displays uncharacteristically oppressive attitudes

1 Machiavelli, Niccolò. *The Prince*, trans. Wootton. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995. Page 51.

in *The Prince*; the ideas of liberty in *The Prince* reveal Machiavelli's support for republicanism, although they are initially disguised.

Machiavelli's model for princely rule resembles the Roman dictator, who defended the republic's liberty in times of great danger. This is revealed in the final chapter of *The Prince*, which deviates from the book's style and exhorts the ruler, Lorenzo de' Medici, to liberate Italy from the barbarian invaders (80). Unlike the rest of the book, this chapter evokes patriotic emotions in the reader. In the first twenty-five chapters, Machiavelli appears to support the harsh actions of the ruler, which initially constrain citizens' liberty. In the final chapter, his purpose becomes clear: the prince should exercise his power to free Italy. Machiavelli says that in times of "urgent danger," the Romans instituted a dictator as a remedy that "always remained extremely useful in all those circumstances which arose at different times to hinder the republic's efforts to expand its empire."² While the idea of empire seems contrary to the idea of liberty, both the Romans and Machiavelli viewed this as a characteristic and safeguard of the republic's liberty. By exerting its power over other states, Rome guarded its autonomy and liberty against foreign forces. Although, the dictator also seems to contradict the idea of a free state, Machiavelli's support of the dictator demonstrates his willingness to employ pragmatic solutions for sustaining liberty. He nearly uses the entirety of *The Prince* to precede his endorsement of extreme power for the sake of protecting liberty.

In contrast to his work in *The Prince*, Machiavelli's focus on liberty is clear in the *Discourses*, in his initial investigation of the forms of government that are propitious to it. While he recognizes that democratic functions play an important role in maintaining liberty, he withholds his support of this in favor of mixed government. He shares with Aristotle the view that governments take the forms of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, alongside the reciprocal forms of tyranny, oligarchy, and anarchy. Machiavelli, however, argues that "all the forms of government mentioned above are defective because of the brief duration of the three good ones and... the evil nature of the three bad ones"

2 Machiavelli, Niccolò. *Discourses on Livy*, trans. Julia Bondanella and Peter Bondanella. New York: Oxford, 1997. Page 914.

(*Prince* 26). He asserts that a balanced combination of the three good forms offer suitable protection from their flaws. In Rome, the monarchical power was never fully abolished by the aristocrats, and the aristocratic power was never fully abolished by the democrats; the result was that the mixed government “created a perfect republic” (*Livy* 27). Machiavelli considers this balance to be the leading cause of Roman liberty. Furthermore, he argues that fairly balanced struggles among internal factions foster liberty in the state (29). Despite his distaste for popular rule, Machiavelli credits the Roman success to the creation of the democratic magistrate, the tribune of the plebs. He says, “The desires of free peoples are rarely harmful to liberty, because they arise either from oppression or from the suspicion that they will be oppressed” (31). Machiavelli considers it to be unlikely that the majority would oppress itself; therefore, it will reject any form of oppression from the other factions of government. Machiavelli recognizes that the primary benefit of a republic is that it contains elements from a variety of governing forms. It is in the balance of government that one finds liberty,



rather than extremes.

At the same time, Machiavelli points out the destructive potential of democracy. He does not associate liberty with democracy; rather, he criticizes democratic institutions for providing a weak and susceptible constitution (26). He clearly scorns the Athenian form of democracy in that it failed to preserve its freedom (26). Moreover, Machiavelli directly criticizes the Roman democratic forces for corrupting the balanced system. In discussing the agrarian laws of Rome, which redistributed lands of wealthy estates to the common people, he argues that the laws of the Gracchi “completely destroyed Roman liberty, because . . . the law ignited such hatred between the plebeians and the senate that it led to armed conflict and bloodshed beyond every civil usage and practice” (101). The democratic faction reacted so explosively, that the republic was not able to survive. Although Machiavelli claims that democratic elements are more favorable to liberty, he argues that the republic, a mixed government, allows liberty to thrive. Democracy on its own can act as a kind of tyranny of the majority. Democracies praise themselves for being free from the rule of foreigners and aristocrats; however, the freedom that they produce also involves the instability and insecurity of the mob. In contrast to this, a republic provides greater freedoms for all classes and protects against both the tyranny of the mob and the tyranny of the prince. Pure democracy—that is democracy unchecked by other political forces—is more oppressive than a tyrant.

Machiavelli asserts in the *Discourses* that the fluctuation between absolutist and republican governments protects liberty from the corruption of democratic forces. He recognizes that democratic factions in a state usually brings down republics and principalities. The people respond to a prince by overthrowing him, instead instituting a republic: “[People] returned once again to the principality, and from that, step by step, they returned towards a state of undisciplined liberty in the ways and for the reason given” (25). Machiavelli recognizes that this cycle exists within temporal limits but nevertheless still maintains liberty in the state that presently exists. Liberty survives through this cycle, even as the collective identity of a people changes or ceases to exist. While Machiavelli would prefer a republican form of government, he supports the cycle as a pragmatic defense of liberty. This demonstrates Machiavelli’s commitment to

the principle of liberty rather than a particular form of government.

Machiavelli uses *The Prince* and the *Discourses* to propagate the idea of liberty. By looking at his other scholarly works, namely the *Discourses*, the reader realizes that Machiavelli aims to protect liberty so it is unfair to characterize Machiavelli only by his most well know work, *The Prince*. Although he appears to endorse absolutist practices, Machiavelli would rather endure a brief period of tyranny for the sake of long lasting liberty. ■

ANALECTS OF THE CORE

Paradise Lost: O sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams / That bring to my remembrance from what state I fell, how glorious once above thy sphere.

William Blake: The modest Rose puts forth a Thorn. / The humble Sheep a threat'ning Horn. / While the Lily white shall in love delight. / Nor a Thorn nor a threat stain her beauty bright.

Ralph Waldo Emerson: Finish each day and be done with it. You have done what you could. Some blunders and absurdities no doubt crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day. You shall begin it serenely and with too high a spirit to be encumbered with your old nonsense.

LYDIA ERICKSON

My Haunted Study Abroad

or, How I Got Hung-over with Hobbes and Locke

My roommate (the living one) has spent the last twenty hours hosting her boyfriend's frat—the party is still going on, upstairs—and all I want to do is eat cold pizza by myself in the cold light of day. But no. I decided to be cheap, and now I'm rooming with the two ghostly gentlemen I switched my major to avoid—Locke and Hobbes.

"Don't give me that 'man is a social animal' bullshit you stole from Aristotle." I tell Locke, pointing my cereal spoon at his face. "Breakfast time is me time."

"Misusing my quotations will get you nowhere. And you take the Lord's name in vain far too much."

"Atheist, remember?"

"Further proof that atheists shouldn't be allowed in polite society."

"Don't sugarcoat it, Locke, tell me how you really feel." I spoon Captain Crunch into my mouth. "Don't you have some... I don't know, gathering of great dead minds thing to get to? Dead white guys unite?"

"I am... expecting someone," Locke says.

"Shit, it's that Calvin guy, isn't it?" I ask.

"Hobbes," he corrects me. "Although he was influenced by Calvin."

"Apologies to Calvin, but technically speaking, I am now officially a Mahomedan," says a voice to my right. Hobbes materializes slowly, grinning sardonically.

"Knock," I say. "Ghost-whistle or something. I could've been naked."

"I've repeated the shahadah," says Hobbes.

"Don't you not believe in that nonsense? Let me quote your words back to you: 'For it is evident enough that words have no effect but on those that understand them; and then they have no other but to signify the intentions or passions of them that speak, and thereby produce hope, fear, or other passions or conceptions in the hearer... profession by the tongue is an external thing,

and no more than any other gesture', all that."¹

"I was just saying that!" Hobbes tells me.

"Left my notes on the table," I reply, pointing to my Franzia-stained sheets of binder paper. Hobbes closes his eyes. I think he is counting to ten in his head.

"Internal faith is in its own nature invisible, and consequently exempted from all human jurisdiction'. If I will be judged by anyone, it will be Christ when he 'proclaims his kingdom, not present, but to come'" (354, 355).

"Real enough to kill you," Locke agrees. "Although I've always thought that the use of force was the sign of a fallacious argument. Religion should have persuasive power, at best."

"Just be glad we don't have divine right anymore," says Hobbes. "Why, in my time, atheism—"

"Impiety, and the like are words of the greatest defamation possible," I finish. "We know, Hobbes. Locke has been quoting you. Religiously. I do consider myself a humanist, you know." Locke nods. Hobbes shrugs.

"Are you doing that thing where you pretend you agree with me?" I ask Hobbes. "Locke, is he?"

"Some things we cannot know," Locke replies innocently.

"It's too early in the day for epistemological honesty," I grumble.

"Modesty," Locke corrects me.

"And being awake."

"I certainly understand the need to take dogma out of the picture," Hobbes admits.

"Tolerant of you," says Locke. "Tolerance, you know, is the chief characteristic mark of the true Church."²

"I mean, as long as she's not Catholic," says Hobbes. "And even if she did go to hell, it's not as though she'd stay there long. As scripture says, 'Hell itself

1 Hobbes, Thomas, and E. M. Curley. *Leviathan: With Selected Variants from the Latin Edition of 1668*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994. Pages 298, 338.

2 Locke, John. *A Letter concerning Toleration and Other Writings, edited and with an Introduction by Mark Goldie* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2010). Accessed 2015. <<http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/2375>>

will be thrown into the lake of fire, which is a second death', and a permanent one. By the way, I hear the turnover rate down there has been amazing recently, what with the recent Purgatorial expansion" (Hobbes 507).

"Really?" Locke asks.

"Yes. The devil has really centralized power. I was quite disappointed. They hold people accountable for sins ordered by another. It would make ruling *so* much harder if people took that into account."

"People should be allowed to publicly embrace their religion," says Locke. "The more factions, the less bloodshed."

"Or we could just not have *any* religion. Atheism all the way. Pastafarianism, anyone?"

"What is it you like to say? The other day, when we were talking about universal rights?" Locke asks me. "Allow me to quote: 'Stop trying to make fetch happen'."³

"Human rights are a little far-fetched," Hobbes says.

"Far... fetched," I say. Hobbes looks at me, and I continue. "But come on though, you are totally a secret atheist. 'They that approve a private opinion, call it opinion; but they that dislike it, heresy; and yet heresy signifies no more than private opinion'. Totally something a sixteenth century atheist would say. Or secret Catholic. Perhaps the lady doth protest too much, you know what I'm saying?" (1)

I catch the look on Hobbes' face, and decide to change the subject. "By the way, Hobbes, since I pay for the apartment, that makes me the head of the Leviathan, right?"

"My *Leviathan* has nothing to do with your unusual domestic arrangement; its use of force is employed only to prevent death, which is not a matter of much concern for Mr. Locke. But I will say it is true that authority, not wisdom, makes the law."

"Pointed modifier much?"

"Perhaps, before imposing laws upon me or my acquaintances, you should seek the consent of those you seek to govern," Locke suggests.

“Certainly,” Hobbes agrees. “That’s the basis of any government. Otherwise you will always be in a state of war.”

“Or life will be always and everywhere only ‘solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short’, is that right Mr. Hobbes? Well let me make a correction: Life already is all that, and worse. I drank box wine out of my cereal bowl last night” (113).

“But it doesn’t have to be brutish,” says Locke. “Let’s make peace between us. We’ll draft a roommate agreement, between the living and the dead.”

“Do I get to be the ruler?” I ask, grinning.

“I think that would be the landlord,” Locke replies. “Who you may want to speak with. He came by yesterday. Something about cold spots, flickering lights.”

“Fancy that,” I say. “To peace?” I raise my cereal bowl, trying to keep a straight face. Locke inclines his head, and I look to Hobbes.

“Peace and consent,” Hobbes agrees. “We can all agree on that.”

“An A on my midterm wouldn’t hurt, either. You two are going to help me study, right?”

“I have a dead white guy convention to get to, sorry,” says Hobbes.

“No,” says Locke. “Just, no.” ■

ANALECTS OF THE CORE

Callimachus: mega biblion, mega kakon (“A big book is big evil”)

Bertrand Russell: Scholastic education is a tiresome necessity. I can remember a feeling of profound regret when my children, after playing on the beach all day long, reached the age at which they had to be taught to read and write.



FROM VOLUME XIV: MICHAEL ZISSER

The Rebirth of Beauty:

Art of the Renaissance

For many scholars and historians, the death of Dante Alighieri in 1321 marked the official end of the Middle Ages, an era marked distinctively by devout Catholicism and the subservience of man to God. However, with Florence and Rome flourishing in trade and textiles and an underlying dissatisfaction with corrupt Roman Catholic Church throughout Europe, a new zeitgeist slowly began to emerge, particularly in Italy. The corruption of the church led many people to acquire a newfound appreciation of the human form and to look back towards Antiquity, a period that stressed the values of human progress and potential, rather than God's dominance and power. This Renaissance or "rebirth" of Greco-Roman culture inspired a new Humanistic view of the universe and a new "secular and scientific understanding of the physical world" (Benesch 7). Faith in human reason allowed for great scientific discovery and was accompanied by a restored interest in the liberal arts and "intellectual culture" based upon the "ideal of spiritual freedom and autonomy of the personality" (Benesch 54).

This new view of Renaissance individualism stressed the beauty of the human form and can be seen predominantly in the artwork produced from the early quattrocento to the mid-cinquecento in both Italy and Northern Europe alike. The art of the Renaissance is largely "based on the discovery of the world and of the self" (Harbison 8). Although great differences exist between the art of Northern Europe in the "Late Gothic" period (Murray 17) and that of Italy, overall development of new artistic techniques flourished, including the innovative use of perspective, depth, dramatic movement, fresco painting, and symmetry. These revolutionary techniques, due in large part to scientific and mathematical developments, enabled Renaissance artists to not only take a newfound pride in their accomplishments, but allowed them to represent drastically different—and many times secular—themes throughout

their works: naturalism, humanism, realism, and classical Biblicalism, which stresses man's relation to God, rather than his inferiority.

For Renaissance artists, a return to Christianity in its classical form paralleled the recreation of values from classical antiquity within their works of art. Renaissance humanist artists not only sought to “attack scholastic theology and return to the Biblical and patristic sources of Christianity” (Murray 11), but also to “give to an old religious content a new intensity and nearness to life” (Benesch 7). This thematic development intended to portray a relationship between man and God that was not hierarchical, but personal. Although this Biblical tradition began in Northern Europe with artists such as Albrecht Dürer in Germany, it quickly became a major trend in Italy as well, with even the most famous of artists, including Donatello and later Leonardo, painting Biblical scenes that depicted the relationship between man and God. In Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam*, a portrait of man is represented in which the individual is endowed with extreme, even divine, potential and power. Adam is represented in the most beautiful, nude form and is given life and strength directly from the Creator. Captured in this painting is a moment in which “all the pride of pagan antiquity in the glory of the body, and all the yearning of Christianity for the spirit have reached a mysterious and perfect harmony” (Hartt 500). This masterpiece represents the collective consciousness of individuals throughout the Renaissance who criticized the “pomp and ceremonies that had grown up around the Church's hierarchy” and sought to “return to the primitive beginnings of Christianity, with its emphasis on simple, egalitarian, and evangelical community” (Harbison 142). This attack on the dogmatism and corruptive licentiousness of the Roman Catholic Church stemmed also from the desire to return to the classical notions of Christianity where “belief is an inner experience which does not need sacred garments, tools, and places as outer tokens” (Benesch 60).

Dürer's *Man of Sorrows* (Fig. 1) perfectly represents this inner religious experience that had slowly taken over the external institutionalization of the Church. The art of early 16th-century Germany, which acted as a mimesis of the Reformation that was rapidly transforming Europe, subliminally portrayed the emotional relationship between man and God (or Christ) that be-

came elevated through God's grace and faith alone. This style symbolizes the "ardent desire of the leading spirits to find an immediate way to God, to justify themselves through the strength of their belief instead through ecclesiastic formulas" (Benesch 22). In this painting, Durer reveals his inner emotional distress caused by Christ's suffering. The divine Christ, who "bears Durer's own features" (Benesch 22), shows the expression of tragic sorrow that has so heavily impacted Durer's own human psyche. These trends of Classic Biblicalism combined with a spiritual and emotional connection between man and the divine define a large aspect of Renaissance art, in which human beings have entered an inward spiritual quest for religiosity outside of the church, while also being depicted as a paradigm of beauty, first exemplified in classical antiquity, where man himself takes on a godly appearance.

One of the main secular artistic movements born from the Renaissance was the development of what came to be known as naturalism, or

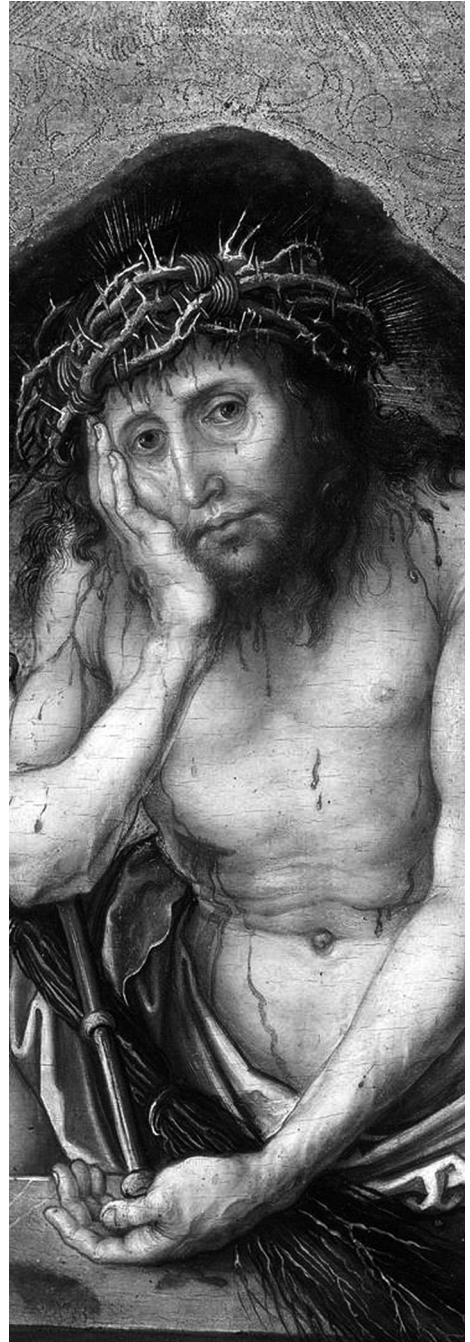


Figure 1: Albrecht Durer. *Christ as the Man of Sorrows* (detail). 1493. Oil on panel. Staatliche Kunsthalle.

“landscape imagery” (Hartt 280). This technique, which was used by both Northern European and Italian artists alike, represents a new purpose taken on by artists of the time: to focus on “issues and ideas that had their origin and purpose outside the confines of the Church—in the daily, worldly existence of contemporaries, in their intellectual life, and in their discovery of the world through exploration and commerce” (Harbison 124). This revolutionary turn towards secularity is due, in large part, to the Reformation and the ubiquitous dissatisfaction with the Catholic Church. Depicting the landscape enabled artists to imagine and create an “ideal space” and a “complete illusion of a new world” (Murray 40). By painting the perfect place (*locus amoenus*), artists were not only able to make use of new artistic trends such as depth perception and perspective, but were also able to place themselves and the viewer in a somewhat imaginary utopian world that existed outside of the corruption and religious fraudulence of the time period. Although landscape paintings are generally regarded as a form of secular art, many of the works contain some form of Christian or Protestant theme or narrative subtly interwoven within them. This feature stems predominantly from an “understand[ing] of the universe as an embodiment of God” (Benesch 42) where a Divine Creator is believed to be responsible for the creation of the natural world in all its beauty. This Renaissance pantheism is notable in the works of German artist Joachim Patinir, particularly *Landscape with St. Jerome* (Fig. 2). This painting depicts a solitary Jerome taming a lion in the wilderness, representing man’s peaceful relationship with the natural world. Jerome has retreated to “face his inner demons” (Harbison 138), depicted through the dark clouds in the upper left corner. The theme of saints or pilgrims “going into a harsh world in order to restore their sense of purpose and ideals” (Harbison 144) became a humanistic way of showing the power of nature to restore and give life to a deteriorating society like that of the Holy Roman Empire. The use of color progression from dark to light also allows for a sense of recession. By creating such a complex, diverse landscape, Patinir is able to depict a setting representative of a place anyone would be willing to journey through because of its beauty and sense of eventual serenity.

The Italian painter Piero Francesca portrayed similar themes in his works,

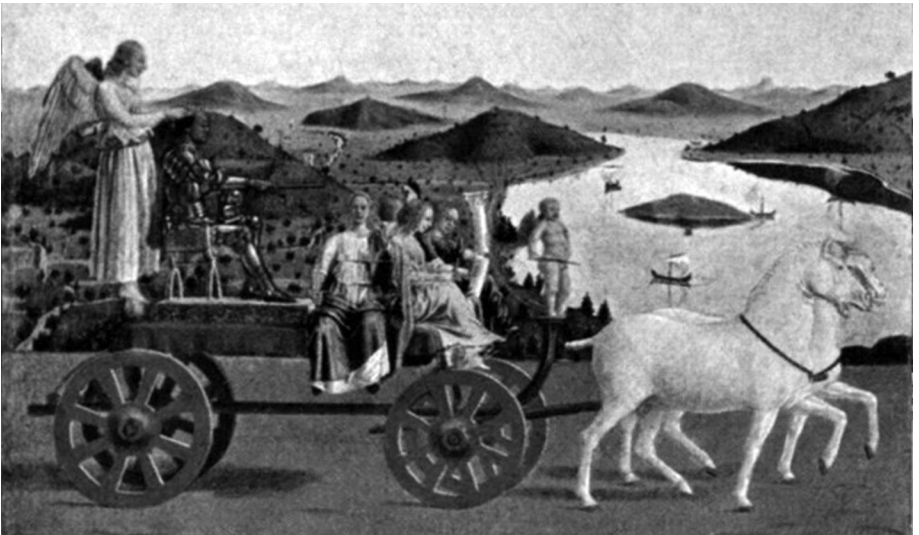
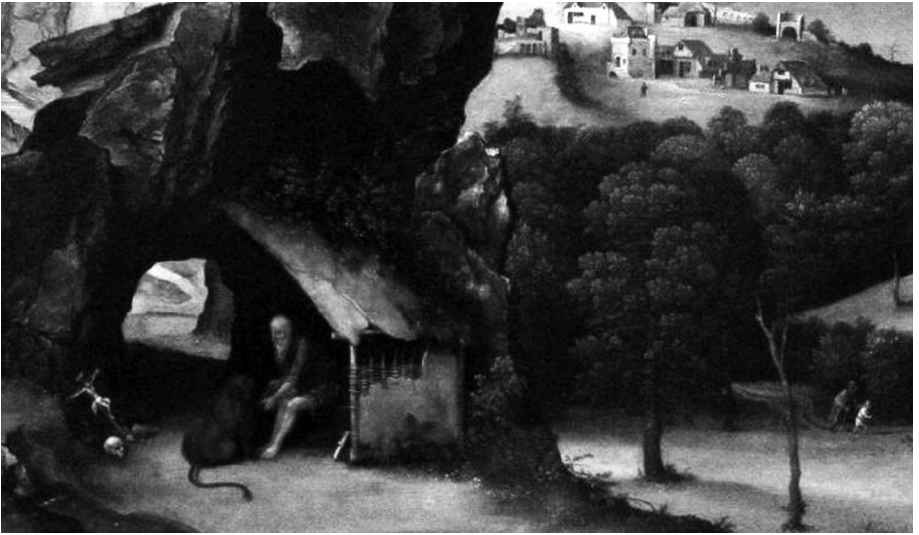


Figure 2, top: Joachim Patinir. *Landscape with St. Jerome* (detail). c.1515-24. Oil on wood. Museo del Prado.

Figure 3, bottom: Piero della Francesca. *Allegorical Triumph of Federico da Montefeltro* (detail). ca. 1465. Oil on panel, 47 x 33 cm. Galleria degli Uffizi.

but is more notable for his incorporation of scientific and mathematical developments within his art. This is essentially the technique that most distinguishes Northern Renaissance art from that of Italy. As for Piero's *Triumph of Federico da Montefeltro* (Fig. 3), the rate at which the conical hills fade into the distance and the rate at which "their intersection with the plain vanishes" represents this plane as "part of the surface of a sphere" (Hartt 282). Piero's rationale for this is undeniably his desire to incorporate the revolutionary scientific idea of the time that the world was round. This notion is further supported by the fact that Piero was acquaintances with Paolo Toscanelli, who drew the map Columbus used to make this theoretical speculation factual. In general, it can be said that landscape art throughout the Renaissance sought to represent a realistic world that made use of the scientific and mathematical discoveries of the age on one hand, and an idealistic, imaginary world where people could find inner solace outside of the corruption of the Church on the other.

Along with the creation of landscape paintings came a continuous development of a type of artwork that art historians now call Realism. Visual realism refers to the artists "ability to mimic . . . the myriad effects of color and light to be seen in the visible world . . . as if the eyes of the artists had suddenly been opened" (Harbison 26). Although much more complex in its application, realism strived to accomplish two tasks: to "render solids according to how objects are seen in light and space" and to "describe the observable factual data of nature" (Wohl 9). This desire to accurately portray the natural world was also accompanied by the fervent craving to "represent the human body in a more realistic way than any practiced since classical antiquity" (Murray 17). The various approaches taken by Northern European artists and Italian artists mark the most distinct differences in artistic developments during the Renaissance. These differences primarily deal with the styles, ornaments and techniques that began developing in the 15th century and culminated in the High Renaissance. The major difference that existed between Italian and Northern realism was the former's emphasis of perspective and mathematical precision. While Italian art was more generally focused on "regularity and clarity," Northern art leaned more heavily towards a representation of "miniature, texture, and illusion" that incorporated imaginative and personal experiences and an "enclosed



Figure 4: Pietro Perugino. *The Delivery of the Keys* (detail). 1482. Fresco. Capella Sistina.

Figure 5: Rogier van der Weyden. *St. John Altarpiece* (multiple details). c.1455–1460. Oil on panel. Gemaldegalerie.

world of privacy and preciousness” (Harbison 34).

One of the most famous artists to stand out among Italians who perfected the use of spatial representation and perspective was Pietro Perugino. In his *Giving of the Keys to St. Peter* (Fig. 4), an uncanny sense of openness and depth of field is obtained through the use of spatial techniques and mathematical meticulousness. This painting provides a “refreshing sense of liberation from material restraints, as if the spectator could glide freely in any direction” (Hartt 359). This use of perspective involves “using a mathematical theory according to which all lines perpendicular to the picture plane converge toward a single vanishing point, and figures or objects are placed in regular and diminishing scale along those orthogonals” (Harbison 32). The symmetry of the classically designed buildings and the sense of mathematically produced depth and third dimension is what distinctively differentiates Italian Renaissance art from the flatness and artificialness of Northern Europe and even, to an extent, the previous religious works of the Middle Ages. The inclination towards spatial precision and perspective was in large part due to the “admiration for naturalistic rendering of detail” prevalent in Greco-Roman culture and brought along with it the adoption of “classically derived humanistic architectural vocabulary” (Wohl 161).

While Italian realism was individualized and “style-conscious,” Northern European Renaissance art generally took the form of “distorted introversion—spaces, private and enclosed” where the artist strove “for their own kind of ideal representation” (Harbison 33) of a magical world. This imaginative form was oftentimes subjected to much criticism from Italian artists who saw the art as dull and irrational. Michelangelo once said Northern art was painted “without reason or art, without symmetry or proportion, without skill, selection or boldness and, finally, without substance or vigor” (Harbison 155). However, what remain as outstanding aspects of Northern art are the intricate depictions of details, textures, and contrasts between areas of light and dark. Rogier van der Weyden’s *St John’s Altarpiece* (Fig. 5) is an apt prototype of this Northern disposition. Depicted are three scenes from the life of John the Baptist which take place indoors, with windows that provide a glimpse into the outer world. This distinctively Northern European technique was in



Figure 6: Giorgione. *Sleeping Venus* (detail). c.1508. Oil on canvas. Dresden Gallery.

Following facing pages: Figure 7: Raphael. *The School of Athens*. 1509. Fresco. Vatican City.

stark contrast to the Italian “brilliant, open, sunlight piazza effect” (Harbison 134) in which the beauty and realism of the outer natural world were depicted, as opposed to the Northern “love of fragmentation and detail.” In Weyden’s piece, this fragmented realism is clearly evident as the multiple stages of John’s life “draw the viewer into an imagined world and make the viewer aware of its illusionist nature” (Harbison 39). This view of the world was also heavily influenced by the philosophy of nominalism, which states that anything a person can truly know is directly perceivable through the senses. Thus, through the use of the senses, an artist is able to focus upon the intricate details of specific objects, people, and places. Again, this devotion to detail and fragmented reality was what set Northern European art apart from the holistic realism and mathematical precision of Italy.

All of the artistic developments discussed previously culminated in a period known as the High Renaissance in Italy and as the Late Gothic period in the North. Starting in 1500, the Renaissance would reach a climax of artistic genius that featured an honor roll of innovative painters such as Michelangelo, Raphael, Titian, Leonardo da Vinci, and Botticelli. What was born was a





renowned representation of the human being in its most beautiful form along with a combination of Italian perspective, symmetry, and harmony, Northern detail, and the representation of Gods, historical events, and unforgettable legends of classical antiquity. These themes were oftentimes painted in the “ornate classical style” (Wohl 115), traditionally known as fresco painting. Since artists generally painted large works, they developed a technique of using wet plaster that enabled them to transfer cartoons, or original drafts, of the paintings onto ceramic where it would then dry. The style of these frescoes was developed by pupils of Raphael in the early 1500s who had as their general aim “verisimilitude in the representation of the classical roman past” (Wohl 118). It is this very technique that Michelangelo used to cover the Sistine Chapel with his magnificent portraits of biblical scenes.

Most people know about Leonardo’s remarkable discoveries regarding the human body and how he and Michelangelo depicted the human form throughout their works, but two marginally less well-known paintings are left to be discussed. The first of these is Giorgione’s *Sleeping Venus* (Fig. 6). Most noticeable here is the depiction of the nude human being, who “shining in the soft light [represents] the full perfection of human beauty” (Hartt 592). Where Renaissance art differs dramatically from the Middle Ages is in the portrayal of the “human being as a living organism” (Benesch 17) flourishing in its innocent nakedness. Just as important in this painting (finished by Titian) is the image of the Greek Goddess Venus, representing the Renaissance rebirth of classical culture. It was the “rise of secular education, coupled with the tendency to equate knowledge with Latin and Greek literature—that is, Humanism that led to a demand for such pictures” (Murray 278). Venus, curved perfectly in relation to the earth, rests in calm serenity in the midst of a natural landscape and, consequently, idealizes the ultimate topos of Renaissance art.

The final painting left to discuss combines both the eloquence of mathematical precision and spatial techniques of the Renaissance and the architectural and thematic traditions of classical antiquity. This is, of course, Raphael’s *School of Athens* (Fig. 7). This painting is the culmination of all High Renaissance artistry. In the direct center of the painting stand Plato and Aristotle; Plato points upwards as he describes his theory of universal forms, while Aris-

totle points down, relating his earthly, practical moral philosophy as he carries a copy of the Nichomachean Ethics. To the left Socrates engages in philosophical argument, with other notable mathematicians such as Pythagoras and Euclid are distributed throughout the painting. On the bottom, with his left elbow resting on a slab of marble, is Michelangelo (Hartt 510). This amalgamation of worldly philosophers, scholars, and artists represents the renewed interest in humanism, the liberal arts, and classical education throughout the Renaissance. As artists began to drift away from the dogmatism of the Catholic Church, they turned toward the intellectualism so often stressed by classical philosophers to be the best and happiest possible life. This painting also represents a remarkable representation of space and classical architecture. The series of arches, receding into what seems like infinite distance, is flanked by nude sculptures. Even more astonishing is Raphael's ability to incorporate such a large amount of people within one area, something unprecedented in the history of art. Regardless of the number of people within the room, Raphael's mastery of the perspective technique almost forces the viewers eyes towards the center, where two of the greatest thinkers of antiquity stand in pensive reflection, symbolizing the new scholarly and classical consciousness that had pervaded the Renaissance for over two-hundred years. ■

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AMIEL BOWERS

Milton Through Scotched Tears

that was the night I cried on your shoulder
after we drank the entire bottle of scotch
because that's what happens after an evening of Milton

overwhelmed by His grand universe, loneliness struck
the beauty of the simplest verses into my soul
as if I had just eaten of that apple that so enraptured eve

she turned away from adam and risked her own salvation
promised sensuality by a questioning serpent challenged by the
authority of a divine decree which pretended perfection of an assumed
subservience

that was the night I cried on your shoulder
after the too many sips of scotch that burned my throat
brought flowing tears and I could no longer pretend.

emotion poured out flowing with heartache of past
loss and lost love and lost purpose whose
sense of self no longer defined as if I, too,

faced the loss of my eve, companion born of the
rib of my left lung who had so yearned for her own self, selfishly
she rose above me because I did not dare to notice

the beauty of her curves and the endless depths of her soul
through eyes of starlight afraid of what was forbidden
blinded by a faith dependent on Another's love rather than hers.

that was the night I cried on your shoulder
after the scotch blended with hints of the acrid taste of a single cigarette
as equally forbidden as the heretic's apple whose tartness

dripped down eve's chin while the serpent watched
with a glinting sarcastic eye triumphant over the vain weakness
of sex and allied with her rebellious spirit seeking acknowledgement

that she and I were more than just the ribbed creation of a man
bored and lonely lacking any understanding of her outside
the shadow of someone greater as we risked all to avoid the forever doom
of standing

under the tree whose fruits were denied but whose forbidden grandeur
overwhelmed and constrained beauty by hiding truth in the seeds
of apples filled with equal parts of shame and hope

as if they were copies of pandora's box hung
like christmas tree ornaments created out of greater fears
watered and exposed by my scotched tears as they fell onto your sweater

that was the night I cried on your shoulder
after we drank the night away poured out by the bottle of scotch
so intoxicated by Milton's grand beauty that I could no longer pretend.

FROM VOLUME IX: SCOTT MOHR

Esprit de Core

I think one could possibly demonstrate scientifically that the most important things in life are unplanned and unforeseen. Not that planning isn't important, but one mustn't lay too much stock by it. When I reflect on my contact with the Core Curriculum which extends from the 1990s to the present, the thing which stands out in my mind isn't brilliant lectures, good discussions, wonderfully written papers and home-run-quality exams—though we try hard to plan for these and successfully produce many every year. Rather it's something much more fundamental, not as easy to document, and not exactly planned.¹ I refer, of course, to the invisible, but powerful state of mind which, like gravity, pulls everything in the Core together.

How can I define this non-material reality? Perhaps it's best to describe how I sense it, to set out a brief phenomenology of the *esprit* or *Geist* that animates us.² I think it consists of six parts.

First and foremost comes a hunger for knowledge and a joy in learning. To a degree unparalleled in most of my other teaching assignments over the past thirty-one years at Boston University, I find students in Core sections intensely curious, eager to learn and excited by "getting it right." Teaching, as everyone knows, has mediocre monetary rewards, but dealing with students who are thrilled by what they learn is a large reward no dedicated teacher can fail to appreciate. A parallel phenomenon prevails among Core faculty. Naturally, all scholars should have lifelong curiosity and their learning should never end, but I sense that my Core faculty colleagues have these qualities to an above-average degree. They also direct them towards disciplines outside their own narrow fields, thereby displaying what I consider to be superior role models.

1 Though I sometimes think that in his infinite patience and wisdom, Dean Jorgensen plans this as he does virtually everything else! [Prof. Brian Jorgensen was the founding director of the Core, succeeded by Prof. James Johnson, Prof. David Eckel, and the currently-serving Prof. Stephanie Nelson. –Eds.]

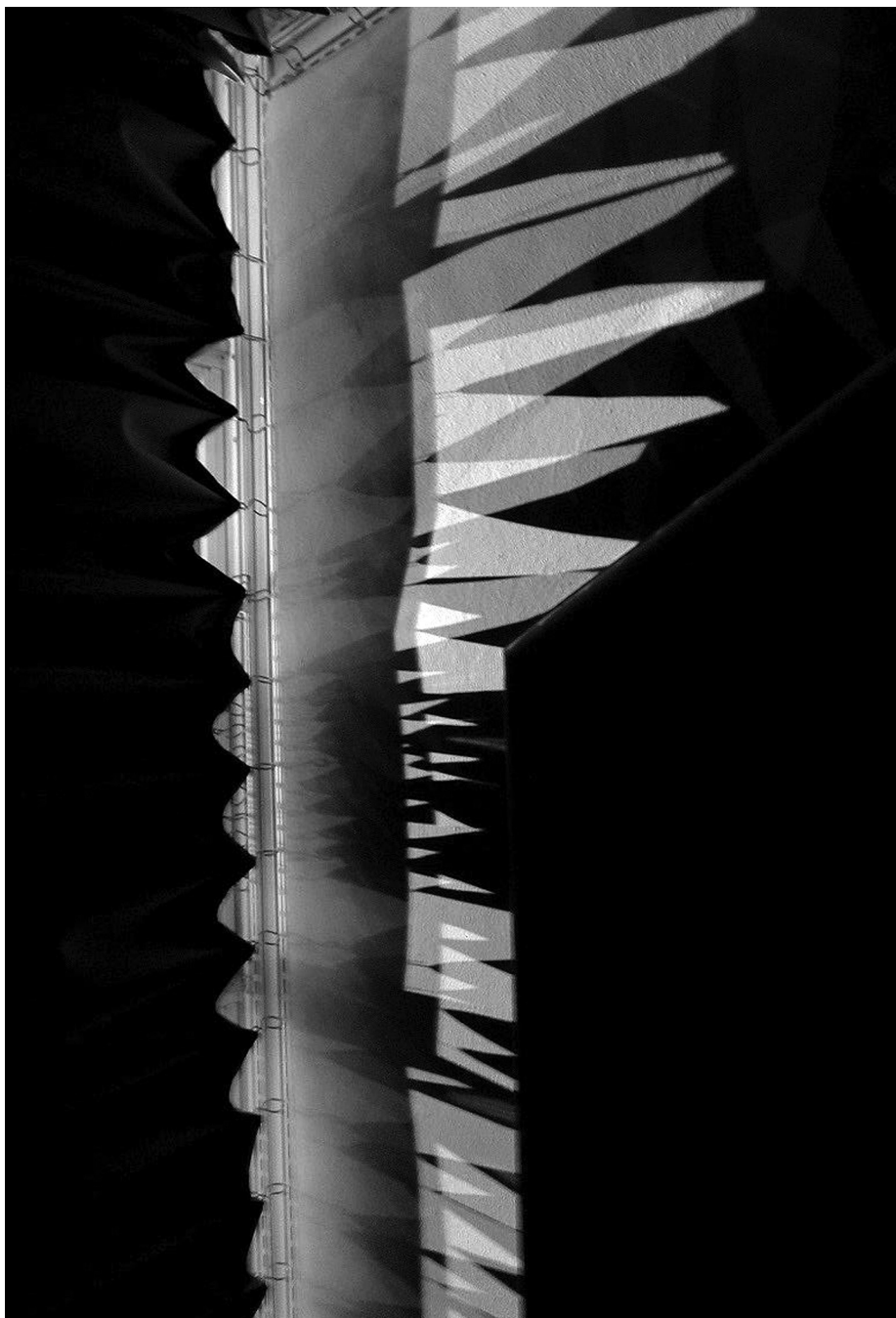
2 I do apologize for the dreadful, but irresistible pun of my title, by the way.

Which brings me to the second key feature of the Core spirit: its catholicity (with a lower-case “c”). I immediately think of Dean Robert Neville’s magnificent *tai chi* demonstration during a CC 102 lecture several years ago (during which one could have heard a pin drop in the Tsai). The sight of a Western theologian, expertly and with great reverence, presenting a central practice from Eastern culture speaks volumes about the breadth and inclusiveness of the content of Core—which students and faculty alike endorse with unhesitating enthusiasm. Naturally I care very much about getting across the ideas and animating spirit of science, and I have found most Core students receptive—though sometimes apprehensive! Many of my non-science colleagues among the Core faculty have been very supportive in this regard also—from Professor Christopher Ricks’ passing along the poem about the learned astronomer,³ to Professors Stephanie Nelson and Greg Fried taking time from their busy schedules to sit in on science lectures (and in Professor Nelson’s case, discussions as well). As we move out of a century notorious for its fragmentation of intellect and culture, I feel very strongly the need for integration and wholeness—and that certainly includes science.

I sense that students also crave to understand where everything fits into a *single* whole as they make their way through a *uni*-versity and try to comprehend their place in a *uni*-verse that somehow includes Newton and Nietzsche, Dante and Darwin, Plato and Freud. Perhaps they can take consolation from the wave/particle duality, Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle, the relativistic twin paradox, Gödel’s incompleteness theorem and other sometimes baffling, counter-intuitive concepts that we present in the second-semester of the Core Natural Sciences.⁴ If the systematic, rational approach to the physical universe forces us to tolerate the coexistence of paradoxes and apparent opposites, we may feel less disappointed if our demand for wholeness in the human sphere isn’t adequately met by some simplistic consensus. In this context, however, the Core’s breadth also provides a significant range of perspectives that may afford

3 “When I Heard the Learn’d Astronomer” was written by Walt Whitman in 1865. –Eds.

4 At the time of writing, Prof. Mohr would have been referring to CC 104, a course since superseded by CC 106 and, beginning in Fall 2015, CC 212. –Eds.



an opportunity to attain wholeness by transcending any single viewpoint.

Another key feature of the Core way is conversation. At Williams College, my mentors were fond of quoting James A. Garfield's definition of the ideal college as "a student sitting on one end of a log and Mark Hopkins sitting on the other." (Hopkins was President of Williams from 1836 – 72.) Anyone familiar with the Core floor in Warren Towers or the special subculture of the work-study students of the Core Office (a culture which has an amazing way of perpetuating itself...) knows that part of the Core experience consists of extended, often-penetrating conversations. And in my best moments as a teacher I have managed to provoke serious and even passionate conversations in my discussion classes. When I ask myself what we're trying to achieve with the Core Curriculum, one answer that immediately comes to mind is that we want to facilitate the development of informed conversationalists who can engage each other on a range of topics that broadly covers the (high) cultural and intellectual landscape. We hope that by the time students finish Core no major field of human learning is completely foreign to them.

Of course the "conversation" our students engage in extends far beyond the present. I remember a television program hosted by the comedian Steve Allen many years ago, each installment of which featured four actors impersonating famous figures from disparate periods of history, literature, art, etc., who sat around a dinner table discussing topics appropriate to their characters. Very importantly—to preserve peace and decorum—Allen acted as the host and moderator. Of course it was meant to be funny (imagine a conversation between Napoleon and Cleopatra...), but there was a serious side also. The idea that great thinkers and artists inspire one another and interact across time and distance is centrally important for the understanding of human culture. The notion that students (and their teachers) can partake of this great conversation is the core of the Core. In contrast to any other undergraduate liberal arts program, I think the Core prepares students so that if asked, they could probably sit down and dash off the script for a pretty convincing dialog between, say Aristotle and Shakespeare (and maybe even between Newton and Einstein!).

Implicit in the idea of conversation is the prerequisite of civility, of manners and of consideration for one's interlocutor. This constitutes a fifth ele-

ment of what I observe to be characteristic of Core people: they listen as well as speak, and though they often disagree, they do so without disparagement. The shared value of the interchange of ideas surpasses insistence upon the supremacy of any one person's particular set of ideas (most of the time...). I think this aspect is especially important for the freshmen, many of whom are reluctant to speak up lest they be ridiculed. Core is not a place of ridicule, and the shelter it provides by virtue of its civility probably plays an important part in nurturing students who would otherwise hesitate to develop their talent for self-expression.

Among the faculty this ethos of mutual respect also plays a key role. Sad to say, even in those temples of learning that we call universities, scholars and teachers all too often fall into the old tribal, parochial trap of dismissing the concerns and approaches of those in fields different from their own as trivial and meaningless at best, and perhaps downright pernicious. (I would be less than honest not to say that this attitude directed toward scientists by their non-science colleagues causes me great pain. And I also have to bemoan the corresponding reciprocal prejudices of some of my science colleagues—not, however, including any who teach in Core!) At any rate, simple common sense says that a closed mind has no way to expand its content. By our efforts, formally in integrating forums, and informally by the way we speak to and of one another, Core students and faculty try to avoid this particularly common, regrettable pitfall in the life of the mind.

The final pillar in my attempt to define the spirit of the Core can be best expressed by a favorite quotation of mine from Alfred North Whitehead: "Ideas," he said, "won't keep. Something must be done about them." What fools we would be to make all the effort that we do to teach and learn the content of the Core Curriculum if all that amounted to was the perfunctory filling of a requirement, a mere going through motions! Whether our primary concern at any given moment is figuring out how better to live our individual lives or how to change the world, the depth of familiarity with the struggles and inspirations of our forebearers plus the experience of clear and critical thinking that the Core provides makes a difference. It's my sense that students relate to

this—indeed, contribute to it!—in a big way. In CC 103⁵ we put forward the conclusion that humans are *thinking* apes, but the emphasis falls on the first word: we are thinking apes. This is our destiny and it matters. It matters more than anything else.

So that's my take on the unplanned, unquantifiable esprit of Core: hunger for knowledge and joy in learning; catholic and inclusive approaches to subject matter; continual efforts to integrate knowledge; meaningful, deep conversations; mutual respect among students and teachers; and a deep-seated belief in the power and importance of ideas. I'm sure Mark Hopkins would approve. ■

⁵ The first-semester Core Natural Sciences course, superseded by CC 105 and, beginning in Fall 2015, CC 111. —Eds.

ANALECTS OF THE CORE

Rainer Maria Rilke: Beauty is only the beginning of terror we can just barely endure.

Charles Lindholm: Some people like to eat chips and drink beer and some people like to think. I think the best people are those who do both.

JAMES RIGGAN *translating* FAROUK GWEDA

My love... we changed

Everything around us changed... changing us
A lighter shade of skin...
Drifting garden blossoms,
The crumbling magic of our past.
Everything around us changed... changing us
Our happy days... just a craving
Love lived in our blood, and seeped between our hands
Passion carried us, but our desires ripened
A song generated us. When our melodies faded... we changed
We changed... changing everything around us

I marvel at our tale. The pulse faltered in us,
We met in caves of silence.
You, my love, became a ghost in my chest.
The life that made us happy passed...
And we lived the life that made us cry.
Later, we left... who, my heart, keeps us alive?

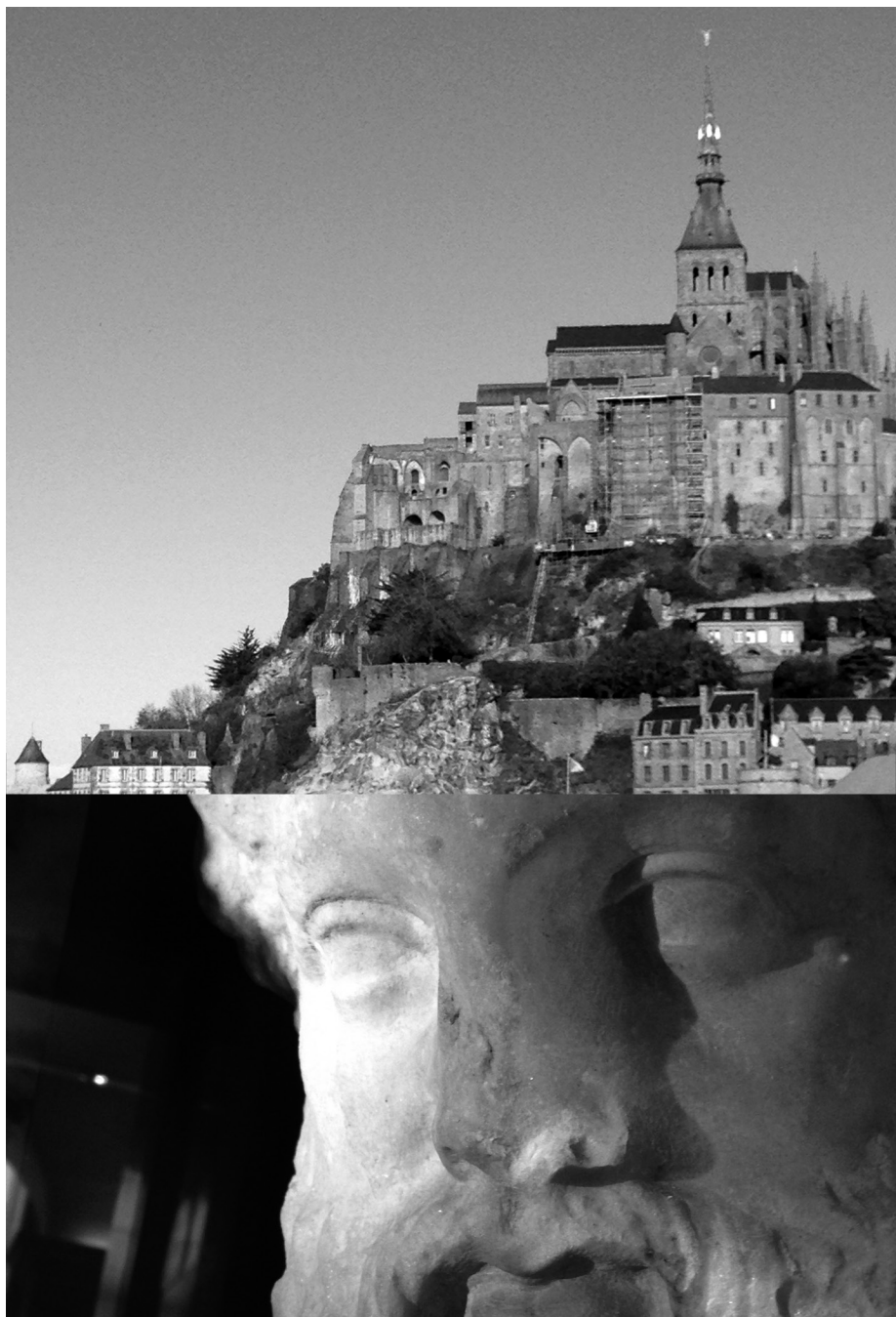
LIAM O'CONNELL

Is Aristotle Inconsistent?

In Book I of his *Nicomachean Ethics*,¹ Aristotle reasons that everything in life has an endpoint, a “good” towards which all knowledge and every choice is directed. This good, Aristotle believes, is happiness. Establishing happiness as the ultimate good serves as the beginning of a discussion on the central components of living life well, a discourse that examines the function of the soul and its respective parts, defines virtues as means between extremes, and classifies the different types of choice. At the center of many of these issues is the role of intelligent and moral virtue and whether they are divisive or complimentary in influencing human activity. In Book X, Aristotle repeals aspects of his earlier arguments by stating that intelligent virtue is the “highest possession we have in us,” rather than moral virtue (Aristotle 289). Aristotle’s conclusion in *Nicomachean Ethics* is not consistent with the entirety of his discussion on happiness and ignores the interdependent function of intellectual and moral virtues within the rational half of the soul, thereby calling for a life beyond the capacities of human nature.

Book X’s conclusion on the topic of happiness breaks with arguments made in earlier books and elevates the concept of supreme happiness to a point unattainable for human beings. Aristotle discusses friendship extensively across several books of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and in his reasoning makes it appear that friendship is necessary for happiness. In Book IX he considers it “strange that we should assign all good things to a happy man without attributing friends to him” (263). Furthermore, a man of high moral characteristics needs people with whom he can do good as it is “nobler to do good to a friend than a stranger” (263). In this way, to be supremely happy, one must have friends with whom to give and receive “good,” for that maximizes the happiness produced by friendship. That is why Aristotle’s assertion in Book X that “a life based on the activity of our reason constitutes complete happiness,” raises many ques-

1 Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. trans. Martin Ostwald. Prentice Hall, 1999.



tions. This sort of contemplative happiness is not complete, as activity based solely on reason excludes the happiness gained from friendship. Since man is “inherently a social and political being whose natural condition is to live with others,” this contemplative happiness appears not only to contradict earlier arguments in the *Nicomachean Ethics* but calls for a life that is superhuman (264). If complete happiness is an endpoint, a thing towards which all things strive, as stated in Book I, Aristotle’s idea of contemplative happiness insinuates that society is the reverse of the true good, that isolation among human beings is complete happiness and therefore the greatest good. Book X is not exclusively inconsistent but suggests an ultimate existence against the very nature of man.

Aristotle’s construction of the soul creates a dependent relationship between intellectual and moral virtue, which makes the elevation of one virtue above the other a trite and contrary resolution to an otherwise detailed discussion. In Book I, Aristotle divides the soul into the rational and the irrational. The rational element of the soul encourages a person to follow the “right” path. By following this path, the person is considered “morally strong.” Aristotle then further divides the rational element of the soul into intellectual virtue and moral virtue, which rule different functions of a person. Intellectual virtue is the basis of theoretical wisdom, understanding, practical wisdom, and is formed by teaching. Moral virtue controls generosity and self control, and is conditioned by habit (32). Aristotle says that in the pursuit of moral virtue, one must exercise choice. According to this understanding of the soul, the culmination of teaching and habit is the essence of a person. By dividing the rational element of the soul in half, Aristotle indicates that a person is not complete without both intelligent and moral virtue. Thus, it seems impossible that one virtue could be considered greater than the other. It analogous to considering whether the brain is better than the heart; yes, it provides us with thought and intelligence, but it cannot function without the heart, nor could the heart function without the brain. One cannot be more important than the other because without the other there is nothing. Indeed, the placing of intellectual virtue over moral virtue in Book X is simply absurd when considering Aristotle’s construction of the soul in Book I.

The disparity between Book X and the rest of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is due

to the perception of intellectual virtue as superior to moral virtue. A contemplative happiness based solely on reason and isolation contradicts Aristotle's earlier arguments for friendship based on moral virtue and promotes a path of life contrary to human nature. Also, the apparent interdependence of intellectual virtue and moral virtue based on the discussion of their functions in earlier books collides with their hierarchical placement in Book I, alienating the last book from the rest of the work. It is certainly curious why Aristotle feels a need to distinguish one virtue as superior to the other after discussing their respective merits. His love of intellectual virtue may be much like Plato's love for philosophers; perhaps he thinks what he loves most is the best. As great of an irony as that would be, Aristotle's arguments for rationality should not go unnoticed for the slight tangent in Book X does not totally corrupt the value of the *Nicomachean Ethics* as a guide to living life conscientiously. ■

ANALECTS OF THE CORE

Albert Einstein: What really interests me is whether God had any choice in the creation of the world.

Zarathustra: More honestly and more purely speaks the healthy body that is perfect and perpendicular: and it speaks of the meaning of the earth.

E. M. Forster: ONLY CONNECT

FROM VOLUME XIV: JAMES JOHNSON

Sincerity & Seduction

in Mozart's Don Giovanni

One point of entry to Mozart's *Don Giovanni* is to consider Beethoven's sentiment, expressed late in life, that the sacred art of music "ought never to permit itself to be degraded to the position of being a foil for so scandalous a subject."¹ Beethoven's indignation grew from his own religious view of the artist. "There can be no loftier mission than to come nearer than other men to the Divinity," he wrote to the Archduke Rudolf in 1823, "and to disseminate the divine rays among mankind."² Despite the opera's divinely punitive ending—with Don Giovanni sent to hell for his crimes and the other characters pledging to keep to the straight and narrow—there is much to offend in the opera. To appreciate Beethoven's point, you needn't go any further than Leporello's Catalogue Aria. Here the servant proudly enumerates his master's conquests: in Italy six hundred and forty, in Germany two hundred thirty-one, in France one hundred in France, and in Turkey ninety-one, "*ma in Ispagna son già mille e tre!*" He conquers country wenches, chambermaids, and city ladies, countesses, baronesses, marchionesses, and princesses: slender ones in summer, plumpish ones in winter, and older ones to round off the list. But "*sua passion predominante è la giovin principiante,*" Leporello sings: "His overriding passion is for virgins." Here as elsewhere the librettist Lorenzo da Ponte skates on the far side of sexual innuendo to approach vulgarity. "Provided she wears a skirt, you know what he's going to do!"³

The way Giovanni speaks of those 2,065 women is at least as stunning as their number. "It's all part of love," he says. "If a man is faithful only to one, he is cruel to all the others. I, a man of boundless generosity, love every one of them."⁴ Surely the view is either a cynical lie or a great delusion. Either way, it keeps him from looking back. But there is another possibility, which in fact explains his successes much more credibly than either deceit or self-deception. Namely, that what he says is true: that seduction is a misnomer, that his love is selfless, and that constancy to one would deprive all others. Søren Kierkegaard

takes this view in *Either/Or*: “I should rather not call him a deceiver. To be a seducer requires a certain amount of reflection and consciousness, and as soon as this is present, then it is proper to speak of cunning and intrigues and crafty plans. This consciousness is lacking in Don Giovanni. Therefore, he does not seduce. He desires, and this desire acts seductively.”⁵

Whether the claim is preposterous or plausible—and penetrating Don Giovanni’s real motivations is not as simple as it first seems—Lorenzo da Ponte has hit upon the secret of all great lovers: sincerity. This is Don Giovanni’s tone—and, one might add, the tone of all successful imposters, con-men, holy martyrs, and flatterers. Da Ponte’s fellow Venetian, Giacomo Casanova, maintains the tone of sincerity for the length of his twelve-volume memoirs to explain his own conquests, which occur on average about once every thirty pages. Ingenuous and immediate, Casanova seems to tell us everything, including his setbacks and humiliations, his illnesses and debilities, each time he is impotent, and the shame he feels in sleeping with prostitutes. Throughout the work Casanova repeats a single theme: that he is neither a seducer nor a deceiver. He writes: “I venture to say that I was often virtuous in the act of vice. Seduction was never characteristic of me; for I have never seduced except unconsciously, being seduced myself.”⁶ The “professional seducer,” he adds near the end of his memoirs, “is an abominable creature,” a “true criminal,” and the “enemy of the object on which he has his designs.”⁷

To early Protestants, sincerity meant transparency: their words matched their hearts.⁸ But professional liars also mastered sincerity to wear as a mask. To succeed you must be believed, and to be believed you must be sincere. With the thunderous opening chords of the overture, Giovanni’s damnation seems sure, and yet at numerous specific moments we cannot discern whether his sincerity is honest or a ruse. Nor can the other characters. The peasant-girl Zerlina is on the way to her own wedding when Don Giovanni takes her hand, tells her she is destined for higher things, and promises marriage. Only a timely intervention by Donna Elvira keeps Zerlina out of Leporello’s catalogue. For her part, Donna Elvira is already on the list and eager to declare to everyone she encounters just what a monster Don Giovanni is; nevertheless, late in the opera, she is still ready to believe that Don Giovanni truly loves her. Judging

Giovanni's sincerity is altogether more urgent for Donna Anna. In the opening scene, a cloaked intruder forces his way into her room, either rapes her or tries unsuccessfully to rape her, and stabs her father as he rushes to her aid. It is of course Don Giovanni, though she does not know it at the time. When she encounters him only days later, he asks with affecting concern, "Who was the villain that dared to upset the calm of your life?"⁹

Asking whether Giovanni's sincerity is honest or a ruse is another way of asking if he genuinely believes what he says or if the sincere tone is used to hide a scheming interior that we never see. If he believes his words, then perhaps Kierkegaard is right and he is a sheer force of nature: unreflective, true to his desires, and at least in this one respect without censure. If he does not, then he is a master of deceit and da Ponte is in on the game. In either case, his sincerity is powerfully convincing. Part of the strange spell of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* is how easy it is to disregard the fact that its principal character is a would-be rapist and killer. The libretto possesses a cavalier bluntness, and yet even its brutalities can seem strangely untroubling. "*L'ha voluto*," Don Giovanni says to Leporello just after the Commandante's death. "He asked for it," is the way Leporello takes it, but the Italian might as easily mean, "*She* asked for it," with reference to whatever has just happened in Donna Anna's bedchamber. From start to finish, Don Giovanni's actions are on full view, and still he seems more a likeable rogue than a criminal. Instead of condemning him we're more likely amused or intrigued. Why is this? His sincerity may very well account for his successes within the drama, but it cannot fully explain our own fascination with his exploits. In my view, this effect lies with the music.

For every character in the opera, Mozart fashions a characteristic musical style. Social rank was the most obvious marker of identity in the eighteenth century, and owing to use and tradition particular musical styles came to be associated with particular ranks. Mozart made full use of such associations, writing *opera buffa* for the servant Leporello, *opera seria* for Donna Anna and Donna Elvira, a pastoral style for the peasant Zerlina, and a martial style for the Commandant. Don Giovanni is the one character without a characteristic style. This only makes sense. He is a chameleon who assumes the shades of his surroundings, slipping into *buffa* when he is with Leporello, a virtuosic

seria style with Elvira, and a folk-like simplicity with Zerlina. When Giovanni swaps his clothes with his servant the better to woo a luscious maid, Mozart offers its musical equivalent by hiding the orchestra behind a whispered pizzicato and giving the accompaniment to a simple mandolin.

Just as da Ponte never reveals what Don Giovanni is really thinking, Mozart keeps resolutely to the surface in his musical depictions. The music does not comment upon Giovanni's actions, much less pass judgement or condemn. In fact, it backs him up at every turn. This is the musical version of sincerity: it gives us no reason to doubt the truth of Giovanni's words. Mozart certainly had the ability to offer such comment had he wanted. A celebrated instance that he surely knew comes in Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride*, when Orestes, terrorized by the Furies for having killed his mother, at last announces that peace has returned to his heart. But accompanying him in the orchestra is a churning, tumultuous rumble. "He is lying!" Gluck called out during a rehearsal in which the orchestra played the passage too softly. "He has killed his mother!"¹¹ There are no such moments in *Don Giovanni*.

For this reason it is not enough to say that Mozart's music abets the attempted seductions on the stage. It reaches beyond the wavering virtue of the drama's characters to draw us into Giovanni's tainted moral universe. The real seducer in *Don Giovanni* is Mozart, and the seduction is not a fiction. This is what Beethoven must have meant in deploring the work.

Consider the moment in the Second Act when Donna Elvira, who until now has spared no occasion to curse her lover as a traitor, appears at a window and, believing herself alone, sings that her heart still trembles for him.¹² Her musical line—hesitant, broken, not properly a melody—conveys the nature of her thoughts. Don Giovanni is below, and he seizes his chance to beg forgiveness and declare that he also still loves her. This he does in the very melody she has sung. As the tonality shifts from A to E major, a related but brighter key, which quickens the attention without drawing attention. The musical line is the same, but in Giovanni's hands its silences prompt Donna Elvira to reply. This is Giovanni's gift: to read instantly the heart of his target and then speak as a kindred spirit. When he comes to the payoff line—"Discendi, o gioia bella," "Come down, my joy!"—the key again modulates, this time to C major. The



melody that at last blossoms has grown from the musical material of Donna Elvira's thoughts but now, spoken aloud as it were by Don Giovanni, it is altogether more sumptuous. Where the shift from A to E is subtle, that from E to C is bold. The new key of C, relatively remote to E, is unexpected though not jarring, and while still bright, it is considerably warmer. The modulation that prepares Giovanni's line enacts his command. The strings descend stepwise. The effect is ravishing.

All of this happens while Don Giovanni and Leporello continue to talk out of Elvira's hearing, which Mozart sets in a rapid *buffa* style. Mozart's astonishing dramatic control is on full display here. Giovanni mirrors the others' musical styles with such sincerity that we begin to believe him.

The opera contains many such instances of Mozart's seductions. "*Là ci darem la mano*," the aria in which Giovanni promises to marry the peasant-girl Zerlina, narrates her surrender in a sequence that exercises strong musical persuasion.¹³ "There we shall join hands, there you will say yes," he sings of his country house in a tune of childlike innocence. "Look, it is not far, come my sweet, let's go." The slow duple meter is soothing and gentle, and, just as with Donna Elvira, Giovanni's simple stanza creates the musical expectation for a reply, which Zerlina readily gives: "I want to and yet I don't; my heart has misgivings; I should, indeed, be happy, but he might be bluffing me."

The music depicts Zerlina's indecision in a series of faltering, downward steps in the next exchange. "Come," Giovanni coos, "I will change your life." She stammers, "But I pity Masetto . . . Then quick, I am no longer strong."

Now Mozart begins to work on us. In the second stanza we return to the opening innocent tune, but Giovanni has to sing only two lines instead of four to get Zerlina to answer. This doubles the pace of the conversation and stirs a sense of anticipation. Mozart adds a nice dramatic touch by gracing Giovanni's lines with a flute and grounding Zerlina's with a bassoon. We feel them coming together even if we do not consciously register why.¹⁴ And as the meter shifts to a pastoral 6/8, they do come together, singing in duet to the end.¹⁵

It is not fully evident just how well Giovanni has fashioned his voice to match Zerlina's until her later penitent aria to Masetto, in which she claims to have been tricked. "*Batti, batti*" is cast in the same reassuring duple meter with

a similarly innocent tune, and at the end Zerlina moves to the same pastoral 6/8 for her conclusion, singing, “Let’s make up, my dear! We want to pass our days and nights in joy and gaiety!”¹⁶ There’s no reason to doubt her sentiments, judging by the words or the music, but from now on Masetto is suspicious—and so am I. “He didn’t even touch my fingertips!” Zerlina tells Masetto.¹⁷ Really? The entire duet was about joining hands. The problem with sincerity is that the more it convinces, the less you are willing to be convinced. This is why Giovanni’s pleasingly reassuring tone is so corrosive. To avoid being a dupe you have to become a cynic.

Mozart remains faithful to Giovanni’s unfailing sincerity throughout the opera, but in one extraordinary moment the composer allows the contradictions of this tone to show. It comes in the tour de force setting of three orchestras playing three dances in three different meters.¹⁸ When Donna Anna and Donna Elvira come disguised to Don Giovanni’s ball and briefly pair off to dance, an onstage orchestra plays a minuet, the most aristocratic dance of the eighteenth century. When Don Giovanni seizes Zerlina and dances her straight out of the room, a second onstage orchestra plays a contredanse, a form with roots in English country dance. Leporello grabs the peasant Masetto in clownish parody, and a third orchestra strikes up a sprightly ‘German’ dance.

Wonderment over Mozart’s technical feat and the sheer fun of trying to hear each orchestra may distract from the larger point. Until now, Don Giovanni has kept the different versions of himself distinct in the minds of his hearers. This is the instant when he is caught: Zerlina screams from offstage; Giovanni blames Leporello for the attempted assault; and Elvira, Anna, and Ottavio pull off their masks to sing, “Deceiver! Deceiver! . . . Soon the whole world will know of your hideous crimes and heartless cruelty.” Here the music remains true to his separate stories, and the clash reveals them to be fundamentally incompatible. And yet it is difficult to call the scene an unmasking. Yes, Zerlina has seen with horror what Giovanni’s promised “marriage” really means; and yes, Donna Anna positively identifies him as her father’s killer. But the deepest questions about Don Giovanni—whether he is an ingenuous lover or a practiced seducer—remain unanswered, and Mozart gives us no clues.

Despite his criticism of Don Giovanni, Beethoven was intrigued enough

by the opera to copy excerpts into his sketch books to learn its secrets. Nevertheless, he disapproved.¹⁹ The music seems crafted deliberately to entice and ensnare listeners, and on a fundamental level it is silent about Giovanni's character. In the sacred cantatas of Bach, the music portrays all manner of wickedness vividly and compellingly, but it never tempts the listener to become a sinner. Mozart's *Don Giovanni* takes a different approach. In a letter to his father, Mozart boasted: "I can imitate and assimilate all kinds and styles of composition."²⁰ Therein lay Mozart's genius and, as Beethoven well knew, his unwholesome powers. ■

Endnotes

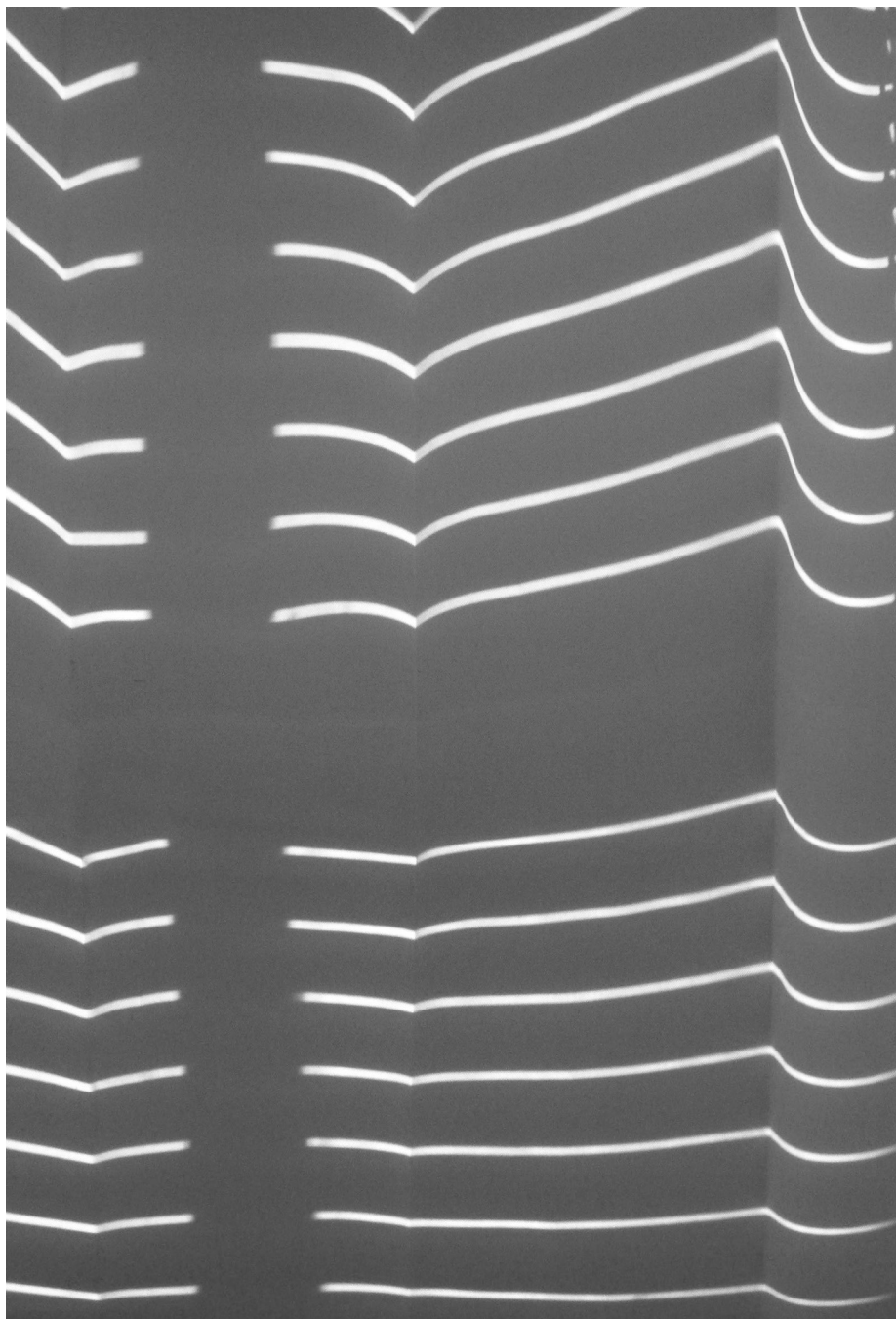
1. Quoted in Martin Cooper, *Beethoven: The Last Decades, 1817-1827* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 127.
2. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 118.
3. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Lorenzo da Ponte, ed. Georg Schünemann and Kurt Soldan, *Don Giovanni* (New York: Dover Publications, 1974), I:v, pp. 62-75. The English translations are my own although I have also frequently referred to that of Avril Bardoni, which appears in the booklet accompanying the recording of *Don Giovanni* by the Drottningholm Court Theatre Orchestra and Chorus, Arnold Östman, L'Oiseau-Lyre, 425 943-2.
4. *Ibid.*, II:i, pp. 233-5.
5. Søren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, trans. David F. Swenson and Lillian Marvin Swenson, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), 1:97.
6. Giacomo Casanova, Chevalier de Seingalt, *History of My Life*, trans. Willard R. Trask, 12 vols. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1966-1971), 10:111.
7. *Ibid.*, 11:111.
8. Reverend John Tillotson, seventeenth-century Archbishop of Cambridge, defined sincerity as "constant plainness and honest openness of behaviour, free from all insidious devices, and little tricks, and fetches of craft and cunning: from all false appearances and deceitful disguises of ourselves in word or action." Sincerity, Tillotson continued, described concord between word and thought, a state in which "our actions exactly agree to our inward purposes and intentions." (Quoted in Leon Guilhamet, *The Sincere Ideal: Studies on Sincerity in Eighteenth-Century English Literature* [Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1974], 15-16.)

9. Mozart and da Ponte, *Don Giovanni*, I:xi-xii, pp. 101-2.
10. *Ibid.*, I:ii, p. 34.
11. Related in La comtesse de Genlis, *Dictionnaire critique et raisonné des étiquettes de la cour*, in a footnote to the article "Opera," 2:12-13.
12. Mozart and da Ponte, *Don Giovanni*, II:ii, pp. 235-45.
13. *Ibid.*, I:ix, pp. 93-8.
14. The foregoing discussion of this aria owes much to the presentation by Professor Thomas Kelly in the Boston University Core Faculty Seminar, February 2, 2005.
15. Booklet accompanying Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Don Giovanni*, Drottningholm Court Theatre Orchestra and Chorus, Arnold Östman, L'Oiseau-Lyre, 425 943-2, p. 90.
16. Mozart and da Ponte, *Don Giovanni*, I:xvi, pp. 148-56.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 147.
18. *Ibid.*, I:xx, pp. 180-227.
19. See Lewis Lockwood, *Beethoven: The Music and the Life* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 2003), p. 253.
20. Quoted in Daniel Heartz, *Mozart's Operas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 37.

ANALECTS OF THE CORE

Franz Fanon: I do not come with timeless truths. My consciousness is not illuminated with ultimate radiances. Nevertheless, in complete composure, I think it would be good if certain things were said.

Voltaire: When man was placed in the Garden of Eden, he was out there 'to dress it and to keep it', to work, in fact; which proves that man was not born to an easy life.



ABAGAIL PETERSEN

It snowed on their wedding day.

Like a beekeeper, my mother
was draped in thinning linen.

My father searched for her,
mountainous, spreading veils,

parting rivers of froth to meet her,
open-mouthed.

In certain lighting it's clear:
his gaze clings to the backs of my knees.

The hungry smell of wet pine in me wears
winter, my stockings slipping, sun

burning through branches. And later,
scars on my bitten lips, fuller now.

TORI SLATER

“Who needs to sleep?”

A profile of Professor Stephanie Nelson

It's the time of day when most CAS students are in class, and her animated shuffle brightens the quiet hallway. She enters the office, a stuffed backpack in tow over her shoulder, her head of tight ringlets visibly wet despite the chill of the 40 degree morning. She's a few minutes behind schedule and immediately sets out for the coffee station, greeting everyone in her path as she passes student staff in the reception area, administrators and faculty at their desks, students in bunches reading or talking. With a mug of black coffee in hand, she makes her way to the door marked “Stephanie Nelson, Director.”

Nelson, a professor in the Department of Classical Studies, has been working with the Core Curriculum for nearly twenty years. “I guess I would say I've probably been involved in each aspect individually up until now,” she tells me as we sit down and we begin our interview. “But, of course, I've never had to do the whole thing together.”

The Core is a liberal arts program housed in the College of Arts & Sciences which focuses on classic works of the humanities and social sciences, and important concepts and discoveries in the natural sciences. The program offers an integrated set of courses typically taken over a period of two years. Prof. Nelson tells me that a negative aspect of college education in general is the lack of connection between courses. Making these crucial connections across disciplines is a main focus of the Core.

Nelson talks passionately about further promoting these connections during her time as the head of Core. In her first and second year as director, she has been working indefatigably to implement innovative ideas to keep Core relevant for incoming students: integrating the Core's social science and natural science content into courses that blend the two domains of inquiry in each semester; an Honors program for Core students; Divisional Awards to acknowledge student achievement in each division of the Core; and new language to appear on official transcripts, so that students who have commit-



ted themselves to the sort of learning undertaken in Core seminars can enjoy recognition for that decision. Each of these changes has come about after long hours and tireless consensus building—the often unacknowledged labor of academic administrators!—but many other ideas are waiting for the attention and effort needed to bring them to fruition.

Even while bringing changes on board, Prof. Nelson is committed to maintaining the spirit of the program. Compared to her past duties in the Core—such as being in charge of the undergraduate science mentors, advising the Core House, or serving as a go-between linking the teaching in the Natural

Sciences to the Humanities curriculum—trying to do all of it together keeps her *extremely* busy. (She refills her coffee cup; no time to slow down!) I ask her how she does it, and she informs me that prioritization is key. She’s learned the importance of adopting the attitude: “If it’s not broke, don’t fix it.”

* * *

As the drizzly morning turns into a drizzly afternoon, I follow the Dean—affectionately referred to as “Lord Nelson” by her students in Core and Classics—as she finds a seat in today’s social science lecture. The lights are low, and Nelson is focused, taking notes in the back of the hall. She’s thoroughly engaged in the speaker’s comments comparing Marx and Malinowski. Her throaty laugh echoes through the room whenever the lecturer cracks a joke. I can’t help but crack a smile; her enthusiasm for new academic experiences is terrifically infectious.

Attending each of the Core lectures may seem like an odd choice for a Dean with so many demands on her time. However, Nelson considers it an indispensable part of the job. She explains that staying plugged into the week-by-week progression of each class gives her a necessary perspective. She is devoted to understanding what Core students are learning, even if, as she admits, such a full schedule takes a toll in some ways.

“What inevitably happens is my own research suffers. The extra time that I’m putting in, I would’ve been doing my own scholarship,” she says. But even as she confesses this trade-off, she’s smiling—there’s no resentment I can see on her face. Her modesty and commitment does not go unnoticed by others. Core’s long-time administrative coordinator, Zachary Bos, gives me a succinct analysis when I ask him for his impression of the latest faculty member to sit in the captain’s chair of the Core Curriculum: “What’s there to say? She’s humble, she’s dedicated, and she wants to see everyone succeed. That’s what’s behind every one of her initiatives, as far as I can see.”

* * *

As an alumna of St. John’s College in Maryland, Prof. Nelson had a very different undergraduate experience from that of the typical BU student. “It was

all great books all the time. The whole faculty always knows what's going on in all the other classes." Coming from a school where every member of the faculty is involved in teaching courses in every subject area, Nelson reports that one of the exciting parts about her involvement in Core is the opportunity it provides her to thoroughly reinforce the importance of making connections within a large college environment. Nelson considers it an indispensable skill, not just in the classroom, but in any kind of workplace, and wants to get students to understand just how useful it can be. Students' concerns about the job market are very clear to her. With economic forces making higher education so costly, parents and students are anxious to see how college majors lead directly a career path. In view of these concerns, it can seem unreasonable to choose a humanities education over more "useful" areas of study. High on Nelson's agenda as director is assuring students that majoring in the humanities has the potential to lead to future employment. Among the many conversations she's been having with other departments, she's been talking with the Career Development staff, with plans to schedule additional workshops for students in first-year Core courses. All part of her effort to respond effectively to the practical concerns of students. Discovering what will be helpful to students can be a defeating process. Nelson confesses that sometimes events are held and simply no one comes. Despite these kinds of disappointments, she possesses a resilient attitude. "One of the nice things about having a program that keeps going on is you try it and see if it works. It doesn't work? Try something else."

* * *

Spreading the love of humanities and learning has been a prominent theme throughout Nelson's career, as has her steadfast work ethic. After she finished her graduate studies in Classics at the University of Chicago, she commuted back and forth between Boston and Chicago, teaching at BU several times a week, and spending the rest of her time in the Windy City. Countless hours on planes and subways were spent grading papers. Incredibly, she kept up this lifestyle for ten years, holding to the notion that "travel time was work time."

Not that things have slowed down much. With so many responsibilities accompanying her new position, she finds that her obligations are constantly



multiplying. Nelson says, “Since you end up putting so much time into work you’re doing, it’s much better in the end to actually be doing something that you think *matters*. It takes over your life, but this is true of most things you care about. The more you do, the more you find there is to do.”

It’s clear that Lord Nelson is passionate about her job, and means to continue bringing new ideas and energy to the program. She sums up her persevering dedication by way of closing our conversation for the time being: “Everything ends up being more complicated than you expected. But who needs to sleep, right?” ■

RACHEL QUILLEN

Catalogue of Causes and Ambiguity of Results:

Tocqueville and the French Revolution

In *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, Alexis de Tocqueville examines the demise of the French monarchy and the ensuing aftermath.¹ Numerous crucial changes swept through France's social order prior to the Revolution. Tocqueville argues: "For doctrines of this kind to lead to revolutions, certain changes must already have taken place in the . . . customs and mores of a nation" (13). By dissecting the long-term, underlying bases as well as the short term stimuli, Tocqueville provides a meticulous analysis of the revolutionary process in France. Even so, he remains steadfast with regard to its results.

The primary aim of the French Revolution was, according to Tocqueville, "not merely to change an old form of government but to abolish the entire social structure of pre-revolutionary France" (8). The French monarchy and the feudalistic structure of French society had previously been a stable and long-lasting organization. The nobleman held a contract over his peasants based on mutual obligation, and the function of the peasantry was dictated by the authority of the nobility. As the Revolution approached, French society fell deeper into a state of disarray. A peasant was now free to "move about, buy and sell, work, and enter into contracts... he had not merely ceased to be a serf, he had also become a landowner... this change had far-reaching consequences" (23). In addition, the gradual divestment of the power of the aristocracy and the introduction of the *Intendants* by the monarch decreased the nobility's previous influence over the peasantry. In addition, the rising power and wealth of the peasantry increased their dominance, in both political and economic arenas.

The "bitter hatred" of feudalism arose from this leveling of power among

¹ De Tocqueville, Alexis. *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*. trans. Stuart Gilbert. New York: Anchor, 1983.



the strata of French society, for “... the more these functions passed out of the hands of the nobility, the more uncalled-for did their privileges appear, until at last their mere existence seemed a meaningless anachronism” (30). The “gradual impoverishment of the nobility” in part influenced such disdain; with the loss of authority in the aristocracy, the nobles became closer to the bourgeois—“all who ranked above the common herd were of a muchness”—and a “leveling-up process” occurred throughout societal classes (80-81). With the loss of the former, feudal class stratifications, small groups began to develop among the French people, increasing feelings of civic community, or “group individualism” (96). This sense of group individualism fostered a sense of loyalty and further contributed to the fall of the old regime of feudalism and monarchy. In the short-term, Tocqueville attributes the changing opinion of the role of government among the people to the intellectuals and their “abstract, literary politics.” He describes the common belief that the complex of tradition should be replaced by “simple, elementary rules deriving from the exercise of the human reason and natural law” (139). Tocqueville argues that the ideals of the intellectuals “[found] a welcome among the masses and [acquired] the driving force of political passion” and began to serve as the authority on which the masses could stand in their pursuit of reform.

However, this platform of literary ideology exhibited several negative effects: “every Frenchman felt he was being victimized . . . it seemed as if the choice lay between meekly accepting everything or destroying the whole system” (141). The masses, their minds overcome by the political ideals of the intellectuals, felt that the current structure of France could only be ushered into a new age by a sudden, sweeping revolution, as opposed to a series of reforms, thus catering to all groups in society, rather than to the common people alone.

Despite this partially detrimental effect of the works of the intellectuals, the “imagination of the masses” was swept up in reform. Tocqueville describes how another short-term catalyst was the education of the people, which was influenced by these “men of letters.” He writes, “The only safeguard against State oppression they could think of was universal education” (160). The post-French Enlightenment belief that human beings were endowed with reason and rationality fueled the masses: “the best way of ensuring the political wel-

fare of the nation was for the State to provide education for all" (160). This "new' power" of education would help to stimulate the ideals of the people and feed their desire for revolution.

State paternalism also contributed to a desire for revolution among the French people. Described by Tocqueville as "democratic despotism," the overreaching power of the state was "for abolishing all hierarchies, all class distinctions . . . and the nation was to be composed of individuals almost exactly alike . . . In this indiscriminate mass was to reside, theoretically, the sovereign power; yet it was to be carefully deprived of any means of controlling . . . the activities of its own government" (163). The former social classes had already begun to equalize with the decreasing power of the nobility, but the masses still lacked the power of public opinion, and the ability to moderate the government—without which, "the State was a law unto itself and nothing short of a revolution could break its tyranny" (163).

Tocqueville ends his volume at "the threshold of this memorable revolution." He does not provide an examination of any supposed new social order. His methodical parsing of the long- and short-term causes of the French Revolution, described by Irving Zeitlin as "a classic study of the old order and the social origins of the revolution," is exactly that: an assessment of *L'Ancien Regime*.² Would such a study have provided his analysis with a broader scope? Perhaps. Whether or not a radically different French society was indeed born from the ashes of the fires fed by these ideals is peripheral to the far-reaching lesson taught by the French Revolution. This lesson resounded in men of Tocqueville's time and continues to have influence today. The Revolution "appealed to the universal laws . . . and championed the natural rights of man . . . In short, the lesson of the Revolution has not been lost even on those who have most reason to detest it" (9-13). Though Tocqueville leaves open the question of whether a radically new society was indeed born, the ideals of the Revolution would, as he claims, continue to influence all people, both leaders and citizens, *ad infinitum*. ■

2 Zeitlin, Irving M. *Liberty, Equality, and Revolution in Alexis de Tocqueville*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1971. Page 144.



A WRANGLERS ESSAY: PEDRO SALAZAR

The Polis:

Towards a Brave New World

Cities will have no respite from evil, unless philosophers rule as kings in the cities, or those who we call kings or rulers genuinely and adequately study philosophy, until, that is, political power and philosophy coalesce, and the various natures of those who now pursue the one to the exclusion of the other, are forcibly debarred from doing so. Otherwise, the city we have been describing will never grow into a possibility or see the light of day. [Plato, *The Republic*, translation by Grube, Book V.473e]

Athens, idealized often and by many as the ultimate representation of harmony and balance in a society, suffers a period of political and social upheaval that are the products of its slow decay. Political and social discords, even though present in earlier forms of Athenian government, are emphasized in Plato's lifetime during the end of the fifth century and the beginning of the fourth century. Athens faces a very controversial time in its development. Its many victories in battle with other city states, its prosperous commerce, and its government under Pericles' impulsive tendency towards greatness introduces the city into a process of extension, which raises imperialism and brings wealth and luxury to the city. Affluence, sharply linked with political power, raises corruption as it becomes an obsession in Athenian people. Athenian leaders struggle to acquire political positions under any circumstance, using persuasion and demagogic techniques to bribe the population. Sophistry and its mastery of rhetoric become popular as methods to justify opinions and proposals of crucial importance to Athenian life.

Social and political dimensions produce constant changes in the arrangement of the Athenian government as a number of revolutions take place in the city during the course of the Peloponnesian War. The constant shift in the government from democracy to oligarchy, creates an unclear arrangement of



the society, and an undefined idea of the social group that is supposed to rule. The precarious and unstable systems of administration of the state in Athens, affect the economy and the living conditions of the citizens, as the city-state enters a process of political stagnation.

Plato is a product of the ebbing Athenian culture and is educated with the tools to criticize its denigration. He is revolted by the political situation, as he considers both the democrats and the oligarchs to be corrupt and guided by self-interest. Both parties were concerned with the acquisition of power, while the real social dilemmas were not solved, as the real interests of the whole community were neglected in the administration policies.

In *The Republic*, Plato makes a meticulous analysis of the political and social conflict of the state, and plots his idea of a perfect state by creating a social structure in which the real interests of the people will be perceived and taken into consideration by unifying philosophy and politics. His perfect state is divided into three social groups, which, through the practice Plato's four cardinal virtues (wisdom, courage, moderation, and justice), will reach a perfect equality. Plato illustrates the three social divisions with the Myth of the Metals, assigning a specific metal for each social partition: gold (the rulers educated through Plato's complex program of education); silver (the guardians who are to swell for the security of the state); and bronze (the craftsmen who will proportion the material needs of the society and will be the only individuals allowed to trade with money). The three social classes are perfectly balanced as each has its own advantages and disadvantages.

Plato considers philosophy as the only instrument that should be used when trying to build a true society. However, with a more profound analysis of Athens and other Greek poleis like Sparta, which Plato includes in his dialogue, the ideal state can be refuted, as a similar social arrangement to that presented in *The Republic*, is distinctive yet could never be transformed into Plato's utopia.

In *The Republic*, Plato considers the classes in his perfect state to be equal, as communal happiness is reached through the interaction and cooperation of the three divisions, in which individuals are presumed to labor in only one job. Happiness is produced by the involvement of the truth, discovered through

philosophy, in society. Even though communal happiness and social concord are present in Plato's state as there is equilibrium, the truth is not exposed to the lower social class—the craftsmen—because education is a convenience of the ruling class. What is the use of reaching communal happiness if the whole community is not able to understand the truth? Plato is then removing every possibility of fulfillment as an individual possibility. He describes individuals as constituents of an organization that should only struggle for the convenience of the whole. Individuals become machines that, according to Plato, will not be alienated, as they are to obey their situation in the community. Hence, in Plato's society there are no social differences in welfare, but there are intended differences in knowledge, which are predetermined by the manipulation of society through noble lies.

The difference in knowledge among the different social classes is one of the similar elements that are evident both in Plato's ideal state as well as in the Greek polis. Plato follows the standards of the social structure of the Greek city states to outline his supposed perfect state. Thus, the mistakes that lead to social antagonism are existent in Plato's reasoning.

In the early poleis, the arrangement of the society was thoroughly aristocratic. The superior class was established by warriors of noble blood, among which the king was to be chosen. The aristocrats had a superior possibility of being educated, especially in Athens where, in order for an individual to acquire the instruments of rhetoric, a necessary skill for political exploitation, the sophists would have expected remuneration. Akin, in Plato's *Republic*, the philosopher king is to be chosen among the class of rulers (gold): warriors through an exhaustive educational program based on philosophy.

All the individuals who were considered citizens in the poleis were strictly demanded to participate in war, which would involve sacrificing their time, wealth and life for the benefit of the state. The class of the guardians (silver) in Plato's utopia is supposed to exercise a similar activity to assure the security of the state.

A polis was an exclusive organization. Not all the members of the population had a right to citizenship. Slaves, landless and foreign men, worked in the fields. Artisans, craftsmen, and merchants were slaves native to other cities,

who supply the other classes with corporeal necessities. Plato's distribution of society assigns a similar role to the class of the craftsmen (bronze), who, though supposed to enjoy the benefits of monetary marketing, are constrained to labor in the fabrication of physical needs.

The social arrangement of Plato's ideal state thus follows the social structure of the developing polis. The principal idea of the Greek city-state, the passionate connection between the individual and the city for the food of the community, is also present in *The Republic*.

In the polis, the aristocracy was not supposed to work for a living. This ideal inferred the existence of slavery and political disadvantage and inferiority. The aristocracy dwelled for the organization and benefit of the government. It was supposed to be ready to fight in battle, and to deliberate in the assembly. An equivalent position is occupied by the ruling classes in Plato's ideal state. Conversely, the lower classes of the polis, as well as the class of the craftsmen in Plato's theoretical state, were supposed to strive for the accumulation of profits.

Is there a beneficial innovation in Plato's society? The equality of advantages among the three classes of the ideal state does not proportion a new social arrangement. Plato's proposal is erratic.

In early expressions of the polis, the aristocracy occupied the uppermost position related to power in the government, as its affluence furnished its members with a comfortable, effortless life that enabled individuals to dedicate their time to the endeavors of the government and war. Riches were a convenience that set the aristocracy in a favorable relationship with the power of the state. The location of the higher classes (silver and gold) in Plato's conjectural state is correspondent, even though dominance is canceled in this social arrangement. The silver and gold classes are to have the same advantages that affluence bestowed the aristocracy in the polis.

After the year 800 BC, as the poleis started to consolidate, the Greek kings lose power and the oligarchy establishes in the government, measuring participation in public affairs through wealth. Once again, citizenship was an advantage of the few that determined participation in public affairs through wealth. Once again, citizenship was an advantage of the few, that determined participation in the procedures of government and in the decisions of the state.

Individuals who had the advantage of citizenship were expected to go through a training process that is comparable with the educational system for the philosopher rulers of the *Republic*. Once again, it is necessary to emphasize that this was an advantage of a privileged class that had reached its privileged position through the measure of material belongings: the election of magistrates was determined by wealthy citizens, who would also be willing to fight in battle and provide arms for the army.

The Spartan city-state, which Plato considers a timocracy (the second best government system for the good of the whole community), expounds in its constitution the education and organization of society when related to the military and the government: at the age of seven, every boy of a traditional and well-to-do background was expected to leave his family to enter a severe program of physical training. Men could only return to family life after the age of thirty. However, they were expected to receive their food in the barracks until they reached the age sixty. The arduous labor of the slaves provided financial support for the military force. The Spartan council was to be elected and engrossed by citizens over sixty who had finished serving their military duties. Lower groups of the population were not welcome in political life. The craftsmen and merchants furnished equipment for the militia.

The education of the individuals among whom the philosopher king was to be chosen is equivalent in Plato's ideal state. Plato follows the stages of development of the aristocracy of the polis to plan his social arrangement. However, there is a very significant difference that describes the originality and advantages of Plato's proposal: the involvement of philosophy in the education of the rulers, which supposedly will lead to the creation of a just society. And even though Plato's efforts towards an equal society are admirable as communal happiness is the only objective, the manipulation of reality and the capability to utilize power is still an advantage of a minority which has been an object of obsession of ambition intrinsic in human nature. Such a phenomenon has tried to be explained in attempts, similar to Plato's, of outlining a perfect society in which the installment of power is the non-existent answer to social discord. The works of Machiavelli, Rousseau, Hobbes, and Marx are a few examples of such dissertations.

It is important to recall that Plato belonged to a traditional and aristocratic Athenian family, which could elucidate his desire to place knowledge only in individuals that, in his ideal state, resemble the aristocracy in its social activities. If philosophy was so laudable, why should it only be a possibility of the few, as it was an accession of the wealthy Athenians? Why is the fate of an immense community being determined by several individuals with manipulative power?

Even though overwrought by the political commotion of the time, Plato was undoubtedly conditioned by his own culture, for which he wished to reproduce the situation of power in the hands of a ruling minority. It is also important to acknowledge Socrates' influence as the source that enabled Plato to critique the reality that he contemplated.

However, Socrates considered each individual to lead his life according to the product of the contemplation and questioning of his surroundings. Plato's ideal state, in which the population is directed by the system, is then a paradox of Socratic reasoning.

Moreover, Plato's comprehension of philosophy as the ultimate mechanism towards a just state is unrealistic. Philosophy is a subject that is inexplicable in its essences. A specific truth can be justified through the use of philosophy in a certain reality, but such a conception will not necessarily exist with coherence in other situations. If Plato's state was to develop and mature it would need to be ostracized from any influence of the external world for its philosophy could be deviated through relationships with convergent societies. If this ostracism was not successful, landless populations could be easily submitted into slavery for the sake of the ideal state, destroying the main objective of Plato's proposal.

Plato is not conscious of the difficulty of amalgamating philosophy and politics in the practical sense. His effort to constitute an independent city state similar to the one discussed in *The Republic* was a failure in the city of Syracuse.

Nevertheless, Plato is conscious of the decadence of Athens. Great literary and intellectual expressions develop freely in decaying cultures. Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* were produced in the disappearing Ionia. As well as *The Republic*, they tried to explain man's apprehension towards injustice.

Plato's equal society is not equally educated. It is removing every individualistic trait from the human being. How can justice be attained if the major-

ity of the population lacks social consciousness due to insufficient education? Could philosophy then be developed in a community that does not have the ability to raise controversy? ■

ANALECTS OF THE CORE OF PROFESSOR NELSON

as compiled by Matthew Spencer, and published in the Core Journal Vol. IX:

1. Professor said of Rousseau's Confessions, "Boy, it's so nitty, and it's so gritty!" Only then did Matthew understand.
2. When Matthew thought he really understood Rousseau, the Professor said, "What's the point of Rousseau's life?" and Matthew could not speak for the rest of the day.
3. The Professor said to a student in the class, "You remind me of Satan, but not in a bad way."
4. When the class thought that they had discussed everything, the Professor surprised them, saying "All we have to do now is figure out, who is Don Giovanni and why, and then we go home!"
5. The Professor redirected discussion one day by uttering the words, "When they were snorting coke!"
6. For a confounded class, the best medicine is more and more confusion. Thus, the Professor said, after a dizzying discussion of Faust, "And otherwise, we only have to figure out the meaning of the universe, and then we're done, okay?"

FROM VOL. XIII: JAMES RIGGAN & ALYX SCHWARTZ

Final Choral Ode

All things of this world
Spawned from themselves
Exist forever, deathless and imperishable.
Life itself is eternal.

But all our lives from nothing start and cease.
And this mortal life
Stands alone beneath the heavens
By its birth into decay, and dawn
That slices through the cycle of biological life.

This is mortality:
To be born unto death
Walking a straight path of doom
In a universe that rises
And falls, only to rise again.

And all creatures of creation
All cities and altars, all speech
Shall fail –
Unless mortality may endow these creations
With some permanence
By making them live forever, in memory.

For then these crumbling things
May enter the world of the everlasting
And mortal men and women, hence
May find their place at last in the cosmos.

Such is the riddle of time –
The human heartbeat's rhythm of memory,
Its capacity to echo through time, and death,
Into eternity.

All things fleshly vanish.
Everything is swept away
Except the echo
That beats red with remembering
And caught between canyon walls
Keeps coming back to unsettle.

And so it is
That our breathing hearts, and nothing more
Speak in judgment
On what it is
To be human.

FROM THE ARCHIVES: AUGUST 1991

What is Different about BU's Core Program

excerpts from the memo titled
"A Brief History of Boston University's Core Curriculum"

Boston University's Core Curriculum has a number of features which, while each may not be entirely unique, distinguish it from most others now being offered.

Perhaps most important is its goal of creating a humanities-based program that integrates the natural and social sciences. Few core curricula anywhere in the country undertake such a project in a systematic way. Given the fragmentation of knowledge in our time, and the frequent ignorance and hostility between those dedicated to different branches of knowledge—and given the origins and the philosophical basis of both the natural and social sciences in humanistic concerns—this is a project of some importance. The Boston University Core has as its goal a wholeness of understanding for both students and faculty. This has not proved easy to achieve—but it has proved to be possible, exciting, and important. Each year, the integration between various parts of the Core becomes deeper and richer. Students who complete the Core in 1991 can be expected to have a real knowledge of the origins of the scientific approach to nature, of the philosophical problems at the heart of the scientific enterprise, of the origins, limitations, and philosophical problems of the social sciences, and of what the knowledge gained by the natural and social sciences can offer to the areas of concern of the humanities.

Integration is being achieved through ongoing study and discussion between faculty from various parts of the Core who then broaden their own teaching to include references to, and study of, relationships between the disciplines; through Core lectures specifically devoted to cross-divisional ties and differences; and through readings designed to stimulate the kind of philosophical and critical thinking which brings to light the similarities and differences of various approaches to knowledge.

Another distinctive feature of the Core: In both the Humanities and the Social Science Core, seminars are focused on a relatively small number of important texts. These texts are read in depth, and are, for the most part, read in their entirety. A number of core programs, some of them quite well-established, either require students to read far too many works—sometimes twenty-five or thirty in a semester—or assign only bits and pieces, or in some cases summaries, of the texts to be studied. By assigning entire works and giving students and teachers time to attend to them in some detail, Boston University's Core fosters not merely an acquaintance with great works of the Western and Nonwestern traditions, but an ever-increasing ability to read, appreciate and respond to them. Students learn the depths to which specific passages may be interpreted, and the important to the whole of what William Blake calls "minute particulars." At the same time, students can see the ways in which texts such as the Tao Te Ching point in a variety of ways toward a single mystery of which neither Western philosophy nor modern science can take hold, or how texts such as Plato's Republic develop a vast and cohesive argument from a set of initial frustratingly inadequate propositions (and sophisms) to a grand vision of the nature of justice, the equality of the sexes, and the crucial importance of education.

Students who successfully complete the Core will likely be far more capable of reading with genuine delight and profit (and therefore far more likely to read) the hundreds of great texts that any Core Curriculum must leave out.

In designing and implementing the Core, faculty have worked hard to develop a curriculum in

which great works of the Western and nonwestern traditions are studied for their own sake and in relation to a few important themes. Similar efforts have been put into placing the works in historical and cultural context, while also teaching students wherein and why they may be called timeless.

Along with its emphasis on the ability to read, Boston University's Core curriculum places a heavy emphasis on teaching students to express themselves clearly, both orally and in writing. Where many core programs require perhaps a six-to-ten-page paper at the end of a semester, the Boston University Core requires a minimum of twenty-five pages distributed throughout the semester. Close criticism of style, argument, and content, and sometimes rewriting of an entire paper, are essential components of Core courses. Writing is emphasized not only because the overwhelming majority of college students write so poorly. It is also emphasized because learning to write about something contributes immeasurably to understanding and appreciating it. Lectures and discussions are valuable tools for learning, and reading for oneself is an even more valuable tool; but there is no substitute for the hard thinking and the wrestle with words and sentences that occurs when one must write cogently about something one has read. One learns not only the work, but learns too how to use language, and how to think critically and coherently.

Core teachers also spend a good deal of time helping students to sharpen and strengthen their ability to express themselves orally. Clearly, if one cannot say what one means so that someone else can understand it, one's knowledge has limited efficacy. Most often, an inability to talk clearly and with some facility about something means that one has not understood it well. Student in the Core are encouraged to participate in class discussions and to make oral presentations to the class, and their performance in these endeavours is part of their grade.

Only a few professors will be expected to devote themselves exclusively to the Core Curriculum. These professors will provide continuity and guidance for the Core, but the majority of the teachers in the program are and will be professor from various departments within the College, and, as time goes on, from other colleges within the University. Thus the philosophy and the knowledge of the Core, and its emphasis on the importance of undergraduate teaching, will be spread throughout the College and eventually throughout the University.

Core seminars are taught by regular faculty members drawn from both junior and senior faculty. The accompanying lectures draw not only upon Core seminar teachers, but upon the most outstanding scholars and lecturers in the University. Considerable time and effort are put into this extremely popular and successful aspect of the Core, so that students not only hear people who are outstanding in their field, but the lectures they hear have been developed to contribute to the texts, topics, and themes on which the curriculum is focused.

The Core Curriculum includes both Western culture and important works, themes, history, and cultural insights from nonwestern traditions. The works studied in the Core are chosen not to indoctrinate, but to educate. While teaching that there is much that is admirable about Western culture, much that is worth knowing and preserving about the traditions which are embodied in the United States, the Core does not ignore the fact that there is also much to criticize. It seeks to provide students with the knowledge and skills required for intelligent and balanced criticism, and to teach them the essential importance of a historical and philosophical perspective on the problems of their time.

As the Core Curriculum continues to develop, great attention will be paid to striking a balance between the valid claims of each particular discipline, and the way in which each discipline contributes to that basic integration of knowledge on which a liberal education is built. At Boston University, the Core is recognized as a beginning. Core teachers encourage students to pursue various avenues of inquiry in other courses offered throughout the University, and to recognize that education is an open-ended process which does not, for that reason, have to be a fractured and fragmented one. ■

JUSTIN LIEVANO

“Let us play. . .”

The Profanation of Sex in Paradise Lost

John Milton does not dissociate human sexuality from holiness or virtue. Adam and Eve engage in sexual intercourse while living in paradise, but it does not threaten their innocence. However, Adam and Eve’s sex after the fall produces guilt and troubled sleep. So, at what point do sex and, by extension, reproduction become sinful in the Miltonic universe? Two specific sexual encounters offer potential answers, the first being Satan’s conception of Sin, and Sin’s impregnation by her father and her son. Though Satan’s sexual and reproductive acts mirror those taken by God at times, Satan’s evil distorts sexuality in cause and effect. The second scenario is Adam and Eve’s sex that directly follows their eating of the forbidden fruit. The ancestors of man feel a new kind of lust after the fall, a lust that burns them and makes sexuality a covetous force. Adam, for example, seizes Eve’s hand to pull her to their marriage bed, and though this parallels Adam’s seizing Eve’s hand to pull her from her own reflection, the surrounding circumstances indicate that this seizure bears a different weight. Moreover, Milton’s “Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce” posits that true marriage hinges on the wish to join oneself conjugally with “a fit conversing soul.”¹ The notion of conversation implies reciprocity in the relations of pure lovers. In other words, Milton holds sinless love as essentially selfless. In Adam and Eve’s post-fall sex and Satan’s incest, love becomes perverted, supplanted by selfish desire. Here, the boundary emerges. When self-serving impulses motivate sexuality, sex itself falls into obscenity.

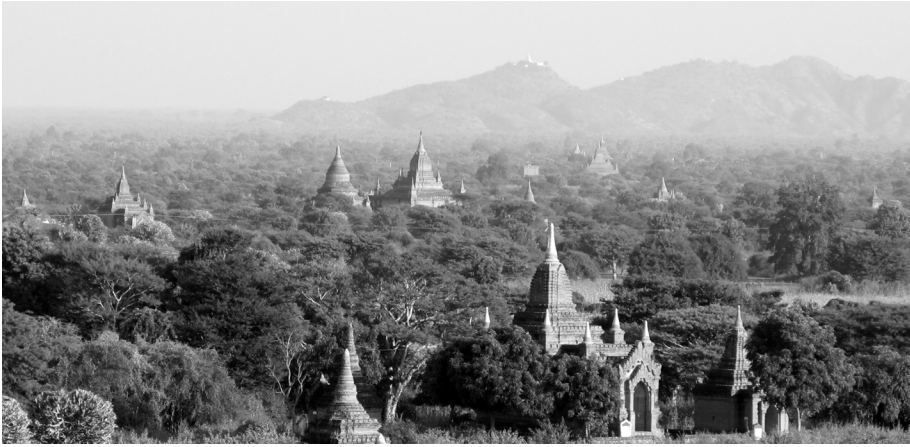
In the Satanic trinity, sex, reproduction, and corruption of the larger world are one in the same. Sin bursts from Satan’s head the moment his thoughts turn to “bold conspiracy against Heavens King,” such that her birth realizes corporeally Satan’s selfishness, his aspiration to assume a higher, unmerited po-

¹ Milton, John. “Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce.” First published 1643. (Handout.)



sition.² Satan, seeing his “perfect image” in Sin falls into a narcissistic lust and takes joys “with [Sin] in secret,” conceiving a “growing burden” in her womb (2.764 – 76). When Satan violates his daughter, he acts in self-absorption, a literal desire to become full of himself, to sate his appetites with himself. Sin immediately follows the tale of her birth with the line “Meanwhile, War arose,” such that syntactically and metaphorically Sin equates this instance of paternal incest with an act of war (2.767). When Satan acts on his selfish sexuality, he begets only ruin. The war that arises as Satan impregnates Sin will cast him out of Heaven and the sex itself generates Death. The product of a self-serving union “[tears] through Sin’s entrails” and “[overtakes] his mother” ... “in embraces forcible and foul,” giving rise to the canine monsters that torment Sin (2.783 – 93). Ostensibly, this new trinity serves as a perversion of the original, especially in the way that Sin’s birth matches The Son’s, but the added sexual dynamics herein speak to the way that selfishness becomes a corruptive force and contaminates sexual activity. Death’s offspring, though more wretched than their mother or father, establish the unstable vulnerability of sexual reproduction as well. Rape is obviously a self-serving action with no basis in love or mutual pleasure, and here rape traps Sin in a cycle of paradoxically destruc-

2 Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*, edited by Thomas Luxon. Accessed 2014. Ch.2, ln.751. <<https://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton>>



tive birth. The creatures come in successions; they emerge hourly to “gnaw / [Sin’s] bowels,” return to her womb, and “[burst] forth / A fresh” (2.797–800). Selfish sex, in this family, holds the potential to deform the body and stain the larger world.

As with Satan and Sin’s tale, Adam and Eve’s life together begins with an immaculate birth. However, the Son sees it fit to create Eve because Adam longs for a companion who will provide him with “rational delights” rather than sensual ones, and because man cannot “converse” with animals (8.391, 96). The Oxford English Dictionary notes³ that the original sense of the word converse includes dwelling with and having intercourse with another, but Milton’s “Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce” asserts a difference between carnal and rational conversation. Namely, the rational conversant is “a ready and reviving” presence for his or her mate (1); in the words of Raphael, the love that grows out of rational conversation “refines / The thoughts, and heart enlarges” (8.589). So, instead of budding from a corrupted mind, the Son generates Eve from the pure body of a man who longs for a companion to better him as opposed to gratifying him. Once again, like Satan, Adam becomes enamored with the woman born of his flesh upon first sight, but Adam claims that his love for Eve

3 “Converse, n.1.” OED Online. Oxford University Press, September 2014. Accessed 2014. <<http://oed.com>>

surpasses simply physical attraction. During his conversation with Raphael, Adam insists that he loves Eve for the graces of “all her words and actions mixt with love / And sweet compliance, which declare Unfeign’d / Union of Mind” (8.602 – 4). In this way, Adam’s love for Eve embodies Milton’s concept of “rational burning” (1). Milton asserts that though one might call what Adam feels ‘desire,’ it reveals itself to be something different, something sanctioned by God. Milton finds nothing unholy in burning for a companion in rational conversation, so Eve’s birth goes untainted, unlike Sin’s.

At the textual level, Milton suggests that once Adam has Eve in the sway of his “manly graces,” the two set about their work in the garden, which, at least in book four, they punctuate with sex (4.490). However carnal Milton’s suggestions are, though, he never intimates that the pair feels any sexual desire. Adam and Eve carry out their “connubial love” in “Rites Mysterious” that “God declares / pure” (4.744 – 46). In other words, before the Fall, sex fulfills God’s commandment to be fruitful and multiply more than it satiates bodily impulses. After eating of the fruit, Adam and Eve find themselves beset not only by knowledge, but also by selfish desire. The quality of Adam and Eve’s fallen cravings makes itself apparent even before the two engage in any sexual activity. Both general ancestors eat the fruit “greedily,” becoming “intoxicated” “as with new wine” which indicates that the pair enjoys a kind of gluttonous physiological pleasure before their thoughts even move to sex (8.791, 1008). Of course, before long, the pair turns their “lascivious Eyes” onto each other and the first act of depravity begins (8.1014). Having fallen, Adam and Eve’s mutual burning ceases to be rational; “In lust they Burne” (8.1015). Adam makes superficial comments about Eve’s “beauty” and the way it “[enflames]” him, in a clear departure from his earlier dialogue with Raphael (8.1029, 31). Adam then asks Eve, “let us play” and in so doing defiles the act of sex by reducing what once fulfilled God’s commandment to idle play, meant only to please the senses (8.1027). In a dim echo of Satan’s self-absorbed reproduction, Adam and Eve’s sex produces a sort of disturbance. The pair slips into “a grosser sleep / bred of unkindly fumes, with conscious dreams” (8.1049 – 50). The word “bred” implies that Adam and Eve’s guilt-ridden nightmares are as much a product of their wanton sex as of their eating the fruit.

One might wonder, then, do self-serving urges motivate all sex after the fall? Milton might respond: “not necessarily.” Just as mankind will not remain fallen forever, sex and reproduction will not remain corrupted. God’s assertion that though man shall be “enthralld / by sin to foul exorbitant desires,” grace shall remain “Freely voutsaft” in Him offers a kind of salvation (3.173 – 75). Falling does not negate the free will that God grants to Adam and Eve, so even having committed a great evil, Adam and Eve have the chance to turn back to God, and dedicate their lives outside of paradise to him. Of course, one sees this promise reiterated in the final moments of the tale when Michael assures Adam that Eve’s “seed” shall “all restore” (12.623). The notion that Adam and Eve’s progeny will restore the world redeems sex and reproduction, making them tools for God’s machinations once again.

In two scenes of sexual intercourse and reproduction, Milton allegorically represents and elaborates on claims from his “Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce.” In the two families that commit physical acts of sexual intercourse and reproduction, Milton shows that sex for the purpose of self-gratifying pleasure produces horrors. Satan’s ambition gives birth to Sin, with whom Satan copulates as a result of his own self-love, which in turn unleashes Death unto his mother and the world. Despite Adam and Eve’s virtuous births by the son, their thoughts fall with their souls into selfish depravity, leading the pair into shame and out of paradise. Only when one burns rationally for another can he or she engage in sexual intercourse with God’s blessing. Milton’s bold choice to depict sexual activity before the Fall plays into a larger corporeality that one finds throughout *Paradise Lost*. Milton, for example, often figures moments of spontaneous creation into terms of sexual reproduction and pregnancy. These generative moments in combination with suggestions of sex in Eden demonstrate that Milton eschews what will become traditional beliefs about the inherent sinfulness of the human body. That is not to say that Milton understands the human body as essentially good, either. Milton’s conception of sex and the larger human body both hinge on the idea of rational burning. Holiness, by Milton’s account, depends on the usage of the body and its functions rationally, and for the glorification of God. ■

HANNAH HAMILTON

Reception

The Castle at Florence: 1513 A.D.

Lorenzo was glad to take lunch with his mother, as he'd only just returned from a sojourn to the country and had not seen her in some time. The mother and son ate in pleasant silence. His own child, Alessandro, sat nearby on the floor, feeding breadcrumbs to his pet bird. The little thing had been a birthday gift from the Duke of Milan.

Unsurprisingly, a servant bearing a parcel in his hands disturbed the peace. He approached Lorenzo, bowed, and offered the package with a humble "M'Lord."

"What's this, now brought to our lap?" he asked with a sigh. While he enjoyed power, he resented the constant responsibility that came with it.

"Arrived just now from Val de Pisa, your highness," the servant answered.

Val de Pisa? Why did that sound faintly familiar, and not in a good way? Was that where his romp in the brothel had gone terribly wrong that summer, spoiled by drunken impotence? Upon unwrapping the package to discover a book, he was at first surprised, but it all fell into place when his eyes fell on the first line of text. "Well, well. If it isn't that scoundrel, tired of exile, no doubt."

"What's this?" Alfonsina asked, fork midway between dish and mouth.

Waving his hand to dismiss his servant, Lorenzo read aloud, "Niccolò Machiavelli to the Magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici..."

His mother listened to the dedication with her customary silence, allowing for an occasional grunt, chuckle or nod. When he had finished reading, his mother cleared her throat, wiped her mouth and contemplatively curled her fingers around a glass of wine.

"A snake in the grass, my son, waiting to bite your heal."

"A snake? Where, Nonni?" Alessandro piped up from the floor.

"Worry not, child," she answered calmly. "He's already been crushed beneath our foot."

* * *

A short piece, Machiavelli's text had absorbed perhaps two hours of their day. While members of his court considered it odd, Lorenzo preferred to consult his mother in political matters. A woman who wasted few words, even since boyhood he had followed all her advice and teachings. The frequentness with which he visited the houses-of-ill-repute was an exception, of course.

She had listened to the entire piece in her customary silence, while a monk read aloud to them. Prince, mother and clergyman alike were surprised to find that the entirety of the work was written in the vernacular Italian, rather than the customary Latin. Lorenzo could offer no explanation for this, especially with his head spinning from the content of the book. He had received several such works in his time as ruler, normally from those seeking a place in his advisory counsel. However, none had interested him as sincerely as had Machiavelli's. The example of Cesare Borgia's having cut his minister in half had caught him off guard, but expressed the author's point quite explicitly.

When the monk finished reading, there was a lengthy silence while they all took a moment to consider what they had heard. Lorenzo was the first to speak when he finally asked, "So, Mother, what think you of this surprising gift?"

The woman showed no indication that she had heard her son's question, and indeed remained in a contemplative hush for so long that he nearly repeated himself. He stopped himself, however, as she replied, "The exile's intent is clear enough. He wishes to return to our city, honorably, as a member of our court."

She paused again. Had Lorenzo not been accustomed to his mother's long breaks in speech, he would have demanded that she tell him something he didn't already know. However, he knew that she was simply choosing her words carefully, especially in the presence of the monk. Monks were infamous gossipers.

"Why ever would he write such a piece in Italian, I wonder!" the monk exclaimed, sipping from a cup of weak beer.

"I was just asking myself the same thing." Alfonsina's arms were folded over her chest, one leg crossed over the other, and her fingertips toyed with the string of pearls around her neck. "Methinks he meant it for other ears."

“Certainly not,” the monk responded quickly. “The package was addressed here, to the castle.”

His mother’s rolling her eyes did not escape Lorenzo.

“What do you mean, Mamma?” he asked. “Whom else could he have sent it to? Or perhaps he meant it for someone else within our palace?”

“Machiavelli wrote this with a great deal of discretion. He was not explicit-- as I said, he is a snake. He winds about in circles. The Italian, however, makes his message clearer. This work is for the people, not the prince. Latin would have reserved the message of the text to royalty and the clergy. Italian allows Machiavelli’s observations to disperse more easily through common society.”

Suddenly Lorenzo understood that which had been uncertain before. He saw realization dawn over the monk’s face, also.

“He detests our family, yet,” his mother finished with a slow nod.

“If I understand you rightly, and I believe I do, your Highness, what you mean is that Machiavelli wishes for commoners to understand the tricks of government,” the monk clarified slowly.

“That is just what I mean,” Alfonsina affirmed. “What’s more, everything he says is right.”

“His advice throughout the text is sound!” Lorenzo agreed. “I particularly enjoyed the bits about war. Simply fascinating, his philosophies. I have a mind to invite him to the court immediately and ask what other thoughts he has to offer.”

“And in normal circumstances, you would be right in doing so, my son,” his mother’s slight tone of impatience did not escape him.

Lorenzo knew instantly that he had reacted too thoughtlessly. Mother had always told him never to trust his first response to anything, a characteristic that he had always struggled with. Like that lovely whore from Milan six months before, who had at first seemed voluptuous and comely, but turned out to be pocked and stank down below. He’d been bound nevertheless to pay the usual rate to the brothel-keeper, despite rushing from the room as soon as he caught site of the woman’s body. Careful observation and thought were critical before taking action.

“Machiavelli wishes to create agitation, to make us out as political monsters to our people,” Alfonsina further explained.

“But that’s impossible, so long as this copy remains in our care, the outside world will never know what he has to say. Latin, Italian or some barbarian tongue! It won’t matter,” the monk declared passionately.

“That’s assuming he hasn’t retained other copies of the work,” Lorenzo argued. “Which he certainly has. The snake! I’ll dispatch ten men to Pisa tomorrow, to finish what I should have completed long ago. That devil was right, perhaps it is best at times to refrain from mercy.”

“My Lord! Remember before whom you speak! I am a man of God,” the monk admonished, humbly folding his hands. “If you must plot bloodshed, dismiss me, I pray.”

And Lorenzo de’ Medici was about to do just that, but his mother raised a hand. “No need. Brother Tomaso, my son has a quick temper, you know that.”

The monk hesitated a moment, but nodded his head in assent. “Of course, Your Highness.”

“You may remain here. Besides, I’d like to hear what you think of this piece you’ve just read to us,” the lady began to finger her pearls again.

Lorenzo wondered why his mother wanted to know Brother Tomaso’s thoughts. He was just a young monk, after all; impressionable and idealistic. His opinion of the book would certainly differ greatly from that of his superiors, who had been in the business of governance longer, and knew that in order to rule a people you had to bend a rule or two. Then again, monks just like Brother Tomaso typically had the most interaction with the common people.

Not surprisingly, he seemed reticent to reveal his thoughts.

“Come on now, man! Cat got your tongue? Out with it!” Lorenzo demanded impatiently. Man of God or not, he was his subject.

“Well, if I’m being honest,” Tomaso began, fondling the golden crucifix in his lap, “I was at first angered by certain aspects of the text.”

“In what way, Brother?” Alfonsina encouraged gently. Lorenzo could tell that she was simply coaxing answers out of the monk in order to demonstrate something to him. This was her favorite teaching method. Even Machiavelli could learn a thing or two from his mother. Then again, perhaps he had.

“It’s outrageous, all of it,” the monk stuttered. “That princes would manipulate their subjects and rivals so mercilessly! Conflict could be resolved through prayer and the love of God, if only princes would be so cooperative.”

Lorenzo could not hold back a bark of laughter at this witless sentiment. Princes resolve conflict through the love of God? God had made him a ruler, regardless of what that exile claimed in his little book. What he did was God’s will. Otherwise, God would smite him down, he was sure of it.

“You deny that deception can be beneficial in certain instances, then?” Alfonsina further urged.

The monk seemed flustered. He was not prepared for an interrogation. “In certain instances, I suppose,” he answered with a nervous shrug.

“If you were to assess this man’s advice in one word, how would you do so, Brother?” the old woman asked softly, slowly drumming her fingers on the table.

“It is wicked, My Lady,” the monk spoke quickly. He seemed to sense with relief that he was about to be dismissed.

Alfonsina met her son’s eyes as she said, “Such as befits a traitor.”

As the monk left the room, Lorenzo snatched the book from the table and leapt to his feet. “What to do, Mother? What shall I do?” he wondered aloud, beginning to pace. “The exile’s advice is sound, his reasoning applicable. In fact, I have never enjoyed another’s man’s observations of principality so thoroughly. In spite of your advice, I wonder what he might have to offer our illustrious family.”

“Nothing, my son, that he has not already given you,” she smiled, nodding her head towards the leather-bound text clutched in Lorenzo’s hand.

Lorenzo did not understand.

“You have there all his best thoughts, what further need have you of the traitor?”

“But Mother, how shall I respond to this work? You saw the clergyman’s reaction. What contempt! We have known the exile for a revolutionary. Shall we not put him down now, quietly, before he can have a second chance at our necks?”

His mother’s knowing look relieved him, for he could tell that she already

had the best solution in mind.

“Execution would be just as detrimental as his reception in this court. You know as well as I that other copies of this manuscript must exist. There are few texts that have been written in Italian, this book of his would undoubtedly draw attention from any learned commoner. Death would only attract notice to the author.”

“Shall I then not respond to this message at all?”

“Respond to the book, but not Machiavelli. Rule based on his teachings, but act as if you had never received them.”

“Mother—”

“This snake already lies writhing in the grass, my son.”

“But, Mother—”

“React indifferently, my son.” ■

ANALECTS OF THE CORE

John Locke: There are two sorts of contests amongst men, the one managed by law, the other by force; and these are of that nature that where the one ends, the other always begins.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau: But no man was ever less curious than I about his friends' secrets. My heart, being solely taken up with the present, is entirely filled with it and, except for past pleasures, which will henceforth be my only enjoyment, I have never a corner empty for that which is no more.



KYNA HAMILL & JUSTIN LIEVANO

“Pop Goes the Core”

*a pop music playlist for Core curated collaboratively with
the experience of an elder & the vigor of a youth*

1. Johnnyswim: “Heart Beats” // Heart Beats EP, 2013
2. Florence & the Machine: “Heartlines” // Ceremonials, 2011
3. Woodkid: “Boatsong” // The Golden Age, 2013
4. This Mortal Coil: “Song to the Siren” // It’ll End in Tears, 1984
5. Imogen Heap: “Minds Without Fear” // Sparks, 2014
6. Marina and the Diamonds: “Savages” // Froot, 2015

JL writes >>

Marina Diamandis (a.k.a. ‘and the Diamonds’) wrote “Savages” in the wake of the Boston Marathon bombings; she read an article wherein the author expressed the difficulty of rationalizing how one man can run a race to save someone’s life (through charitable sponsorship) while another constructs a bomb to destroy life. The song asks a question posed by the social contract theorists, Locke, Hobbes, and Hume; are humans essentially good, and subsequently led astray, or essentially evil and animalistic? “Were we born to abuse, shoot a gun and run / or has something deep inside of us come undone? / Is it a human trait or is it learned behavior? / Are you killing for yourself or killing for your savior?”

7. Royal Wood: “Juliet” // Good Enough Day, 2007
8. Radiohead: “Karma Police” // OK Computer, 1997
9. Mumford and Sons: “The Cave” // Sigh no More, 2010
10. Matchbox Twenty: “How far We’ve Come” // Exile on Mainstream, 2007
11. Lana del Rey: “Summertime Sadness” // Born to Die, 2012
12. Janelle Monáe: “Many Moons” // Metropolis: The Chase Suite, 2008
13. Jewel: “Who Will save Your Soul” // Pieces of You, 1995
14. Johnny Cash: “Hurt” // American IV: Man Comes Around, 2002

15. John Cameron Mitchell: "The Origin of Love" // Hedwig & the Angry Inch, 1998

KH writes >>

John Cameron Mitchell's Hedwig and the Angry Inch is currently playing as a revival on Broadway after its initial run off Broadway in the 1990s. The Origin of Love is Cameron Mitchell's gloriously camp reworking of Plato's Symposium in a story about a disillusioned punk rocker transplanted from East Berlin to America after a botched sex-change operation. Only in America!

16. Smashing Pumpkins: "Bullet With Butterfly Wings" // Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness, 1995
17. James: "One of the Three" // Laid, 1993
18. Röyksopp & Robyn: "Do it Again" // Do it Again, 2014

KH writes >>

I am an unabashed fan of Robyn and this song (for me) had to go on the list because as a teacher in the Core, I have the opportunity of teaching the books over and over and over again. An experience that is a little bit enlightening, a little bit maddening and always groovy. Like samsara!

19. Eurythmics: "Sweet Dreams " // Sweet Dreams (Are made of This), 1983
20. Bonnie Tyler: "I Need a Hero" // Footloose Soundtrack, 1984
21. Bon Iver: "The Woods" // Blood Bank (EP), 2009
22. Björk: "Pagan Poetry" // Vespertine, 2004
23. Queen: "Under Pressure" // Hot Space, 1982
24. Kimbra: "Madhouse" // The Golden Echo, 2014

JL writes >>

Shakespeare's Hamlet may have departed from the Core for the time being, but "Madhouse" captures what eludes Ophelia in the aforementioned play. Kimbra discusses the madness of love, being driven nearly insane by her lover as she attempts to help him: "Chaos and disorder/ I'm a mess then I'm a messiah." However, the bridge of the song reaches a kind of hope for the future (both sonically and lyrically) that poor Ophelia never finds in her own circumstances: "You gotta find that light shining in the dark times." Kimbra, it seems, finds a way out while poor Ophelia resigns herself to death ♪

MATTHEW KELSEY

Hymn to Alma Mater

I sing of welfare and a man who's well
 because of Core, who learned everything
 he needed to know about whores
 from Gilgamesh, and was later pleasurably hushed
 at heart by the Tao Te Ching. Now when he walks,
 he takes one step at a time. When he talks, he sings
 the song of himself, chock full of all
 those contradictions and thinks, *Very well,*
then, feels very well when in the light
 of friendship, especially with a bottle of Bacchus'
 best in hand, Aristotle at his hip.

Not all
 is easy, of course—Darwin's world can be as *poor,*
nasty, brutish and short as it is replete
 with wonder. The heart's hard arc of love
 is harder when your love's a deer—isn't that right,
 Petrarch? And what then, our well man, when your heart
 stands a loaded gun, is up against other guns,
 germs, the steel gaze of others? This man, Gargantuan
 in height, calls upon his Rabelaisian humor, draws near
 his brothers and sisters and says *Don't put Descartes*
before the horse. By all means, don't
lick that horse in the mouth! Remember we've exhausted
thousands of years of stars, and there will be
thousands more. And when this man finally finds his father
 beyond the comfort of his home, asleep deep in the dark
 of the unknown, cloaked in all age has to say
 about youth and how we owned it, and the father's fate
 carries him closer to the colder waters

where no oar helps, where even reflection
 does the son, our man, no good—Well, still it moves
 him to think of Aeneas, of how he was
Burdened and sick at heart, with feigned hope
in his look, and how still he stood
 before his people to say:

Friends and companions,
Have we not known hard hours before this?
My men, who have endured still greater dangers,
God will grant us an end to these as well.
You sailed by Scylla's rage, her booming crags,
You saw the Cyclops' boulders. Now call back
Your courage, and have done with fear and sorrow.
Some day, perhaps, remembering even this
Will be a pleasure. And so our man gathers together
 mother and father, reminds them their job alone
 is to try, to *essai*, to inspect within and without, to harbor
 wonder. Maybe our man is eccentric, maybe Quixotic, but he
 knows truth when he sees it, knows because of Core
 that *one man scorned and covered with scars*
still strove with his last ounce of courage to reach
the unreachable stars, and he knows the world
was better for this, and will continue to be
 or not to be. And if the possibility of the latter
 leans uncomfortably close, our man will keep
 long-ago-learned words closer, will not fear suffering,
 for *a man who fears suffering is already suffering*
from what he fears.

And if he suffers? If he fails,
 falls hard, encounters pandemonium, betrays his own
 good work? He'll grin and bear it. He'll smirk
 in Mephistophelean spirit. And even then he'll call on Core
 to remind us: *Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n.*

FROM VOLUME XVII: ERIN MCDONAGH RUBIN

Does Sancho Panza Read Plato?

Miguel de Cervantes' luckless, enthusiastic, would-be knight errant Don Quixote has enchanted generations of readers with delusions of grandeur and knighthood. Despite entreaties from his stoic squire Sancho Panza, Don Quixote fights valiant battles with windmills and sheep, righteously delivers convicts from their punishment, and defends imaginary kingdoms from giant wineskins, all in the name of chivalry. The world in which he lives exists primarily in literature: he derives its characteristics and events from epic poetry and fables about knights errant which he has read. Despite this eccentricity, however, the question still remains whether Don Quixote's world of sorcerers and damsels in distress is not just as real as the everyday world is to the rest of society. The answer is not as obvious as one might think. Plato pictured reality as an ideal which could not be approached by the material world. Therefore, since concrete objects were only imitations of this ideal, their identity depended upon the thoughts people projected onto them. The function of an object defines its identity, so identities are subjective. Nicolas Rescher agrees with Plato, but for different reasons: as he sees it, material objects have too many characteristics to manifest all at once, and so the reality of something is defined by someone's experience of it. "The finitude of experience precludes any prospect of the exhaustive manifestation of the descriptive factors of any real thing," Rescher explains, and thus Don Quixote's experience defines his fantasy world as reality.¹ Plato's and Rescher's definition of reality, as dependent upon functionality, supports this view and indeed all of Don Quixote's perceptual discrepancies.

Don Quixote elaborates this theory of functional reality perfectly when he explains to Sancho Panza his love for the lady Dulcinea del Toboso during their venture into the woods for his dramatic self-imposed exile. Sancho re-

¹ Rescher, Nicholas. *Realism and Pragmatic Epistemology*. Pittsburgh, PA: Pittsburgh Press, 2005. Page 3.



members Dulcinea as a strong but plain peasant girl, and Don Quixote angrily reprimands him. “Not all poets . . . really have any such mistresses at all . . . It is enough for me to be convinced,” he affirms; “I depict her in my imagination as I wish her to be, both in beauty and in rank.”² The point here is that love is a matter of perception: Don Quixote sees Dulcinea this way, and loves her this way, and so this way she shall be until he decides differently. What she is to Sancho does not matter, because Sancho does not love her. Similar logic

² Cervantes, Miguel de. *The Ingenious Hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha*. trans. John Rutherford. New York: Penguin, 2003. Page 216.

applies to Mambrino's helmet: empirically speaking, the object is a chunk of metal pounded into a half of an empty sphere. To the barber, who needs a bowl in which to wash things, the object becomes a bowl. To Don Quixote, who needs to protect his head more than most people do, it is a helmet. This difference of opinion about a seemingly undisputed, empirical fact illustrates Rescher's point about the various manifestations of objects' identities. Sancho Panza's affirmation is crucial here, because he changes his mind based on experience. When Don Quixote first acquires the helmet, Sancho exasperatedly insists that it is only a simple bowl. However, when the original owner comes to reclaim said bowl, Sancho claims that "my master won [the helmet] . . . and if it hadn't been for this here basin helmet he'd have had a bad time of it" (418). Because he saw the object's usefulness as a helmet, Sancho changes his idea of its identity. This follows Plato's logic entirely, though he seems unaware of this.

The fact that Don Quixote has a different perception of reality than those around him does not necessarily make him mad or change his own identity in any way. Throughout the text, except where it pertains to things like castles and adventures and fantastical characters, he is a man of intelligence and good judgment, which both the narrator and Don Quixote's fellow characters affirm. When he gives his thesis about the difference between a knight's hardships and those of a scholar, the narrator remarks that "Don Quixote was developing his arguments in such an orderly and lucid way that for the time being none of them listening to him could believe that he was a madman" (355). Most readers would agree that Sancho, though simple and greedy, is at least sane, yet he falls into agreeing with Don Quixote about some of his delusions. Sancho is a simple peasant, Don Quixote is a brave and unfortunate man, and as Erich Auerbach says, "the fact that Sancho is playing a rogue's game [encouraging his master] and that Don Quixote is enmeshed in his illusions does not raise either of them out of their everyday existence."³ This tendency of Don Quixote to be genuine, eloquent, and oddly sensible endears him to readers who might otherwise distance themselves from a character so obviously abnormal.

3 Auerbach, Erich. "The Enchanted Dulcinea." *Mimesis*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953. Page 342.

The limitations of Don Quixote's madness are evident towards the end of the story, when three peasant girls approach on donkeys and, despite Sancho's beautiful descriptions of their palfreys and jewels, Don Quixote sees nothing but three homely girls and smells nothing but "raw garlic that poisoned [his] very soul" (Cervantes 550). Here the roles apparent throughout the story have reversed: Sancho extols the beauty and nobility of the three women in eloquent, descriptive language, while Don Quixote, who has no immediate need to see what is not there, stares "with clouded vision and bulging eyes at the woman whom Sancho called queen and lady" (548). He appears bewildered by this discrepancy, but argues with Sancho nonetheless. "I am telling you, friend Sancho," he says, "that it is as true that [the alleged palfreys] are asses, or maybe she-asses, as it is that I am Don Quixote and you are Sancho Panza; or at least this is how it seems to me" (547). Of course, having adopted a noble name when he decided to be a knight, the man is not really Don Quixote—however, to illustrate the point, his identity as a Don (a Spanish noble) is intrinsic to his fantasy about knighthood, while the identities of the three girls as noblewomen is not.

Following Plato's logic, Don Quixote appears as sane as any other character in this mountain of a novel. His illusions are a result of his need for extraordinary experiences to support his fantasy of being a knight. He is lucid, determined, and articulate, except where discussions or events pertain to his dreams knighthood and chivalry, and Plato and Rescher's logic defends his perceptions as valid. Though he undeniably dreams of the impossible, Don Quixote's otherwise dignified manner contrasts his ridiculous exploits and makes him an anomaly endeared to his readers, who can sympathize with his dreams of glorious bygone days. ■

ANALECTS OF THE CORE

Francis Bacon: The sense is like the sun, which reveals the face of the earth but seals and shuts up the face of heaven.



ANDREW JOHNSTON

Cheeseburgers Out of Hell

At the West Campus dining hall, one thing is for certain: there will be a painfully time-consuming, starvation inducing line for an overcooked, low-quality, cheeseburger. While it may not seem like a substantial enough problem to be discussed intellectually, this is actually a major concern of many in the world of academia. Drawing ideas from ancient texts may give some insight into how society can overcome this excruciating experience. Both *The Nicomachean Ethics* and *The Divine Comedy* explore human behavior and its consequences. Therefore, themes from these two books can give clues as to how to solve this plaguing situation that haunts college students at dinner time. Aristotle would take an ethical approach, reminding society of its higher goal of achieving happiness by exploring the function of humans, the virtue of moderation, and the reward that comes from an intellectual life. Dante, however, would take a much more intense stance, informing society that overindulgence and bitterness are sins that earn individuals eternal residence in Hell. He would use characters similar to Virgil to scare people away from such sandwich lines. Despite their differences, both solutions shine light on the importance of reading and understanding ancient texts in hopes of applying them to even the smallest of contemporary dilemmas. While both intellectuals offer compelling cases for their methodology, it depends on the individual, as well as society, to see which one should, or could, be implemented and whether or not the long lines for cheeseburgers will soon become a thing of the past.

In a world where humans are still learning how to solve the many issues a complex society contains, oftentimes the little problems can be overlooked. This is unfortunate because perhaps it is necessary to solve these before we can tackle the world-defining ones. As dinner time rolls around at any college, the despair that comes from a painful wait for a juicy burger is enough to make anyone realize that a change needs to be made. It is important to examine an array of techniques for solving such a problem and then choose the option which best suits the circumstances. With this in mind, one must first note that

a burger line is only a problem because it provokes unpleasant emotions in the people waiting. If these emotions were to be prevented, the problem would no longer exist. Secondly, this is a problem that can be viewed from a consequential standpoint because both the action of, and reason for, standing in line is preventative of a virtuous life, according to some. Finally, the line is formed due to sluggishness at the grill. Any suggestions as to how these three issues can be prevented must be fully considered. Analysis of the themes of ancient texts is one way of finding such plausible solutions, and those should not be overlooked.

Aristotle would take an objective approach to both prevent long lines, and to ease the pain they cause. He believes that humans have a gift from the gods, one that no other animal possesses. This he identifies as the gift of contemplation, writing:

the activity of the divinity which surpasses all others in bliss must be a contemplative activity, and the human activity which is most closely akin to it is, therefore, most conducive to happiness.

What better time is there to contemplate the world and human existence, searching for happiness, than in a line waiting for food? If this were to be put into practice, one would not be wasting time but instead be bettering oneself virtuously, leading to a diminished feeling of pain while watching the meat slowly cook. While Aristotle would encourage students to use this time for meditation, he would also urge chefs to be more efficient. He believes that there are some sciences that pertain directly to the highest form of human function and therefore require high levels of proficiency. These include strategy, household management, and oratory. Burger making is part of household management and requires a great deal of strategy, so the chef should be someone who has achieved excellence in this field and can make burgers efficiently and take orders flawlessly. Taking this into account, lines would move quickly and young students, who are still learning the virtue of contemplation, would suffer less. Finally, Aristotle would attack the students in line. It is common practice to order a double cheeseburger. Nearly everybody does and because

the grill is only so large, often there are more people in line than burgers cooking. Aristotle would promote the option of only allowing one burger per customer, if we understand correctly his claim that “since we are naturally more attracted to pleasure we incline more easily to self-indulge than to a disciplined kind of life.” He goes on to write that a truly virtuous man finds self indulgence “disgusting.” He would believe that we should find a mean between discipline and self indulgence and therefore only order one burger, seeing as it is all we really need. This would result in more customers being served at once and a substantially faster line, allowing students to return to their studying or to continue contemplation while they eat. Aristotle’s plan lays out three simple steps for dissolving the issue of time wasting lines. At once, they will both speed up the dining process, ease suffering, and make everyone involved a more virtuous person.

While Aristotle would strive to make people happier in his approach, Dante would employ fear instead. In *The Divine Comedy*, Dante uses the character of Virgil as a teacher and tour guide who has all the answers regarding Hell. Virgil’s sagacity is evidenced in Canto VII when Dante asks him a question and refers to him as “Master,” signifying Virgil’s superiority. When attempting to solve the contemporary problem, Dante would again use a teacher as a tool ensuring that it would be someone the students admire and look to for guidance. The teacher’s word would be final, and similarly to Dante in *The Inferno*, the students would feel subordinate to their teacher. From here, the teacher would spread God’s word, warning the people in line of Hell. For example, he would share the laments of the sorry souls trapped in the fifth circle who tell Dante (again, in Canto VII) that they are there because they “had been sullen in the sweet air that’s gladdened by the sun.” This is precisely what the complainers in the line are doing. The burger line is a *blessing*; it has cheeseburgers at the end of the wait, something these people should be thankful for. Instead, they whine. The teacher would have to remind them that in hell they would “[tear] each other piecemeal with their teeth.” This fear would defeat their feeling of despair, instead forcing them to realize what is good about the wait, thus rendering the problem a non-issue. Dante’s teacher would also look to reduce the line by explaining that the gluttonous also have a circle in Hell. This third

circle, as depicted in Canto VI, is plagued by “gross hailstones, water gray with filth, and snow [that comes] streaking down across the river,” making many of the customers realize the possible consequence of their sin (stuffing their faces with a double cheeseburger packed with toppings and a side of fries). Many of the righteous, God-fearing students would leave the line to find healthier, smaller portions elsewhere, thus speeding up the process for everyone else. In Dante’s approach, fear and obedience are the driving forces. Hell being as horrible as Dante describes, it is no wonder that the use of Christian theology would be his best approach to the situation.

The difficulty in solving problems arises from the fact that people often-times do not listen to the good advice. Both methods offered above give viable solutions, but it depends on the individuals in line as to which one would work better. If the people were looking for happiness, by bettering themselves virtuously, Aristotle’s approach would be more appealing. In a school full of stress and competition, many may want to explore new ways to be happy and be the best they can be. Dante’s religious route, on the other hand, would only be taken seriously by people who believe in and fear Hell. Assuming they do, however, the fear of fire and brimstone would be more than enough of a reason to drop out of the line or stop complaining. With both ideas in mind, examining the beliefs of the average person in the burger line would most likely give Aristotle an advantage. This is because the majority of people nowadays do not fear Hell as Dante says they should. Since there is a significant amount of sinning and general lack of strict religious followers, most people would disdain Virgil’s words, whereas they would view Aristotle’s as more scientifically realistic.

Assuming Aristotle’s approach is more effective, what is the chance that it will ever be implemented? Slim, at best. Most people would rather stare at Facebook on their smart phones than dive into the contemplative life during their fifteen-minute wait. Secondly, the hall manager is not going to hire a burger specialist due to high costs, so a proficient college student will get the job. Finally, with hungry students they wish to please, the dining hall will have to continue serving double cheeseburgers upon request. While the doctrines of Aristotle may briefly spark interest when people worry that they are leading

meaningless lives, they will soon revert back to their accustomed ways. Before they know it, they will enter the gates of Hell and, looking to their left, will see Aristotle shaking his head from his spot in Limbo.

Imagine a dining hall where the burger lines are always short, a master chef prepares only single cheeseburgers, perhaps even healthful ones, and people wait patiently while contemplating the philosophical questions of the ages. Additionally, there are no complainers in line and everybody excitedly thanks the chef for their small meal and makes sure to say grace before taking their first bite. They fear divine wrath and strive for excellence in virtue. Anyone who has ever been to West Campus knows this could never happen. A culture where greed is accepted, complaining is tolerated, and anti-religious movements are on the rise challenges scholars to find new ways to apply themes of ancient texts to the contemporary world. It appears that despite philosopher's best efforts, society has evolved to a point where these themes are simply too far from being relevant. ■

ANALECTS OF THE CORE

Aristotle: Friendship is most necessary with a view to living. For without friends no one would choose to live, though he had all other goods.

Dennis Costa: The fiction of this fiction is that the fiction is not a fiction.

FROM VOLUME IX: DAVID ROOCHNIK

It All Fits Together

I was in a bar, drinking a beer with Prof. Stephanie Nelson, when before my very eyes, she had one. I've seen her have them before, especially during a Core review session for the final exam. But I had never witnessed one quite as intense as this. Yes, she was having, and I was watching, a peak core experience (PCE).

Prof. Nelson was describing a lecture that Prof. Eckel had given, and which her section had then discussed. Something about Jerusalem being in the center of Israel, and the Temple being in the center of Jerusalem, and the Ark being in the center of the temple, and inside the Ark... the BOOK. Her eyes lit up when she said the word "BOOK," and her arms began to wave. She started to speak in what sounded to me like tongues. Something about IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE LOGOS, and something about the the center of Uruk, and the camel who couldn't go through the eye of the needle, and how I was damned, and how IT ALL FITS TOGETHER.

I, of course, couldn't quite figure out *how* IT ALL FITS TOGETHER. I wasn't even sure what IT was. So I just sat there, drinking my beer, wondering what was going on. I'm pretty sure it was, in fact, a PCE. But I have to admit that I'm not positive. This is because I myself have never had a PCE. I've come close; like the time I was lecturing about the *Odyssey* and realized how Homer is really just an inverted Platonist. At that moment, a lightbulb went on over my head. I had made a CONNECTION. But I wasn't yet able to fit it *all* together. And I didn't get to speak in tongues. No, only Prof. Nelson gets to do that.

Actually, now that I think of it, maybe she wasn't speaking in tongues. Maybe I just didn't understand what she was saying. Oh well, I guess that means I'll have to keep drinking beer with Prof. Nelson... and going to Core review sessions. ■

FROM VOLUME V: HANNAH HINTZE

Wisdom Alone

... *thy gentle hand*
Seiz'd mine, I yielded, and from that gentle time see
How beauty is excell'd by manly grace
And Wisdom, which alone is truly fair. (IV.488r)

John Milton's *Paradise Lost* is not an allegory. Milton gives to his Adam and Eve a richness that prevents either from referring to a single discrete and namable reality. This same richness that precludes pure symbolism allows for a great range of suggested meanings and connections. The universality of great poetry is in part this very ability to point beyond itself to other ideas and other works, and to enter into a conversation with them. Thus, we must take the suggestions of great poets seriously, and follow them to the universal discussion.

It is in this spirit, then, that we can examine Adam and Eve not only as individuals or as Man and Woman, but also as elements of the soul, as parts of our thinking, knowing, and loving that exist in unity and give us life. Of course Adam and Eve are not *only* this, but if Milton is truly a great poet, then they are *also* this. We must trust that if he does not have Plato at his ear, then at least he has him in the room when he writes "justify the ways of God to men." Milton cannot write without hearing Plato's justice in the ordered soul, and this voice must echo with more or less reverberation in Milton's own work. If Adam and Eve's marriage reminds us of the workings of the soul, we can assume Milton's active cue. His poetic suggestions are meaningful and serious, and if they lead us to reality that does not fit with our own thinking and experience, then we must either question that poetry or bring ourselves to meet it.

Adam and Eve's marriage is the life or Paradise, and the end of the mar-

1 Milton, John. *Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained*. ed. Christopher Ricks. New York: Signet, 1968.

riage is the loss of Paradise itself. Bliss and woe depend on integrity. Similarly, the poem itself stands or falls on the strength of this central image.

Milton suggests in his language and in his argument that Adam and Eve are united unto Wisdom; in it, all their individual possibilities for beauty, grace, contemplation, and strength converge and become actual. The Wisdom that is of all things “truly fair,” is the defining feature of life in Paradise.

One may object, however, that the very passage that establishes Wisdom as that principle virtue which comprehends all others (IV.488, quoted above), also attributes it to Adam alone. If this is true, if Adam is complete alone, then what is the addition of Eve? Of what worth is Eve’s lesser (and perhaps false) beauty to Adam, if he already has Wisdom, which alone is “truly fair”? If Adam holds Wisdom without Eve, then Eve’s dowry is merely a fatal flaw, an artificial weakness Milton binds to Adam to explain his sin. Is she as indispensable in explaining union as she may seem to be in explaining the fall?

Before we can answer, we must set out more clearly what Adam and Eve point to. We see them first walking together in the garden, “Not equal, as their sex not equal seem’d; / For contemplation hee and valour formed, for softness shee and sweet attractive grace” (IV.296). Milton says later that Adam looked over Eve and “beheld / Beauty” (V.13). Milton portrays Adam as the thinker, the active seeker, the beholder, the strong. His motion is outward, to grasp and form.

Eve’s role is more passive. She receives Adam’s thought as she yields to his seeking. She is the beheld, and her excellence is her softness. Adam is not *only* the drive of Reason, and Eve is not *only* the receptiveness of beauty, but it is impossible to talk about Adam and Eve’s significance without these two ideas.

Part of the difficulty in determining which lays claim to what lies in the fact that Adam and Eve are so closely joined in the language of certain passages: Eve yields to Adam when she sees “how beauty is excell’d by manly grace and Wisdom, which alone is truly fair.”

Milton suggests unity by the grammar of the section; “manly” modifies “grace.” Eve was made for “grace” but “manly,” that belongs to Adam. Thus, Adam’s quality is grafted onto the previous description of Eve, who is made for “sweet attractive grace.” Manly grace is no longer *his*, but *theirs*, since they

are grafted together. Furthermore, “Manly grace” and “Wisdom” receive the ambiguously singular: “which is.” Which is? Manly grace alone is truly fair? Or Wisdom alone? Or perhaps a composite? Manly grace belongs to Eve, and is, with Wisdom, truly fair. And to complicate matters (or perhaps to simplify them) Reason and Beauty are married in another composite term, “truly fair.” Milton’s language seems to suggest that both Eve and Adam have a part in Wisdom, and that perhaps Eve submits beauty not to a wisdom that Adam alone holds, but rather to the Wisdom that both achieve together.

Adam and Eve first appear shining with “Truth, Wisdom, Sanctitude, severe and pure” (IV.293). Wisdom is something they do not hold or pursue on their own. Indeed, Raphael warns Adam against a solitary contemplation. “Solicit not they thought with matters hid / ... joy thou / In what [God] gives to thee, this Paradise, / And thy fair Eve (VIII.167).” Reason is made to seek the beauties before it, to be attracted and bound to those other senses that gather and present beautiful images for its delight. Wisdom is not Reason alone, but Reason intent on present beauties. Without Eve, Adam is the Mind that is just as prone as unguided Fancy “to rove uncheck’t” (VIII.188). “Prime Wisdom,” says Raphael, is “to know / That which before us lies in daily life” (VIII.188).

Adam’s gaze is too high unless Eve draws it downwards. His wonder becomes wisdom only when it is fastened on a present object. “Heaven is for thee too high to know what passes there” (VIII.172); says Raphael. Adam is fruitless unless he turns to “joy in....Eve” and so to be, with her, “lowly wise” (VIII.173).

Thus, it seems that Wisdom cannot belong to Adam alone. Eve is indispensable. There is no Wisdom without her, and in particular, without her submission to Adam. Eve’s soft ringlets “impli’d / Subjection, required a gentle sway, / and by her yielded, by him best received, / Yielded with coy submission, modest pride, / And sweet reluctant amorous delay (IV.307).” The excellence of Eve is in yielding, and yet yielding with delay. “Nature herself, though pure of sinful thought, / Wrought in her so, that seeing me, she turn’d [away]” (VIII.506; This original turning away, flying to the image of herself, is a tendency softened to mere “delay” under Adam’s sway. Her submission after delay is proof of her willingness, since submission means nothing unless it is free. Thus Adam seeks (going back to the Latin, require) more than requires. He

may not seize her except with a “gentle hand.”

And what is it for Adam to seize gently? He must always *mind* Eve. He must *keep her in mind*, and be drawn to her, as Raphael has said, but he must also *mind* her: guide, protect, and inform her. There must always be a balance between their individual strengths. Adam must rule without crushing, and be drawn without yielding completely. He complains to Raphael that “all higher knowledge” seems to leave him in Beauty’s presence. But Wisdom is not to blame. “Be not diffident / Of wisdom, she deserts thee not, if thou / Dismiss not her” (VIII.562), counsels Raphael, “Weigh with [Eve] thyself; / Then value” (VIII.571). The right amount of “well-managed self-esteem” will move Eve to “acknowledge [Adam] her Head; / And to realities yield all her shows” (VIII/574). Thus, balanced between two extremes, Adam minds Eve as the Beholder minds Beauty. He is drawn to her, and she submits to his gaze.

She submits to him also as a matter to form. His thoughts seek her out and form understanding, while her thoughts “find all repose” only in him (V.28). Adam is her perfection, bringing to birth the possibilities she holds. Adam calls their discourse “rational delight” (VIII.391). Eve loves this same Wisdom in which “high dispute” is solved “with conjugal caresses,” for “from his Lip / Not Words alone pleased her” (VIII.55). Adam and Eve’s union is the creation of life. Without Eve, Adam is sterile, he “interrupt[s] the sweet of life by roving from her” (VIII.184). And without Adam, Eve may be informed and beguiled by false guides, and her fruitfulness used to bear sin and death. Neither form nor matter by itself is life, but Wisdom, their union, is.

Adam’s discourse with Eve concerning her dream of temptation provides another picture of marriage within the soul:

In the Soul

Are many lesser Faculties that serve
Reason as chief; among these Fancy next
Her office holds; of all external things,
Which the five senses represent,
She forms Imaginations, Airy shapes,
Which reason joining or disjoining, frames

All what we affirm or what we deny, and call
Our knowledge or opinion. (V.100)

Fancy presents possibilities, and Reason forms them into knowledge. But, when we sleep and Reason “retires into her private cell...Oft in her absence mimic fancy wakes / to imitate her; but disjoining shapes, / Wild work produces oft, and most in drams, / Ill matching words and deeds long past or late” (V.100). Milton very deliberately uses the same terms when he describes Adam’s separation from Eve. He is “absent” from her. There is no principle to behold and inform her. Without the union in Adam, her beautiful, sensual variety becomes wild and disparate. She prophesies her own fall in her speech to Adam: “what we by day / Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind, / One night or two with wanton growth derides / Tending to wild (IX.209). Wisdom alone can draw, support, yield and shape into life and proper growth. And without Wisdom, there is only wildness, a nightmare in an untended garden.

Eve has a dream that foreshadows reality. But the fall Eve dreams about is a dream in itself; it is the consent of mimic Fancy before Adam’s waking consent. The real Fall happens when the Soul is awake. Adam consoles Eve: “Evil into the mind of God or Man / May come and go, so unapproved and leave / No spot or blame behind: Which gives me hope / That what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream, / Waking thou never wilt consent to do” (V.116). Yet the dream must matter, for on waking, Eve abhors to have dreamed in sleep of that consent. “In sleep,” while sleeping, she did not abhor thus to dream. She has not sinned, but Evil has left its spot on her: she sheds tears not of relief, but of remorse.

She and Adam both wake to betrayal. Evil touches them in their sleep, and leaves a mark, an “addition strange” that begins to split them down the middle (V.116). While Adam is absent, Eve is enticed. It is her nature and her excellence to yield. Imagination, Fancy will be formed by something, whether Mind wakes or sleeps. But how not fall asleep? What safeguards are there for preserving Wisdom?

Milton answers us in the morning of the Fall. Eve, touched by a dream, tells Adam to let her go: “That thou shouldst doubt my firmness . . . I did not

expect to hear" (IX.279). But Eve is precisely not meant to be firm. Her excellence is in yielding. There is no Wisdom, if she attempts firmness; there is no Wisdom if Adam allows her. In one moment, the two switch roles, and Adam tells Eve, "to short absence I could *yield*" (IX.248).

Adam argues that Eve gives him no choice. His sway is gentle. He cannot force Eve: "Thy stay, not free, absents thee more" (IX.372). But is it so determined, that when Eve is firm, Adam must yield? Then she would already be lost to him: then a dream has already robbed him of life and Wisdom.

But Adam is not without choice. All is not lost until he lets Eve out of his sight. "Her long with ardent look his Eye pursued;" His Eye pursued, but he did not (IX.357). And herein lies the abdication; Adam was made to *mind* Eve, not to inform and guide her, but to behold her, to keep her in his mind. Wisdom requires that he be firm in seeking; not to follow is to lose Eve forever: "Hadst thou been firm and fixt in thy dissent, / Neither had thou transgressed, nor thou with me" (X.1160). Thus Adam, awake, allows Eve to fly. This abdication presages Adam's fall just as surely as Eve's dream presages hers. They will be severed; Wisdom will be lost.

Thus, Adam is without help when Eve returns. All alone and without Wisdom, he follows. But to seek Eve now is to seek too late, since the union they achieved is vitiated by their separate follies. From henceforth, they will walk together, but "wandering" and "solitary."

Milton's suggestion is clear. Adam and Eve fall together in the loss of Wisdom. Life falls to death, and the fruit is a divided soul. For this divided soul, harmony is lost in opposition. Sterile reason alternates with rank growth of Fancy, the intellect capitulates to sensuality or disdains it, Form holds harsh sway, or it does not rule at all. So without wisdom, qualities of mind and heart walk hand in hand but are not one. ■

ZACHARY BOS

Truth We Will Know

Sharpen not the knife that slits the belly
of the kicking lamb; have no bowl ready

for spilled entrails, wherein to seek some truth.
The belly of a stone knows more of worth.

True divination is learned in the light
glancing off rock and roof at setting sun,

when lovers feeling need embrace. It is
the skin tarot of teeth and tongue and eye

that knows the length of life. It pities none.
Look at this human face I wear and ask,

When shall I die? *In time*, the tarot says;
in time. No flame or scrying glass or rune

nor hopeful prayer or spell knows otherwise.
Tear up your lying cards of Marseilles.

about the contributors

Zachary Bos has been an administrative member of the Core staff since 2003. He was a student in the graduate creative writing program at BU..

Giselle Boustani-Fontenele has come to Boston from Tarzana, California to study in Core and major in Religion.

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SASSAN TABATABAI *translating* RUMI

Qazal 170

I was dead, now I'm alive. I was crying, now I'm laughing.
I was struck by the power of love; now I am love everlasting.

I have seen my fill, my soul is bold,
I have the lion's heart; now I am a Venus lit.

He said "You are not crazed, not suited for this house."
I wandered and went mad; now I am bound in chains.

He said "You are not drunk. Leave, for you are not of this suit."
I left and I got drunk; now I am drenched in bliss.

He said "You are not slaughtered, not drowned in delight."
I faced his life-giving face; now I am cast down and slain.

He said "You are shrewd, but lost in day-dreams and doubt."
I was tricked, I was confused; now I am uprooted from it all.

He said "You are a flame; you are the center of this feast."
I'm no flame, I'm no feast; now I am wind-blown smoke.

He said "You are the lord and head, the leader and guide."
I'm no lord, I'm no guide; now I am a slave to your will.

He said "You have wings and feathers, I will not give them to you."
I lusted for his wings; now I am wingless and bare.

New-found luck said to me "Don't go. Don't be pained.
I have sympathy for you; now I am drawn to you."

Ancient love said to me "Do not leave my side."
I said "Okay, I won't." But now I am rooted and ground.

You are the fountain of the sun, I am the shade of the willow.
You came and struck my head; now I am see-through and low.

My heart unearthed a blazing soul; my heart split and opened wide.
My heart spun the freshest silk; now I am this beggar's foe.

At dawn, the soul's silhouette pranced without care.
I was a mule-driver and slave; now I am a king and lord.

Your infinite sugar sweetens this grateful scroll.
He came and sat beside me; now I am his friend.

The afflicted earth pays tribute to heaven's wheel;
It turned and gazed at me; now I am receptive to light.

The turning wheel gives thanks to angel, lord and realm.
I have felt his merci; now I am noble and bright.

Gnostic truth is pleased to see us soar.
I have climbed the seven floors; now I am a shining star.

I was Venus, now I'm the moon. I am the two-hundred-fold sky.
I was a hidden Joseph before; now I am a Joseph come forth.

I am like you, illustrious moon; look upon me as yourself.
For I have heard you laugh; now I am a garden of smiles.

Be like a chess-piece, glide without sound.
I have seen the face of the lord; now I am exulted and blest.

“The light which puts out
our eyes is darkness to us.
Only that day dawns
to which we are awake.

There is more day
to dawn. The sun
is but a morning star.”

(henry david thoreau)



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