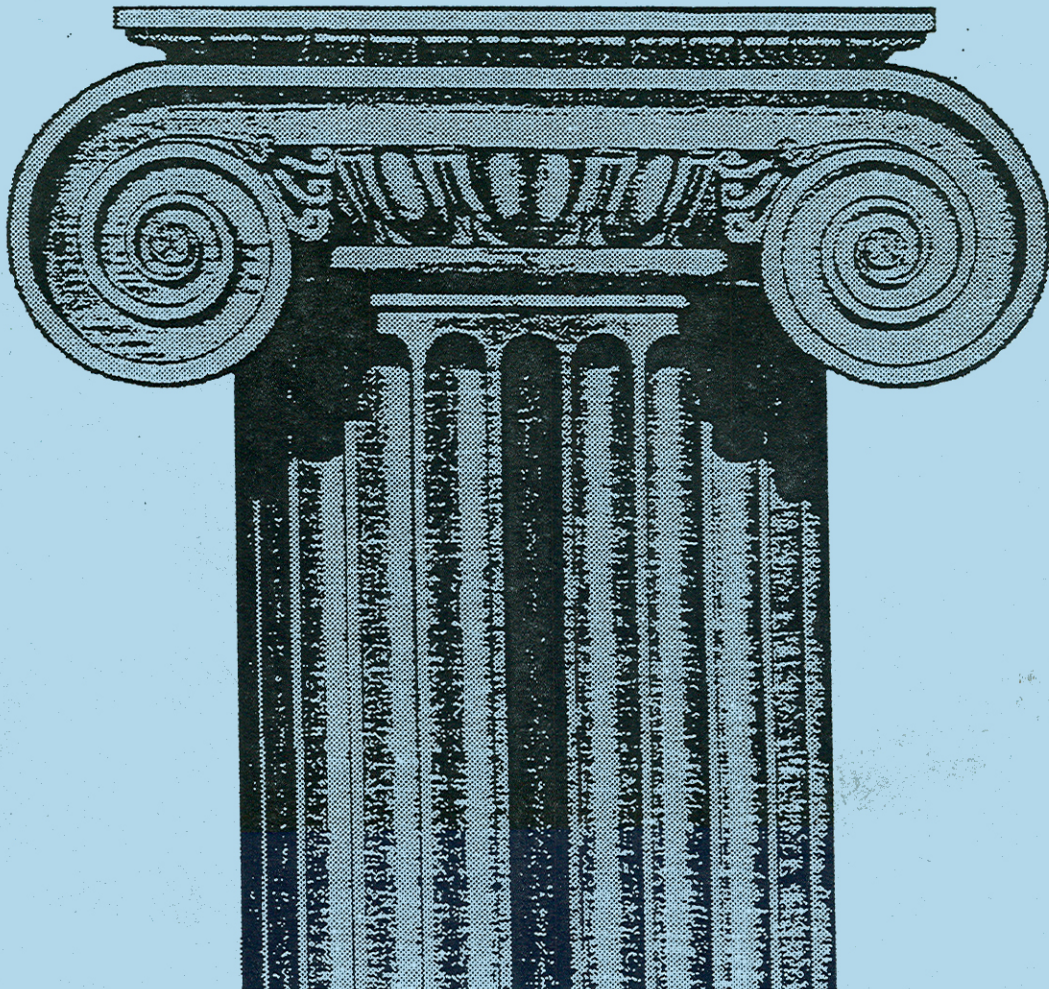


The Core Journal

Volume VI/Spring 1997



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“The Master said, Learn as if you were
following someone whom you could not catch up,
as though it were someone you were frightened of losing.”

-Confucius

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Introduction

At the end of this Spring semester most of us will be standing at the crossroads of our undergraduate education. Two years behind us and two years ahead, this vantage point offers a different perspective for each Core student who stands at the mark and readies himself for the future. Looking back, the student sees the literature, philosophy, science and social theory of the Core Curriculum but may not be entirely sure of what lies ahead. This, the sixth edition of the Core Journal, is published for the Core students who have sampled the Core experience in one or two classes and for those who have completed the full eight course marathon. Each of us will carry with us the unique experience of Core as an accomplishment, a new way of thinking, an appreciation of what has come before us and affirmation of what is still to come.

The sixth edition of the Core Journal is a collection of essays and dialogues produced by students inspired by the works of the Core and encouraged by the conscientious guidance of their professors. The works in this edition were anonymously chosen on the basis of clarity, style, originality and well-founded interpretation.

The editors would like to thank all of the students who submitted papers to the journal, the professors who encouraged them, and the Core office staff for receiving and copying the submissions. We would also like to extend our gratitude to Dean Jorgensen, Professor Speight, and especially to Professor Nelson for her support, guidance, and long hours helping us get this project off the ground.

The Core Journal Editors, Spring 1997

Music greets you at the door,
chanting, beating, bursting,
tuning
cranial channels to matching fill-up stations.

Lively chatter flutters
its wings
and dancing, aesthetic chords
meet, mingle, and merge
emotion and voice.

Familiar faces abound;
reveal, conceal, pierce-
perform
while silently, inside schoolbags
unknown faces
await
and hope to live again as once before.

The happy parade of tune and talk
dances for awhile
until
the melodies end,
and conversations hurriedly dwindle to a close.

Silence falls.

Then, the muted tongues,
from the onlooking, penetrating eyes of dust-
forged, frozen to paperbacks-
renew their breaths
and speak again-
echoing in the motionless, attentive room.

What once was is allowed again to be-
appreciated, contemplated, learned,
heard.

Reception channels filter the sound
and interpretation keys string their webs,
holding the past in hand while hearing it presently resound.

But, only for a short while does the monologue sing.

Then the audience claps its grateful thanks
and bustles to good-bye,
still remaining
tightly clinging
to their frozen dust fellows.

- *Macall Robertson*

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Nature and Human Nature

What place does man have in the natural world? Ultimately, are Nature and human nature intrinsically connected or disparate? These questions have beset thinkers since pre-Socratic times, and at the dawn of the Renaissance, with the social climate at a crossroads, two insightful poets take up the debate again to offer some social commentary. In his Canterbury Tales, Chaucer looks toward the future with optimism, willingly turning away from the defeating famine, war, and disease of the recent past. He embraces the changes of progress and sees Nature as the welcome stimulus prompting men to act. The Pearl Poet, however, views Nature differently--as a relentless wheel that presses ever forward at the expense of tradition. The discussion of spring in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight maintains a sense of removal from Nature, which does not heed human concerns, and apprehension for what the future holds.

These two ideas about Nature are highlighted in each poet's account of the coming of spring, which may symbolically represent the Renaissance period itself. In order to convey their prevailing messages, the poets utilize the devices of diction, verse style and mood, and syntax within the passage and the work as a whole. The manipulation of these devices, beginning with diction, succeeds in presenting two very different but engaging psychological perspectives. As Chaucer narrates the coming of spring, he conjures an image of a world awakening at the insistence of nature. European society, like the "root," has lain in a state of dormancy and now can begin to blossom. Vibrant diction such as "vein," "quickenning force," and "engender" conveys the urgency of Nature's call for action. Man should not only move but seek the intense life with the aggressive character of "Aries the Ram," which also marks the beginning of the zodiac cycle. This same reference to astrology also points to a greater reliance on Nature as opposed to God. "The west wind...with its sweet breath / Has given life"; natural explanations replace the creation story in which God breathes life into man. Similarly, the religious meaning of the pilgrimage is subverted by the natural longing to travel and conquer the unknown: "People long to go on pilgrimages...to take ship." Like the

"stripling sun" and "tender shoots," Renaissance Europe has the character of an adolescent, charged with wonder, childish optimism, and longing for "foreign shores" (p.1)

In contrast to Chaucer's words of longing, the Pearl Poet's diction seems far away yet pervaded with apprehension. Sir Gawain does not identify with Nature, which appears completely oblivious to his inevitable death. The line "the world's weather with winter contends" implies that spring and summer must fight winter to appear, but Gawain knows that the immutable seasons will follow on schedule and dreaded winter will return (ll.504). Furthermore, Nature is permeated with reminders of his fate. The Green Knight and the green of the dreaded Christmas season appear everywhere through "gowns of green" and "greenwood" (ll.508,515). The Pearl Poet describes the "keen cold"; interestingly, keen means not only intense but also describes the sharp blade of a knife (ll.505). Words such as "set time," "flesh," and "day by day" mimic Gawain's thoughts of his own death, which for a Christian, means thinking about spiritual life (ll.501-12). The reference to "Lent" brings up the feast of Ash Wednesday when people realize their own mortality (ll.502). Gawain continues his association with Christian imagery: "I have but three days / And would as soon sink down dead as desist from my errand" (ll.1067). Similarly, before Gawain falters "the barnyard cock had crowed but thrice" (ll.1412). In the face of such weighty thoughts, the business of nature as usual when "Birds build their nests, and blithely sing" could only seem removed or even sardonic (ll.509).

In addition to diction, the two poets manipulate their verse style to mimic the mood of the time period as they see it. Chaucer's abandonment of the traditional alliterative verse for the "heroic couplet" demonstrates the Renaissance's break from old-fashioned tradition to find new adventure. Also, iambic pentameter proves less rigid than the alliterative style, allowing Chaucer to admit all kinds of words just as he admits all kinds of testimony to gain a deeper understanding of human nature. His ability to find common threads between an apparent odd couple, such as the pardon-seller and the wife of Bath, parallels his ability to couple words with divergent meanings by rhyming them. For instance, he rhymes "seek" and "sick" (both "seke" in the original, p.1). The continuous pattern of short-long, short-long

fits well with long thoughts as well as short, subtle side notes, making the Canterbury Tales conversational and unpretentious.

While the steady rhythm of iambic pentameter works for Chaucer, the Pearl Poet's alliterative verse pricks more interest. The three alliterating syllables demonstrate the Pearl Poet's need for sameness and repetition; similarly, he clings conservatively to the medieval tradition. Furthermore, the consonant sounds keep time mechanically and highlight the mood created by Gawain's dread of the future in the face of stringent time. But the nonalliterating consonant sound at the end imitates the unpredictability of the future: "First things and final conform but seldom." Although the poem demonstrates a strong sense of cycle, it stresses the inevitability of change--which accentuates Gawain's feelings of inevitable disaster and suspense that estrange him from the simple beauty of Nature.

The unpredictable nature of Sir Gawain again surfaces with the "bob" and the "wheel." The "bob," a two syllable line in the middle of alliterative verse, punctuates the rhythm and gives the reader pause, much like the thoughts that stop Gawain and haunt him. "Ere long" he will die for his word; no amount of spring can hide that message. The "wheel," four lines in iambic trimeter, comes in close succession of the "bob" to highlight the contrast between man and the natural world. While Gawain's thoughts are locked on his fate, Nature's "greenwood rings with song"; Nature's "wheel" exhibits some intonations of a child's song, carefree and oblivious of Gawain's adult responsibilities (ll.515). Additionally, the "wheel" sounds reminiscent of minstrel songs, from the tradition that the Pearl Poet loves.

Each poet's precision in verse structure provides an introduction to the manipulation of syntax found in his passage and his work as a whole. By beginning the Tales with nature and moving to people, Chaucer indicates an intimate cause-and-effect relationship between the two, developed also with the following line openers: "When the sweet showers...And when the west wind...And when small birds...Then people long to go on pilgrimages" (p.1). Chaucer adds parenthetically that "Nature so prompts them, and encourages," knowing well that such a understatement actually accentuates this idea. Furthermore, Chaucer intentionally uses the pronoun "them" with an obscure reference. Does Nature prompt the

"small birds" of the preceding lines or the people embarking on pilgrimages? Because Chaucer sees Nature as the impetus for movement, he also uses it to move his Tales by placing the passage at the very beginning. The passage draws the reader at once by spiraling into stories with numerous lines beginning with "And," giving the impression of an excited storyteller with much to say (p.1). The change of season heralds the widespread societal changes as well as a change of heart, challenging the Renaissance reader to forget about past hardships and move on to the building of a greater tradition, one richly rooted in people both like and unlike the characters of the proceeding pages.

Like Chaucer, the Pearl Poet also manipulates syntax wittily. Within the passage, which deals with the unforgiving timeliness of the annual cycle, the Pearl Poet constructs a cycle within the passage by framing the description of spring. He begins with the lines "For though men are merry in mind after much drink, / A year passes apace and proves ever new" (ll.467-8). Later appears Nature's pretense: "Solace of all sorrow with summer comes" (ll.510). The two may connect to convey that any escape from reality, whether through drink or illusory summer, will prove futile because of Nature's unbreakable clock. Also, despite the framing, the syntax of the ending "bob" and "wheel" makes the exchange imperfect and the end surprising. The Pearl Poet adeptly places the coming of spring in the interlude between the winters partially because it interfaces well with Gawain's preoccupation with the passage of time. But perhaps most importantly, the passage is placed as such because it demonstrates the antagonism between man and Nature and, more subtly, between tradition and progress.

Chaucer's and the Pearl Poet's respective views on the relationship between man and Nature, manifested in literary devices such as diction, verse style and mood, and syntax, reveal a great deal about how they envision the future of their society. Chaucer sees a fundamental causal relationship between man and Nature, full of life and promising consequences for man; Nature incites man to stop playing the role of the conquered and to go conquer the unknown. Because of his optimism at the prospect of the future, Chaucer considers such an outward movement natural and welcome. The Pearl Poet, however, is

holding on to a tradition steadily washing away with time. He sees man as somewhat fragmented from Nature, helpless against the force of time and progress. Which perspective portrays the relationship between man and Nature correctly? As an audience, readers can only treat the question as Chaucer intended to do in his Canterbury Tales--by examining both perspectives to obtain a fuller picture. But as individuals each man must surmise his own relationship with the world around him.

Emily Klauser

Back to Canterbury

When in September, students rush back in,
When bookstore lines are long, summer's worn thin.
Party flyers litter BU's campus.
Comm. Ave is double parked; Bay State's a mess.
When dining halls their meal calendars display
Then students greet old friends--some with dismay.
But over at the Espresso Royale,
There is another story yet to tell.
Autumn has pricked their hearts, the change of season
Has brought them here to Boston, intellect the reason.
Together over coffee and tea
Will thoughts and arguments flow free.
Each has a viewpoint each a chosen path
The midshipman, Steward Law, and Professor Bath.
The matter at hand: at last to understand
The wisdom exposed in that foreign land
Of Canterbury.

With my single shot double vanilla capp.,
I prepare for my day, a map
Of what to do to see to be
The details of my life, not free.
But three who sit to me adgent
Challenge my mood complacent

I listen to their discussion overheard

From where I am, this I observe:

Steward Law, though short, stands and walks tall

As an Ambassador, he's known by all

His B.U. sweatshirt pulled tight to his chin,

And baggy clothes conceal that he is thin.

Though warm, with sparkling eyes and full-toothed smile,

He rarely ever lingers for a while,

And though when greeting, remembers every name,

Seems preoccupied with the rules of the game.

Pre-Law and Chem. major, he advises freshmen,

Fulfilling public office and obligation.

Professor Bath writes books well known

Writ in cafes, away from home.

Her travels bring her around the world

Tall and well-rounded, her clothes are sequined and pearled.

Her husband, in Seattle, sells her books.

They are successful; she has four kids that look

Not one bit like their father--though he's never noticed.

He thinks not with his mind but with his fists.

She wears a golden cross, which hangs above her neck pen

And sets Christian example to her daughter, who's ten

Plus ten. Though beautiful, with dignity and grace,

She fidgets nervously, with sadness in her face.

Third in conversation is a Naval Midshipman.
Still in uniform, he comes from drill exposition.
He sits tall, posture straight and his shirt is well creased.
In noble manner, shares his thoughts, yet often says the least.
His military formality unnecessary in this place
He attempts to modify his bearing--mild in this case.
He excels in fitness and in academics both
He earned the Naval Scholarship, for body and brains, I troth.

The professor begins the topic they've come here to discuss.
Her blunt opinions and love of words makes her famous.
She starts the conversation with what she has to say,
"Chaucer wrote long ago; what is his worth today?
Steward takes the question on, his answer ready cocked:
"Chaucer's view's panoramic, in time it is locked."
The woman catches his challenge, yet wants to go deeper:
"Why is his story more than just preserver
Of simply the ways and views of those of his time?"
The ambassador had not to think--he continued in his prime,
"Today, I see, Professor Bath, Chaucer's pilgrims all round
Details though different, their humanity can be found."
Satisfied with his response, Steward gives a look
At the midshipman, who'd not yet been hooked.
And slowly, and effortlessly, the midshipman replied
Thinking perhaps that Steward had lied.

His words they are simple, his message is straight.
He just isn't convinced--more evidence it will take.
"The pilgrims were survivors, running from disease.
They used superstition to put their mind at ease.
Today we have it easy, in America the great.
Doctors give us medicine, our lives don't hang on fate."

Here the professor intervenes, makes a comment aside:
"Today is it different, or do we all still hide
From one another in community
Lonely, abandoned, afraid to BE?"

The midshipman answered with what he knew
The facts he stood to; what was true.
"In 1337 the Bubonic Plague struck
Killing one third of Europe--no special luck
For women or children; it hit rich and poor
The class system altered to its very core.
People feared each other, as the disease spread.
Away from families, into mountains some were led.
Isolated from society, the dying felt their grief
Alone, homeless, and abandoned on the streets."
Steward stops him short with what he has to say.
"Today, in 1996, we live in that same way.
AIDS is rampant, here and now, we have no cure
How to avoid it, not known for sure.

People fear each other, whether straight or gay.
It's killing by the millions, the most degrading way.
Victims are isolated now others live in fear
That they'll contract the disease if they should come near.
The symptoms of the Bubonic plague are not the same by nature.
But today's society makes Chaucer's work even greater.
His philosophy of humanity applies to every time.
To think otherwise, midshipman, is no less than a crime."
Here the midshipman chose not to speak
His thoughts drifted back to events of last week.
The drill team won their trophy cup.
And to celebrate, with a woman he'd hooked up.
A man in the military who has AIDS
Is ridiculed and isolated--forbidden duty, unpaid.
"Maybe it's not easy to be alive today."
The midshipman consented, and to Steward's point gave way.

The midshipman has his protest answered
From Professor Bath and Steward he heard
The evidence he needed
Argument not repeated.
Chaucer in The Canterbury Tales gives
Designs for all to live.
A panoramic view
Of Humanity. Old is new.

Machiavelli Actualized: A Coup d'état of the Core Curriculum

One of the aims of the Core Curriculum has been to discover the meaning of justice, and the greatest good. Students learn about justice and the different ways of achieving the greatest good through such timeless works as the *Republic*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Confucius' *Analects*, Aristotle's *Politics*, the Bible, and the *Oresteia*. Lurking in the second year of Core is a little handbook on how to be a prince. The effect of this innocent looking handbook is revolutionary. Niccolo Machiavelli's *The Prince* uproots all previous notions of justice and the greatest good. Machiavelli asserts that in order to be a good prince, the prince has to discard justice and transform the greatest good into his own private good. Machiavelli discredits political theory, and even discredits Plato - one of the central figures of Core. Upon reading the *Prince*, it is natural to desire to refute his cynical theory and affirm the importance of justice and the righteousness of man. Certainly the stories of the great leaders that are read in Core will show the flaws of Machiavelli's political theories in action. However, this surprisingly (perhaps, shockingly for the most noble-minded Core students) is not the case. For instance, consider the first great leader from the cherished books of the Core -- Gilgamesh. Upon close examination, the great leader of Uruk appears to be a quintessential Machiavellian prince, supporting the actualization of his political theory. It will also be shown that Core Humanities texts, such as *Samuel I & II* and *Exodus*, further corroborate Machiavelli's political philosophy. After this coup d'état of the Core Humanities by Machiavelli, is one to conclude that the works read in Core support Machiavelli's political theory in action? A particularly ambitious Core student could turn to Core Social Science for help. However, the student will be immediately confronted with Thomas Hobbes. A semester after Hobbes' book lies Erving Goffman's work about the manipulation of social masks. What is more Machiavellian than a person who can manipulate masks -- a person who can commit outrageous cruelties, yet wear the mask of a noble prince? Before we concede victory to Machiavelli, there is still one more avenue left

to protect the notions of justice and the greatest good -- Core Science. Amidst the DNA, expanding universes, hebian synapses, and selfish genes, lies game theory. It is the game theory of Core Science that refutes the effectiveness of the ruthlessness and injustice of Machiavelli's prince. Moreover, whereas the readings from the humanities seem to lend support to Machiavelli, through numbers and a few fancy formulas, the Core Curriculum has a solid and empirical argument against Machiavelli's political theories in action.

Before proceeding any further, the following question must be addressed: "What is the political theory of Machiavelli?" Machiavelli's political theory is presented as a handbook for taking over new principalities. Machiavelli sums up his advice to princes when he writes:

... the policy to follow when one has newly acquired power is to destroy one's enemies, to secure some allies, to win wars, whether by force or by fraud, to make oneself both loved and feared by one's subjects, to make one's soldiers loyal and respectful, to wipe out those who can or would want to hurt you, to innovate, replacing old institutions with new practices, to be both harsh and generous, magnanimous and open-handed, to disband disloyal troops and form new armies, to build alliances with other powers, so kings and princes either have to win your favor or else think twice before going against your wishes (Machiavelli 27).¹

Thus, Machiavelli is urging princes to abandon justice and the common good. He asserts that a prince ought to do anything to keep his power and maintain order, short of causing hatred (this would be the result of stealing women or property). What justification does he give for this? Machiavelli justifies his theory by writing: "So a ruler ought not to mind the disgrace of being called cruel, if he keeps his subjects peaceful and law-abiding, for it is more compassionate to impose harsh punishments on a few than, out of excessive compassion, to allow disorder to spread, which leads to murders or looting" (Machiavelli 51). Machiavelli believes this is the best way to keep peace and order among inherently evil people. Moreover, Machiavelli's prince can be characterized as being both a lion and a fox, for he asserts: "... it is necessary for a ruler to know when to act like an animal and when like a man

¹ Machiavelli, Niccolo. *The Prince*. trans., David Wooton (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1994)..

... he should take as his models among the animals both the fox and the lion ..." (Machiavelli 54). Machiavelli believes that a prince should always look like a brave, *virtuous* lion, but can secretly act like a sly, deceitful fox. However, the prince must make certain that he is never seen as being a fox. Hence, the ideal prince displays the *virtu* of the lion, but utilizes, without being known, the characteristics of the fox.

The first leader encountered by Core Students is Gilgamesh, a young god-like king who is engulfed by his seemingly endless power and the intoxicating city of Uruk. At the beginning of *Gilgamesh*, Gilgamesh is the epitome of Machiavelli's prince. He arouses fear in his subjects, is a great military leader, relies on *virtu* far more than luck, and displays harshness and cruelty when necessary. The following passage describes Gilgamesh: "There was no withstanding the aura or the power of the Wild/ Ox Gilgamesh. Neither the father's son/ nor the wife of the noble; neither the mother's daughter nor the warrior's bride was safe..." (*Gilgamesh* 4).² The only flaw in Gilgamesh is that he causes hatred in his subjects by stealing their wives - one of the few things Machiavelli does not advocate. As a result, the people of Uruk cry out to the goddess Aurur to create another person as strong as Gilgamesh. In response to this plea, Aurur sends them "a hairy bodied wild man of the grasslands" (*Gilgamesh* 5) named Enkidu. It is Enkidu who brings out the lion in Gilgamesh, and helps him mature into the ideal Machiavellian prince. Thus, the epic of Gilgamesh supports Machiavelli's political theory in action.

The best chance to refute Machiavelli appears to be the Bible. After all, Jesus does clearly states: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5: 5 & 7). However, Machiavelli writes about earthly principalities, not heavenly kingdoms. *Samuel 1 & 2*, on the other hand, are very political in nature. Surprisingly, these books also support Machiavelli's political theory in action. The strengths and weaknesses of David and Saul are the primary determinative for

²*Gilgamesh*, trans. David Ferry (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1992), p. 4.

what ultimately happens in their lives. David and Saul fit perfectly into Machiavelli's classifications of the different types of leaders. David is the epitome of the ideal Machiavellian prince. Machiavelli states that leaders who rely chiefly on *virtu*, or skill, such as David, will be very successful. Machiavelli later writes: "Those who ... become rulers merely out of good luck, acquire power with little trouble, have a hard time holding on to it" (Machiavelli 21). This is precisely the case with Saul. Saul becomes king through good fortune (he wanders into the presence of Samuel fulfilling the Lord's prophecy), but in the end he does not have the *virtu* to hold onto his kingship. David, on the other hand, does not acquire his kingship simply through good fortune. David uses all his might to pull the mythical sword out of the stone in order to become king of Israel. David is also very aggressive in battle and making decisions, but yet is very crafty and plotting behind the scenes (i.e., killing the husband of Bathsheba), which very few people notice. Machiavelli emphasizes the fox in David by suggesting that he killed Goliath with a knife, but led people to believe that he only used a simple slingshot. Thus, like the ideal Machiavellian prince, he balances the lion and the fox within him. Part of Saul's problem is that he often appears to be a fox rather than a lion. For example, there is nothing noble or lion-like about trying to kill the young David. As Machiavelli points out, you cannot allow people to perceive you as a fox because the lion within them will eat you alive. This is exactly what happens to Saul. Thus, Saul's tragic demise is due to his reliance upon fortune and his fox-like image. Conversely, David's abundance of *virtu* and his ability to balance the lion and the fox within him help propel him to greatness. Moreover, the stories of David and Saul are, in effect, a testimonial to the effectiveness of Machiavelli's political theory in action.

The Hebrew Scriptures also contain the history of the great prophet Moses. Could the story of Moses possibly be used to support Machiavelli's political theory in action? Not only does the story of Moses further support Machiavelli's theory, but Machiavelli urges us all to be like Moses in his text. Unthinkably, Moses turns out to be Machiavelli's ideal leader. Machiavelli feels that the most effective way of ruling a principality is to convince the

people that you are built up and maintained by God. Machiavelli writes: “Only ecclesiastical rulers have states, but no need to defend them; subjects, but no need to govern them ... So these are the only rulers who are secure and happy” (Machiavelli 36). Machiavelli very subtly insinuates that Moses may have utilized religion to gain power. He does this by grouping the religious Moses with the secular Cyrus, Romulus, and Theseus. Machiavelli later remarks with a touch of sarcasm, “Obviously, we should not discuss Moses’ skill, for he was a mere agent, following the instructions given him by God” (Machiavelli 19). Thus, Machiavelli demonstrates how even the most righteous of leaders read in Core supports his political theory in action.

Since Core Humanities and Social Sciences supply little help in refuting Machiavelli, we are left to turn to Core Science. Through game theory, political theories can be scientifically tested against each other to see which one is the most effective.³ Countless experiments have been performed, resulting in the following conclusions. The type of political rule proposed by Machiavelli will almost always be the least effective. Machiavelli’s prince will always defect, or only be concerned with his own welfare. This type of prince is called a devil in game theory. The only way the devil will win in game theory is if he is surrounded by angels, those who never defect. However, a principality is seldom composed of all angels. The opposite of Machiavelli’s political theory, is that proposed by Jesus Christ who advocated the Golden Rule. In game theory, these people are angels. Generally, angels are more successful than devils. However, the most successful leaders are those that follow a strategy called the Gold-Plated Bronze Rule, similar to that formulated by Confucius. This rule states that you can repay evil with evil, but you must be forgiving some of the time. In his article, Carl Sagan states: “Among other *virtues*, it (the Gold-Plated Bronze Rule) breaks out of unending vendetta (as is the case in the *Oresteia*)” (Sagan 14). Thus, through the empirical methods of science, the enterprising Core student can refute the effectiveness of

³ All references to game theory are based on “A New Way To Think About Rules To Live By,” Carl Sagan, Parade Magazine, November 28, 1993, pgs. 12-14.

Machiavelli's theory in action.

Hence, science can rationally show why Machiavelli's political theory is not the most practical course of action. Game theory reveals that if every leader were an ideal Machiavellian prince, the world would fall back into the unending bloody vendetta of the *Oresteia*. If everybody is out for their own good, then the ideas of justice and the greatest good would vanish from earth. However, as Core Humanities shows, in many circumstances Machiavelli's prince can be quite successful. While Gilgamesh, David and Saul, and Moses support Machiavelli's political theory in action, game theory shows that it is not the most effective *rule to live by*. While one Machiavellian prince may be successful, a world populated by these princes would result in anarchy. Thus, game theory is able to refute Machiavelli, and salvage the concepts of justice and the greatest good. In conclusion, thanks to the help from an unexpected source (that is Core Science), the works that have been read in the Core Curriculum can offer an empirical way to demonstrate that the actualization of Machiavelli's political theory is not the best course of action.

Experience and Human Limitations

"In the experience I have of myself I find enough to make me wise, if I were a good scholar" (Essays 115). Montaigne's sentiment, echoed by thousands today, expresses the major drive towards empiricism and individualism during the Renaissance. The intellectual community had grown dissatisfied of the largely theoretical nature of traditional philosophy. Renaissance thinkers were instead concerned with action and expediency--what they could do as individuals to attain the good life. As a result, concrete experience replaced general premises, reshaping the course of philosophy, religion and psychology and paving the way to empirical discovery. However, this growth did not occur without a price, for inductive reasoning introduces many problems. Because of the voluntary nature of experience, it falsely inflates man's confidence in free will. Quantifying or ranking experience proves difficult, and experience confuses the relationship between mind and body. Furthermore, empiricism can diminish the value of learning by emphasizing that the unique particulars of one experience cannot directly apply to another. Renaissance writers such as Pico, Petrarch, and Montaigne attempt to overcome such limitations on empiricism, and finally, the best solution to the problems comes from a new version of the philosophy that empiricism attempts to leave behind--including notions of practical wisdom, the doctrine of the mean, and self knowledge.

The most obvious problem with a philosophy based on experience stems from the unchecked optimism that sometimes accompanies it. Ready to conquer anything with intense effort, men forget to ask themselves what their abilities allow. But what happens when limited human resources are not enough? Pico's "Oration on the Dignity of Man" ignores this possibility, outlining a universe where man possesses no form of his own, his actions and his free will alone determining his fate. But free will acts as a double-edged sword, leaving no room for error, a conspicuous deletion from the human condition. Along with "the power...to be reborn into the higher forms, which are divine," man also has "the power to degenerate into the lower forms of life, which are brutish" (Renaissance 225). In a similar spirit of confidence in free will, Petrarch undertakes to conquer nature by climbing Mont Ventoux, firm in the belief that "ruthless striving overcomes everything" (Renaissance 38). If he can but unify his own will, he believes he can achieve the highest things--he wastes no time considering whether or not God or predestination will allow it. However, it remains questionable whether "the desire to see its conspicuous height" provides sufficient reason to

strive for experience, to seek divinity. If a man unrealistically ignores his own tendency to err, he faces sure disappointment.

The problem of overconfidence leads to a further problem when man tries to quantify experience. When man assumes his destiny lies fully in the actions he performs and what he experiences, he will naturally try to do and experience as many different things as possible. Such sampling can, however, lead to a superficial existence, acting simply for the sake of acting. Furthermore, inductive reasoning from concrete experience always presents the danger of a narrow conclusion; man cannot acquire infinite experiences in his finite lifetime and thus must make assumptions based on limited data. For example, Pico believes the practice of philosophy lifts man to the highest things. But in his intense attempt to acquire all philosophical ideas, he succeeds only in reducing philosophies to their bare essences and weakly stringing a thread of centrality through them, foolishly posing some 900 theses. Such a plan is destined for failure.

Petrarch makes a comparable mistake by erroneously placing too much importance on a single experience. Inspired by the instantaneous conversion experiences of St. Augustine and St. Anthony, Petrarch expects to resolve all his inner conflicts with one difficult experience, the climbing of Mont Ventoux. He assumes an all-or-nothing attitude and tells himself: "You must either ascend to the summit of the blessed life under the heavy burden of hard striving...or lie prostrate in your slothfulness in the valleys of your sins" (Renaissance 40). But Petrarch himself points to the problem with an instantaneous change of heart when he writes in haste to his confessor, "I was afraid the intention to write might evaporate, since the rapid change of scene was likely to cause a change of mood if I deferred it" (Renaissance 46). Most people do not experience momentous and complete conversion. Moreover, if the feeling of revelation dissipates as rapidly as it begins, the benefits it offers for life remain dubious.

Beyond the problems involved with quantifying or ranking experiences, empirical thinking introduces the following question: Is experience based on that of the mind or that of the body? Many claim that the mind embodies the highest things in man and thus should be the focus of experience. For instance, Pico assumes the Platonic pain of separation and advises man to "disdain earthly things," removing himself from the body as much as possible (Renaissance 227). But this idea contrasts with the common view of experience, which involves the body through sensation, emotion, and movement. Further, when man tries to separate bodily concerns and spiritual/intellectual concerns, a conflict of interests arises which

often leads to the problem of divided wills, a problem Petrarch well recognizes: "A stubborn and still undecided battle has been long raging on the field of my thoughts for the supremacy of one of the two men within me" (Renaissance 43). Inasmuch as he is human, man possesses both a soul and a body. By separating himself from his body, he becomes fragmented rather than a complete human being.

A philosophy of experience not only blurs the relationship between mind and body; because of the varied nature of experience, the relationships man should draw between different experiences also remain unclear. Pico demonstrates the fallacy in attempting to relate too many varied ideas through his weak conclusion. Likewise, Petrarch comes to the realization that bookish examples do not correlate exactly to individual lives when he experiences an anticlimax rather than a conversion like that of St. Augustine and St. Anthony. Montaigne pushes the issue further and claims that the disparity among individual experiences and the unique circumstances out of which they arise undermine the value of all precedents. "The inference that we try to draw from the resemblance of events is uncertain, because they are always dissimilar" (Essays 106). He thus questions the value of learning, for man cannot reliably use his own experiences or that of others as a formula for his own actions in the future. But instead of rejecting learning, Montaigne claims the learning already acquired is never enough--man should pursue knowledge further rather than relying on a body of experience for knowledge. "It is only personal weakness that makes us content with what others or we ourselves have found out in this hunt for knowledge" (Essays 110).

As a result of all these objections, an individual would have difficulty in finding any value in experience. However, Montaigne deals with these problems rather effectively, and ironically, when the answers come, they return partially to systematic philosophy and its deductive reasoning. Experience of any one external situation may not apply to another, but all experiences teach an individual about himself--most importantly, about his limitations. Montaigne would thus reject Pico's ideas, claiming that such an attempt to look beyond human means simply points to a lack of self-knowledge and weakness of soul. "Greatness of soul is not so much pressing upward and forward as knowing how to set oneself in order and circumscribe oneself" (Essays 129). Man can only avoid the problems of false optimism in human free will and the inevitable disappointment that follows by recognizing his limitations, including the limitations on his knowledge. "What I have learned bears no other fruit than to make me realize how much I still have to learn" (Essays 117).

By recognizing his limitations, man can discern his proper relationship to all things

and act accordingly, a difficult feat which Montaigne considers the purpose of human life. "Our great and glorious masterpiece is to live appropriately" (Essays 126). Here Montaigne seems to outline his idea of conscience as something akin to Aristotle's account of practical wisdom, "a true and reasoned state of capacity to act with regard to the things that are good or bad for man" (Nicomachean 142). A man possessing practical wisdom is concerned with action and particulars; he always acts in the proper way to fit the circumstances and thus exhibits moral virtue, the mean between a vice of deficiency and a vice of excess. Similarly, Montaigne declares that "it is much easier to go along the sides...than by the middle way...but it is also much less noble and less commendable" (Essays 129).

One can draw a further parallel between Montaigne and Aristotle by recognizing that the mean according to Aristotle cannot be discerned by reason but only by perception. This perception involves self-knowledge, for an individual must discern the mean relative to himself. Where he finds himself weak and given to one extreme, he must take special pains to avoid vice:

We must consider the things towards which we ourselves also are easily carried away...We must drag ourselves away to the contrary extreme; for we shall get into the intermediate state by drawing well away from error, as people do in straightening sticks that are bent (Nicomachean 46).

Thus, experience allows man to perceive his limitations or weaknesses and practice choosing the mean against the extremes. Similarly, Montaigne would likely say that experience gives man the opportunity to choose to act consistently according to his conscience. Also, recognizing individual limitations involves learning to deal with pain and pleasure. "We must learn to endure what we cannot avoid" (Essays 120). For instance, man must employ his mind to rationalize and accept pain to avoid excess hatred of it, as Montaigne does to better accept his kidney stones. Man must also learn to accept natural pleasures which accompany the human condition. However, since pleasure needs most regulation, man can learn to evade his most troublesome desires through experience: "If each man watched closely the effects and circumstances of the passions that dominate him...he would see them coming and would check their...course a bit" (Essays 116).

This discussion of pleasure and pain might lead one to question how large a role the body plays in human life and the problem of divided will. Montaigne answers this question by enlisting the body as the mind's partner in the ordered life through a system of checks and balances. "Let the mind arouse and quicken the heaviness of the body, and body check and

make fast the lightness of the mind" (Essays 134). Furthermore, he rejects the notion that the body always influences an otherwise blameless mind towards error. "I scarcely make a motion...that is not guided by the consent of nearly all parts of me, without division, without internal sedition. My judgment takes all the blame or all the praise for it" (Essays 85). The mind must moderate pain and pleasure, but the body acts as the instrument for the ordered conscience.

How can Montaigne accept a formulation for the best life that involves accommodating the body? Does it not hinder man's journey to immortality? Montaigne simply answers that man possesses both a body and a soul, neither of which can be neglected. "There is no part unworthy of our care in this gift that God has given us" (Essays 134). Man must nurture his body and reconcile himself to the limitations and fallibility the body may impose on him. In order to recognize his proper place in the universe, the mean between the divine and the beasts, man must look inside himself. Petrarch, too, reaches this conclusion after returning to the systematic philosophy and religion of Augustine's Confessions: "How greatly mortal men lack counsel who, neglecting the noblest part of themselves...look without for what can be found within" (Renaissance 45). Man is not a god, but he has great potential. In fact, because actualizing this potential proves so difficult, the rare men that succeed seem more than human. As Montaigne indicates, "Nothing is so human in Plato as the qualities for which...he is called divine" (Essays 135).

"When reason fails us, we use experience...which is a weaker and less dignified means. But truth is so great a thing that we must not disdain any medium that will lead us to it" (Essays 106). During the Renaissance, man turned to empiricism, finding the general premises of traditional philosophy inadequate for describing the "dignity of man." Such an unprecedented focus on the personal experience celebrated the human condition and led to a burst of intellectual growth and discovery. However, the focus on experience involves many complications including unrealistic optimism towards free will, difficulties in quantifying or prioritizing experience, confusion surrounding the relationship between mind and body, and a decreased emphasis on learning because of the peculiarities of any single experience. The works of Pico, Petrarch, and Montaigne begin in a struggle against tradition towards the new empiricism, but inevitably, the best solution to these problems comes from a reformulation of the old philosophy, including the ideas of practical wisdom, the doctrine of the mean, and self knowledge. In fact, most of the problems with empiricism stem from man looking outside himself. Philosophy reminds man to use his limitations as guides to fulfilling his

potential instead of obstacles to be overcome, and only then is the individual truly celebrated.

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**Hobbes', Locke's and Rousseau's Political Philosophies
as Related to Each One's Philosophy of Human Nature**

In general, one's political philosophy is reflective of, or somehow related to, one's philosophy of human nature. When theorizing about proper community, it is imperative to consider the nature of its citizens in order to create one that would function peacefully. Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau all have differing views on human nature. Therefore, they reach sharply contrasting conclusions about the appropriate society and government for mankind. How each thinker conceives of his recommended community is unique and supported by his understanding of human nature, as can be traced in Leviathan, Second Treatise on Government, and "Discourse on the Origin of Inequality." Hobbes' impression of fundamentally anti-social man relates to his endorsement of an absolute monarchy; Locke's notion of reasonable man, with occasional exceptions, relates to his call for a limited government; and Rousseau's perception of a primitive man become corrupt by society is interconnected with his advocacy of a government with qualities of both democracy and totalitarianism.

In Leviathan, Thomas Hobbes portrays man as power-hungry and belligerent, in need of an all-powerful ruler to protect him from other men like himself. He maintains that the state of nature equals a state of war for human beings, who have overwhelming appetites that necessarily conflict with benevolence towards competing humans with their own appetites. Hobbes states that equal capabilities among human beings in the natural state intensifies the warlike and uneasy existence of prepolitical living. This constant physical and psychological insecurity of man is linked to his desire for power. Power assures his means to live, and increased power gives him the ability to live well. Man's natural, fierce propensity towards self-preservation grows into a desire to live comfortably. He forms or conforms to social contracts in order to escape the natural state of war, in which he is always endangered

and could never live luxuriously-- "The Passions that encline men to Peace, are Feare of Death; Desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living...And Reason suggesteth convenient Articles of Peace, upon which men may be drawn to agreement" (Hobbes 188). Hobbes' man is driven by his passions, especially his desire for power, but he has enough rationality to see the benefits of society.

Hobbes' conception of a quarrelsome and appetitive human nature is crucial in his prescription of absolute government. Since every man is equal, the ruler himself can be anyone. Hobbes places the key to harmonious living in the institution itself. If left in the state of nature, man is too busy defending himself to live pleasantly. With no one to answer or appeal to, freedom actually hinders true liberty. Therefore, men need strict restraint to keep them out of the state of war and free to enjoy peace-- "The finall Cause, End, or Designe of men... in the introduction of that restraint upon themselves, ... is the foresight of their own preservation, and of a more contented life thereby; that is to say, of getting themselves out from that miserable condition of Warre" (Hobbes 223). Not only must the government be strict to maintain tranquillity, it must also have absolute power. Everyone must be united in power, will, and judgment to secure the common good for all. This unification prevents civil discord since men act as one political body, in the actions of the sovereign. Hobbes defines the commonwealth as "One Person, of whose Acts a great Multitude... have made themselves every one the Author, to the end that he may use the strength and means of them all, as he shall think expedient, for their Peace and Common Defence" (Hobbes 228). Hobbes' view of human nature is relevant to the fact that he suggests checking individual passions and protecting man from man by unification of all, under an absolute ruler. As the end of the sovereign (which is supposed to be the multitude acting as one) is to protect the citizens, Hobbes believes that its far-reaching power should not be limited.

On the contrary, John Locke argues that human nature is basically reasonable and better fitted to have a conditional government. A dichotomy exists in Locke's

philosophy of human nature that is cardinal in pointing out the necessity of government, *and* the necessity of limiting its power. He claims that most men are rational, and can control their naturally passionate appetites without much outside restraint. However, Locke contends that transgressors of Reason, which he equates to the Law of Nature, also exist. This minority poses a constant threat of attack on the life, liberty, and/or property of everyone, thereby making the state of nature impractical.

The two parts of Locke's theory about man allows both the need for authority and the importance of limiting its power to be evident. In addressing the question of why men would leave the complete freedom of the natural state, he states "though in the state of nature he hath such a right [of total freedom], yet the enjoyment of it is very uncertain, and constantly exposed to the invasion of others [who are not disciplined by reason]" (Locke 66). Locke sees the need for government to stop transgressors from violating man's natural rights to life, liberty, and property. However, since most men are rational, the people are obligated to obey only the ruler or rulers to whom the majority consented. The people have a right to resist other kinds of government when the rational majority perceives rebellion. Locke's impression of man being unwary and tolerant of abuse, being passive and slow to redeem his rights leads Locke to believe that *rulers* cause rebellion, not the multitude. Since it is not unlikely for rulers to rebel against the common good, government is easily turned into enslavement, and absolute government is worse than the state of nature. Locke's apprehension of human nature is interconnected with his exhortation of a conditional government, whose "power... can *never be supposed to extend farther, than the common good*" (Locke 68). Above all, Locke's government is formed for the sake of liberty, since most are rational and self-restrained enough to enjoy it without harming others.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau disagrees with Hobbes and Locke on their perceptions about natural man, claiming that they actually describe the product of centuries of social living. He conjectures and romanticizes about what primitive man must really have been like,

and pictures what has been called the “noble savage,” though he himself does not use that term. The two main characteristics of Rousseau’s prepolitical man is the propensity towards self-preservation, and a compassion for others. He imagines a happiness and simplicity of lifestyle that he lamentingly admits human beings can never recover fully. Contemporary man, with all his vices, is the result of a badly made society-- “countless sorrows and afflictions which are felt in all levels of society and which perpetually gnaw away at souls... are the fatal proofs that most of our ills are of our own making” (Rousseau 42). Rousseau judges the faculty of reason itself unnatural, saying that it hinders pity and plays a significant role in the deterioration of human nature. Hobbes’ contentious man, and Locke’s rational man are what becomes of the noble savage in a society where the rich, powerful, and wealthy control the poor under the pretense of common interest, and where citizens are actually slaves to a corrupt constitution. The nature of Rousseau’s primitive man is neither moral nor immoral, rather he is made immoral by the evil ways of society.

Elements of both democracy and totalitarianism are involved in the regime that Rousseau prescribes for rebuilding the degenerate system, according to his claim that man has become badly habituated by the existing political state. Since civil man is too ingrained with reason to return to the state of nature, Rousseau impels him to perfect himself and to will morality by choosing a wholly new society. He believes that man can be more free than primitive man by combining his strength with others who freely enter the community. Rousseau realizes the need for restraint in order to have liberty, which can be accomplished properly by reintroducing morals into society. His goal to preserve and protect individuality involves democracy, yet his petition for unity in spirit and interest is characteristic of communitarianism. The former goal is intended to be harmonious with natural man’s inclination for self-preservation, and the latter is intended to further the natural compassion of man. Rousseau explains that to move beyond immoral society, human beings need to be unified in morality. Communal living can not be peaceful if every man decides entirely for himself what is good or evil without any kind of model. Rousseau supports the unlimited

sovereign of the general will, because it grants people the freedom to govern themselves according to their common good. Finally, Rousseau advocates education to make people will the general will of the community. Rousseau's proposed democratic and communitarian society is his remedy for the reformation of human nature that has been perverted by existing society.

Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau propose different political structures according to their own conceptions of human nature and the state of contemporary man. Hobbes understands man to be fundamentally full of passionate and egocentric appetites, and unable to coexist with others without the strong influence of an absolute government. Locke sees most men as rational enough to be able to sufficiently control themselves, but concedes of violators of reason that necessitate a limited government. Finally, Rousseau believes that all members of a society must be united in will and morality, while maintaining their individualities, because natural man lives by the principles of pity and self-preservation. All three thinkers realize the necessity of social contracts for the peaceful coexistence of human beings, and relate effectively their philosophies of human nature to their political strategies.

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MONTAIGNE AND BACON
ON THE RELATION BETWEEN MANKIND AND NATURE

Based on a variety of different convictions, many thinkers write about the relation of mankind to nature and to the natural kingdom. Michel de Montaigne and Sir Francis Bacon have divergent views on this issue, according to each one's basic attitude towards man and towards nature. In the *Essays*, Montaigne presents a romantic notion of the latter, admiring its simplicity and felicity. Not surprisingly, he sees mankind's relation to the natural world as a potential kind of friendship and mutual bond of benevolence. On the other hand, nature is a complex and powerful object for Bacon, as conveyed in his *New Atlantis and the Great Instauration*. He believes it is the duty of mankind to figure out the laws of the natural world, and to harness its powers for the benefit of the human community. The relation of mankind to nature is that of subject to ruler, respectively, and Bacon wishes to reverse that relationship. Both Montaigne and Bacon respect the natural world, but they clearly differ in their view of how mankind and nature should stand in relation to each other.

To understand why Montaigne sees mankind's relationship with the natural world as a kind of friendship, one must consider his basic view of nature itself. In "Of Experience," Montaigne says that "Nature is a gentle guide, but no more gentle than wise and just" (Montaigne from *Selections from the Essays* 133). This figure of a compassionate mentor takes on maternal qualities in the essay "Of Cannibals," in which he praises "our great and powerful mother Nature" whose creations are "the greatest and most beautiful" (Montaigne from handout 152-153). For Montaigne, the natural universe is an amiable, nurturing, and joyful place where man can live well by letting mother nature guide him.

Montaigne's belief that man should maintain a harmonious and considerate amity with nature follows from his romantic view of the natural kingdom. Following and trusting nature is for him the best course, to live in the "sweet freedom of nature's first laws" which are "happier," and simpler than those constructed by man (from *Selections* 3). Since Montaigne conceives of the natural universe as perfect, he says that man should not try to change or control it. He proposes to human beings, "Let us give Nature a chance; she knows her business better than we do" (from *Selections* 119). Implicit in this suggestion is the belief that human beings should accept their natural condition, which includes occasional illness and certain death, along with the happy aspects of human existence. Montaigne claims that he not only accepts, but is grateful for what nature has

offered him. He even makes the bold statement that “it is unjust to infringe her laws” (from *Selections* 126). Throughout the essays, Montaigne refers to the superiority of nature’s ways, encouraging man to participate in a sort of friendship with the natural world.

Finally, Montaigne says that part of being in this relationship with nature involves the enjoyment of the goods it offers. Indeed, he “consider[s] it equal injustice to set [the] heart against natural pleasure and to set [the] heart too much on them” (from *Selections* 124). Montaigne believes that by nature, the deeds that human beings must perform to survive at the same time give them pleasure, and justifies the relishing of worldly delights further. Moreover, he distinctly says that nature “invites us to these [pleasurable actions] not only through reason, but also through appetite” (from *Selections* 126). It can be inferred that human desires to perform certain actions that are more appetitive than rational, such as having sexual intercourse without the aim of conceiving, are natural, and therefore perfectly fine. Montaigne believes that nature gives man the right amount and the right kind of knowledge that he needs to “occupy himself simply and in an orderly way, that is to say naturally” (from *Selections* 115). Therefore, according to Montaigne, the relation of mankind to nature should be that of teacher to student, parent to child, friend to friend.

In contrast to Montaigne’s comforting notion of nature, and the affectionate relationship he sees between it and mankind, stands Bacon’s more utilitarian view. He sees in nature the key to acquiring true knowledge. However, it is not a simple and generous provider of wisdom for Bacon. Rather, he believes that the natural “universe to the eye of the human understanding is framed like a labyrinth; presenting as it does in every side so many ambiguities of the way, such deceitful resemblances of objects and signs, natures so irregular in their lines, and so knotted and entangled” (Bacon 13).

Since nature contains profound knowledge, yet is mysterious and elusive, Bacon believes man must try to acquire a comprehension of the natural laws and use it to benefit and empower mankind. He claims that as long as man is ignorant about the natural world, he will remain “but the servant and interpreter of nature” (Bacon 31-32). The relation of mankind to nature for Bacon is notably opposed to Montaigne’s position on the issue. Bacon endorses the manipulation of the world for human benefit as a whole, instead of the idea that humans should accept what they have been given. Friendship is replaced by the master/ servant relationship, the status of which Bacon wants to reverse. He believes that human beings should actively acquire knowledge and interpret nature in order to “command it in action,” instead of being commanded by it (Bacon 21).

To become the ruler of nature, Bacon says that man should be dedicated to figuring it out with inductive science and reason. Due to its trickiness and complexity, “Logic... is not nearly

subtle enough to deal with nature” (Bacon 12). To “reach the remoter and more hidden parts... it is necessary that a more perfect use and application of the human mind and intellect be introduced” (Bacon 14). Bacon goes on to claim that induction from observable facts is the way man can get an accurate understanding of the complicated natural universe. Therefore the relation of mankind to nature in Bacon is comparable to the relation of subjects, who desire to understand their ruler’s knowledge to gain some benefits and power for themselves, to their long-time ruler.

According to each one’s view about man and about nature, Montaigne and Bacon have different ideas about the relationship between human beings and the natural world. Montaigne encourages a friendship with nature, trusting in its simple goodness, letting it guide man and enjoying the pleasures it affords. On a different note, Bacon believes in turning man’s position as a servant of nature into the position of master, which requires understanding the complicated universe and applying the knowledge to serve the common human good. With such incongruous attitudes towards life, nature, and what is good for mankind, it is not surprising that Montaigne and Bacon have different ideas about this vital relationship.

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I AM WOMAN, HEAR ME...roar?

PREFACE

Chaucer's Wife of Bath has been called a woman ahead of her time, a woman who cuts through the misogynist rhetoric of her time and emerges strong and ambitious. She is a survivor, and I have therefore decided to create a dialogue between three women - also survivors - about her monologue in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

Two of these women - Justine and Dorothy - are characters in a novel called *Two Girls, Fat and Thin* by Mary Gaitskill. Although both are survivors and are strong women, they still fall prey to conventional views of women. Justine, a freelance journalist, is thin, pretty, and intelligent, yet she is completely manipulated by men. Dorothy is a graveyard-shift proofreader and is very intelligent, but she is paralyzed by her obesity and her desperation for company. Both women are strong and have survived sexual abuse, but it affects them to this day, which is evident in their relationships (or lack thereof) with men.

The third person is my close friend Ivanka, also a survivor, not of sexual abuse, but of growing up without a mother in a war-torn Croatia. Like Justine and Dorothy, Ivanka is fiercely intelligent, but she is still held down by the shackles placed on women in this society.

The scene of the discussion among the three women is The Trident, a coffee shop on Newbury Street. Justine is writing an article about whether or not women are truly liberated in this society.

Taking off her sunglasses as she strolls into the coffee shop, Justine scans the crowd assembled in the smoking section. One beautiful Slavic-looking girl sits alone at a three-person table reading and smoking a cigarette. Justine strains to read the title on the cover of

the book: *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. That had to be her. Coughing a bit, Justine swims through the smoke-filled room and makes her way over to the girl.

"Excuse me... Um... are you -" She begins timidly.

The girl reluctantly lifts her head from her book. "Ivanka? Yes. You're Justine?"

"Yeah. Uhh... is Dorothy here yet?"

"No, not yet."

"Oh." Silence. Justine nervously looks around the room, hoping not to see anyone she knows. Searching her mind for something to do to pretend she doesn't notice the silence, she rifles through her tattered bag and pulls out a tape recorder. Setting it carefully on the table, she looks at Ivanka to get a better handle on her. She sees the familiar lines of depression around her eyes. Justine knows that look. She knows how it feels. There is something else in those eyes, though. Not sure at first, Justine squints a little, as if that would help her to see Ivanka's soul. It must have helped a bit actually, because she recognized the glimmers of strength, determination, and yes - hope, that scary four-letter word.

Sensing this, Ivanka finally takes her eyes off the smoke trailing from her cigarette and glances up at Justine. Realizing that she had just been staring at Ivanka for a little too long, Justine quickly looks away, reddening a bit.

"It's okay. I watch people too. It's fun to try and figure people out by looking at their eyes, especially when you first meet them. I guess it's the psychologist in me. Everybody does it; it's just that some are better at hiding it than others," Ivanka says with a mischievous little grin. Justine reddens a bit more, and Ivanka bellows out, "Ahh... the elusive Dorothy finally makes her appearance!"

"Hi, Justine. I guess you're Ivanka. It's nice to meet you. Sorry I'm late. I just-"

Justine quickly interrupts. "Don't worry about it. Let's just get started. As I mentioned to each of you on the phone last week, I'm writing an article of the *Village Voice* on women's role in today's society."

"Right, but why are you interviewing us? We aren't anybody special," asks Ivanka while lighting another cigarette.

"Well, I have already interviewed Dorothy for another article, and because of the information I gleaned from her in those interviews, I thought she'd contribute a lot to this article. As for you, I heard about you through a friend of mine who is a teaching assistant in the Psychology Department at B.U. Given your background, I thought you could give another perspective on the issue."

"I'm really excited about this, Justine. I've missed you since the last interview... but what made you decide to write about women now, in 1996? Is it really pertinent to society now?" Dorothy asked.

"Of course it is! You know as well as I do that no matter how strong we are, something always gets us in the end, simply because we are women who don't fit the Barbie-doll mold. What made me think of this, is what I came across the other day when I was looking through some old papers that I wrote in college. I found one about the Wife of Bath, a paper in which I lauded her for being a strong woman, ahead of her time, blah, blah, blah. But thinking about it now, I really wonder if she was all that great. So anyway, that's why I asked you guys if you had read *The Canterbury Tales*," Justine slumped in her chair, almost as if this topic was taxing to her. Silence.

Dorothy spoke up first. "Well, I think the first thing that needs to be said is that the Wife of Bath was a strong woman - and a survivor. Just because she slept with men to acquire power doesn't undermine her strength."

"But that's just as bad as a prostitute who has sex for money! She may have power, but look how she gets it!" Ivanka exclaims, pointing her cigarette at Dorothy for emphasis. Looking through her bag, she pulls out her copy of the book. "Look! She says it right here, on page 224, that her marriages 'meant nothing to [her]!' That's not strength! It's

manipulation, and it does nothing to further the plight of women. If anything, it sets us back! She gives women a bad name.”

Justine cut in, “Yeah, but you have to take into account the time period in which she lived; it was the most misogynistic of all time. The only way for a woman to get power in those days was to manipulate men into thinking that they had the power, while she had the upper hand the whole time.”

“Right, but that doesn’t make her a model for us to follow. I’ll admit that she was strong to do what she did; I just don’t agree with the way she did it,” Ivanka states emphatically.

“Remember the Prologue?” Dorothy interjects. “Remember how all she did was justify herself through citing passages in the Bible? Well, she was smart, and she must be given credit for that too. She really knew what to say to get people to agree with her.”

“Just because she was a good rhetorician, doesn’t mean that she was a good person. I mean-”

“We’re not talking about the quality of her character, Ivanka. I just want to talk about her role as a feminist figure in early literature,” Justine interrupted.

“I realize that, but I just want to make it clear that I don’t think she’s a particularly good role model,” Ivanka says defensively. “I think her motives for manipulating men were good, but I don’t like the way she carried it out. Well, part of me likes the way she plays on the sexual appetites of men to get what she wants, but that’s still not true strength.”

“I see her as a kind of a victim, a tragic character,” Dorothy says meekly.

“I think you’re right, Dorothy. Perhaps she is a victim of society’s perception of how women should be,” Ivanka said with a very stern look in her eyes. “A professor in the English Department at B.U. gave a lecture on the Wife of Bath’s Tale a couple of weeks ago. He mentioned something about how maybe she had internalized all the misogyny of her culture and now believes it. Therefore, she thinks that the only way to gain power in her

society is to play into the misogyny, but in doing this, she ends up falling prey to it anyway."

"Exactly," said Justine. "And I guess that's why I felt such a connection to her in college; I understood her and why she felt she had to do the things she did. After all, I pretty much did the same thing when I was in junior high school. I was a sexually promiscuous pubescent girl who thought the only way to get noticed was to wear short skirts and tight shirts, not simply to be myself. That's exactly what the Wife of Bath is doing. She talks about "selling" her *belle chose*, her pretty thing, to gain power, and I don't think many women today can say that they haven't done the same thing at least once in their lives."

"Right," says Ivanka, lighting another cigarette. "I agree totally. The Wife of Bath is a symbol of what women are all like, deep down, no matter how intelligent, strong, or beautiful they are. We all think that because we're women, regardless of what the feminists tell us, we can't make it on intelligence alone in this society. And if you aren't thin and beautiful, then you can forget getting anywhere. We all say that we can do whatever we please, but I think we all know that, although it has gotten a bit better, things really haven't changed all that much."

"Yeah, and the Wife of Bath personifies this feeling," began Dorothy. "She believes all of the misogynist sentiment of her culture, and will end up destroying herself because of it. In the prologue of her tale, she gets very defensive at one point, recalling all of the terrible things men have ever said about women. There is a strange underlying tone to her speech. She is so defensive, that it seems she might actually believe what men said about women at the time. People tend to get defensive when what others say has some kind of truth."

"The professor I mentioned earlier also said that she was a 'victim of her own self-image'. No matter what she said about women's power and strength, she still wouldn't - or couldn't - marry for love, only money. It's all as if she thinks that no one would love her because she doesn't deserve it," Ivanka said, sipping her coffee.

"Sounds familiar." Dorothy shot a look at Justine. "I doubt any of us is a stranger to self-esteem problems. Most women get into destructive relationships because they think that no decent man would want them. Or they don't bother with relationships at all, thinking that no man - kind or manipulative - would ever want them. They're too 'fat,' too 'ugly,' too 'stupid,' too 'smart,' whatever. I understand that feeling well. I've only had one relationship, and I'll probably never have another one, for that very reason. Like you, Justine, I feel a kinship with the Wife of Bath. I understand where she's coming from. We have the same problem; it's just that she handles it differently than I do. It all comes down to the same thing, though."

"You didn't have to glare at me, Dorothy. I was thinking the same thing you were. I, too, have subjugated myself to countless men who treated me terribly, and I stuck through it, because I thought I deserved it. It's almost as if I search for those bastards! No matter where I am, I'll find them. It's the mean guys that I get attached to the most. The Wife of Bath's favorite husband was the one who beat her. What does that say?" Justine exclaimed.

"Exactly," Ivanka said in her thick Croatian accent. "The concept of beauty as it relates to women really intrigues me. Dorothy, you mentioned something about how if women aren't thin and beautiful, then they can't get anywhere. The Wife of Bath is lucky in that she is attractive, but she knows that beauty doesn't last forever. She knows that her beauty is fading fast and there is nothing she can do about it. Without beauty, you're nothing, and even if you have it, you won't have it for very long. She knows this, and it isn't a pleasant thought. What surprised me a little was the story she told about the knight who was forced to marry the old hag who saved his life. It irritated me that she turned out to be beautiful and loyal in the end. But what bothered me even more, was that the Wife of Bath seemed to endorse this."

Justine spoke up, "Yeah, but that goes along with what we were saying before about how no matter how much she hates that women have now power in her society, she still

believes that without beauty, you're nothing. She internalized this stuff so much, that she thinks the story of the knight is a wonderful fairy tale. It's her way of justifying herself. Her entire speech is one big justification of her actions. That's why I love this story. It works on so many different levels."

"It's also a very good representation of the darkness of women's psyches," Ivanka said, gathering up her things, "even though I still have a problem with her being a role model for young girls."

"That's the thing, though. I don't think she's supposed to be a role model; she just represents, as you said, the negative sides of women and what society has done to us. I still think this is a sad story, though," says Dorothy. "I just wish that we were free of those fetters placed on us so many years ago. I don't now. I still look at myself and say, 'You're so fat, no man would ever consider you, not even the sick and perverted ones'."

"Well, you're not missing much with those guys. Trust me," Justine snorted. "Anyway, thanks a lot for helping me. This should be pretty good. I'll call you guys if I have any more questions."

"No problem," Ivanka says, putting on her coat.

"I hope we can do this again. It was really... nice to talk," Dorothy muttered.

"Yeah. Bye."

"Bye."

"Bye."

The Relic

by John Donne

When my grave is broke up again
Some second guest to entertain
(For graves have learned that womanhead
To be more than one a bed)
And he that digs it spies
A bracelet of bright hair about the bone,
Will he not let us alone,
And think that there a loving couple lies,
Who thought that this device might be some way
To make their souls at the last busy day
Meet at this grave, and make a little stay

If this fall in a time or land
Where mis-devotion doth command,
Then he that digs us up will bring
Us to the bishop and the king
To make us relics; then
Thou shalt be a Mary Magdalen, and I
A something else thereby.
All women shall adore us, and some men;
And since at such time miracles are sought,
I would have that age by this paper taught
What miracles we harmless lovers wrought:

First, we loved well and faithfully,
Yet we knew not what we loved, nor why;
Difference of sex no more we knew
Than our guardian angels do;
Coming and going, we
Perchance might kiss, but not between those meals;
Our hands ne'er touched the seals
Which nature, injured by late law, sets free.
These miracles we did; but now, alas,
All measure and all language I should pass,
Should I tell what a miracle she was.

The Relic

The poem "The Relic" by John Donne exemplifies many of the qualities of his work that sets him apart from a poet such as Shakespeare. His rhythmic patterns are not regular and fixed, so a deviation from the pattern of iambic pentameter is not necessarily meaningful, as it might be with Shakespeare. Instead, he uses this lack of inherent regularity as a means of expressing emotion. By shortening the lengths of lines, using enjambment and intensifying the rhyme pattern, he creates a more undulant and irregular poem that works to intensify the expression of his feelings. The use of alliteration and assonance unites the poem internally, independent of the rhyme scheme. Also typical of Donne is the use of numerous metaphors throughout the poem rather than an extended metaphor or conceit, as with Shakespeare. "The Relic" is a sprawling poem which uses dramatic shifts and unexpected imagery in order to create a mood.

The poem consists of three stanzas, each of which consists of two quatrains and a tercet. The rhyme pattern is regular throughout the poem, the first quatrain being AABB, the second CDDC and the tercet EEE. The way that Donne manipulates these rhyme patterns is what adds a great deal of drama and character to the poem. The rhythmic pattern of the poem is essentially regular throughout as well. The meter is regular and predictable, while the feet contained within them are usually not. In other words, there is no consistent use of iambs or trochees, rather, there is a constant shift in the motion of the verses. The verses do consist of a regular number of syllables, however. the first quatrain consists of four lines of tetrameter, the second quatrain consists of two lines of trimeter alternating with two lines of pentameter and the triplet consists of three verses of pentameter. An interesting aspect of the rhythm is evident in the second quatrain of each stanza because the rhyme scheme alternates CDDC, while the rhythm alternates 3535. This causes the rhymes words to be on lines of varying length and allows for the possibility of changing the rhyme pattern

itself through the use of internal rhyme or other devices. There are only two exceptions of this rhythmic pattern throughout the poem, which could mean that they have some significance or are especially meaningful.

Before the analysis of individual lines, it is important to look at the general idea expressed in the poem and at the metaphors introduced, so that the significance of various structural techniques within the work can be better understood. The poem consists of three stanzas consisting of eleven lines each, divided as described above. The number of verses is therefore 33, which perhaps attains significance when the subject matter is understood. The first full 11 line stanza describes the unearthing of a grave containing the bodies of a couple entwined as if in love, the second stanza describes their bones being mistaken for relics with miraculous powers and the final stanza describes the real miracles that the bones represent: true, faithful love.

The first stanza of the poem abounds in poetic devices such as assonance and alliteration. The second verse shows assonance in the repetition of the vowel "e": "Some second guest to entertain". This is also used in the last verse: Meet at this grave and make a little stay." The repetition of vowel sounds in the final verse emphasizes the idea expressed. It seems to tie the words "grave" and "stay" together to enhance the idea of firmness and immovability already found in "stay."

The one use of alliteration in this stanza is a significant one because its conspicuousness is increased by the enjambment immediately preceding it. Lines five and six read: "And he that digs it spies/ a bracelet of bright hair about the bone." Line five is the first time that the conspicuously shorter verse arises at the beginning of the second quatrain and it catches one unawares. The natural tendency is to continue the fifth line, which has only six syllables, for two more syllables in order to make it match the pattern of the first quatrain. This tendency is further enhanced by the lack of punctuation, and therefore a lack of a caesura, at the end of the line. This enjambment also seems to enhance the secretive

quality of "spies." It sits at the end of the line, tempting one to see what has been discovered and pushes one onto the next line rapidly. The next line unfolds rapidly in a flurry of alliterated b's.

the seventh line is also interesting because it is one of the two lines in the poem that has an irregular number of syllables: seven, rather than the six that forms a perfect trimeter. This could be an unintentional result of word choice, or it could have meaning. The line reads, "Will he not let us alone," and perhaps the irregularity reflects the mistake of the grave-digger in intruding upon their subterranean slumber. He has entered the scene and is creating a disturbance, which is reflected in the "disturbed" meter.

The last triplet, which Donne has used in other poems to create a quickening or intensifying effect, seems, in this poem, to be orderly and slow in comparison to the rapid fluctuations found in the second quatrain. Each of the three triplets appear to express and summarize the most important points of the preceding stanza and introduce new ideas. Reading simply those nine lines would give one a good idea as to the feelings expressed in the poem. Out of the three triplets in the poem, this one probably is the fastest paced, as there is enjambment after the first two verses. The triplet can be read as a complete sentence without pause between verses.

The second stanza uses some of the same devices as the first in unification of the poem. There is assonance in the third line of the stanza: "Then he that digs us up will bring." There is also an example of alliteration the ninth verse of the poem: "And since at such time miracles are sought." But by far the most interesting aspect of the stanza, and of the poem as a whole, is the second quatrain which is so replete with enjambment, extra syllables and internal rhymes, that its very structure seems to have changed. The quatrain reads:

To make us relics; then
Thou shalt be a Mary Magdalen, and I
A something else thereby.
All women shall adore us, and some men

In this quatrain, enjambment wreaks havoc on the normal rhythmic and rhyme patterns of the poem. The semicolon placed after "relics" creates an awkwardness that shifts the rhythm for the rest of the poem. After the semicolon and its accompanying caesura, only one syllable remains which, because there is no punctuation after it, tends to be read as the first part of the next verse. But there is also a curious connection between the rhyme of "then" and "Magdalen" because the "and I" at the end of the second stanza also occurs after punctuation and has none after it, so it tends to be read a part of the next verse. So the internal rhyme of "then" and "Magdalen" appears as an end rhyme. This is also enforced by the fact that the second line of this quatrain is one that possesses an extra syllable; it has eleven rather than the expected ten, so the part after the comma on that line seems even more superfluous. Probably the strangest thing about this quatrain is the third line, "A something else thereby." This line is the conclusion after four lines of enjambment. It ends with a period at the end of the line and is supposedly what all of the other lines have been leading up to and yet it is very unfulfilling, impersonal and anticlimactic. Perhaps he feels he feels is anonymous and insignificant compared to her, or perhaps he does not want to reveal the truth and sate the reader's inappropriate curiosity.

One final note of importance concerning this stanza is that it introduces the word "miracle" which is continued into the next stanza and undergoes a shift in meaning. In this stanza it is used to describe the false miracles which people attribute to relics and the belief Donne characterizes as "mis-devotion." Additionally, it is used to describe the "miracles" he and his lover wrought, which he enumerates in the next stanza. they are not miracles in the strictly religious sense, but rather miraculous as a testament of the strength of true, unconsummated love.

The third and final stanza exhibits many of the aforementioned styles already enumerated. Enjambment is used but to as significant an effect as in earlier stanzas. As usual, the first trimeter line of the second quatrain has enjambment, which forces the reader to

continue onto the next line and increases the speed and tension of the poem. By far the most interesting use of alliteration in the poem is found in the second line of the first quatrain: "Yet *knew not* what we loved, nor why." This seems to be an accurate verbal representation of the ignorance the writer possesses. The repetition of the n's and the w's and the alternation between the two gives the effect of confusion or irrationality which embodies the meaning of the line.

Also of interest, for a number of reasons, is the last triplet:

These miracles we did; but now, alas,
All measure and all language I should pass,
Should I tell what a miracle she was.

The concept of the miracle, which was introduced in the second stanza, is reintroduced in these lines and shows a change of meaning. the first use of miracle corresponds to one of the previous uses, being the miracle of loving someone faithfully and truly. The second use of miracle isolates his lover as being *the* miracle. In some ways, this meaning is connected to the sense of miracle used in describing their bones as relics. She has ceased to be the false miracle of mistaken identity and has become a miracle for the genuine person the poet knew her to be. This emphasis on her power and grace is further emphasized by the lack of rhyme at the very end of the poem. Perhaps "was" was pronounced differently in Donne's day but in ours it does not rhyme with "pass." This is really the only time, (except for the slippery "faithfully"/ "why" rhyme at the beginning of this stanza) that the rhyme is not complete, which makes it conspicuous and more meaningful.

The physical relationship seems bittersweet for Donne throughout his poetry. It is the thing to which he constantly strives, but the thing that he knows does not have the most spiritual importance. Donne's style was only rudimentarily covered in this paper, but I think that one interesting distinction between Shakespeare and Donne is the relative internalization of their poems. Shakespeare begins with a static form and basically unvarying style which he subtly changes and shifts in order to create something new and exciting. Donne, rather than

working with the poem internally and creating meaning from trochees and iambs, casts off many of the rules to create something new. It is more openly dramatic and expressive but less directly influenced by the more minute aspects of versification.

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Speaking with God: Refined Forms of Communication

Although Bach and Donne consider God enormously complex and complicated, they use different means of placing the divine personality next to human personalities. Bach shows in his dances and fugues that we must surrender ourselves to an art-form in order to approach God; we cannot get there by purely rational methods. Through his music, Bach portrays a relationship between man and God that is as mysterious as it is complex. Donne considers the divine less abstract, for the first sonnet in the *La Corona* cycle asks for God's blessing. He sees God as someone we can talk to despite his infinite complexity.

Like other art-forms, music has the particular quality of inviting the human mind to experience ideas and emotions that far surpass the capacity of reason. Just as Kazimir Malevich's *Suprematist Composition: Aeroplane Flying* brings abstractions to perceivable distances so does Bach's music bring God closer to man. In Malevich's depiction of brightly colored rectangles floating across a white canvas, we recognize something much more complex and beautiful than the simple geometrical shapes. Each figure has a rigid construction yet it hovers freely in relation to the others; constraint and freedom as interlocked contradictions provide a framework for the painting. Like Bach's fugues and Donne's poetry, Malevich's painting draws the audience into a state of perception that transcends reason and transforms ordinary emotions.

Two subjects (independent melodies) provide the musical shape for Bach's "Giga" of *Partita 1 in B-flat Major*. The first is bright, colorful and floats across the treble staff while the second contains deeper tones, and it works to keep the first from wafting away. Alternating high notes in the first subject provide emotional weightlessness; the second subject interjects with the voice of reason and lends stability to the piece. In this work, Bach combines an emotional aspect with an intellectual one. The two components together make room for a third soul-state. Employing the heart and the mind, the "Giga" opens a spiritual

pathway for communication. As listeners we enter into an elevated arena of contemplation, where feelings and thoughts are no longer clearly divided, and God becomes perceptible.

Without music, we can not gain progress in the climb towards understanding of the divine intellect. Mankind constantly struggles to approach God through intellectual means, but as Calvin and Augustine agree, “we can not grasp him” (Institutes, 62). Nor can we through emotional frenzy enter into the vast folds of the mind of God, for pure emotions are too unguided and uncontrolled. The closest that we can get is to make a connection that is neither completely emotional nor entirely intellectual; this kind of connection is possible through music.

A feeling of divine and human union comes when you close your eyes and listen to Bach’s “Andante” from the *Italian Concerto* as it takes you away from time and place. The first three bars establish not two subjects, but one splintered into two—melody and harmony. As you are waiting in the arena, the second subject enters. It is the voice of God, and you are right there. Is the bed still underneath you? You cannot feel it anymore. The music places you outside of reality so that everything around you disappears; it opens your mind to something unavoidable and yet unavailable until now. God is not untouchable here; he still cannot be understood but can somehow be perceived. This is the task of Bach’s music: to transport man beyond himself and closer to the divine. It does not attempt to equalize man and God but to make the relationship between them intimate.

The level at which God exists in opposition to human understanding is beyond the powers of reason, and Bach’s music reflects the impossible confusion that we feel when we grapple with this problem. The “Fuga 1 in C Major” of the *Well-Tempered Clavier, Volume 1* portrays the constant battering that the emotions receive when they try to understand something vastly complicated. Bach writes this particular work in four voices; a single subject gets transcribed into four keys. Then each voice is played one after the next until all the voices are playing simultaneously.

The analogy would be to have four people speak the same phrase in four different languages at the same time; when each person finishes, he or she starts over until the phrase is spoken simultaneously by all four people at different times. Feelings of frustration and confusion multiply with each repetition as the phrase becomes more evasive. The word fugue has its root in the Greek word *φύγειν*, which means to flee. Many of Bach's fugues feel like they are trying to evade the listeners; we are constantly chasing after the subject but never catch it. Our frustrations are not uncomfortable because the music is soothing, but they are knocking at our thoughts. Ends and beginnings flow seamlessly together, while we try to extract a single melodious phrase. This impossible task is like trying to dissect the infinite nature of God into small fragments embracable to the human intellect—it can not be done.

While Bach introduces God through abstraction, Donne introduces him in Biblical context. Communication with the divine for Bach occurs through music and does not require language; it relies rather on tonal compositions. Donne addresses his sonnet cycle *La Corona* to God, first asking him to bless the poem and second for a crown of glory. God is available through the direct route of language; he is still vastly complex as the cycle shows but no longer mysterious.

The poem in form and content includes many intricacies and subtleties that perhaps reflect the great complexity of the nature of the divine. Titled *La Corona*, the cycle is not only about a crown but is in the shape of a crown; the first and last lines are identical—“*Deign at my hands this crown of prayer and praise.*” The beginning and end of the poem run together, and one could imagine copying the poem onto a single strip of paper and attaching the ends without losing any of its value. This is not a simple and straight-edged crown but one with seven peaks. Seven sonnets constitute the entire cycle; the end of each sonnet begins the next. Final lines are identical to first lines in adjacent sonnets.

A point of further complication is the number seven, which reflects the week long story of creation in the Christian Old Testament. Beginning with light and ending with rest, the creation story details God's act of forming the universe. After God rests in Genesis 1, he

creates the universe all over again in Genesis 2; creation in the Old Testament becomes rather circular. *La Corona* can be interpreted under the same lens: the crown of prayer and praise that Donne asks for in the first sonnet provides a light in his dark world of fading flowers and fallen angels; and the “uprising of this sun, and son” in the final sonnet leads to eternal rest for all of those who ascend to Heaven’s gates. As the final line of the final sonnet leads back to the beginning of the cycle, the symbolic creation presented in the poem starts over again. Creation in *La Corona*, as in the Old Testament, becomes circular.

The content of this cycle includes numerous Biblical references and contexts that make reading the seven individual sonnets an exercise in Biblical verse. Donne does not want the “proud crown of the drunkards of Ephram,” rather he wants a crown of glory from God (*Isaiah*, 28). The first sonnet is an appeal to the Old Testament writings of Isaiah. Sonnets two through six recount the story of Jesus’ birth and life. And the final sonnet tells of Jesus’ ascent into Heaven and of the path created by his journey that mankind will hopefully follow.

As in Bach’s music, Donne’s *La Corona* tells of a God that humans cannot understand. The frequent use of contradicting terms by the poet portrays the idea that God exists somehow beyond contradiction. Jesus, who is at the same time all and everything at once conceived within Mary’s womb, “cannot sin, yet all sins must bear.” Donne showers the son of God with contradicting terms: he is infinite and at the same time enclosed; he is eternal but imprisoned by flesh and death; and he is incapable of sin yet he bears all sin. Humans cannot understand Jesus by taking for granted such contradictions, and as Donne believes, humans cannot understand Jesus at all. Ends and beginnings slide into one another when Donne talks about God so that “at our end begins our endless rest.” These contradicting terms, along with others, uncover what the poet considers to be the nature of the divine: that it is not available to human understanding.

Bach and Donne reflect through their art-forms the God's greatness by using complex forms in their works. Bach composes multi-subject dances and fugues that are complicated, but beautiful; Donne writes a poem that draws its energy from a myriad of external sources. When listening to Bach or reading Donne's *La Corona*, one finds himself thrust into a world of new feelings and thoughts. The works produce more than fleeting emotions but provide, as Professor Johnson put it, "intellectual exercises" for the mind to savor.

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Selfhood: Erving Goffman, Frantz Fanon, & Margaret Mead

In The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, Erving Goffman explores how human social interaction is like a theatrical stage upon which multitudes of performers present themselves and their actions to an audience of others. Key to his discussion of performances are the following three statements: "the word person, in its first meaning, is a mask;" "everyone is always and everywhere, more or less consciously, playing a role;" "It is in these roles that we know each other; it is in these roles that we know ourselves" [19]. However, in focusing strictly and objectively upon the social techniques of the performer, Goffman does not explore three important components of the "Presentation of Self." First, Goffman does not thoroughly discuss how cultural conditioning and environment construct performances (i.e., masks or roles). Second, Goffman does not discuss the negative aspects of performances. And third, Goffman does not consider what happens when an individual is deviant in his society and does not wear his assigned mask. However, Margaret Mead, in Sex and Temperament, and Frantz Fanon, in Black Skin White Masks, do account for these components of roles which Goffman overlooks.

Goffman's "report" of The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life "is concerned with some of the common techniques that persons employ to sustain...impressions and...some of the common contingencies associated with the employment of these techniques" [15]. In his report Goffman works under the assumption that "when an individual appears before others he will have many motives for trying to control the impression they receive of the situation" [15]. However, are all motives actualized? Do environment and cultural categories control the role-playing of performers? These are questions which Mead and Fanon explore. Goffman however, in his Introduction, restricts his analysis of roles, stating that "the specific content of any activity presented by the individual participant, or the role it plays in the interdependent activities of an on-going social system, will not be at issue" [15]. In his

analysis of performances, Goffman seeks to layout a report which describes the types of roles people play, or masks people wear, as a means of manipulating the impressions they make. He defines and describes the components of the performance (such as the front, manner, appearance, and setting which the performer must learn how to maximize in his favor) and he explains how the performer must avoid the impression disruptors, such as unmeant gestures, faux pas, scenes, and inopportune intrusions.

However, in remaining neutral in his report, Goffman neglects to sufficiently define a performance. To Goffman, the term performance is used "to refer to all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers" [22]. Furthermore, Goffman argues that men and women construct themselves by means of the masks they wear (i.e., the performances they give). However, cannot an individual influence observers without acting? Cannot an individual be playing a role by means of their presence alone? Fanon and Mead definitely say yes and, unlike Goffman, state that people are not always consciously playing roles. Fanon and Mead broaden and supplement Goffman's definition of the word performance.

To Fanon, in his discussion of the effects of French colonization on the blacks of the Antilles, an individual can play a role in society based strictly upon their race. Without any activity on the part of an individual, Fanon states that an individual can cast an impression in the eyes of his observers. Fanon states that this situation arose in the Antilles because the color of skin fused to incorporate other social categories as a result of environmental economic circumstances (French imperialism). The societal categories were that "Negroes are savages, brutes, illiterates," while whites are moral, rich, and literate [117]. Therefore, a black was considered a savage, a brute, and an illiterate regardless of his activity or performance towards his audience. Moreover, it was only through his proper performance that a black individual could alter the impression his mere presence cast in the eyes of either

an Antillian black or French audience. The Antillian black audience viewed themselves in the same way as the French as they had internalized the categories which the French had created of them. Fanon describes the French view towards blacks stating that "A white man addressing a Negro behaves exactly like an adult with a child and starts smirking, whispering, patronizing, cozening. It is not one white man I have watched; but hundreds" [31]. Only by learning the French language well, marrying a French person, and acting inferior, could the Antillian black person attempt to lessen their inferior role as a black in the eyes of their society. In sum, Fanon states that he "had rationalized the world and the world had rejected (him) on the basis of color prejudice" [123].

Like, Fanon, Mead also broadens Goffman's definition in her work Sex and Temperament. Mead asserts that gender, like race, can represent a role. She states that in different cultures, different sexes are assigned different roles and masks based solely upon their sex, not based on the activity of the individual. For instance, Mead reveals that Arapesh women have similar roles to Arapesh men because their culture does not assign particular temperaments to gender. However, the Tchambuli women and men do have different roles as a result of their culture's gender role assignments, "with the woman the dominant, impersonal, managing partner," and "the man the less responsible and the emotionally dependent person" [279]. A clear example of Mead's argument that sexism has the similar effect as racism is seen in the Cookacooka tribes. In the Cookacooka tribes, gender plays the crucial role in all social intercourse. Cookacooka boys are taught to run away from females at a young age and newly married grooms are not permitted to engage in social intercourse with their wives immediately after marriage unless they have their backs facing them and unless their elders are serving as their intermediaries.

Therefore, according to both Fanon and Mead, roles and performances are not based solely upon the actions of the performer in front of their audience. Roles are also strongly influenced by the individual's environment and cultural conditioning. The French imperialist

environment of the Antilles created role enslavements based on race, with the whites as superior and blacks as inferior, while some of the cultures which Mead examined created role confinements based on gender. According to Fanon and Mead, an individual may make an impression on an audience without any activity on their part. Therefore, Goffman's definition of performance, taking into account the relevance of Fanon and Mead, should be more inclusive and refer to any impression that an individual casts "during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers which has some influence on the observers" [22].

The important, second issue of masks which Goffman leaves unexplored in his report are the negative outcomes of masks. Fanon directly addresses this concern in Black Skin White Masks. He states that not only do the Antillian blacks have to wear white masks, as the title of his work states, but they have to wear them at all times and have suffered psychologically as a result of them. To Fanon, "in the man of color there is a constant effort to run away from his own individuality, to annihilate his own presence" which psychologically "proceeds from humiliating insecurity through strongly voiced self-accusation to despair" [60]. Moreover, as a result of his enslavement to inferiority, Fanon states that "the attitude of the black man toward the white, or toward his own race, often duplicates almost completely a constellation of delirium, frequently bordering on the region of the pathological" [60]. These pathological results of exploitation enrage Fanon. In affirming that "(his) black skin is not the wrapping of specific values," [227] he declares that "no attempt must be made to encase man, for it is his destiny to be set free" [230]. Fanon declares why all mankind must be freed from exploitation through his definition of what it is to be human. To be human is to say "Yes to life. Yes to love. Yes to generosity" and at the same time, to be human is to say "No to scorn of man. No to degradation of man. No to exploitation of man. No to the butchery of what is most human in man: freedom" [222]. However, to Fanon, not only can masks produce immediate negative effects, such as

psychological neurosis, but they can also lead to more negative consequences. In the presence of such an inhumanity as exploitation, Fanon calls mankind to fight and to sacrifice. Just as the Vietnamese who died "for the sake of the present and of the future," Fanon calls mankind to fight, "so that never again would a people on earth be subjugated" [227]. Thus, Fanon's description of masks reveals that inhuman masks can produce negative effects, and in turn, these effects, when they contradict what it means to be human, demand to be destroyed (possibly through violence).

Goffman however, unlike Fanon, did not see the negative consequences of wearing official societal masks, which he termed as idealization. To Goffman, idealization is like a ceremony which serves as "an expressive rejuvenation and reaffirmation of the moral values of the community" [35]. In idealization, the performer "will tend to incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of the society" [35]. Yet, how ceremonious and rejuvenating are idealized performances which enforce the exploitation of human beings? How moral? Clearly, the Antillian black who must always wear a mask which re-enforces the exploitation of himself was not in Goffman's mind when he wrote about idealization. Rather, Fanon's case description of idealization is more like Goffman's performance nightmare.

Finally, the third aspect of the "Presentation of Self" which Mead explores though Goffman does not is the deviant performer. In his analysis, Goffman presumes that not only are people always wearing masks, but they have motives to do so. But, what of those individuals who cannot wear masks or play roles, especially the culturally correct ones? In not accounting for the innate differences amongst performers and the cultural importance of wearing the official masks, Goffman does not account for the deviant performer. However, Mead in her analysis of three primitive tribes does, stating that "each tribe has certain definite attitudes towards temperament, a theory of what human beings, either men or women or both, are naturally like, a norm in terms of which to judge and condemn those individuals who deviate from it" [xiii]. To Mead, the deviant is "any individual who because

of innate disposition or accident of early training, or through the contradictory influences of a heterogeneous cultural situation, has been culturally disenfranchised, the individual to whom the the major emphases of his society seem nonsensical, unreal, untenable, or downright wrong" [290]. In Sex and Temperament, Mead shows that various cultures deal differently with their deviants and that the individual performer cannot entirely chose their performances because they are culturally determined.

Clearly then, in presentating the various techniques and contingencies of masks, Goffman did not say all that could be said about them. Rather, he objectively approached the conception of self from the viewpoint of role-playing, arguing that each and every person is at all times wearing a mask. Mead, on the other hand, approached the idea of selfhood from the perspective of culture, arguing that human roles and masks are conditioned, especially in regards to gender and temperament. Lastly, Fanon, approached the conception of self from his definition of what it means to be human. To Fanon, in order for the performer to be human, the self must possess certain attributes, in particular freedom from exploitation and enslavement to roles. Yet, whether it be in presenting the methods of mask usage, or relating how culture and environment produce roles, or in seeking to destroy masks of exploitation, each of these authors sought to display in some way "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life."

Fyodor Dostoevsky: The Man in His Work

Fyodor Mikhaylovich Dostoevsky is the influential 19th century Russian novelist whose works are known for their compelling philosophical, social, religious, and psychological elements. His novels contain themes of crime, estrangement from society and humanity, and salvation through suffering. He was able to write about such concepts because he was well acquainted with the darker side of life which so many of his characters embody. There are characteristic parallels between the content of Dostoevsky's life, and that of his writing; these are especially true of his first great work, *Crime and Punishment*, and in particular of the central character Rodion Romanovitch Raskolnikov. Dostoevsky's greatest purpose in writing this novel, as well as others, was to dive into the inner reaches of the human mind and soul in order to illustrate certain essential truths of the human condition. The setting and circumstances may be unique, but the fundamental experiences are indeed universal. Writing is Dostoevsky's medium for conveying the wisdom of life, the depths of the mind, the emotions of the soul, and the inner nature of man.

Rodya Raskolnikov characterizes the type of man present in Dostoevsky's novels. Rodya is a student of the middle class who sustains a meager subsistence. He cannot afford to attend the university any longer, and "he [is] hopelessly in debt to his landlady" (Dostoevsky 1). His family, consisting of a mother and sister, is little better off. Raskolnikov illustrates Dostoevsky's concern with one's social status. Dostoevsky could relate to the difficulties of a middle class man because he was one himself. The issue of money is also significant because the lack of it is a defining feature of one's status. Dostoevsky spent most of his life in need of money, and at times he was even forced to use his writing skill as a direct means of putting food on the table. However, he is not so much writing about the poor middle class as he is writing about it in relation to the peasants and the aristocracy. It is the entire social system that concerns him, but from the view point of the common man. This is a direct contrast to such contemporary writers as Leo Tolstoy and Ivan Turgenev who wrote primarily from the

point of view of the aristocracy. This distinction is significant for, since the majority of people belong to the middle strata, it meant that Dostoevsky's novels were more accessible to the average man.

Themes of crime, violence, and guilt are present in all of Dostoevsky's works because they are concepts he deeply understood. As a young man he was arrested and sentenced to death, which was commuted to four years of hard labor at Omsk, in Siberia, and thereafter four more years as a soldier; "Memory of the experience during the grisly preparations for the execution. . .haunted the pages of his later fiction" (*Encyclopedia Britannica* 451). He was arrested for his participation in certain radical organizations, and prosecuted for crimes against the Czar. Consequently, Dostoevsky thought himself to be truly guilty. While in prison he was directly exposed to the criminal element, and attempted to understand the workings of the criminal mind. Raskolnikov's situation is similar in that almost the entire novel deals with his murder of a pathetic old woman and the guilt he feels as a result. The murder is particularly violent, for "he dealt her another and another blow with the blunt side [of the ax] and on the same spot" (Dostoevsky 69). The guilt that Raskolnikov feels is so intense that he begins to desire punishment for his crime, and he eventually allows himself to be caught by the police inspector. Dostoevsky observed that violence and crime bear certain consequences, and in this way his own experiences with such concepts were translated into his most important themes.

Dostoevsky makes a significant distinction in his novels between reason and will, for he believes that reason is not adequate in transforming a man into a human. Raskolnikov commits the act of murder because of his theory of the "extraordinary man." The woman he kills is an old pawnbroker who cheats her customers, and abuses her sister. He believes that she is no use to society, and in fact harms it, and, therefore, deserves to die. Further, Raskolnikov decides that he will take her money and give it to his family, theorizing that "humanitarian ends justify evil means" (*Encyclopedia Britannica* 452). He theorizes that the "extraordinary man" can commit such a crime without feeling remorse or guilt. As a

result, Raskolnikov the intellectual replaces Raskolnikov the man, reason taking the place of the living processes of life. After committing the crime, however, Rodya ceases to care about his family or anything else. Through acting out such a heinous theory he has alienated himself from society, and desisted in being a human. Dostoevsky witnessed much of the same tyranny of reason firsthand in prison, as “the categories of good and evil had simply ceased to control behavior” (Frank ix-x). He observed many men who experienced little or no anguish or suffering from their crimes, most of which were murder. In so doing they isolated themselves from society, both literally and figuratively. From this he deduced that one is made human through the feelings of the heart, not by the rational thoughts of the mind, and that one needs to be connected with the rest of humanity.

It was in prison that Dostoevsky also developed his notion of salvation through suffering. Feeling the extreme guilt of his crime, and experiencing great suffering, he accepted his punishment as a means to purge himself of his past actions. He took up reading the New Testament, the only book offered, and read it frequently. It began to offer him relief from his inner and outer turmoil, and “taught him a new faith in Christ” (*Encyclopedia Britannica* 452). Consequently, he reasoned that happiness must be earned through hard work and suffering. Seeing the dangers of pure reason in his fellow inmates he then concluded that it is suffering that will reconnect a man of crime with humanity. The other prisoners exhibited no feeling because they were not suffering, and a person who does not feel is not human. In fact, it was in prison that Dostoevsky developed his epilepsy that plagued him for the rest of his life, which he believed was a form of intense suffering. Raskolnikov takes on the exact form of the reasoning intellectual who, upon being punished for his crimes, finds renewed hope in the suffering that he must endure. In the end of the novel he decides to take up the New Testament and embrace the new life that “would cost him great striving, great suffering” (Dostoevsky 472).

Dostoevsky has a psychological concern for the human mind and soul, which can be seen in the way he writes. He uses characters that are antiheroes in order to illustrate his

concepts in the most extreme form. Raskolnikov is not essentially evil, but at the same time he certainly does not possess any kind of monopoly of good qualities; he walks that fine line between the two, capable of becoming the essence of either. Raskolnikov is psychologically complex, and it is not so easy to judge him. Instead of judging, Dostoevsky wants the reader to understand the character, and then reflect upon him. For as intense a character as Raskolnikov is, he is still a person with whom the reader can relate. For these reasons Dostoevsky goes to such great lengths in order to give a complete description of what Raskolnikov is thinking and feeling. He wrote in his notebook: "They call me a psychologist. It is not true. I'm only a realist in the higher sense; that is, I portray all the depths of the human soul" (*Encyclopedia Britannica* 453). Dostoevsky is able to accomplish such a feat partly because of his writing style, for although he uses the third person, he preserves the vantage point of the individual. The narrator is omniscient, but at the same time he does not leave the individual. Joseph Frank writes: "Brilliantly original for its time, this technique enabled Dostoevsky to conserve most of the psychological intimacy of the first person while freeing himself from its limitations" (Frank xiii). In this way he explores the innermost regions of Raskolnikov's character.

Dostoevsky's concern for man and his humanity originate from his personal experiences in life. His unique subject matter and original style could be created only by a passionate man who had a deep knowledge and understanding of the darkness he was trying to portray. Dostoevsky comprehended the significance of isolation from society, and he found renewal in religion through great suffering. He was ultimately a man in search for what it means to be human, and writing was his medium for conveying the truths he painfully discovered about the human condition. Though he is "concerned with the problems of the average Russians, he elevates them to universal significance in his search to find 'man in man'" (*Encyclopedia Britannica* 453).

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A Canterbury Chat

"So you're implying that it's not really love that conquers all? It's your move."

"Pawn to bishop four. I'm just saying that our definitions of 'love' may be a little different, honey. Now go ahead."

"Hmm . . . you've put me in a bit of a tricky situation. All right, I suppose I'll have to go Queen to your--

----BANG!----

" . . . knight?" gasped the Nun Prioress shakily, as a red-faced specimen of that very piece strode through the door he had so forcefully kicked open. "By St. Eloi! What on earth is the matter?" she demanded in a not-quite-modulated voice.

"Have you seen this heathen tract?!?" thundered the Knight. "It's positively heretical! Saying such things as 'princes must learn to use cruelty,' recommending vices, condemning popes . . . and he calls it virtue! I wonder that they've not yet delivered the scoundrel to Rome."

"Oh, I see what's gotten into him -- it's Machiavelli, the new man of infamy," said the Wife of Bath with a smile. "Infamy . . . at least in the Church's eyes. Have you read the book just yet, my dear Sir?"

"Well, not completely, but I've skimmed a few sections, and I've seen all I need to see!" ranted the good man. "I'm off to join a commission to bring that terrible man to justice!" And with an uncharacteristic slam of the door behind him, the Knight galloped off into the distance.

"My word! I don't understand what's gotten into him," breathed the Nun Prioress. "I'd heard rumor of some evil work while visiting with the priest, but I'd no idea --

"Oh, news takes a while to get to England, and as always, those hotheaded Italians have gotten all excited over something that goes against ideals," simpered a voice from the shadows.

Fortunately, Madame Eglantine had learned to modulate her screams as well as her oaths.

"I myself think the book's a work of genius. . . hits the ideas exactly that need to be said," continued the voice, disembodied no longer as its owner stepped into the light to reveal himself as the Pardoner. "About time someone recognized hypocrisy as a virtue, although it'll put me in a bit of a tight spot, sermon-wise. Can't exactly condemn what I'm practicing in secret anymore, now can I?" he queried with a malicious grin.

"What a horrible man he must be, to earn the admiration of the likes of you!" huffed Eglantine. "If I weren't dedicated to moderation in every way, I'd soon spread news of your heresy throughout England! I ought to --

"Calm down, all of you!" interjected the Wife of Bath. "Pay the men less mind, my dear -- as you should be, regardless -- they know very little of that which they speak. And as for you, louse, I'd wager you'd not read the text yourself, either."

"I know enough to back up that of which I speak," he returned. "Certainly I've read the section where he clearly states that 'a prudent lord cannot observe faith, nor should he.'"

"Oh, you ill-informed halfwit! You, as will so many others, I'd wager, are summarizing the man's words to suit your own purposes. Did you not notice the purpose for which all of this was written?" she demanded.

The Nun Prioress cleared her throat. "Pardon me --

"Not likely, my dear, you haven't the money--

"--but what in the world is this book about?" she inquired, frowning. "And how," she demanded, turning to the Wife of Bath, "do you know so much about it?"

"While my beloved fifth husband and I taught each other the rules of love, he managed to teach me something of languages as well," she revealed. "It was not for little reason he was deemed an excellent scholar. But to answer your other question, the Italian statesman Niccolo Machiavelli has lately written a

short treatise concerning the proper conduct of a Prince in gaining and governing his province. Much of it has to do with means of takeover and protection, but he's made statements concerning vice and virtu that have the Church and her adherents rather in a snit."

"And deservedly so!" broke in the pardoner, "when one professes that the prince should especially 'appear all religion,' but admits that it is often necessary to act against it, and merely gain the good will of being thought so! And for controversy's sake -- did you see the knight run out of here?-- what a stroke of brilliance to call such villainy 'virtue!'"

"You see, though, that's exactly where you've misinterpreted him -- you as well as the Knight," asserted the wife of Bath. "Machiavelli uses the term 'virtu' to mean conduct and appropriate action of a man as befits his station and situation. 'Virtue' as we've taken it to mean for centuries still figures into his arguments, but he's arguing for a different purpose than that for which the word was originally intended."

"I would think," spoke the sweet prioress, "that virtuous conduct would always be appropriate. Why, in the convent --

"But my dear, that's just the point!" broke in the pardoner. "The world does not live in a convent, and should not be required to act as such! This is a truth men like myself have known for centuries, but Machiavelli simply has been the first man courageous enough to say so."

"You're right -- to a point," acknowledged the Wife of Bath, "but you make the too-hasty generalization that Machiavelli's writing his treatise to the world. In fact, he's aiming it towards one particular sort of person -- the Prince himself."

"But a prince is a man like any other, is he not?" inquired the prioress.

"Not when acting as a prince," specified the wife of Bath. "Machiavelli's book makes the case that a prince must 'learn not to be able not to be good' and to use this lesson whenever necessary. Unlike our dear friend the Pardoner here, who seems to think that Machiavelli's just licensed rampant immorality, those

who actually read the book will find that he's actually making the case for timely, flexible action, albeit in somewhat shocking terms."

"So he actually does believe that man should be good?" asked the prioress.

"Well, he doesn't ever actually make statements to man in general, but he doesn't want to speak well of evil. He just wants the Prince to be realistic, both in his aims and in the means that must necessarily be employed to achieve them."

"And you think he's only speaking about a Prince?" laughed the Pardoner. "My dear woman, look at yourself!"

"Whatever do you mean?" stammered the wife of Bath.

"Oh, you know perfectly well! Actions aimed to achieve an end, manipulating people to get what you want, having it all be about control -- what tale did you tell the group? I seem to remember a similar sentiment -- could it be your own towards relations with men? Small wonder you defend the man -- someone has finally authorized your behavior! Now come, admit it!" exclaimed the Pardoner.

The Wife of Bath seemed uncomfortable. "Similar he may be, I grant . . . but I disagree that Machiavelli means his observations to apply to the populace at large. He merely speaks of the conduct of a Prince -- no more, no less."

"But don't you recognize the implications?" pushed the Pardoner. "We can all take Machiavelli's advice in achieving the ends we see as valuable. I do the same -- the only difference being that mine own end is merely to preserve myself."

"But we need princes," broke in the Prioress, "and we certainly don't need your kind in the Church. Men like the Knight have the right idea -- to keep the world safe from such villainy, I put my faith and trust in God."

The wife of Bath permitted herself a small smile. "My dear, it can't quite happen that way -- such

things go on in the world today. and not everyone is as sure of salvation as yourself. Though Machiavelli acknowledges the existence of ecclesiastical principalities, he has very little to say about them -- he believes much more in fortune."

"Who, as a woman, must be beaten to be controlled?" remarked the Pardoner with a smirk.

"He certainly has a bit of the right idea when he states that she may be won by the young and impetuous much more readily than the weak and wavering," shot back the wife of Bath. "However, as you've obviously no more to say on that front, I suggest that the prioress and myself continue our game. It's my move."

Nicholas B. Carolus:

“The more I strain my gaze up towards it, the higher it soars ... Just when I feel that I have exhausted every resources, something seems to rise up, starting out sharp and clear.”

-Confucius

Levi Dalton:

“The apparition of these faces in the crowd,
Petals on a wet, black bough.”

-Ezra Pound

Stephanie K. Childs:

“Men say that the senses superior
to their objects, the mind superior to the senses,
understanding superior to the mind;
higher than understanding is the self.”

-*The Bhagavad-Gita*

Elizabeth Boocock:

“While my sight that was bound in my eyes unclosed,
As to long panoramas of vision.”

- Walt Whitman, “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d”

Ryan A. Kane:

“The Master said, He who by reanimating the Old
can gain knowledge of the New is fit to be a teacher.”

- Confucius

Aaron Huberfeld:

“The World was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.”

- John Milton

Thoughts from the Editors ...

Alex Ivey:

"Poetry should be great and unobtrusive ... it should enter into one's soul and not startle or amaze it with itself."

- Keats

Monica Florescu:

"The Master said, 'He who learns but does not think, is lost.' He who thinks but does not learn is in great danger."

-Confucius

Chee Ming Goh:

"When I play with my cat, who knows if I am not a pastime to her more than she is to me? ..."

-Montaigne, "Apology for Raymond Sebond"

Paul Simpson:

"Take this longing from my tongue
And all the useless things these hands have done"

-L. Cohen

Macall S. Robertson:

"Words! Mere words! How terrible they [are]! How clear, and vivid, and cruel!
One [can] not escape from them. And yet what a subtle magic there [is] in them!"

- Oscar Wilde, character Lord Henry, The Picture of Dorian Gray