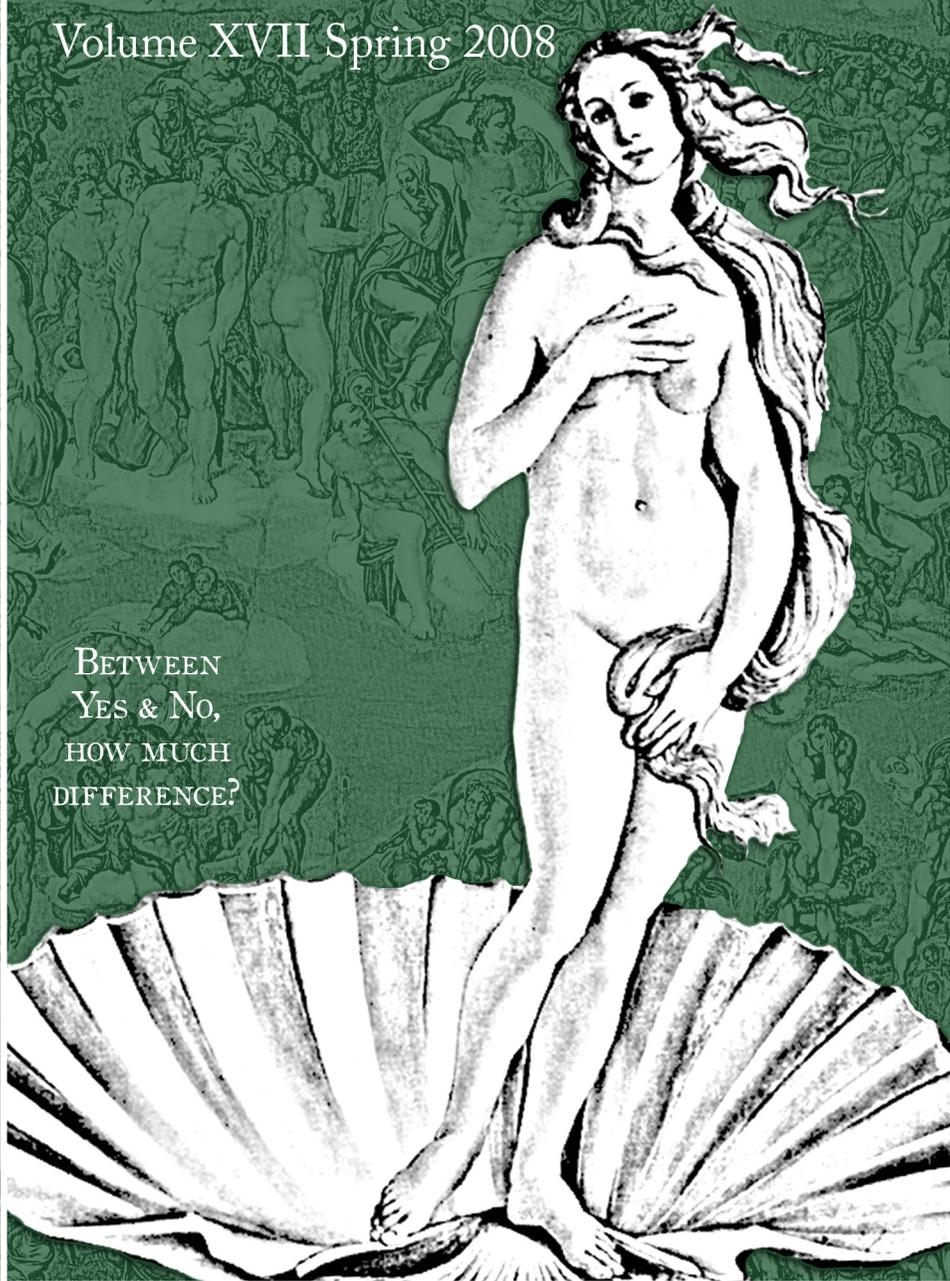


The Journal of the Core Curriculum

Volume XVII Spring 2008

BETWEEN
YES & NO,
HOW MUCH
DIFFERENCE?



THE JOURNAL
OF THE CORE
CURRICULUM

Volume XVII

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Cover

Each side of our cover features a detail from a famous work of art set against the background of Michelangelo’s “The Last Judgment”—on one side, “The Birth of Venus” by Sandro Botticello, and on the other, “Nimrod” by Gustav Doré.

EDITOR'S NOTE

After two years in the Core Curriculum, we have stepped out of the darkness into the light; we have considered evil and rejoiced in the good; we have existed and we have fallen into the depths of self-doubt. We have been plagued by countless sleepless nights and by bitter coffee, and yet we refused to give up the journey. As much as we liked to complain, we savored each and every moment of our two years in the Core, steeping in over two millennia of the world's culture and history. We have encountered the most esteemed, convoluted, distracted, perverted, ridiculous, and most sublime minds, and engaged with them until the very late or early hours of the morning (depending on your perspective).

So that is roughly the Core experience, and in this year's journal we have tried to assemble works representative of Core and the robust, unconventional thinking it nurtures.

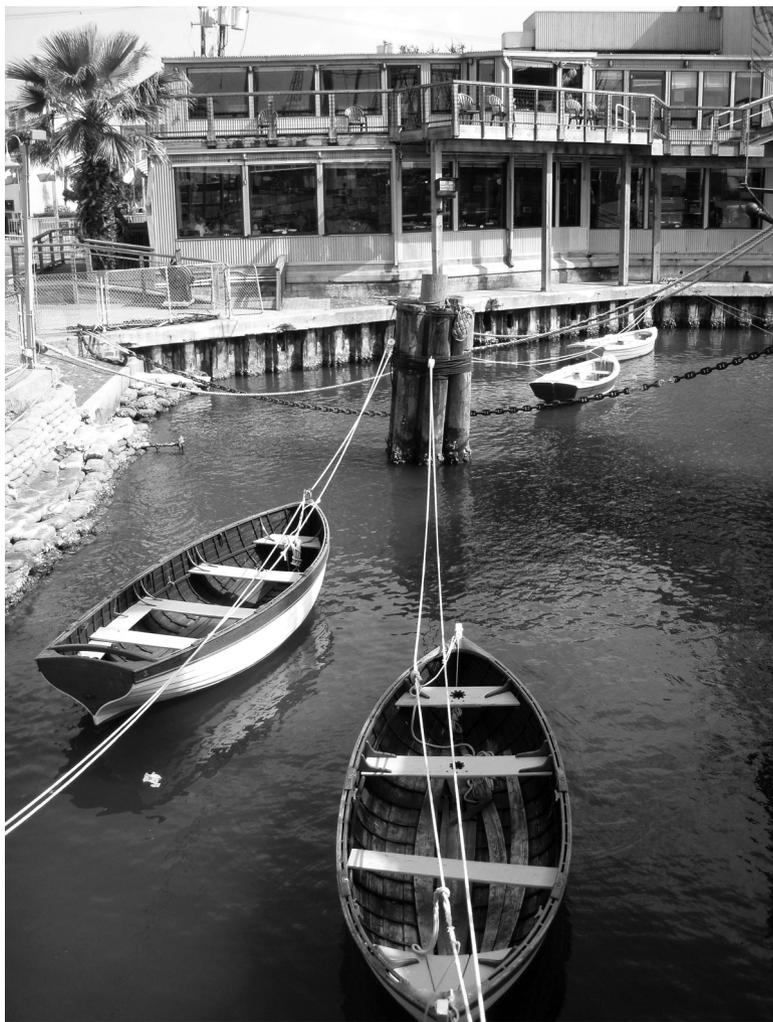
A few words of thanks to the contributors who shared with us the fruits of their labors and especially to our Core professors, without whom we would not have visited so many strange worlds. To my wonderful and brilliant editorial staff, much love and thanks for your time, efforts and witticisms. I would like to thank Professor Tabatabai for his guidance, as it was his invitation that allowed me to continue my Core experience. Finally, since no journal would ever reach fruition without Zak: we thank you for putting up with us, our mishaps and our fears.

Now then, gentle reader, enjoy the journal—and if you do, then we have achieved the goal toward which we set out: to share with you our journey, as well as our joys and sorrows.

Now go, but be warned that the Way is not easy, and there will be shadows and there will be mountains to climb. They are not to be feared or shunned, but rather fully explored so that you may experience life and its mysteries more completely. Fare thee well, fair stranger,

Amiel Bowers

Editor



Galveston, TX, 2006

Andrew Bisdale

THE GOOD PRINCE AND THE BAD KING

by Amiel Bowers

As reflections of real life, books and their characters are complex and multi-faceted, and just as in real life, no character is completely good or completely bad. They are often conflicted and faced with key moral decisions: their choices reveal the diverse aspects of humanity and society as well as the various conceptions of good and bad. ‘Good’ is that which pleases society and upholds the traditional moral ideals while ‘bad’ is that which does not please and instead violates those same ideals. Much of society uses the concept of murder to illustrate the difference between good and bad; the basic premise is that the protection of a life is good and the converse—the taking of a life—is bad. Even so, the division between good and bad is not absolute; they blend along a spectrum. For example, it is bad to

kill but less bad to kill in self-defense or accidentally, and premeditated murder is worse than involuntary killing. The reader often judges characters and their moral quality based on these premises and context. Nevertheless, Shakespeare's Hamlet and Homer's Odysseus are two characters whose actions and personalities illustrate the difference and the ambiguity between good and bad and the inherent difficulty of judging the two. Both characters need or want revenge and both achieve it through the murder of others; nonetheless, Hamlet's morality is superior to that of the character of Odysseus.

Context is integral when comparing the two characters of Hamlet and Odysseus. Hamlet is the conflicted and confused royal prince commanded to avenge his father's murder by his father's ghost, and Hamlet's extreme indecision and constant questioning cause him to appear weak and pathetic, almost unable to kill anyone. Odysseus, the strong Ithacan warrior-king, desires only to return home; once there, he must avenge the disgrace to his house by the suitors. The quest for revenge and the desire for the return to normality are the forces driving both men. Moreover, both men are trying to achieve a type of homecoming. Through corruption the home of one has become "a couch for luxury and damned incest," (*Hamlet* I.4), and the home of the other is "as if it were a house to plunder" (*Odyssey* I.294). Each seeks to restore his ruined family home.

Hamlet's indecision and inability to kill make him a good character. He cannot, nor does he want to, kill his uncle Claudius even if it is theoretically understandable since his uncle killed his father. It is not until the crucial scene of the murder of the queen's minister, Polonius, that Hamlet's hand is forced; even beforehand, when he had a perfect opportunity to kill Claudius when he is alone in prayer (III.3), he delays, again claiming that since Claudius is in prayer he will not be damned if he dies now, which is what Hamlet wants. Many consider Hamlet to be the most tragic of all of Shakespeare's characters for he recognizes that the only way to resolve the situation is to murder Claudius,

even if he does not want to nor is fully capable of committing such a crime. He needs to fulfill the filial duty that his father's murder burdens him with, and so he must avenge his father's unlawful death. However, if he does indeed kill Claudius he will become like him because he commits the same crime of murder. Indeed, Hamlet says before he talks to his mother in Act III.2, "O heart, lose not thy nature. Let not ever/The soul of Nero enter the firm bosom. /Let me be cruel not unnatural" (1.393-395). He does not want to become a murderer but he wants to fulfill at least one of his father's ghostly commandments by stopping his mother's incestuous adultery.

In Act 1, scene 5, the ghost of Hamlet's father places upon Hamlet four tasks: firstly, to revenge his "murder most foul"(1.26); secondly, to "taint not thy mind"(1.85) namely to stay uncorrupted by the royal court, "a couch for luxury and damned incest"(1.83); thirdly, to let his mother alone and finally, to remember him, his father (1.111). As Ann Hentz writes, "Hamlet is not only asked to act in this corrupt, diseased world, he is also admonished not to act. He must act against Claudius without acting against his mother" (523). Two conflicting traditions trap Hamlet: the code of revenge and the Christian code of morality. As Harry Levin notes,

The stumbling block is the code of revenge, the cult of blood for blood, the incongruity of a civilized man carrying out so barbaric an imperative, flouting the laws of God and man by taking his enemy's punishment into his own hands. (35)

Since he must avenge his father's death, according to his filial duty and the code of revenge, he is violating the Christian traditional idea of what is good. Levin comments: "Hamlet, though he repines against his plight in general, never questions his duty of killing the King. On the other hand, he never deliberately acts upon it" (35). Nonetheless, Hamlet shows through

his lack of impulse that he is not a killer at heart; the situation and the people around him, especially the Ghost and Claudius, have forced him to contemplate and eventually commit an act that he does not want to commit. Furthermore, many scholars have criticized Hamlet for his indecision and constant delaying but as H. Levin explains, doubt blocks Hamlet “for doubt is that state of mind where the questioner faces no single answer nor the lack of one, but rather a choice between a pair of alternatives” (38). Hamlet must choose between the revenge code and the Christian code, but he consistently doubts himself and the legitimacy of the arguments for each. The uncertain complexity of Hamlet’s character transforms him into a mirror of reality.

Richard Levin highlights that Hamlet “is never in his normal state” (219); indeed, even though Hamlet possesses many ‘bad’ qualities, such as showing no regret for the Lord Chamberlain Polonius’ death, and a bitter, cruel and condescending personality, Shakespeare is able “to maintain our sympathy and admiration for Hamlet” (219). R. Levin emphasizes also the “several extenuating factors that serve to mitigate our negative judgment of some of his behavior” (219). Hamlet is consistently questioning and analyzing himself; and his deep attachment to both his father and Laertes show that he is not a calculating murderer. R. Levin also mentions, “Hamlet is his own severest critic” (221) and because of that, the reader is less critical and more understanding of him based on context. The situation poses several difficult questions about morality and the validity of the revenge code. Hamlet interrogates himself throughout but most vividly in Act III:

To be, or not to be: that is the question:
 Whether ‘tis nobler in the mind to suffer
 The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
 Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
 And by opposing end them? (III,1.55-59)

In the end, Hamlet acts in accordance with both codes; he avenges his father by killing Claudius but concludes by sacrificing himself to atone for his sins.

Homer's Odysseus, in contrast, never truly questions his motivations or his actions. He repents, but he very quickly moves on with only one object in mind: to return home with glory. Odysseus represents the 'bad' because he consistently performs rash and unnecessary actions, which lead to many misfortunes because of his hubristic and prideful nature. For example, he reveals his name to the Cyclops as they are escaping in Book 9. Such an act is unnecessary, as even Odysseus acknowledges:

I would not heed them in my glorying spirit,
but let my anger flare and yelled: Kyclops,
if ever mortal man inquire
how you were put to shame and blinded, tell him
Odysseus, raider of cities, took your eye:
Laertes' son, whose home's on Ithaka! (9.546-562)

In fact, the very reasons for Odysseus' visit to the Cyclops are rash and egoistic; there was no need for him to visit the Cyclops; he did so in order to accumulate more loot.

Fidel Fajardo-Acosta points out that Odysseus indeed "manipulates to his advantage and abuses the sacred institution and duties of hospitality to strangers in the civilized Greek world, the *xeneia* ritual" (125). Odysseus presents himself to Polyphemus as over-bearing and over-reaching by freely stealing his food; very similar indeed to the actions of the suitors he slaughters later in Book 24. Fajardo-Acosta further writes that:

Homer takes great pains to demonstrate that Odysseus at this point is not in a position of need or helplessness and is purely driven by greed to see what goods he can extract, either by guile or by force, from the natives. (142)

Odysseus has just embarked from the land of the Cicones, which he has sacked and destroyed, so he has plenty of booty and supplies.

As a warrior at heart, Odysseus cannot resist revealing himself to Polyphemus; he must reveal his name so that the whole world will know of his great deed. Also, the subsequent trials he undergoes, belie the recklessness of his act; as Fajardo-Acosta comments:

The motives of Odysseus in his desire to visit the Cyclops are tainted with the hubristic character of the impulses and actions which generally meet with harsh punishment in the Odyssey. (141)

Fate ignores neither Odysseus' crimes nor any other crime in the Greek world. The suitors who also violated the sacred institution of hospitality in Odysseus' house do indeed meet their fate.

In ancient Greek, Odysseus' name comes from the word *odysasthai*, "to be wroth against," "to hate" and Homer's epithets all highlight negative aspects of Odysseus. One example is the very first epithet Homer uses, *polutropos*, the 'one of many wiles,' or "skilled in all ways of contending;" or the one, which he is so proud of before Polyphemus, "the sacker of cities" (I.1-6). All these epithets suggest the violence and deceit inherent to Odysseus' character. Odysseus is not immediately concerned with prudence; he must restore his name, which he had made for himself at Troy and which he has since lost. Therefore, he will do everything to win his honor and his treasure back.

Homer and many ancient poets and commentators viewed the Homeric heroes as destructive and 'bad.' They considered warriors and heroes, like Odysseus, to be deserving of fame and glory, but at the same time, Homer consistently highlights their bestiality and their negative traits. He achieves this mainly through epithets and similes; one particularly clear one is when Odysseus emerges from underneath the bramble to greet

Nausicaa in Book 6: “like a mountain lion/... with burning eyes-who prowls among the herds/ or flocks or after game” (6.140-143). Furthermore, in Book 22, Odysseus is completely pitiless and Homer calls him ‘the lord of all the tricks of war’ (l.416) Odysseus is a trickster and manipulator. There are numerous examples of Odysseus’ trickery and manipulation throughout the *Odyssey*, the most notable the Trojan Horse, which he describes in Book 8.

An explicit justification of Odysseus as a bad character is his slaughtering of the suitors in Book 22. Odysseus becomes battle-crazy and in his blood-lust kills all 108 suitors even though several ask him for mercy. He is ruthless and adamant that all shall die, “there will be killing till the score is paid” (l.68) despite having separated the truly bad suitors from the more innocent ones the day before. Although the transformation of the rational Odysseus into a man crazed by blood and the taste of revenge is not completely excessive as a reaction, Odysseus never doubts that he will murder every one of the suitors. He never questions the reasons and indeed he would have continued to fight against and kill the outraged families in Book 24, had Athena not descended and made the final judgment and stopped all conflict.

Odysseus is a classic example of a warrior-king and ancient hero; naturally, war, conflict, and greed for glory are part of his nature. Even so, they are too simple and weak to serve as excuses for the extreme brutality which he commits against the suitors, and even the Cicones, whom he essentially destroyed and massacred in Book 9. As Fajardo-Acosta notes, “the poets tend to see Odysseus as a villainous character, motivated by pride and greed, who triumphs over his enemies thanks to his ruthless and deceitful ways” (3). His old servants, such as the swine-herd Eumaios, portray Odysseus as a kind and generous master, but as the Cyclops episode and the slaughter of the suitors illustrate, there are many times when his prideful and reckless attitude overcome whatever sense of poetical justice he may have; indeed, he frequently oversteps the ideals of ‘good’.

Hamlet continually doubts the legitimacy of his actions and has sincere remorse for the things he has done. He does not like the person he is becoming, even if it is slightly an act, and in the end, he dies a willing death. He represents the good character because he cannot kill blindly; Polonius was an honest mistake and it was an act that was indirectly forced upon him by Claudius and others. Odysseus, on the other hand, is perfectly able to kill mercilessly and his remorse is superficial. He grieves for his comrades but in the end, he indirectly sacrifices them all so that he can return home. He acts rashly and egoistically while Hamlet suffers through what he must do. Hamlet's options are very similar in the end and he cannot really refrain from choosing either; instead he delays as much as he can until the circumstances explode and force him to act. In contrast, Odysseus does have more flexible choices: he does not have to kill all the suitors, especially when some suitors beg for mercy; but Odysseus chooses the 'wrong' or bad choice of murdering them. Hamlet must act while Odysseus does not have to do all he does. ☹

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INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO BUILD A CLOUD

by Daniel Hudon

No one has successfully built a cloud, so this is your chance to make history. Apart from bringing rain and providing shade, clouds have myriad uses that have yet to be explored. You will be doing imaginative souls and humanity a favor. You have no reason not to build one.

Before you start, make sure your mind is still. Clouds are ephemeral and if you're not prepared to concentrate you won't grasp their true nature. Drink a tall glass of water. Meditate. Go on vacation. Take early retirement. Do what it takes to clear your mind, otherwise your cloud will fail.

Now think about the possibilities of your cloud. You must endow it with potential. Basho praised clouds for allowing moon-viewers to relax. Kalidasa used a cloud to carry messages between distant lovers. A Hindu myth says clouds used to be the wings of mountains, which is why they still gather around mountaintops. Magritte painted clouds into the outstretched wings of a dove. Don't short-change your cloud by thinking small. In that case, save yourself the trouble and just build a stone. Imagine great things for your cloud.

Give some thought to the type of cloud you want; if you don't plan it out, you'll just get an amorphous blob. Your best bet is a standard cumulus cloud that has a wispy bottom and cauliflower top. This form has a good aesthetic and endless possible variations—you've got room to maneuver. Stratus, a thin, gray sheet, is also recommended, despite its lack of individuality, because you can build one right in your kitchen. Rain clouds, such as cumulonimbus, are also worth considering particularly because of their lovely sounding name. You could probably seduce someone just by whispering the word "cumulonimbus" into his or her ear, but be aware that they require the most material, and tread carefully because having the power to bring rain is likely to go to your head.

Other cloud types to be aware of, though they are considerably more challenging, are lenticulars, which look like flying saucers and require nearby mountain ranges (plus their attendant winds) for their ultimate shape, or night-glowing noctilucent clouds that require a good quantity of meteoric dust to freeze water onto (so that they glow) and an altitude of fifty miles. Good luck with the scaffolding.

Once you have your mind clear and some idea of your cloud's potential and shape, you're ready to start building. Here you have two convenient options. The first option is the Mayan chuc, a clay sauna barely big enough to sit in, commonly found in the mountain villages of Guatemala. Pour water over the rocks and collect steam in a large plastic bag. Better yet, use a

parachute (so long as you can close the end). You may need to stay in the chuc for several days to collect enough steam so eat well beforehand and stay hydrated. Also, be sure your container is properly lined or you'll come out with a condensed cloud suitable only for watering plants or making coffee. Time spent getting the lining right is time saved. Remember to concentrate on your cloud's potential and shape while you collect. Similar results could be obtained from Laotian saunas or Turkish baths. Don't forget to tip the attendant if you do this in Istanbul.

The second option is the Murakami method in which you create your cloud by boiling up some spaghetti. Use a big pot and start early in the morning. Again, capture the steam in a properly lined plastic bag (or parachute) with your properly calmed mind. Take deep breaths. Keep filling the bag (or parachute) until the spaghetti is *al dente*. You need to really pack the steam in if you want to build a respectable cloud so be prepared to make several pots of spaghetti, maybe a few weeks' worth. The noodles freeze well. Or, invite the neighbors for dinner—when's the last time you did that? Perhaps even make it like a church supper and invite the whole block. It's for a good cause.

Once you have your bag of steam, keep it warm with aluminum reflectors and redirected sunlight or you'll have a watery mess. You can do some initial shaping but most of that will be done on-site before you release your cloud.

Spend some time investigating good release sites. You want a reliable updraft of warm air. If you release your cloud and it falls to the ground, you've made fog. Not what you were aiming for. One good location is the ramparts of the fort at Jodhpur, India—the sounds of the entire city, from the clang of hammer on metal to the gossip of the washing women, well up from below so you know there's a good updraft. Other places may be suitable too. Try Mongolia, for example, in the summer time. Those steppes must be good for something.

When you're ready to release your cloud, remember all the possibilities you conjured for it, and your thoughts about shape.

This is the moment of truth. Make still your mind, and heart. Open the bag and let the cloud out. (Here is where the parachute comes in handy because of the much larger opening.) Don't force it. Patience is key. Whisper to it about seeing great palaces, glittering cities, palm trees swaying on tropical isles. Clouds are often reluctant to be solitary sojourners, so coax gently. Be sincere. In an uncertain world, you only want the best for your cloud. ☺

FIRST YEAR

ANALECTS

I will teach you the totality
of knowledge and judgment;
this known, nothing else
in the world need be known.

- Lord Krishna, *The Bhagavad Gita*

I think he would need time to get adjusted before he could see things in the world above; at first he would see shadows most easily, then reflections of men and other things in water, then the things themselves. After this he would see objects in the sky and the sky itself more easily at night, the light of the stars and the moon more easily than the sun and the light of the sun during the day.

- Plato, *The Republic*

And just as he who, with exhausted breath,
having escaped from sea to shore, turns back
to watch the dangerous waters he has quit,
so did my spirit, still a fugitive,
turn back to look intently at the pass
that never has let any man survive.

- Dante, *Inferno*

For the mind is in chains when, because it is dissatisfied with the conclusion it has reached, it wishes not to stand still, while on the other hand, its inability to resolve the argument makes forward movement impossible.

- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

The praise of fame rings clear without
these frills and fancy foot-rugs; and the god's best gift
is a mind free from folly.

- Agamemnon, *Oresteia*

Between Yes and No
How much difference?
Between good and evil
How much difference?

- Lao-Tsu, *Tao Te Ching*

In the beginning, before he let his health slip away, he could have avoided becoming ill: but once you have thrown a stone, and let it go, you can no longer recall it, even though the power to throw it was yours.

- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

Our love of what is beautiful does not lead to extravagance;
our love of the things of the mind does not make us soft.

- Pericles, *History of the Peloponnesian War*

If I must cross the sea, I will cross the sea. If not, I will
wander in unknown places, seeking.

- *Gilgamesh*

So humid Iris through bright heaven flew,
On saffron-yellow wings, and in her train
A thousand hues shimmered before the sun.
At Dido's head she came to rest.

- Virgil, *The Aeneid*

To my memory, give back something of Your epiphany,
and make my tongue so powerful that I may leave to people of
the future one gleam of the glory that is Yours.

- Dante, *Paradiso*

Knowing others is intelligent.
Knowing yourself is enlightened.

- Lao-Tsu, *Tao Te Ching*

Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock
and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks
receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone
who knocks, the door will be opened.

- Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*



Modern-day Homer

Andrew McFarland

WHY DO WE EAT CAKE?

by John McCargar

As I approached Socrates, I desperately tried to think of a way not to sound like a total dunce for having become so distraught over my talk with Thucydides. He was brusque, and though he hadn't meant to, I simply could not help but feel the man had made a mockery of all I stand for. So I decided upon a most ingenious plan for solving the situation—let Socrates fight my battle for me! Since it was close to my birthday, I figured that by simply inviting my pseudo-mentor and this outside dissident, I could lure them into the same area by setting the alcohol and cake on the same table. I could predict the location of Socrates well enough, and Thucydides would idle by too, given enough time. It was the cake that did it.

After all, why attend a birthday party if not for the cake?

“Socrates, I’d like you to come to my party next week. There will be wine and food for the taking, and no gifts are necessary,” I said, holding back my true desire. I knew the one thing Socrates would bring was his questions.

“Very well my young Adeimantus, but make certain the people are as good as the wine!”

So the game was set. As the party came and guests arrived, I loitered around my cake, waiting for Thucydides to make an appearance. And so he did, heading for the cake even though Socrates was sitting just next to it. I decided to plant the seed for discourse, and let Socrates’ nature take over from there: “Thucydides, why is it do you suppose, that we eat cake?”

He rather curtly responded, “Why else? Because it’s delicious.”

“No, I mean why do you suppose we eat cake though there are so many other delicious foods out there, especially at a certain event such as this?” At this Socrates turned his attention from his drinking to the conversation, and I figured it would be best if I only sat and listened as the ideas unfurled.

“Well Adeimantus, upon its creation I suppose we could claim that it was eaten only for the sake of the pleasure it brought to the body. Now it wins over competing treats for the sake of honoring the tradition, simple boy. If it had been brownies, the outcome would’ve been birthday brownies. Honestly!” He turned away as if to leave, but Socrates stopped him.

“Now wait my good sir, would you mean to imply that we eat cake merely because we have always eaten cake?” He turned back around, slightly annoyed.

“That would be my claim.”

“And that we originally ate cake because we felt it was good?”

“That too would be my claim, so far as good food tastes good,” Thucydides replied.

“Very well. What do you say about the nature of medicine,

my good sir?”

“What do you mean to ask, or have you gone senile so early?”

“I mean to say that you are implying we can measure for ourselves what is pleasurable and good that enters into our body. But it occurs to me that even in the nature of medicine, sometimes our natural tendency to relieve pain or eat foods that taste good is not necessarily best for our bodies. Would you agree?”

“Medicine is a functional art, Socrates. We are not all doctors. We all do, however, eat. So we all may not be good judges of our bodies, but that would hardly stop one from being the best judge of what he eats.”

“I suppose I should clarify. What is one’s natural tendency upon breaking a bone?”

“I would say to favor the limb, and keep it from harm.”

“What if the limb recovers crooked? What is the natural tendency then?”

“Obviously the same as if it had recovered properly.”

“But a doctor, knowing the best for the body, would even re-break the bone for a better setting. The doctor, having more knowledge of medicine—which is the art of the body—is far better acclimated to telling us what is eventually ‘good’ in the long term, whereas we would simply avoid pain for a short term good. The same can be said of food, can it not?”

“That a doctor knows what is best for a man to eat?”

“Not necessarily a doctor, Thucydides, but one who understands the intricate relations that food has with our bodies would best tell us how to eat, would he not? A nutritionist would tell us to avoid cake if at all possible, would he not?”

“He would.”

“And a nutritionist is, in form, the only person capable of understanding the best things for our body, even if our natural tendency is to do the opposite?”

“I suppose by that definition, but-”

“Then sir, it occurs to me that cake would not be good for

the body at all. Rather we want it to be good, so we call it good, but it is truly bad. And by that I feel the boy has a good point sir: why is it we insist upon eating cake?”

“Well, had you given me a second, Socrates, I would have told you. Men, being motivated by three things, will only act for fear, honor, or self-interest. In the case of cake it was originally self-interest, and not for what is good for the body. The nature of reality is irrelevant to men. What we think is real has far greater implications on our actions than actual fact. And, it is a natural tendency of self-interest to want things that are pleasurable, and subjectively speaking cake is very pleasurable. Then, as it became a customary tradition we continue to eat cake in part for its ‘benefit’ to the self and also for the sake of honoring our ancestors in their tradition.”

“It appears to me, good sir, that you and I agree on more than we would seem to at first. I too would claim that what a man thinks he knows will influence him far more than the reality of a situation. I would also say that man has a natural tendency to pleasure, as you have indicated. I feel we differ only in that I would argue for what should be, while it seems to me your theory only contains that which is. Or am I incorrect in assuming so?”

“I would say what you have observed about me is correct. I do not see a reason for what should be. As we are now is all that matters, and all that will change is time; people will forever remain the same. I would assert that what exists is what should be, and there is no way around it. Any two people, given the same circumstances, will behave basically the same way and that, Socrates, is why your idea that there is a difference between what is and what should be means nothing.”

“You say that people are all the same?”

“That I do.”

“What about the art of gymnastics? Certainly you do not mean to imply that any two men given the same time to train will have the same skills?”

“There is a good chance of that, sir. But a number of variables, including effort and trainer ability, will make the quality of one’s training differ, thus the difference in experience.”

“What would you offer as an apology for any given trainer having a star pupil, though all his students are forced into the same time and effort for the same trainer in training? Can we not say that this pupil was born with a soul more adept at the art of gymnastics?”

“We can, but that is not to say that, given effort, any other pupil could not overtake him in skill.”

“Possibly, but let us suppose these men are now ants, and suppose that the level of skill in the art of gymnastics can be represented by a set path they are to follow in a straight line. If we start the first ant one meter ahead of the other, and then prompt them to move forward at equal times with equal vigor, say the maximum they are capable, then will the first ant not always be far ahead of the second?”

“He would, but you have simplified the nature of men too much by placing him in the shell of an ant. Men can always compensate for their shortcomings, sir, but the problem is that we are like the ants in that we do not follow a straight path. We, like the ant, are tempted off the path by our own desires such as a piece of this cake, and idle away valuable time that could otherwise be used to train ourselves.”

“You would admit, however, that we can each be born with a degree of individuality? That each of us can be best suited to a given task or profession that another may not be naturally suited to?”

“For the sake of argument, Socrates, I will give you this point, but make your ideas clear in a short time. I’d like to go eat my cake before it dries and blows away in the wind.”

“Very well, kind Thucydides. Consider that each of us has a certain level of individual talent over which we have no control. Would we not be best off then focusing on those talents which we have from birth, those in which we will always have the

advantage over one who begins with relatively no skill in the matter?”

“I suppose this could be so. What is your point?”

“Well, if we can assume some degree of innate nature, say a tier system of the soul. Souls like gold will be given to those born with a certain love for knowledge, silver for those born with a particular love for honor and justice, and bronze for those born with a love for things that satisfy their appetites. Let us also say each child will be best suited to a certain activity, say a silver soul to gymnastics or sophistry, a bronze soul to artistry, and the coveted gold for those that seem to understand the heart of most things that are, and thus appear to have talent in all things, though it is really only in vision.”

“I will suppose this, but what of these men? You have assumed that every man is markedly different at birth, yet observation tells us most men are quite similar. How do you account for this?”

“There must be a common ground for every soul, so it will be this—components of their being. We can obviously agree that all men possess desires that bring comfort to their bodies, such as a desire for food when hungry or warmth when cold. And that these desires are very general in design, not being specific but only seeking to comfort the basest level of want?”

“Certainly.”

“Then perhaps we can also agree that there is a part of the soul acclimated towards what is right, or more importantly what they believe to be right, their perception of justice? And that this will compel the man to action or non-action as it were, if only for the sake of upholding those rules which he has decided are worth respecting?”

“This sounds like a love for honor.”

“Honor would be a facet of this component of the soul, but it would not be its entirety. This part acts as a guide towards what is right, so it can compel the soul in the name of honor though it is not itself based solely in that idea. Rather, it is more

concerned with maintaining a degree of rightness in the outside world, rather than appearing to be inwardly right to the outside world.”

“Are there more parts?”

“Considering the splendid nature of threes, there is a third and final component. Would you agree that we all possess a degree of reason, an ability to think of things in a logical and mathematical form entirely separated from our human experience? That this component would be most in touch with reality and the nature of things and how they work?”

“I can see your understanding of the soul, but I have to say that it is far too idealistic. By your definition, most men today are only motivated by their appetites or in a few small cases by that which they perceive as right.”

“Exactly! The souls today have lost their touch with reason, and have concerned themselves far too much with their appetite. We run around mostly seeking to satisfy our lowest desires, slaves to the lowest part of our being. In some cases, we are more democratic, able to experience desire for other people, or even for things that do not necessarily fulfill our immediate desires but will help us in the long run. And, in a few small cases we let our love for money overrun us, deciding that what is best in this world are things defined by trade. The very best among us express a desire for justice and equality, trying to better orient the populace to a state more in tune with what we claim to be our morality.”

“So there are no men left governed by their reason?”

“No, these will always be. But in today’s world they either become isolated, since what they know means nothing to men consumed by what they want. Or, in most cases, the aristocratic souls devolve to those timocratic souls concerned with preserving what is right, fearing if no one speaks society will fall.”

“I do say Socrates, you and I agree on the state of things. But you have yet to accept that men will never concern themselves with the best of what is offered, but will always fall victim to

their desires.”

“I suppose that there we draw our line then, my good opponent. I feel men can recover from this state given education in the right way to best use every part of their soul. We will continue to make the same mistakes as long as we allow our souls to be defined by misguided men, such as being compelled to eat cake though not truly knowing why. On that note, enjoy the party, sir. I apologize for keeping you.”

“You as well.”

With that, Thucydides went back to eat his cake and Socrates resumed his drinking. I can't help but think that my plan backfired in a way. Socrates did not prove the man wrong so much as just he has a very pessimistic view of the whole affair. He also seemed to agree with Thucydides far more than he should have, but could it be true? Could we be saved by education alone? Are we doomed to repeat our mistakes over and over again? I suppose I need not concern myself with these things now. There is, after all, a superbly delicious piece of cake left to be eaten. ☺

THE MIND WITHIN THE MASTERPIECE

by Clare Murphy

In the age of the Renaissance, the idea of eternal salvation was a glorious notion when contrasted with the often harsh political and social systems of the time. It was a period of frequent and violent change within the government, deception within the papacy, turbulence fueled by the Protestant Reformation, and gross savagery in all realms of society. However, amid this chaos humanism blossomed in the arts, bringing the creative minds of the time back to the ideas, images, and values of the classical models. A light in a period of

vast uncertainty, Michelangelo Buonarroti, one of the most famed artists of the time, created boundless masterpieces that beautifully expressed many of the most appreciated biblical stories. In one of his best-known works, “The Last Judgment”, Michelangelo creates an accurate depiction of the Last Judgment, as presented in the book of Matthew, in order to please the pope, but simultaneously imposes additional characters who do not appear in the book of Matthew in order to communicate his personal annoyances, religious views, worries, and uncertainties.

Many of the details of “The Last Judgment” are in keeping with the biblical text of the book of Matthew. In Matthew, numerous parables describe the events that will take place in the Final Judgment. The most complete description can be found in Chapter 25 of the Gospel of Matthew, when Jesus is described at the throne of Heaven surrounded by angels with “all the nations gathered before him” (25:32). Jesus goes on to separate the good from the evil and finally orders, “depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels,” leaving only the “righteous to eternal life” (Matthew 25:41, 46). The words of this text correspond perfectly to many of the figures in Michelangelo’s “Last Judgment.” At the center of the piece (detail on facing page), Jesus maintains a stance of power, his left leg lunging toward the damned while his right leg remains more relaxed, in an almost reposed position, closest to the redeemed. He holds his right arm raised, “as if to call for attention and at the same time to calm the surrounding turmoil” (Mancinelli 87). His right hand waves the redeemed up to Heaven while His left hand pushes downward and away from His body as if to emphasize and strengthen the unwavering downward movement of the damned into the depths of Hell. Both hands show marks of blood, the remnants of Christ’s greatest sacrifice. Jesus’ gaze faces toward the damned in a downward glance, as if to instill feelings of guilt into those who were not worthy of this sacrifice. The damned are separated

from the righteous, and at first glance, Michelangelo's "Last Judgment" appears to be a beautiful and accurate portrayal of Christ's final judgment, the work specifically requested by the Pope.

Upon closer observation, however, Michelangelo's personal and social opinions are released through the additional figures that are placed in the masterpiece. A major personal touch can be found in the portrait of Minos, the Judge of the Damned in Dante's *Inferno*. After Biagio de Cesena, the pope's Master of Ceremonies, publicly criticized Michelangelo for painting so many nude forms worthy of a "road-side wine-shop" in such a "shameless fashion, in so highly honored a place," Michelangelo was quick to replace the face of Minos with that of Cesena (Mancinelli 89). With a further glance, one notices that Minos's exposed genitals are being bitten by the serpent that is coiled around his body (Gamba 168). Cesena was certainly not present

at the time of the Bible's creation, and neither was Michelangelo's quick, snapping, and revengeful wit. The image of Cesena being bitten in the same area for which he so boldly condemned Michelangelo's work acts as the artist's confident response to what he viewed as an imbecilic criticism. While many of the nudes were later covered in "braghe" or breeches" by Daniele de Volterra in 1565, Michelangelo's confidence in his depiction of the nude truth of the Last Judgment can be seen in the still uncovered face of Cesena (Mancinelli 95).



Michelangelo adds another figure into "The Last Judgment" who is not present in the book of Matthew. Also placed in the center of the painting at the side of Jesus and within his same

“aureole of light” sits the Virgin Mary (Gamba 154). She is posed in same form as “the antique crouching Venus,” the goddess of love and beauty, making it appropriate that she is placed alongside the redeemed as they ascend into heaven (de Tolnay 56). The idea of placing the Virgin Mother in the scene of the Last Judgment is unique to Michelangelo’s interpretation, and shows his willingness to use his artistic license in order to wander away from tradition (Mancinelli 82). This addition of Mary into the scene has been interpreted as Michelangelo’s way of separating “justice and mercy,” dividing the formerly masculine Judgment between female pity and male dominance and command (de Tolnay 56). The two come together in the center of the fresco, traditional in their central importance in Catholicism but novel in their dual presence in the Last Judgment, close in proximity but opposite in stance, as if to show the “diversity of their roles” (Mancinelli 87). This separation reveals Michelangelo’s views on the separate nature of male and female, with Jesus powerfully facing those who must be disciplined and Mary gently facing toward those who are to be welcomed and nurtured in Heaven.

Michelangelo’s personal thoughts and uncertainties about his own final judgment are also seen within “The Last Judgment.” In what appears to be the flayed skin of St. Bartholomew, Michelangelo places a depiction of his own face, empty in body and drooping down toward the underworld. This unflattering self portrait can be understood as a physical representation of Michelangelo’s constant concern about his own fate in the Final Judgment, as well as the constant oppression and anxiety that he felt while working on his Medici commission. “The Last Judgment” was not Michelangelo’s passion, and his loathing for the project comes through in the signature of his self portrait. In the period of the Protestant Reformation and the sale of indulgences, questions about the legitimacy of the church arose and gave birth to further questioning of the definition between the path to Heaven and the path to Hell. The

redeemed and the condemned are interspersed throughout “The Last Judgment”, establishing no clear boundary between the two categories, and representing Michelangelo’s personal concern about the workings of the true Last Judgment and the murky division between good and evil. The saints surrounding Christ “do not display happiness or relief,” only “anxiety and concern” which is inconsistent with the traditional representations of the saints in the Christ’s Final Judgment (Mancinelli 87). These variances from the traditional, strict certainties of the Judgment in Catholicism can be interpreted as Michelangelo’s inner uncertainty and worry about his own final destiny, as well as his attempt to understand the boundaries of good and evil.

The inclusion of additional people from Michelangelo’s time in “The Last Judgment” helps the artist to discretely communicate his own opinions to his audience while still depicting the Last Judgment in a traditional way, satisfying the pope and the Catholic Church. Behind the portrait of Michelangelo as St. Bartholomew is a figure who appears to be Urbino, Michelangelo’s assistant to whom the “rare qualitative shortcomings of the fresco are due” (Mancinelli 89). Urbino is not at all a Biblical figure, but he lurks sneakily behind Saint Bartholomew in the painting as he did behind Michelangelo in real life. As Michelangelo was already not in the least bit thrilled about his artistic duties to the papacy, it must have been increasingly unpleasant to see his own masterpiece tainted by the hands of a less talented assistant. A parallel can be drawn between the insertion of Cesena’s portrait and that of Urbino, two men who, in the eyes of Michelangelo, insulted the beauty of his original work. The inclusion of contemporaries such as Cesena and Urbino in “The Last Judgment” allows Michelangelo to share the story of the painting’s creation alongside the story of the Last Judgment.

In creating such an immense masterpiece, Michelangelo sought to reach a depiction of the Last Judgment that would please the pope as well as relay his own personal annoyances,

religious views, worries, and uncertainties. Interspersed within the theological images of “The Last Judgment” are the complex thoughts of Michelangelo that developed as he spent his endless days upon the scaffolding of the Sistine Chapel, high above the minds and matters of his countrymen. In this image of immense religious integrity, Michelangelo adds the face of a critic, a colleague, a woman, and himself, placing his own experience in that of “The Last Judgment.” Through his personal additions to the Last Judgment, Michelangelo reveals the journey of his creation and the mind of its master. ☺

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Sprinkler

Andrew McFarland

Bea Wissel

LADY MACBETH CLEANS HOUSE

Bird yellow rays of morning sun
sneak in through leaky blinds
cast prison bar shadows
across stain-streaked walls.
She rises to the sound of quiet dripping
dirty dishes yesterday's clothes.
And this day now like every other day
skin grown over
empty cradle
wounds.

Lady Macbeth lights a cigarette
and watches afternoon soaps.
She will scrub and scrub
with water that never runs clean.
And the afternoons stretch
into the yawning mouth of bone
silence.

On laundry day, Lady Macbeth
weeps over bleach and suds.
She will cry: *out, damned spot; out*
as if the stain were no sin of hers.
The sky blushes pink as twilight creeps
over tree tops and into marrow
and shadows again begin to rise.

Darkness now
thick womb-like
comforting
the dusty shameful ache
its pierce more skillful than a knife.
Who would have thought
she had so much blood to bleed?

REACHING THE LIGHT: REASON OR WISDOM?

by Cassandra Lane

Two years after the start of the French Revolution in 1789, W.A. Mozart wrote his final opera, *The Magic Flute*, with the help of the librettist Emanuel Schikaneder. Although many people point to Bastille Day as the end of the Enlightenment, a trans-continental movement cannot end in a single day, and it would be years before Romanticism, often seen as a reaction to the dry rationalism of the Enlightenment, gained momentum. Works such as *The Magic Flute* marked the beginning of this transition. Mozart and Schikaneder use the Enlightenment themes of light and dark in their opera, but they do not agree with the Enlightenment thinkers who believed that the only

path out of darkness was Reason. In the priest Sarastro's realm, Mozart also seems to give an answer to a question posed by Frederick C. Beiser in his discussion of the Romantic Era's reaction to the Enlightenment: "How is it possible to fill the vacuum left by the Aufklärung ("the Age of Light") without betraying reason? How is it possible to restore our unity with nature and society without abandoning the autonomy of criticism?" (231). In Sarastro's realm, Mozart and Schikaneder unite Nature (represented by the Egyptian god Osiris) and Reason (represented by his wife Isis) under a single ruler, Wisdom. Through their treatment of the theme of light and dark and the contrasting characters of the Queen of Night and Sarastro, Mozart and Schikaneder give their audience an alternative to the strict principles of the Enlightenment, while remaining faithful to the basic idea of rational thought.

The opera starts in a wild landscape, described in the stage directions as "a rocky place, here and there overgrown with trees; on both sides are hills" (1.1 p. 1). The hero, Tamino, learns that he has found the kingdom of the Queen of Night, a passionate woman who is controlled by her emotions. The people of her realm, exemplified by the bird catcher Papageno, are simple people who do not question their way of life. Papageno has never seen his Queen, but he follows her orders, passed on to him by the three ladies, for the simple wage of wine and food in exchange for his birds. When Tamino asks him where they are, Papageno replies that he is "no more able to answer that than [he] knows / how [he] came into the world" (1.1 p. 2). He does not know his father and mother, the name of his country, or that there are other lands beyond what he can see. He is the epitome of an unenlightened man according to Enlightenment principles, because he knows nothing and is content knowing nothing, and therefore does not begin to seek out the truth. His simplicity is mirrored in his music; since he is always accompanied by his pan pipe (arguably one of the simplest instruments) and easy, lighthearted melodies, the audience expects nothing more

than fun and comedy from Papageno before he even opens his mouth to speak.

The Queen, on the other hand, has knowledge, but is blinded by her emotions and cannot see the truth. Her chamber is “decorated by transparent stars” (1.1 p. 4), and, although the stage directions do not expressly say so, it appears that she rules in darkness. Her emotions cloud her ability for rational thought; even her introductory aria appears almost to be a stream of consciousness. Her tone bounces from consoling, to mournful, to angry and vengeful, to helpless, and finally to hopeful, all within a relatively short piece. Mozart’s opera opens in a land of darkness, and it is not until later, in Sarastro’s realm, that the audience gets a glimpse of how to move towards the light.

Tamino’s introduction into Sarastro’s realm is filled with mystery. The Queen sends him there to save her daughter Pamina from Sarastro, who has kidnapped her. Tamino, in love with Pamina’s portrait, sets off with Papageno to rescue her, guided by three ladies. They lead him to a grove in which he finds three temples, for Wisdom, Nature, and Reason. He must pick the right entrance, and it is in this choice that Mozart and Schikaneder first move away from Enlightenment principles. Tamino first turns to the Temple of Reason, which, following the logic of the Enlightenment, would be the right choice. But Tamino is turned away by voices from within, and the audience learns that “the application of reason and diligence to human problems” (Donakowski 11) can no longer provide a direct path to Enlightenment. Eventually, after being turned away at the Temple of Nature, Tamino finds the entrance to Sarastro’s realm in the Temple of Wisdom.

The theme of light and dark continues within the temple. After being greeted and brought in by the speaker, Tamino finds himself alone in the dark. Afraid, he calls out, “Oh eternal night! When will you end? / When will the light reach my eyes?” (1.2 p. 9). The idea of light was extremely important to the Enlightenment; the philosophers of the age saw themselves as

“torches” who brought mankind out of the darkness, “enveloped in shadows, in the mists of ignorance which had hidden the true path from their sight” (Hazard 31). Light was also important to the Masonic movement whose rituals are found throughout Sarastro’s realm. Both Mozart and Schikaneder were Masons, and they therefore would have known that “to ‘seek the light’ has long been a metaphor among Masons for pursuing admission” (MacPherson 1078). Mozart and Schikaneder borrow this imagery for the character of Sarastro and his priests, who carry torches, bringing light into the dark night in which the opera is set. Papageno comments on this frequently; both he and Tamino are bothered by the impenetrable darkness. At one point, he tells Tamino, and therefore the audience, that “as soon as [the priests] leave / you can’t see even with your eyes open” (2.2 p.14), which reinforces the idea that the priests are enlightened, and are serving to bring Tamino and Papageno out of the darkness in which they find themselves throughout the trials of initiation. Enlightenment thinkers thought of themselves as “emanating from the majestic laws of Reason” (Hazard 31), whereas Sarastro’s order of priests ruled through the principles of Wisdom.

The clarity and light that accompany Sarastro and his priests is not only found in the libretto and stage directions; Mozart also includes them in his orchestration. Sarastro’s bass voice is contrasted sharply with the soprano melismas of the Queen of Night. The Queen’s introductory aria jumps from mood to mood, note to note, while Sarastro’s arias follow a simple musical line. The contrasting styles are highlighted in Act II, scene 3: the Queen has entered Sarastro’s realm seeking revenge upon him for kidnapping her daughter. With ten lines of text, Mozart’s orchestration helps the audience feel the same desperation as his character. Sarastro’s aria, in response to the threats from the Queen, is composed, serious, and calm. Even though he knows the Queen plans to kill him, Sarastro’s tone is solid and does not waver, calming Pamina quickly. All of the music in



Charles River

Andrew Bisdale

Sarastro's realm carries the same serious tone, even in the face of murder, and it is this emotional and intellectual solidity that further contrasts the Enlightened priests from the wild, emotional realm of the Queen of Night.

Although they did not name Reason as the sole provider of light, Mozart and Schikaneder did not abandon it completely. The Temple of Wisdom was simply the central temple of the three Tamino originally faced and as the opera continues, Mozart and Schikaneder show the audience that it serves to unite both Nature and Reason under one principle. The Queen of Night's husband gave Sarastro "the sevenfold disk of the

Sun... with its all-consuming / power” (2.3 p. 16) upon his death, transferring the power of the Sun (symbolizing both Nature and Wisdom) to him. Although the plot line is not developed further, the Queen alludes to the fact that with this disk Sarastro is able to control her. Jay MacPherson, in his discussion of the Queen’s assumed darkness, points out that “her husband was never the King of the Night” (1082). He suggests that the Queen’s husband was actually the King of the Day. If Night and Day were married, they could balance each other and therefore maintain control over their realm. When he died and passed his power to Sarastro instead of his wife, he left her at the mercy of her emotions, ordering her “to allow / [herself] and [her] daughter to be guided by the / wisdom of men” (2.3 p. 16). Like the Enlightenment thinkers who were like “the Sun, constant, steady, unfailing”, Sarastro uses the power of the Sun to illuminate the minds of his initiates, but unlike the thinkers, his light is not that of Reason alone (Hazard 31). Reason is pointless without Wisdom and Nature to guide and support it; each needs the other two to truly lead to enlightenment. Sarastro and his priests serve the Egyptian gods Isis and Osiris. Isis represents Reason; according to the ancient historian Plutarch, “the true votary of Isis is he who... uses reason in investigating and in studying the truth contained therein” (Babbitt 13). Her brother and husband, Osiris, reigns over vegetation, among other things, and is associated with the flooding of the Nile and the crops that stand along the river. Isis and Osiris represent the union of Reason and Nature, and Sarastro, representing Wisdom, acts as the unifying force between them.

Sarastro invites Tamino and Papageno to undergo various tasks, both physical and mental, to join his order. Only Tamino passes the first task of silence, and he continues on to the final task, a passage through the mountains of fire and water. Sarastro’s armed guards tell him that although the path seems terrifying, “if he but conquers the fears of death, / he will ascend from earth to heaven. / Enlightened he will be able / to devote

himself to the service of Isis” (2.8 p. 22-3). With Pamina at his side, Tamino passes through the fire and water, and they are finally allowed to join Sarastro’s order. In the final ceremony of Tamino and Pamina’s initiation, Sarastro, furthering the image of the enlightened being as a ray of light, declares that “the sun’s rays drive away the night, / destroy the evil power of the dissembler” (2.10 p. 25). His followers also allude to the image of darkness, hailing Tamino and Pamina for having “penetrated the darkness” (2.10 p. 25). “Viennese [Masonic] lodges that felt a call to spread the values of the Enlightenment rang many changes on the phrase [‘seek the light’], and on the larger theme... of light’s struggle against the darkness of superstition and prejudice” (MacPherson 1078). Despite this use of Enlightenment imagery, Mozart and Schikaneder remind the audience that this light was not found through Reason alone: the three spirit guides hold flowers, and the chorus of priests and initiates thank both Isis and Osiris for the success of Tamino and Pamina.

Even though Mozart and Schikaneder wrote *The Magic Flute* after the end of the Enlightenment, their opera still employs the imagery of that period. While the Queen of Night rules in darkness, Sarastro uses the power of the sun to rule. Tamino’s journey towards enlightenment begins in a darkened temple, and ends in a brilliantly lit chamber. The process through which a person reaches the light according to Mozart and Schikaneder is where their opera begins to move away from the Enlightenment. Where the Enlightenment thinkers believed that the light could be found through Reason alone, Mozart and Schikaneder believed that the path is found in Wisdom. Wisdom does not abandon the principles of Reason entirely, and through the character Sarastro, and his evocation of the Egyptian gods Isis and Osiris, they argue that Wisdom encompasses both Reason and Nature. ☺

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Becca

Andrew McFarland

Annalisa Dias-Mandoly

EMPIRE

Let me be your guide across the stars
to those places where the ancients reside.
Let me show you the world as I knew it.
Let me teach you passion.

—I drank you in as poison,
and with each infernal beat
my heart pumped your image
from the back of my eyes
through my veins,
and you became an inward flame
consuming my body
and I could no longer breathe
or blink or weep or sigh or speak
lest you were near.

—We were happy then,
when everything stopped—

But you gave in to destiny
and let future history whisk you away.
and I cried, and I cried— *Pietà!*

But the only mercy for me
came in the form of fire
and the icy clang of your metal sword.
We could have been incredible—
but you chose glory over life.

ROMANTIC THEMES IN “TINTERN ABBEY”

Fabiana Cabral

Themes portrayed in Wordsworth’s poem “Tintern Abbey” represent the nature of poetry in England during the Romantic period, which took place roughly between 1780 and 1830. Disillusioned by the cold reasoning of the Enlightenment, initially inspired and subsequently horrified by the forces of the French Revolution, and increasingly repelled by the overly lofty and supercilious nature of poetry up to this time period, William Wordsworth and other poets of the late 18th and early 19th centuries sought to enrich and liven poetry by infusing it with overflowing emotion, social critiques, and a pastoral fervor never seen before. Wordsworth’s poem “Lines written a few miles

above Tintern Abbey” exemplifies the style of writing that revolutionized the language and mode of expression of English poetry. Among the themes most developed were the importance of interacting and reconnecting with Nature, the value of introspection and as consequence a degree of social, if not physical, isolation, and, finally, an emphasis on the urgent need to calm the wild passions within. These ideas are beautifully and artfully interwoven into “Tintern Abbey”, and are thus applied, though in various ways, to English Romantic poetry as a whole.

“Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey” outlines the speaker’s return to a country setting after five years of absence. The speaker emphasizes that he is not the same man he was five years ago; he has changed, and yet the landscape is just as stunning and as soothing as it was years before. The predominant theme of Romantic poetry is often the nurturing aspect of Nature, how man can find comfort in the simplicity of rural life. It is not a coincidence that the Nature Wordsworth “worships”, with its flowing river, steep cliffs, and dark sycamores, is fundamentally unassuming and simple as well as wild and rough. It is precisely this plainness in environment that one should seek out. In the poet’s preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, he writes that “low and rustic life was chosen, because in that condition, the essential passions of the heart... speak a plainer and more emphatic language.” In other words, the best way to express profuse emotions is not to utilize embellished and ludicrously overwrought terms, but rather to express it simply. This is not to say that there is no elevation in this type of language or way of thinking; on the contrary, Nature should be a medium through which we can collect the most elevated of our thoughts. There is a direct link between “these steep and lofty cliffs” from the fifth line, and the mind, impressed with their “quietness and beauty” which feeds on “lofty thoughts” from line 129. These images calm and please the speaker. But best of all, the speaker does not need to be in this rural setting for these visions to impress him.

Another important theme expressed in “Tintern Abbey” is

the power of the mind in moments of isolation or emotional despair. Although the speaker has been absent for five years, his mind was never absent, for he expresses that “oft, in lonely rooms, and mid the din / of towns and cities, I have owed to them / in hours of weariness sensations sweet” (26-8). In other words, the ability to remember those pastoral scenes affords the speaker just as much tranquility as if he were physically there. Nature is thus a balm for the troubled mind. The speaker, surrounded by the falsehoods of society, the unkindness of men, the unpleasant squalor of urbanization, and the “dreary intercourse of daily life” (132), need only reflect on the revitalizing memories of previous contact with Nature to protect himself. However, this doesn’t merely serve as a consolation or distraction; Wordsworth illustrates it as a necessary process for the understanding of what can be termed raw experience.

The speaker five years ago was youthful, free to roam in the wild, drinking in everything in an ominously frantic fashion, filled with “aching joys” and “dizzy raptures” (85-6), distracted and in awe of the marvels around him. There is joy, yet there is also an early trace of anxiety, as the speaker runs “more like a man / flying from something he dreads, than one / who sought the thing he loved” (71-3), incapable, in the moment, to take it all in and reflect on it at the same time. Wordsworth once said that poetry is “emotion recollected in tranquility.” Thus, introspection in the aftermath of the occurrence becomes relevant, because only then can one truly appreciate the experiences one has undergone. One of the most engaging and subtle points the poem portrays is that this brutal contrast between the idyllic and the anxious, between the freedom and innocence of youth and the troubles of experience, is not only inevitable, but perhaps even desirable. Wordsworth does not warn his sister or his beloved away from city life, nor does he say “Flee all ye who may to greener pastures!”; he certainly does not tell them that their salvation lies in seeking refuge from society in the country. Rather, he fully comprehends that the sadness and discomfort of

distancing himself from pastoral paradise helps him glorify it all the more and, most importantly, allows him to calm those passions that threaten to tear him apart.

Here Wordsworth averts the quintessential Romantic danger. A common misconception about the Romantic movement maintains that the Romantics discarded the intellect in favor of the passions. “Tintern Abbey” exemplifies how this interpretation fundamentally misconstrues such poetry. As the poem ends, the speaker emphasizes the need to calm the turbulent passions that have been evoked by his communion with Nature as well as other emotional interactions in his life. The process by which “wild ecstasies shall be matured / into a sober pleasure” (139-140) is urgently necessary for the emotional and spiritual well-being of the speaker. Change, the only constant in life, holds the speaker between a rock and a hard place. The following choice must be made: either the speaker can choke on the overflowing wonder exuded by Nature, and subsequently drown in the overwhelming oppression and despair wrought by society’s figurative chains, or he can accept his situation and allow the beauty he has experienced to continue to fill him in a calmer manner. To put it in Wordsworth’s own words, as one ages, one cannot observe Nature as one did in

Thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
The still sad music of humanity
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue— (91-4)

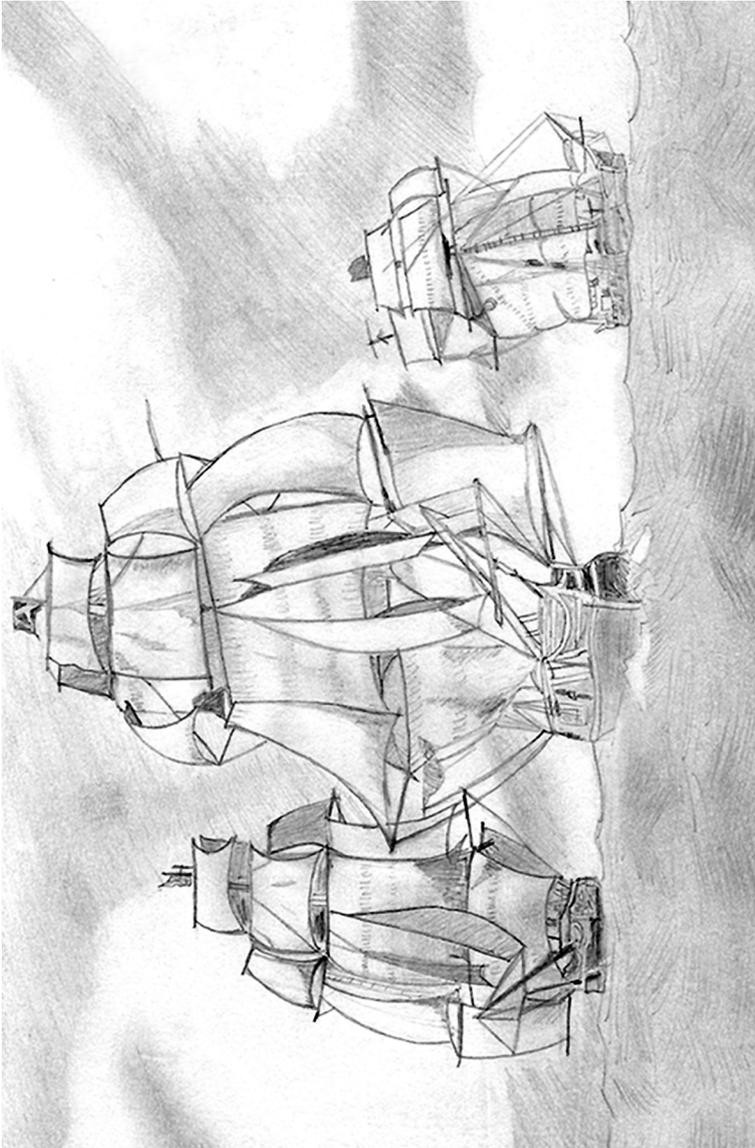
Therein lies the virtue of the Romantics: there is no need to despair, so long as one braves the paralyzing torments of life supported by the “anchor of [one’s] purest thoughts, the nurse, / the guide, the guardian of [one’s] heart, and the soul / of all [one’s] moral being” (110-12). Using the intellect, delving into self-induced moments of quiet, it becomes possible to relive and analyze those moments of admiration, and sublimate them into

deep, personal treasures that promise to bolster one against any fear, sadness, or disappointment.

Wordsworth is an imposing figure in English poetic tradition. His writings and those of other Romantics familiarized people with poetry and made it accessible to all those who might appreciate the pleasing versatility and expression of the English language. By analyzing the poem “Lines Written a few miles above Tintern Abbey”, one may come in contact with a robust spring of Romantic themes. The importance and sublimity of connecting with Nature, the value of introspection and the power of memory, and, finally, the paramount decision to fuse the intellect with exorbitant emotions, are all themes that permeate the work of Wordsworth and other poets of the period. One has seen that Romantic poetry is not overly nostalgic, but rather optimistic, forward-looking, and positive. One can now appreciate that powerful emotions have to be filtered through an intellectual thought process. But, in the words of Jonathan and Jessica Wordsworth, descendants of the great poet himself, what most characterizes Romantic poetry is “a valuing of all that is most precious in existence: of love, of feeling, of imagination in its highest form... It is poetry for those who love life...” (3). In this tumultuous period of European history, Romantic poetry represented not merely a new style, but also a new spirit. The effects of this spirit have permeated our own writing and our culture, and its effects can still be felt today. ☺

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Three Approaching Ships

Fabiana Cabral

Annalisa Dias-Mandoly

WAKING UP

I can't think. I can't write.
My disjointed thoughts splatter out
as particles of dust
and I breathe in so deep that
my throat becomes caked
with a film of dirt.
I cough and I choke and spit
sputters out from the curve
of my lips.
I am exhausted. Fatigue
rides in my bones,
and I ache with failure.
All of this thinking hurts my brain.

When I go to sleep I will dream
Of a place where
each sunset is more beautiful than the last, where
I am free to walk about the hills and valleys,
rivers, woods and plains, where
heavenly virtue remains, where
perfection exists, where
dust contains the substance of life, where
my thoughts make sense.
But I will persist in wondering
What is beyond the horizon
just out of view.

Whisper, whisper softly in my ear
Come and invade my being
 Divulge to me your secrets
 Enfold me in your mysteries.
 Tantalize me, tempt me,
 Entice me, torment me.
Help me to open my eyes.
I yearn to know truth.

When I awake, when I unlock my eyes
 and rub out the dust
 to return to the world
 of passion bitten into,
 and broken trust,
I will be more like Eve
 than any other woman.
And I will realize that
 my Paradise
Is forever
 LOST.

Zachary Bos

THE FIG TREE

[7]

Splitting open a warm fig from the tree
in his mother Millie's tiny back yard,
my grandfather gave me half. Its roundness
was like the roundness of a woman's breast;
its small seeds crisply burst between my teeth.

[16]

Not until her funeral service, when
I read the mourning card, did I
discover her name was Carmelita —
charming and exotic, preposterous.

It made more sense, then, to imagine her
clutching a leafless twig on the long trip
from Italy. When they had saved enough
they bought land and built themselves a house.
The cellar walls they built from rocks dug there.

My mother's stepfather's mason husband
used his bare hands as trowels for the joints
between each course of varied fieldstone
until his palms were worn as smooth as leaves.

[25]

Her tree never really thrived, never leaned
toward the ground, heavy with fruit, swarmed by wasps;
New Jersey winters are a bit too cold.

Each summer only a few green knobs would
appear on its branches, growing rounder
until they'd darken, swollen with nectar,
in the first cool days of autumn; show
their ripeness with a bead of shining dew
at the small hole that opens opposite the stem,
the garden gate for those inscrutable wasps
who spend their brief lives in fragrant darkness
searching for wingless mates in the grottoes
in among the hidden flowers inside the fig.

THE UNLIKELY HEROISM OF SATAN IN *PARADISE LOST*

by Steve Ramirez

The provocative language of Milton's grand poem about the Fall of Man from grace unexpectedly imbues the character of Satan, who also fell, with heroic qualities. The effect is to allow this unlikely hero to assume an Aristotelian stature. When considered through the lens of Aristotle's *Poetics*, Satan's character fills Aristotle's definition of a traditional tragic hero. His arrogance and subsequent *katharsis* are familiar, human imperfections, and make the devil a character with whom the reader can identify. Through the voice of Satan (and all his heroic oratory),

*To Go Away**Andrew McFarland*

Milton engages in a dialogue with prior works regarding the nature of heroism, reconfiguring the old model, and successfully redefining notions of heroism. Milton's masterful use of diction gives flesh to Satan as a charismatic persona with a haughty demeanor, which allows for Satan to conform to the Aristotelian definition of a traditional hero. According to Aristotle, a tragic hero is of noble stature, who makes an error in judgment (*hamartia*) that leads to a reversal of fortune (*peripeteia*); he consequently recognizes that this reversal was brought upon by his own actions (*anagnorisis*), and finally causes his own destruction, thus evoking a sense of *katharsis* (143). Initially, in Book I, the reader finds Satan in transcendent glory, though in the wake of

his expulsion from Heaven, for the “Prince, chief of many throned powers” (I. 128) is comforting his legions with hopes of regaining heaven and to “equal the Most High” (I. 40). He is “stirred up with envy and revenge” (I. 35) and his “injur’d merit” (I. 99) serves as a catalyst for his denunciation of God.

Hence, the first hundred lines, it is already established that “Around [Satan], Milton has thrown a singularity of daring, a grandeur of sufferance, and a ruined splendor” (Wilson 208). By instilling a heroic rhetoric of reason in Satan, Milton allows for “th’antagonist of heaven, [Satan] ... Hell’s dreaded emperor, with pomp supreme,/ And Godlike imitated state” (II. 509-511) to articulate with masterful and convincing elocution, which consequently instills his army with specious hope. Milton’s heroic characterization of Satan forces the devil to transcend the demonic stature and achieve a state of noble leadership. As Miller notes, “If we listen to Satan as he wishes to be heard, his speech asserts equality, freedom, and nobility of the soul... for he is a consummate poet”(Miller 87). Ultimately, Satan stands as a fallen soldier whose leadership is unparalleled:

Will ye submit your neck; and choose to bend
The supple knee... and if not equal all, yet free,
Equally free; for orders and degrees
Jar not with liberty, but well consist. (V. 787-793)

He declares that in order to create new laws, old laws must be disobeyed and either reformed or destroyed. Milton’s heroic portrayal of Satan as a fallen warrior with valor and honor surely takes the audience by surprise, for by the end of Book I, Satan is as tender as he is ambitious.

Furthermore, Milton’s sympathetic characterization of the devil is also elucidated through his use of heroic rhetoric. For example, after being expelled from Heaven for his blasphemous rebellion, Satan comforts his legions:

In dubious battle on the plains of heaven,/ [We] shook
 [God's] throne ... All is not lost; the unconquerable will,/
 And study of revenge, immortal hate,/ And courage never
 to submit or yield. (I. 104-108)

Milton also instills in Satan a rational rhetoric that dominates Satan's dialogue and highlights his speculative and deliberative nature. Satan's heroic and rational voice is manifest when he states that it is "better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven... With rallied arms to try, what may be yet/ Regain'd in heaven, or what more lost in hell?" (I. 264-270). He understands that by abiding by God's tyrannical decree, complacency will only lead to idleness. For this reason, Satan declares that leading his army in the deep abyss of Chaos is preferable to kneeling and subordinating himself to a vengeful Creator, which highlights his noble leadership. Hence, "[Satan's] wonted pride... with high words, that bored/ Semblance of worth, not substance, gently rais'd/ their fainting courage, and dispell'd their fears" (II. 528-530). After his demonic comrades overcome uncertainty and doubt, Satan begins his struggle for liberty, which ultimately leads to his tragic realization of his own inability in understanding God's immutable will. In brief, a hallmark of Satan's heroism is his use of the rhetoric of legitimate rebellion by "princes" or "inferior magistrates" against a king and he transforms this idea into a rallying cry for the overthrow of God himself.

The aura of heroism quality around Satan is enhanced by figurative language, as when Satan's "heart/ Distends with pride" (I. 571-572) and, after soothing his multitudes of followers, he:

in shape and gesture proudly eminent/Stood like a
 tower: his form had not yet lost/ All her original
 brightness, nor appear'd/ Less than archangel ruin'd.
 (I. 590-593)

Satan's stature is described as a "tower," slightly ruined, rivaled in

greatness only by his imposing pride. This scene is filled with all the grandeur and power, the rationality and pride, that epitomizes Satan's heroic persona, for he has so deep a malice that he decides "to confound the race/ Of mankind in one root, and earth with hell/ To mingle and involve, done all to spite/ The Great creator" (II. 382-385).

Fittingly, in desperate need of a hero, Hell rejoices as Satan, on whom "The weight of all, and [Hell's] last hope, relies" (II. 416) decides that in order to "seek/Deliverance for us all" (II. 464-465) he must go on his own way through Chaos and into God's newly created Paradise. He states that "this enterprise/ None shall partake with me" (II. 465-466), for the leader of hell understands that only he possesses the capabilities of undertaking the perilous journey to observe and ultimately corrupt God's newly created Paradise. For instance, as Satan approaches the gates of hell, he speaks to Sin and Death: "I come no enemy, but to set free/ From out this dark and dismal house of pain" (II. 822-823). He defiantly proclaims his plans for liberation:

I stood/ Thy fiercest, when in battle... a faithful leader... I lone first undertook/ To wing the desolate abyss, and spy/ This new created world, whereof in hell/ Fame is not silent, here in hope to find/ Better abode".(IV. 926-940)

Thus, Milton embeds venerable qualities in the devil's character which adheres to the Aristotelian notion of a tragic hero.

As noted earlier, Aristotle highlights that a hallmark of a tragic hero is his humanity, with which the audience can identify and eventually sympathize. Hence, although Satan's leadership seems infallible and exemplary, like all traditional heroes, Satan is subject to a tragic flaw that eventually elicits a cathartic experience from the audience – his arrogance and inability to comprehend what Milton calls "God's omnific being" (VII. 217). For example, towards the second half of the epic, Satan's

character begins to deteriorate from the tender and lamenting fallen Archangel of Book I to a demon who finds himself envious of Paradise. Milton's diction creates a sense of a regretful warrior whose own envy and pride leads to his imminent dissatisfaction regarding his status in God's universe.

Satan's diminishing heroism is also depicted in the grotesque imagery that Milton creates, for in a scene of contemplation, "[Satan] squat like a toad" (IV. 800). Hereafter, Satan begins to realize that a creature who aspires to equality with the Creator can never be content; yet, his character departs from the traditional conception of the devil as the epitome of evil. For although the "Holy Writ had characterized [Satan] as the proud rebel and the 'liar from the beginning'" (Steadman 64), here the reader certainly can sympathize with Satan's ambition. These are the basic features of the *pathos* felt for Satan's fallen character, a figure whose tragic flaw is all-too-human: ego.

In his *Poetics* Aristotle asserts that good men ought not to be shown passing from prosperity to misfortune, for this does not inspire pity or fear, but instead revulsion. Nor should evil men rise from ill fortune to prosperity, for this passage does not elicit sympathy from an audience (Aristotle 145). Accordingly, Satan's pride and vanity lead to his lack of success against God. Percy Shelley maintains in his *Defense of Poetry* that

Nothing can exceed the energy and magnificence of the character of Satan as expressed in *Paradise Lost*... Milton's Devil as a moral being is as far superior to his God as one who perseveres in some purpose which he has conceived to be excellent in spite of adversity and torture is to one who in the cold security of undoubted triumph inflicts the most horrible revenge upon his enemy. (2.789–802)

Yet, Shelley and Milton both recognize that at the base of Satan's attempt to overthrow God is pride and anger: "So bent

he seems/ On desperate revenge, that shall rebound/ Upon his own rebellious head” (III. 84-86). This flaw establishes Satan as a tragic hero of the Aristotelian kind, one bound for greatness but doomed to failure.

Finally, Satan’s dialogue reveals a conflicted mind, which further reverberates with Aristotle’s idea of a hero as a character with whom the audience may identify. Even when alone, his character undergoes philosophical conversations with himself: “Till pride and worse ambition threw me down,/ Warring in heaven against heaven’s matchless King” (III. 40-41). When Satan contemplates, his mind is ebbing and reveals an interplay between doubt and hope.

Ultimately, however, his *prelapsarian* condition—that is, before the Fall—is undermined by his own self-begotten image, which is implicit in his concealed thoughts: “Is there no place/Left for repentance, none for pardon left... my dread of shame... How dearly I abide that boast so vain... under what torments inwardly I groan” (IV. 80-90). Hereafter, Satan understands that he is the personification of Hell and bids any optimism *adieu* by accepting his condition: “So farewell hope, and with hope farewell fear,/Farewell remorse: all good to me is lost;/Evil be thou my good(IV. 108-110). In due course, Satan’s “vindictiveness, anger, and a passion for self-aggrandizement” blind him to his God (Carey 34); and yet, these characteristics also feed his ambition and facilitate his success in tempting Eve. Indeed, although he does not take the throne in heaven, he succeeds in corrupting the course of God’s design.

Paradise Lost is an epic poem embedded with heroism, especially in Satan’s monumental figure.

There can be no poem in any language in which pathos and beauty so jostle one another, and pedestrianism so alternates with wingy flights. It is by turn magnificent, engaging, tragic, tedious, fantastic, and

entertaining; and has, throughout, the queer enchantment of the exotic, monstrous mind which shaped it. (Macaulay 97)

It is the story of man: “To man in part / Spiritual” (V.405 – 405); it is the story of Satan: “Vast and haughty... advance[ing]... tow’ring, arm’d in adamant and gold” (VI. 109-110). The beauty and grandeur, the images and literary devices of *Paradise Lost* are all reflections of Milton’s mind embracing the Aristotelian formula for heroism. Perhaps no other character can be sympathized with, so full of grace and heroism, than Milton’s Satan. ☹

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Lindsey Gould

HOW TO LOVE A SHADOW

I'm right here, she says.
Petrarch stops writing, paralyzed by shock.
He looks up from his desk and sees her,

There, standing right in the room.
Soft sunlight glows through her skin,
while her garments
and all the strands of her hair
move slowly about her,
as if disturbed by a faint breeze.
Her image flutters with each breath
that Petrarch takes.

What are you writing, she asks,
slowly tilting her head in inquiry.
His pen still poised above his desk,
ink drops upon the parchment.
He swears he can hear each splash.
I am writing, he whispers, about you.

She approaches him in the dim light.
His tremendous urge
to grasp her hands in his,
exclaim his love, hangs in the air,
inconvenient and inexplicable,
caught in folds of apprehension.

Will you ever find me, she asks.
I don't understand, he replies, faintly.
Aren't you right here?

I always have been, Francesco.
Steadily her lids drop. Her clothes fall flat;
she fades away as if she were never there.
Petrarch leans forward from his chair,
his feet arched against the wooden floor.
He wants to leap! To fall,
to melt away into the air with her.
His muscles tense with the thought. Then...

Petrarch stifles brave notions.
He resigns himself, falls back into his chair,
and continues to write about his life.
He continues to write about nothing.

CONTRIBUTORS

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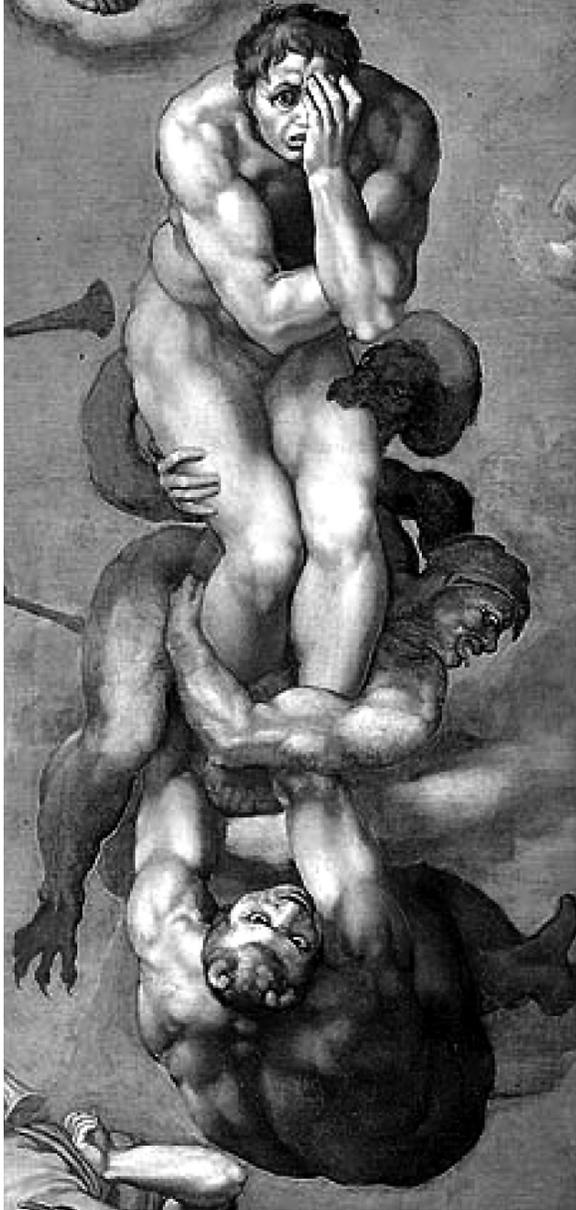
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Other than poetry and theatre, BEA WISSEL (Anthropology, Religion, Theatre) really likes feminism and fur coats.



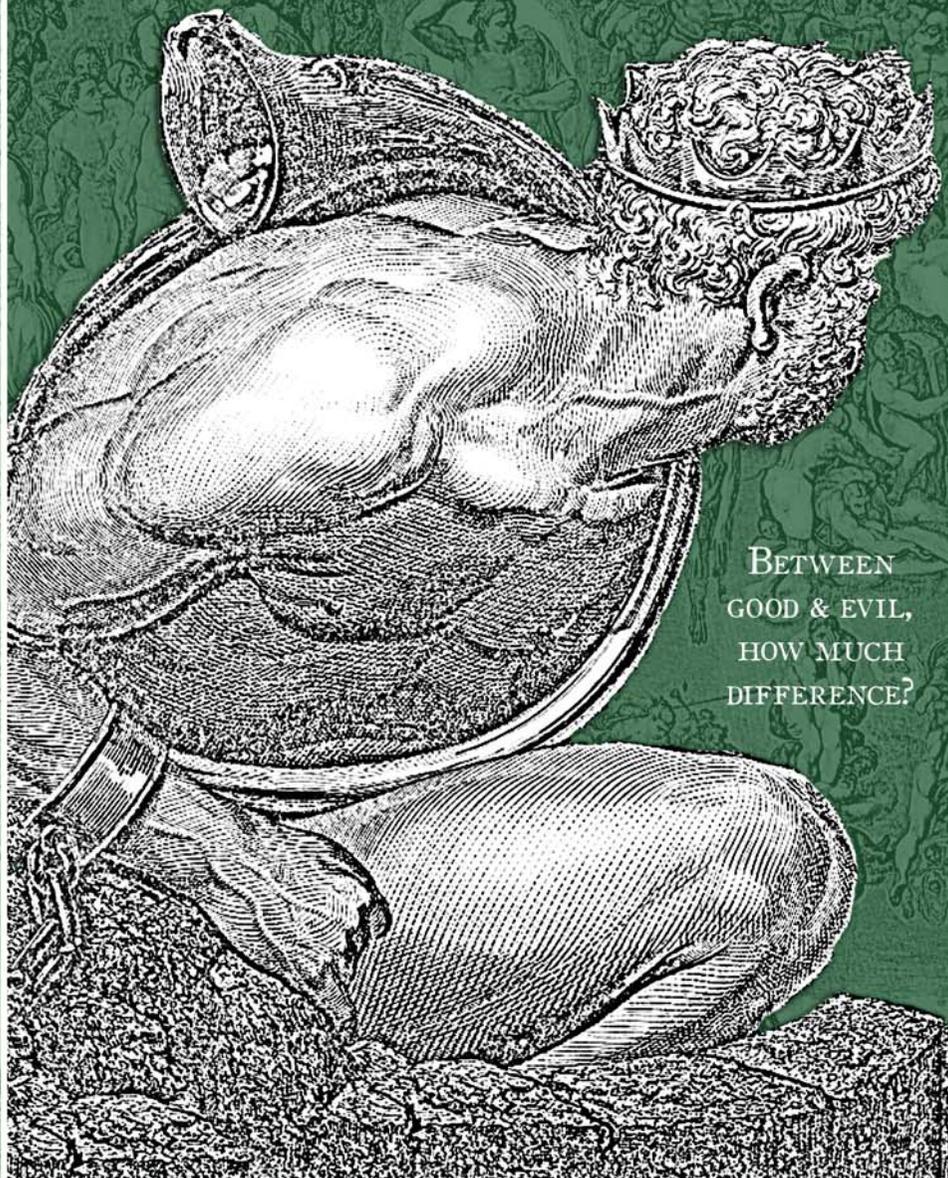
"Le Penseur" by Auguste Rodin, 1902



"Il Giudizio Universale" (detail) by Michelangelo Buonarroti, 1535-41

The Journal of the Core Curriculum

Volume XVII Spring 2008



BETWEEN
GOOD & EVIL,
HOW MUCH
DIFFERENCE?

THE JOURNAL
OF THE CORE
CURRICULUM

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ABOUT THIS JOURNAL

Love and hate, light and dark, good and evil, happiness and despair—by the end of Core we know the divisions between these cosmic opposites are hardly ever distinct. In the physical arrangement of this Journal, we attempt to demonstrate the dichotomy inherent in the lessons we’ve drawn from the Core texts, through the intentions of their authors, and through the nature of their characters. The two-sided cover is designed to make manifest the value of an Aristotelian mean, the *via media*—the Middle Way. On one side, you’ll find Venus, lovely and haunting; on the other, Nimrod, raw and forceful, barely restrained. Each is powerful and beautiful, but in extremely different ways. They are not opposites, but rather complementary aspects of a complex whole. In their differences you will find one of the most valuable lessons of the Core education: that the richness of life is never quite as easily classifiable as “good” or “bad,” but in all cases is a rich amalgamation of the two.

As Gulliver plods onward toward home, he is many times waylaid. Each time, however, this divergence provides an education that improves his knowledge of the world. In a similar fashion, the obstacles we struggled through during the production of this volume proved in the end to have taught us lessons we will not soon forget. In making your own way through this work, think of the minds and characters we have encountered thus far, and see if you can classify any of them to one side or the other; perhaps this strangely arranged little Journal will help.

We savor the joy of reaching our journey’s end all the more because we remember the difficulties we faced along the way. As Keats explains in his Odes, as Aeneas demonstrates in his flawed heroism, and as Paulo and Francesca evoke our sympathy even from Dante’s Hell, our constant striving for happiness is possible only when we have obstacles to overcome.

Erin McDonagh
Layout & Production

SECOND YEAR

ANALECTS

Out, out brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more.

- Macbeth, *Macbeth*

In democratic nations, all those who have the ambition to excel in letters should often nourish themselves on the works of antiquity.

- de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*

He had been eight Years upon a Project for extracting Sunbeams out of Cucumbers, which were to be put into Vials hermetically Sealed, and let out to warm the Air in raw inclement Summers.

- Gulliver, *Gulliver's Travels*

According to the wise Solomon, Wisdom enters not into the malicious heart, and knowledge without conscience is but the ruin of the soul.

- Gargantua, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*

So a prudent man must always follow in the footsteps of great men and imitate those who have been outstanding.

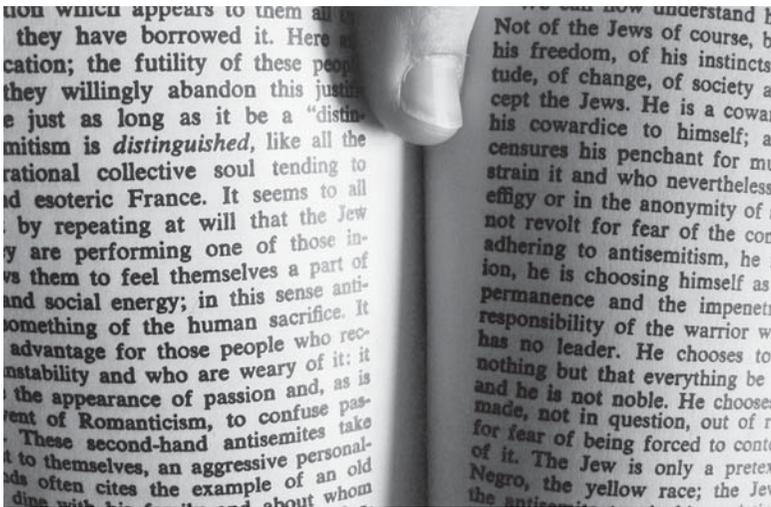
- Machiavelli, *The Prince*

The mind is its own place, and in itself
can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.

- Satan, *Paradise Lost*

Now that I was free and my own master, I supposed that I could do anything, achieve anything. I had only to take one leap, and I could rise and fly through the air.

- Rousseau, *The Confessions*



Book

Andrew Bisdale

Good sense eludes the overhasty pen.

- Faust, *Faust*

To Elizabeth it appeared, that had her family made an agreement to expose themselves as much as they could during the evening, it would have been impossible for them to play their parts with more spirit, or finer success.

- Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*

In short, our hidalgo was soon so absorbed in these books that his nights were spent reading from dusk till dawn, and his days from dawn till dusk, until the lack of sleep and the excess of reading withered his brain, and he went mad.

- Cervantes, *Don Quixote*

For such is the nature of men that howsoever they may acknowledge many others to be more witty, or more eloquent, or more learned, yet they will hardly believe there be many so wise as themselves.

- Hobbes, *Leviathan*

I never envied any bird its wings
But the pursuit of intellectual things
From book to book, from page to page-
What joy that yields!

- Wagner, *Faust*

The thing to do is to become insane without a cause; [if
Dulcinea does not send for me] I shall go truly mad.

- Don Quixote, *Don Quixote*

I will therefore make a serious and unimpeded effort to destroy
generally all my former opinions.

- Descartes, *Meditations*

But here's the joy: My friend and I are one.
Sweet flattery! Then she loves but me alone.

- Shakespeare, Sonnet XLII

'By God, I'm going to write a book on the advantages of long
cod-pieces, just as soon as I have the time.' And he did indeed
write a handsome, fat book on the subject, beautifully illustrat-
ed. But it hasn't been printed yet, as far as I know.

- Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*

Mark but this flea, and mark in this,
How little that which thou deny'st me is;
Me it sucked first, and now sucks thee,
And in this flea our two bloods mingled be.

- Donne, "The Flea"

NICK & FRANK



photo and text by Andrew Bisdale

François Rabelais had heard that Michelangelo Buonarroti was nearly finished with his exertions at the Sistine Chapel—a giant fresco painting. Although he had heard quite a bit about the place, he had never seen it for himself. Upon learning of the new addition, Rabelais was compelled to go to Rome to gaze on it with his own eyes.

As he entered the chapel he marveled at its initial beauty, and was pleased to find Michelangelo as he was

finishing his painting on the far wall. He walked back and introduced himself.

“Good afternoon, sir, and may I say what a truly amazing job you have done here. My name is François Rabelais, and I write stories,” he said excitedly, “but today I am merely a humble observer of your art.”

Michelangelo graciously responded, “It is a pleasure to meet you, Signore Rabelais. Please, take some time to look around, and tell me what you think of my paintings.”

Rabelais walked around the entire chapel, taking his time observing and thinking about the images, and at last he walked back towards the altar where Michelangelo stood examining his just finished fresco.

“What did you think of the ceiling?” Michelangelo asked.

“Extremely impressive, sir, and it provoked many questions,” Rabelais replied. “But what massive beauty this altar has become! I feel as though Dante’s *Inferno* has been brought to life!”

“Why, I had that very idea in mind while painting it myself,” said a flattered Michelangelo. “It is a portrayal of the Last Judgment.”

“I am very impressed, although I have always had a problem with the *Divine Comedy*. I simply don’t understand how one can claim to know what any given figures will suffer in the afterlife. I happen to believe such knowledge is unattainable without dying oneself. I have my own opinions on such matters anyway.”

Michelangelo was surprised by Rabelais’ highly opinionated nature, but was interested to see what sort of discussion they could have regarding his work. “Fair enough,” he said. “Did you have any other opinions about, say, my depictions on the ceiling?”

Rabelais smirked a little and replied, “Why yes, shall

we take a walk?” And the two started walking down the aisle, looking up at the ceiling as they went.

“I was delightfully surprised when I saw all the nude bodies at first,” he continued. “It must have taken a bit of nerve for you to paint such figures in such a holy place.”

“Why yes,” Michelangelo replied. “I feel the human body is one of the most beautiful gifts God has given us, and it is only right to show it praise in the Lord’s house. I am glad you feel so as well.”

Rabelais agreed. “But wouldn’t it be a real spectacle if you were to depict the men with enormous penises, and have them brandish them and tie them around their waists as belts and such?”

“Excuse me?” said Michelangelo, taken aback. “That’s not quite the image I was trying to create.” He could tell that he was dealing with a radical character and that the rest of their discussion was going to be an interesting one, to say the least. “I painted these *ignudi* to celebrate the beauty of the male form, not to make a mockery of it!”

“Well I can assure you, most men certainly wish they had such a blessed digging tool,” said Rabelais, somewhat pleased that he had sparked such a reaction. “Another thing I found interesting,” he said, drawing Michelangelo’s attention back towards the ceiling, “was the abundance of acorns amongst the *ignudi*. Surely these are some sort of symbol for the male—”

“I’ll stop you right there,” snapped Michelangelo. ☹

Annalisa Dias-Mandoly

STARRY NIGHT

Let me live in a cave for all my life.
Shimmering starlight blinds my eyes
And, in agony, I try to turn away,
But everywhere radiance remains.
I would rather be comfortable and safe.
So let me live in a cave and outlast the day.
I accept your shackles with heartfelt thanks.
They take the fault off my back.
Yes, let me keep my back to the world-
Watching shadows dance along in silence,
I will write their stories with my dry wit.
Here again, as always, I and we and
All those sad and sorry ones sleep
Away the light, straining in the night
To see past reflected starbeams.



"De sterrennacht" by Vincent van Gogh, 1889

ROUSSEAU MEETS MTV

by Julie Drapala

Unlike other “True Life” confessionals, mine is totally new and different from all of them. What’s even more, there will never be another one like mine. I want to show everyone watching that this exactly how I am—I want to bare my soul for the whole world to see. I know people think these MTV shows are scripted, but this is entirely real—this is who I am, and I am not acting for the cameras at all. I’m just being myself and telling my story.

I’m not exaggerating to make myself sound more interesting or like a better person at all. It’s hard for most people to accept, but I really know who I am, and because of that, I know all about people and what they think. I would never exaggerate or lie about anything because I am entirely real. More than this, though, you will never find anyone else like me. Never. I’m not saying that I’m perfect, or better than anyone else, but I definitely stand out.

I know that people watching this are going to judge me and say I made things up—but that’s absolutely not true. This is reality TV—it’s real. If anything didn’t happen exactly like I say it did, I’m telling the story as best I can, and it happened so long ago that something might slip my mind, maybe. You can all think what you want about my story, but just think about what you would say to a TV audience as big as this. Could you be as honest and real as I am?

That being said, the story I want to come clean about happened when I was a lot younger and working at Abercrombie & Fitch. For the most part, my job was pretty decent, and I was just trying to earn money for college. The pay was fine and I was treated well. I did something so incredibly awful, though, and I’ll never be able to forget it. I know it happened a long time ago, but every day I am reminded of what a terrible thing I did. I think that I might have possibly destroyed this girl’s life that I worked with—someone who was a better person than me, and I had to go and make her life a total living hell.

We could get discounts on clothes, so no one usually stole anything, but there was this weird scarf I really wanted. I could have just asked to get it with my discount, but I didn’t want to wait. One day, when there were still other workers in the store, I decided to take it, and my manager found out right away. I totally panicked, and said that Mary stole it and that I was just holding it while she stocked some boxes. Mary was so cute and innocent, totally not the stealing type. While other girls working at Abercrombie wore too much makeup and always went tanning, Mary was naturally pretty and so sweet. The other girls were just catty and talked about each other constantly, but Mary never said a bad word about anyone. When he heard my accusation about Mary, my manager’s jaw dropped, but I’ve never done anything wrong before either, so he believed me too.

My manager went and got her out of the stockroom, and all the other staff was called around. All he had to do was hold up the scarf, and I once again blurted out her name again without

a second thought. She totally did not know what was going on and gave me the worst death stare ever, but I kept a straight face. She kept saying she knew nothing about this scarf, keeping calm the whole time and never yelling or anything. When the manager had to take care of an angry customer for a minute, she whispered to me to just be the nice guy she knew me to be, and come clean. After the manager had dealt with the customer, he asked again who was responsible, and I blamed her again, looking her in the eye the whole time. Mary started bawling in the middle of the store, saying, “You were always such a cool, nice person. This is so crappy, but I’m just glad I’m not you.” Those were the only words she said to me after that. She kept trying to tell the manager that she had been unloading all the new clothes all day and that she hadn’t been out on the floor at all, but never said my name at all. Since she wasn’t getting very defensive, and just saying she didn’t take it, in her usual quiet way of talking, and I kept saying her name so harshly every time, the manager believed me more. There were so many people in the store at the time that the manager didn’t have time to ask more questions, so he fired us both right then and there. His last words were, “You can figure out who really did it between the two of you... obviously one of you just lost your job because the other can’t fess up. I’m sure whichever one of you is really guilty will realize what an awful thing this is.”

He couldn’t possibly have known how absolutely awful I would feel every minute of every hour of every day after that. I have no idea what happened to Mary since then, but she wasn’t planning on going to college and was happy working at Abercrombie, and I really don’t think other stores would hire her if she had a record of theft. Even though it was just a scarf, stealing is never okay, and especially for someone thinking of a life in retail. After this I don’t know what happened to her. Her family really didn’t have a lot of money, and she worked many hours to support them too. I can’t even imagine all the painful talks with her parents about why she lost her job—it must have been

so incredibly terrible.

I have trouble sleeping because of these thoughts. I lay awake for hours sometimes, thinking about what possibly could have happened to her because of me. I once went to the doctor to get a prescription sleep aid because it got so unbearable. I take Ambien every night so I can sleep without thinking of the life I probably ruined.

I've never told anyone this before because of how bad it makes me feel. No one knew about this before, and that's why I went on MTV. I want everyone to know now what a bad person I was. That was my goal for doing "True Life"—to finally come to terms with the terrible thing I did.

Everything I just told you is totally true—the dialogue is as close as I can possibly remember, and all the names and places are the same. I realize what an awful person I am because of what I did, and anyone who thinks that I don't feel as bad as I should clearly didn't listen to what I just said.

I did what I did because I was so afraid of my manager thinking less of me. I can't bear for people to think I'm not an honest person. The fact that all the other employees were around, and customers too, also made it that much harder—I couldn't have imagined having to tell everyone I was a thief! I've matured more now too, back then I was still a kid really, so my age also explains why I lied.

One good thing I can think of is that I never even wanted to steal again, let alone actually go through with the act. I also hate lying now—it actually hurts me to lie. Feels like a knife twisting in my heart. But now that I've told the whole world how I could have possibly ruined her life, I feel like my conscience has been cleared. Through coming on this show and telling you what happened, I feel Mary's life took a turn for the better. I'm sure Mary's life worked out in some way. I never want to talk about this again.

COMMENTARY

This burlesque modernizes Rousseau and places him in the pop culture of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Since Rousseau pioneered secular confessions, this burlesque plays on that tradition and emphasizes the course it has taken since his time. A book was the best medium for such a narration in Rousseau's time, since it alone could allow him to reach a wide audience; today's world relies on media such as television to reach a large audience.

Furthermore, Rousseau is quite self-absorbed in writing his whole life story and deeming it important for the masses to read. MTV's "True Life" highlights an individual's desire to tell the entire world his or her story, and shows how this same concept is popular still today. Additionally, "True Life" episodes focus on an individual and a specific aspect of his or her life, allowing him or her to narrate and explain a particular event or aspect of his or her personality. Although in *The Confessions* Rousseau narrates many experiences of his life, the "True Life" format allowed emphasis of a certain representative scene, while also including his self-deprecating yet pompous prologue. The initial first few paragraphs of *The Confessions* are extremely telling of Rousseau's character, and one of the aspects I chose to exaggerate is his frequent use of superlatives. Using the repetition of words such as "never, always, most, and totally," I wanted to draw attention to how Rousseau uses these words to try and assert his authority in his retelling. Although Rousseau uses superlatives very often, he also never outright says that he indeed did ruin Marion's life—he constantly includes words such as "maybe" and "possibly," and I chose to combine at least two of these each time in my burlesque to emphasize this habit. Furthermore, I also chose to exaggerate Rousseau's excessive defensiveness in his honesty and genuineness, which also is clear from the title of his "True Life." Rousseau constantly challenges readers to call him a liar or exaggerator, and I chose to address

this several times through the burlesque as well.

As to the specific choice of store, article stolen, and renaming of Marion to Mary, I chose these all as modern day equivalents, but also to draw out certain characteristics of Rousseau's narration. The title of MTV's actual show "True Life" is in itself telling—"true" asserts the authentic quality of the show, which Rousseau does verbally in *The Confessions*. Working in retail today seems equivalent to working as a domestic servant in the past. It provides for a authority figure, in the manager, who catches Rousseau. Additionally, as the ribbon he chooses to steal is a frivolous accessory item, I chose to substitute a scarf, and also include the detail about the store discount to make the theft even more trivial. Rousseau idealizes Marion, noting not only her physical beauty, but also kindness and purity, immediately calling to mind images of an idealized woman. Since Marion sounds similar to Mary, a name which symbolizes wholesomeness and goodness via the Biblical reference, I chose to name her Mary to call attention to his idealization of her, which makes his "crime" all the more heinous.

The ending of the burlesque, while perhaps the most exaggerated, brings out the contrast between Rousseau's self-condemnation and confidence in his own absolution. By simply writing his story in *The Confessions*, Rousseau feels he can put the past fully behind him and free himself from any guilt. Despite the fact that he has done nothing to actually rectify the situation, Rousseau feels that simply telling the readers what happened is penance enough—a ridiculous notion. This absurdity was clearly troubling to me and made Rousseau appear pompous and self-gratifying, a theme I chose to focus on not only at the end but throughout the entire burlesque. ☺



Confucius

is teaching with an open hand...

Networks: China
 Sex: Male
 Relationship Status: Married
 Looking for: Friendship
 Hometown: Qufu
 Date of Birth: 551 CE

► Mini-Feed:

Confucius wrote on Zixia's wall. 12:40 pm
 Confucius wrote on Zigong's wall. 10:41 am
 Confucius published a note. 9:12 am

► Information

► Friends

Master Zeng
 Master Yu
 Yan Hui
 Zixia
 Sima Niu
 Zigong
 Ji Zicheng
 Duke Ai
 Master Mian
 Duke Ding
 Ziyou
 Yuan Si

► Groups

Chinese philosophers for emphasis on tradition and filial piety • What would Buddha do?
 • Wearing a strange hat helps me philosophize

► Notes

12:41 pm One of my favorite teachings is from Book 17, a conversation with my disciple Zigong:
 I sighed, "Would that I did not have to speak!"
 Zigong said, "If the Master did not speak, then how would we little ones receive guidance from you?"
 I replied, "What does Heaven ever say? Yet the four seasons are put in motion by it, and the myriad creatures receive their life from it. What does Heaven ever say?"

Political Views: Indifferent..."In being a filial son and good brother one is already taking part in government. What need is there then, to speak of 'participating in government?'" (2.21)

Religious Views: Confucianism

Activities: Relaxing, reading, singing "In his leisure moments the Master was composed and yet fully at ease." (7.4)
 Reciting the Odes and Histories (7.18)

Favorite Music: The Postal Service [I appreciate the artists' varying instruments, tempos, how they experiment with sound to create a piece of music]. "When [The Postal Service] first begins, it resounds with a confusing variety of notes these notes are reconciled into means of harmony, brought into tension by means of counterpoint, and finally woven together into a seamless whole. It is in this way music reaches perfection." (3.23)

Favorite TV: The History Channel, The Brady Bunch

Favorite Quotes: "Zigong asked 'Is there one word that can serve as a guide for one's entire life?' The master replied 'Is it not understanding (shu)? Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire.'" (15.24)

About Me: "I focus on those who are good and seek to emulate them." (7.22) "There is no one who is my equal when it comes to cultural refinement." (7.33)

Schooling: Self-taught

Employment: Shepherd, Cowherd, Clerk, Bookkeeper, Justice Minister in Lu, Teacher

Brian Jorgensen

OUT-CHORUSES FOR LYSISTRATA

recited to the tune of "Sean Bui"

Now the sweet keening of lord Dionysus' flute attends his beating of drums.

See now the women, all women come dancing, frisking like fillies and gliding like swans.

Athena, tall, of the Parthenon pillars, of Spartan portals of dominant bronze,

One, you are one Athena, sing flashing-eyed women, One, Athena the One.

They call to the goddesses, call to young girls, call to grown women, our elderly, too.

Artemis, Deepa, Demeter and Nancy, Kirke, Letitia, Shaniqua, and Sue

Come skipping from duplexes, swaying from waiting-rooms, cars left abandoned, and gloom-scented dives,

Come whirling from homes, with torches and silverware, colanders rattling and fast-flashing knives.

Wherever you look it's a Judgment of Paris, see Hera, Athena, or whom you would think,
See matrons in motion, pale lab technicians who swirl pure smocks, abandon their sinks.
Dutiful daughters go chanting their virtues to whores making laughter from ways of the street,
A thousand eyes flash, they all clap and stamp, a million bright snapshots go focused and fleeting.
Cashiers more lovely than racks of new magazines twirl silk scarves into pattermy snakes,
Schoolteachers circle, their weary smiles lightened, post-office redheads porpoise in lakes.
Leaping the old maids, joy in those eyes, they who have long looked on life askance
Now shout among daycare providers whose strollers each wheel two children through ranks of the dance.
Some lift up houses, then set them down gently, caress their rough corners and whirl upon lawns,
Credit cards sail by and glitter like finches, no ledge, no lintel they cannot dance on.
Like statues they come, sliding down the sloped railings, walking on wrought iron, balancing high,
Dancing through spikes, atop the spikes dancing, uncanny, sweet-smiling like daughters of sky.
Saxy sing grammar-school chorus directors, made jazz madonnas, pipes born anew,
Pegasoi fade on the air, it's the art teachers, painting, there Helen in reverie moves
Among lawyerly women, styles crisp as razors, long-widowed mothers in dresses resigned,
As rivers that no one has noticed in weeks surge under images darkling in shine.

Meter-maids leapfrog, squirrels give kisses, this once in a century springtime is real,
Birdsong is only in dancing endurable, godlike the lines of the flute hoarse and shrill.
Noli nos tangere, this we have done, stand clear of the taunt of Bacchus' drums,
Approve of the peace which the women have made, free may they mock you, which freedom has come

Against dull years of strain, of bombing and bombs, self-mockery, irony, hiding of tombs,
Fear-smelling mazes, windings and wedgings, overcast consciousness, uneasy rooms,
Leaders unlovable, critics untrustable, friends unremarkable, drums without joy,
Fibs of psychology, jading technology, cinderblock surveys, unplayable toys.

How peaceful the dancing, the sway of the meadowlands, peaceful our clamor, all peace in the drum,
Wide-shining peacefulness, peace in blue chicory, peace among silos, peace in the hum
Of the peace-loving work of the bees unrelentingly, peace in the frog's astonishing soar,
Peace in the flickering knees of the girls, in the submarines surfacing from the sea's floor.

Right, we did right to cause those agreements, right to call loveliness out of the ground.
Take note of hills, each small-town Cithaeron, and marbles of Washington glowing with sound.
Wine is God's blood, new budgets are coming, the young shall have joy and the soldier have rest,
What would have happened, what could have been done, if teetotalers ruled the east and the west?

DADDY NEVER LIKED SLUTS

by Blair Rosen

Growing up, my father taught me some very valuable lessons. Daddy always said, “Nobody wants to buy the ice cream truck if you’re giving away the popsicles for free!” Daddy always hated sluts, and he has passed this conviction on to me. Both my father and my mother were very careful to instill certain values in me concerning deportment and morality. Promiscuity and adulterous behavior are two lifestyle choices that the three of us collectively disdain, while lying and deceit are absolutely unacceptable. It is thus most appropriate that Aeschylus’ Clytaemnestra takes her seat for me as the most evil character, while Homer’s Penelope fulfills her role as the epitome of good.

According to inherited prejudice and lessons concerning morality and proper etiquette for a lady, along with the lessons of the Ten Commandments, Penelope and Clytaemnestra deserve their respective characterizations of good and evil.

In Homer's *The Odyssey*, Penelope, as a quintessentially "good" wife, exhibits unrelenting devotion to her husband Odysseus while he is missing for nineteen long years. Even though most presume that he is dead, Penelope absolutely refuses to give up the hope that he is alive and will return to her side some day. She remains faithful to him in body, heart, and mind. *Odyssey* scholar Chris Emlyn-Jones corroborates this contention, acknowledging the evidence Homer provides in Book 11 through the spirit of Odysseus' deceased mother, Antikleia. Emlyn-Jones articulates, "Antikleia, in response to an inquiry about whether Penelope has remarried, assures him that she remains steadfast in her grief" (1). Specifically, Antikleia states that Penelope

is, poor heart, still in your palace hall. Forlorn her
nights and days go by, her life used up in weeping but
no man takes your honored place. (11.204-207)

Existing in her world without her beloved, unsure of his whereabouts, Penelope passively waits. The tears Penelope sheds reflect her perpetually despondent disposition. She commands sympathy from those around her because she suffers from an incurable disease: a broken heart.

Penelope's principles dictate that she even honor Odysseus' request that she remarry in his absence upon Telemachus' coming of age. Penelope conducts herself with the utmost restraint in entertaining the suitors at the home she once shared with her husband. She treats the devilish suitors with respect despite the fact that remarrying is the last thing she aspires to do. The portrait of loyalty and honesty, Penelope preserves her modesty while her husband is away through her allegiance to him and

compliance with his wishes for her future. Emlyn-Jones highlights that by Book 20, “Penelope has explained how much she longs for Odysseus’ return and how much she hates the attentions of the suitors” (1-2). Penelope accepts that a marriage with one of the grotesque men is an imminent possibility, as she is a woman of her word who values the promises she makes to the man she respects above all others.

With love as her motive, Penelope adheres to Odysseus’ order. Critics, however, suggest that in welcoming the suitors and in allowing the group of rapacious pigs to remain at her home, Penelope invites skepticism; Penelope’s hosting of the suitors calls into question the validity of her reputation as a faithful wife. What these critics fail to recognize is that in addition to being loyal to Odysseus, Penelope is also very astute. Odysseus’ wife is acutely aware of the fact that without her husband, she is in a very vulnerable position. Penelope resolves to treat the suitors with exceptional kindness and grace accordingly. Her

treatment of the suitors is a most wise approach for a devoted wife who has found herself in quite a precarious position, insofar as Penelope’s safety and the security of both her family and the kingdom are at risk. Penelope is acting prudently in the interests of those she holds most dear, and her honorable concerns substantiate her seemingly too-tender treatment of



sketch by
Jessi McCarthy

her houseguests. In responding to the suitors' solicitation of her affections with indecision, Penelope's lofty promises to the suitors to ultimately remarry buy her time to grieve and to hope for her beloved's safe return.

Penelope proves herself and her love for Odysseus in his absence, and her attitude and actions upon his return illuminate her as a very wise woman worthy of her esteemed seat on the throne. When Penelope comes to the realization that the beggar is her husband, she makes a statement juxtaposing herself with Helen to elucidate her initial hesitancy to believe the beggar, even though she already knew intuitively of the beggar's true identity. In likening herself to Helen, Penelope accentuates her own resistance to temptation. Some Homer enthusiasts, however, misinterpret this unlikely comparison. Athleen Morgan, fortunately, is more perceptive and she explains that Penelope's parallel to the notorious adulterer, Helen, "justifies her own exacting caution that has been necessary until this moment" (2). Morgan adamantly campaigns in support of Penelope's character and her seemingly inappropriate comparison, elaborating,

Penelope is very conscious of the shame before family, peers and countrymen that is the inevitable lot of a married woman whose adultery becomes common knowledge. Such would have been Penelope's own fate if she had not exercised her exacting caution. (2)

Hardy C. Fredricksmeyer supports this interpretation, stating boldly, "So far from inadvertently likening herself to Helen, Penelope actually emphasizes her own chastity through implicit contrast with another's adultery" (489). Penelope ultimately exhibits that she has been profoundly faithful to her husband during their twenty-year involuntary separation. Since she honors her promises, remains loyal, and acts according to principle, Penelope warrants respect. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for her cousin, the infamous Clytaemnestra.

Clytaemnestra is the polar opposite of Penelope. Clytaemnestra deserves her own indictment in violating two of the Ten Commandments by committing adultery and in murdering her husband. Intriguingly, Aeschylus' *The Oresteia* carefully constructs Clytaemnestra as a character who is not altogether evil, contrary to what base interpreters of the play often presume. Clytaemnestra develops into an evil, menacing creature over time; she is pitiful insofar as she knows the difference between right and wrong and good and evil acts, and yet she commits evil acts in spite of this knowledge. She is thus ultimately more nefarious than a traditionally evil character, because she possesses the intelligence to know better and she still chooses to act in opposition to any concept of moral righteousness she once possessed.

Scholar F.R. Earp elucidates that "Clytaemnestra, though she glories in her vengeance, is not naturally cruel" (55). Earp rationalizes Clytaemnestra's murder of her husband as a crime motivated by her daughter's murder, and he pronounces the author's role in this interpretation as he asserts, "Aeschylus takes pains to show that the prime motive was the sacrifice of Iphigenia" (55). In particular juxtaposition to Agamemnon, Aeschylus portrays Clytaemnestra as possessing some human decency and dignity. Clytaemnestra emphasizes the depth of her pain and the helplessness of her situation from the outset of the tragedy of *The Oresteia*, commencing with the compelling vulture metaphor:

Like vultures robbed of their young, the agony sends them frenzied, soaring high from the nest, round and round they wheel, they row their wings, stroke upon churning thrashing stroke, but all the labour, the bed of pain, the young are lost forever. (Ag. 54-60)

Clytaemnestra makes her point loud and clear: Agamemnon is the vulture responsible for compelling her into a "frenzied" state

in robbing her of her young Iphigenia. Clytaemnestra's dark "thrashing stroke" image is likewise a powerful indicator of her sentiments toward her husband and his villainous act. Receiving even a single thrashing stroke is a considerable burden to bear, and the countless strokes in succession that Clytaemnestra cites speak to the harshness and degree of torture she associates with her husband's killing of their daughter. At the close of this exclamation from Agamemnon, when Clytaemnestra laments that "the young are lost forever", she is expressing the intense grief she feels in waking up day after day in "the bed of pain" to the torture of knowing that her daughter is gone forever (Ag. 60). She is a mother with child no longer, and the pain of knowing that she cannot bring her daughter back to life or to her side is deep and searing in her soul. It has to be said, however, that in focusing on her own pain, she ignores any concept of noble motives that may truly be behind her husband's crime.

The frustration Clytaemnestra feels incites considerable rage within her. Livid over the murder of her child by her own husband, Clytaemnestra blames Agamemnon for provoking her to possess "no fear of husband" (Ag. 152). Earp defines Clytaemnestra as "a woman who broods over her wrongs" (55), and he identifies this as the major flaw endemic to her character, considering that "brooding over wrongs is a weakness because it perverts the character, and Clytaemnestra's character is perverted by it" (56). Earp thereby alludes to Clytaemnestra as somewhat innocent until her daughter's murder corrupts her spirit and consumes the good aspects of her conscience and personality. Contending that Agamemnon's murder was born out of Agamemnon's killing of their daughter, Earp calls Agamemnon's murder an act that "was originally noble" (56), as *The Oresteia* intellectual vehemently proclaims, "In spite of all [Clytaemnestra] retains our respect and even a measure of sympathy" (Earp 56), though it is important to note that it is only because "the death of Iphigenia reminds us that Agamemnon too is guilty" (MacLeod 133). However, the sinister side of

Clytaemnestra overpowers the moments when Aeschylus illustrates the she-devil as the victim of the scenario.

Aeschylus employs very telling imagery to describe Clytaemnestra's treacherous behavior and her descent into evil. At Agamemnon's homecoming, Clytaemnestra's speech of welcome proves that she is a liar and her subsequent actions display that she is a calculated killer whose vengeance becomes excessive with the wrongful murder of Agamemnon's innocent captive, Cassandra. Clytaemnestra initially declares herself to be a loving and faithful wife, though Earp points out, "she herself is neither loving nor faithful" (57), but an adulteress who behaves like a whore in her husband's absence. F.R. Earp postulates, "Aeschylus intends to show that [Clytaemnestra's] bitterness against Cassandra was so keen that it made her for the moment cruel" (55). In killing Cassandra senselessly, Clytaemnestra becomes truly evil and her murder of Agamemnon no longer seems quite so justified.

Clytaemnestra's wickedness contrasted with Penelope's angelic character communicates what it truly entails to live as a good person and more importantly, a virtuous wife. Penelope is an emblem of the perfect wife, relentlessly faithful to her husband whom she loves, honors and respects. Emlyn-Jones puts it best, evaluating Penelope as "a great queen who exceeds in wisdom and insight the great heroines of old" (14), earning this praise through her inspiring loyalty to her marriage and persistent faith in her husband's return. Clytaemnestra is pure evil personified as a deceitful, treacherous woman perverted by her anger to sin without regret. Clytaemnestra is undoubtedly the worst wife conceivable and a cold-blooded killer. ☹

IN DEFENSE OF MACHIAVELLI

by Jonah Blustain

When one speaks of the Renaissance, the grandeur of the art, the depth of the literature, and the beauty of the music are praised to no end. Names of the masters of Renaissance culture are invoked: Michelangelo Buonarotti and Philippe de Monte come to mind. Is it intentional that no masters of politics are included? Why is it that the only Renaissance political figures that are widely known are either popes or patrons of the arts? The greatest disservice done to the Renaissance is the exclusion of one of its greatest thinkers, Niccoló Machiavelli. When one speaks of Machiavelli, it is usually in the same hushed tones as when one speaks of a dangerous man, one who has been damned by centuries of lies told against him by people that neither

understand his message nor care to out of fear. This man, a patriot, malcontent, and master political thinker, encapsulates the fundamental ideas of the Renaissance, and concurrently rejects all that is going on around him. Despite the fact that Machiavelli was never well-recognized while alive, never fully appreciated by those who he loyally served, his patriotism and his sharp intelligence were ever at the disposal of the best interests of his home, Florence.

Niccoló Machiavelli was born on May 3, 1469 to Bernardo di Niccoló and Bartolomea Nelli. Although his family was not wealthy, both of his parents set out to educate young Niccoló in the arts of rhetoric and literature. His father was an attorney with a great love of books, so great that multiple accounts remain of Bernardo di Niccoló compiling the indices of classic texts in order to acquire the expensive books. His mother was also known to be a religious poet. There can be no doubt that both of his parents' love of literature had an early and profound effect on the mind of young Machiavelli.

Machiavelli's political life started as nothing of particular note and grew extremely slowly. His first appointment came on July 14, 1498, when he became clerk of The First Chancery of The Republic of Florence. At the time of his appointment Florence was at war with Pisa, a war that would only come to an end when the Swiss mercenaries that Florence hired revolted and took the Commissioner of Florence hostage in July of 1500. This event triggered in Machiavelli the bias against, even hatred for, mercenaries that can be seen in all of his major works (Prezzolini 149). In his best known work, *The Prince*, Machiavelli states that mercenaries are

both useless and dangerous. Anyone who relies on mercenary troops to keep himself in power will never be safe or secure, for they are factious, ambitious, ill-disciplined, treacherous. (Machiavelli 38)

*Old Man at Haymarket**Nathan Brown*

Machiavelli's most important career assignment of his early life was when he was second in command on a Florentine delegation to France in July 1500. He was highly valued by the Florentine leaders "for [his] terse, lucid style, [his] marshalling of all the evidence making for a decision, and [his] scrupulous caution" (Roeder, 141). There he aided in the quest to get more French troops for the war on Pisa.

Immediately after his marriage to Marietta di Ludovico Corsini in 1502, Machiavelli was sent to the court of Cesar Borgia, the Duke of Valentino. Right after Machiavelli's second visit to the court was Borgia's infamous massacre of his enemies. Borgia, soon to be Machiavelli's idol and the poster child of his ideals, killed the governor Remiro d'Orco. When Borgia was first collecting power and influence in Romagna, he saw that the nobles that had governed the territory heretofore were weak and

effeminate. In order to keep the populace under his control, Borgia appointed d'Orco, a man described as "cruel and efficient" (Machiavelli 24), to the head of government. After d'Orco established order through the harshest means, Borgia decided that d'Orco was no longer needed. After setting up a fair and impartial legal system for all of Romagna, he had d'Orco executed for his crimes against the populace. Machiavelli later held this man up to Borgia as one who "used every technique and did all the things a prudent and skillful man ought to do" (22). This man, who Machiavelli considered an "ideal prince" (Prezzolini 151), "kept his plans to himself, and then put them into immediate action with assurance and rapidity" (151). The only thing that bothered Machiavelli about Borgia was that he was not running all of Florence, as all of the Florentine political leaders were inferior in Machiavelli's eyes.

One of Machiavelli's greatest moments came in 1506 when he finally got support for his proposed Florentine militia. In Machiavelli's writings, the militia is crucial. The way in which Machiavelli set up his militia was extraordinary. Due to the vast size of Florence and its surrounding tributaries, Machiavelli was worried about the opportunity for one regional section of the militia to rise up and cause problems for the rest of the country. Machiavelli's solution to this conundrum was to appoint as head of each regional section a commander from a different and, if possible, competing region. Therefore, each section of the militia would have been commanded by a man who did not have an ulterior motive that could be carried out by using his countrymen in the militia. Due to his hard work for the people of Florence, Machiavelli was given a title of nobility in 1507.

In 1512, some of Machiavelli's acquaintances were found to have been involved in a plot against the government of Florence. Machiavelli's name came up during the interrogation and he was summarily arrested and tortured. Despite being tortured an amazing six times without confessing, he was later released, though exiled to the countryside. When Machiavelli was sent

away, his exile away from politics constituted “forced renunciation of the life he loved best” (Viroli 148). It was in this method that Machiavelli lived the rest of his life, penning his greatest works, *The Discourses*, *The Prince*, *The Art of War*, and his own *Florentine Histories*. At only 58 years of age, Machiavelli died on June 22, 1527 of an undiagnosed stomach ailment.

One anecdote that remains involves a dream Machiavelli was said to have related to his close friends from his deathbed. He was walking along in his dream and came across a band of ragged and broken men. When Machiavelli asked who these men were and where they were going, they replied that they were the blessed and that they were on their way up to heaven. A little further on, Machiavelli spots another band of men, this time attired richly, and debating animatedly among themselves. When Machiavelli poses the same questions to them, he learns that they are the damned of Hell, and are on their way to the Inferno. While these well-dressed men are speaking to him, Machiavelli realizes that these men are all the classical, yet pagan, greats of statecraft: Plato, Plutarch, and others. Machiavelli then tells his friends that he would prefer to go to hell than heaven, just so he could converse indefinitely with these great men who share his interests.

The question remains: who was Machiavelli, and how was he related to the Renaissance? The true answer to that question is rather complex, as many historians disagree as to whether or not Machiavelli was even influenced by the Renaissance. The Renaissance is most commonly defined as “a rebirth, an event both old and new” (Mansfield 10). Although it is true that Machiavelli could be classified as a “Renaissance Man” on the basis of his “desire for a revival of ancient virtue” (Mansfield 9), he differs from other ‘Renaissance Men’ in his philosophy and his views on religion.

Machiavelli, unlike his contemporaries, gives more value to Roman goodness and culture than Greek culture (Mansfield 11). This is not to say that Machiavelli is into art, statues, and

the new musical styles that are traveling across Europe. In fact:

Machiavelli wants to give the Renaissance a hard face; to deflate its esteem for rhetoric, to attack its adherence to philosophical tradition, to unsettle its accommodation with Christianity, to refute its belief in the virtues of the classical gentleman, and to remind it of the value and glory of the military. (11)

Machiavelli is quite fed up with the ethos of his time. In fact, many historians describe his view of his contemporaries as an attitude of “dissatisfaction and of criticism” (Prezzolini 73).

Due to his beliefs, Machiavelli quickly became “one of the authors most strongly rejected by the church” (Prezzolini 214). Machiavelli had great difficulty reconciling his pessimistic worldview with the doctrines of the Catholic church. It also does not help that Machiavelli saw the corruption and moral disease that was rampant within the Papacy. Despite the fact that for a long while Florence was an ally of Rome, Machiavelli was always spoiling for a fight between religion and secularism.

Machiavelli yearns for a good fight, the fight is only good provided its scope is great and its violence substantial. For the mollifying effect of Christianity on the law of nation, he feels nothing but contempt. (Hulling 14)

In addition to contempt, Machiavelli feels envy for the resources, money, and interests that the general populace has invested in art and music. He would prefer that the welfare of the state be placed above any other concern. He feels that the Christian emphasis on adornment for the Church “draws meaning from this earth” and is a form of “lazy ambition” (Prezzolini 27). That lack of ambition is the antithesis of what Machiavelli is about: adding to the state; in his eyes, the state itself is the

supreme end and the supreme means. By ignoring the vitality of the state, either through foppish art and music or through the decadence of the Renaissance, one's own existence is threatened.

So who was Machiavelli? Was his work the product "of a man with an obsession" (Cronin 266)? Or was Machiavelli a genius of his time? Niccoló Machiavelli is more than the maniacal totalitarian madman that desires to rule with an iron fist. Not only is he a product of his time and life experiences, but his ideas indeed have merit. Behind his blatant pessimism of human nature lies a man who worked in public service for most of his life and got very little for it. Machiavelli gave everything he had to Florence, and the leaders ignored him. Fortunately, modern readers can read his works and synthesize his message into a doctrine that would work today. ☺

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PETRARCH'S
CANZONIERE
AND *MOUNT*
VENTOUX

by Anjali Lai

Erich Fromm, the German-born social philosopher and psychoanalyst, said that “conditions for creativity are to be puzzled; to concentrate; to accept conflict and tension; to be born everyday; to feel a sense of self.” While Fromm is making a general statement about the abstract nature of art, his words may be

appropriately applied to the work of Francesco Petrarch, whose masterpieces in literature were products of the tension of his struggle to find his sense of self. In select poems from the *Canzoniere* and in his essay *The Ascent of Mount Ventoux*, Petrarch employs traditional literary techniques to convey the conflict between his individual spirituality and the desires of his surrounding world. Through layers of metaphors, use of symbolic narrative, and detailed attention to the human thought process, Petrarch is able both to embrace the essence of the emerging Renaissance period, as well as to preserve the elegance of classical antiquity. He produces pieces of literary art that capture the tension between divine spiritual discipline and worldly passions and desires.

Metaphor is the literary technique most often employed by Petrarch. On a small scale, Petrarch creates detailed characters to symbolize some of his grander, more serious themes. The most famous character throughout Petrarch's *Canzoniere* is Laura, the idealized love of his life, who stands for glory, fame, and other worldly desires. Through his poetry, Petrarch reveals that the figure of Laura is someone whom he seeks, but can never attain. While in Poem 16, for example, Petrarch declares that "alas, sometimes I go, my lady / searching as much as possible in others / for your true, your desirable form," (26) he later compares Laura to the mythological Daphne, the nymph pursued by Apollo but who was transformed into a tree to escape capture. Petrarch says "Could I be with her at the fading sun...and she not be transformed into green wood / escaping from my arms as on the day / Apollo had pursued her here on earth!" (29). This emotional longing for Laura is one way of representing Petrarch's desire for beauty and grandeur. As Anita Obermeier writes,

unlike Dante [Petrarch] cannot fuse love of God and love of woman, although he tries... while he attempts to portray Laura as a divine representative on earth,

he does not fuse but instead polarizes the issue, wavering excessively between self-criticism and self-justification. (141)

Obermeier's observation supports the fact that Petrarch's use of a character as a metaphor is one attempt to convey his overall theme of striving for something he cannot possibly acquire.

Petrarch's use of metaphor extends beyond single characters acting in a poetic story. In fact, the story itself becomes an allegory for Petrarch's internal conflict between choosing the sacred, chaste, divine path of life or the eventful, emotional, religiously daring one. Petrarch's essay *The Ascent of Mount Ventoux*, which recounts his experience of climbing the mountain with his brother, is an extended metaphor. Petrarch notes that he is more inclined to take "a path which seems at first sight easier leading through low and worldly pleasures," and consequently will eventually have to "climb up the steeper path under the burden of labours long deferred to its blessed culmination, or lie down in the valley of [his] sins" (14). Petrarch contrasts his climb up the mountain with that of his brother, who "chose the steepest course straight up the ridge," yet who reached the summit more efficiently. Through these contrasting approaches to climbing Mount Ventoux, Petrarch creates a symbolic narrative that is yet another representation of the inevitable choice between what is physically desirable and what is spiritually right.

Although Petrarch's layering of metaphors provides a beautiful, classical method of expressing his individual conflicting emotions, the use of metaphor was not entirely original in the 1300s. Even so, while his technique of using metaphors harkens back to a traditional element of literature, Petrarch simultaneously introduces a relatively modern aspect to his literary art through his recording of the human thought process. As author Brian Stock says, "By the end of the Middle Ages, the literary approach to the self occupies as important a place as the vener-

able concern with the self as an aspect of soul or mind” (Stock 716). Petrarch is a major player in second period of literary development, insofar as he “describes relationships between reading, writing, and the self in unprecedented detail. His much discussed ‘modernity’ and ‘individuality’ are best understood in the context of his... reflections on his own literary activities” (Stock 717). It is through this self-reflection that Petrarch reveals his desires and his inevitable quest to define himself. For instance, while struggling on the path up Mount Ventoux, Petrarch takes a moment to sit and reflect, as his “thoughts quickly turned from material things to the spiritual” (13). Petrarch then proceeds to recount the stream of thoughts, directly prefacing the passage by saying, “and I said to myself more or less what follows: ‘What you have experienced so often today...clearly happens to you [and] others in their journey toward the blessed life’” (14). This attention to his thought process provides a realistic and personal presentation of Petrarch’s emotions.

However, not all accounts of Petrarch’s thought process are so clearly defined, or flow as logically. In many cases, it is the fragmentation and contradictions in his psychology that convey the emotional conflict that is his subject matter. For example, once at the top of Mount Ventoux, Petrarch says,

Much that is dubious and evil still clings to me, but what I once loved, I love no longer. Come now, what am I saying? I still love it, but more moderately. No, not so, but with more shame, with more heaviness of heart. Now, at last, I have told the truth. (15)

Petrarch’s constant questioning proves that he is holding an internal argument with himself, as he tries to understand what he loves and how he loves it. Giuseppe Mazzotta writes in his book *The Worlds of Petrarch*, “It can be said that Petrarch broadens the vast fields of theological reflection at the very moment

when he confronts the figments of his vision and the demons of his own self” (Mazzotta 165). Essentially, it is an analysis of the self “that is Petrarch’s radical project” (166). In the process of grappling with his own interpretation of spirituality, Petrarch turns inward to “hear the whispers and see the shadows of the soul” (166).

These themes of studying thoughts and of attempting to make sense of discords in psychology pervade the work of Petrarch, and are textual proof of Petrarch’s longing to understand himself. This suggestion of chaos and fragmentation is evident even on a physical level, when looking at the compilation of Petrarch’s works as a whole. He expresses the content of his literature through a variety of short-story-like prose, as seen in the *Ascent of Mount Ventoux*, and romanticized poems collected in the *Canzoniere*. While it is clear that Petrarch’s prose focuses on his thoughts and uses streams of consciousness as a form of introspection, Mazzotta says that poetry too is considered the “privileged language of secular self-reflection, and it is concerned with the crisis of moral knowledge” (168). Furthermore, “poetry to Petrarch marks the retrieval of the language of the imagination as the way to probe his unsettled sense of himself and the world” (168), suggesting that through poetry Petrarch can get in touch with his deep sense of identity.

Essentially, one can dissect the works of Petrarch to isolate examples of classical poetic qualities such as metaphors and allegories, as well as detailed accounts of the human thought process, a literary technique that marks the beginning of the Renaissance when artists paid new attention to the art and science of the human body. However, when broadening one’s focus from detailed literary elements to a look at Petrarch’s works collectively, one will see the fragments of his emotional mosaic as a complete and extraordinary project. As Mazzotta argues,

[Petrarch] tenaciously stages contradictions, contemplates the contrary pulls and splinters of his soul, pro-

poses decisive shifts, lapses repeatedly into customary impasses. [Yet] these rhetorical strategies that he deploys in the construction of his texts must be considered as a whole. (84)

It is in the “unity formed by their fragmentary and contradictory forces, that [conveys] the relentless, unremitting rhythm of Petrarch’s imagination” (84). While the image of Petrarch’s self is divided among considerations of “philosophy, faith, love of the classics, politics, art, religion, and of Italy, France, Greece, and Rome,” it is important to note that each individual exploration relates to the next, as every interpretation contributes to a common vision of Petrarch’s “self.” For Petrarch, “the self...is but a unity of parts, and, at the same time, [represents] a culture [that] emerges not from the consensus but from a conflict of ideas produced by opposition and dark passion” (Mazzotta 9). ☉

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THREE SCENES
FROM THE
CORE MOVIE

by

Kaitlin Young

Fabiana Cabral

Marie Sutkowski

Alexa Ray Corriea

Scene Five

(Fabiana, Alexa, Teja, and Ethan are in the Astronomy Department getting help from Professor Jackson.)

Fabiana: Professor, thank you for meeting with us at such short notice this morning, but I assure you that it's a matter of utmost importance.

Teja: Yeah, it's hella important.

Ethan: You see, the Core was stolen this morning.

Alexa: Yeah! Someone yonked the Core!

Fabiana: And in order for us to find it, we feel as though we need a full understanding of the powers of the Core.

Alexa: Yeah! The POOOOWERS!

Teja: Liberty already told us that the Core has the power to bring people from the past to the present and back again, but how is this possible? How does it work?

Ethan: Does it even work?

Jackson: Well it's really quite simple; it all goes back to the basics we taught you in Core. We pretty much spelled it out for you. I'm sure you'll be able to find the answers if you just go back over your notes from the first semester.

Ethan: Umm... yeah. What if, say, just hypothetically speaking, I mean, one were to have sort of misplaced those notes?

Teja: Yeah, like in a trash can?

Ethan: I would just appreciate a little refresher course.

Jackson: Alright, well, in layman's terms, you know, there's

F=ma, and then of course, $E=mc^2$, and the theory of relativity, and Schrödinger's cat... And then of course, there's the idea that you can't know the mass and the placement of an electron, nuclear fission, fusion, quantum physics, dark matter, dark energy, creation of stars, the Big Bang, the universe is expanding, looking back in time... Really it's just a matter of applying these concepts.

Fabiana: Let me get this straight: what you're telling us is that you don't know?

Jackson: No clue. It's just another one of those beautiful scientific mysteries. But all we can really tell you is that it works, and that we're glad it does.

(Pause.)

Alexa: I don't understand this. I'm going to Hudon.

Scene Eight

*(Fabiana walking along BU Beach,
and runs into Lao Tzu meditating.)*

Fabiana: Um, are you Confucius?

Lao Tzu: "Names can name no lasting name."

Fabiana: Oh, so you're Lao Tzu. Maybe you can give me some information.

Lao Tzu: "The sage leads people away from knowing and wanting."

Fabiana: Right... See, I'm trying to find a 15th century evil Italian dude who is bent on destroying the passage of time...

Lao Tzu: Time? "Tao is older than the ancestor."

Fabiana: ... Have you seen a guy named Machiavelli around here?

Lao Tzu: "Long winded speech is exhausting. Better to stay centered."

Fabiana: (*loses patience*) Look mister, I've just about done had it...

Lao Tzu: "Best to be like water."

Fabiana: What?

Lao Tzu: (*opens eyes*) "The Sage takes care of the belly, not the eye."

Fabiana: Oh!!

(*Ten minutes later... Fabiana and Lao Tzu, both eating Panda Express bowls.*)

Lao Tzu: (*chews*) OK. You can't get to Machiavelli directly. You have to beat his henchmen. Defeat them and all will be well.

Fabiana: (*also chewing*) Thanks. Fortune cookie?

Lao Tzu: No thanks. (*Puts bowl down, resumes meditation pose with eyes closed*) "Those who sustain Tao, do not wish to be full."

Scene Nineteen

(*Back at poker and the Evil Four*)

Macbeth: They are coming. What are we to do?

Clytemnestra: Give the Core to me. I will make them pay for the troubles they've caused.

Machiavelli: Give the Core to you? Ha! You are entirely inca-

pable of harnessing its true power—of even comprehending it! What could you possibly do with it?

Clytemnestra: I could end the rule of power-hungry men like you!

Machiavelli: Says the power-hungry whore.

Satan: Ooh. Harsh.

Machiavelli: You're not worthy of it. You couldn't even manage a simple murder in your own time. You have made so many mistakes! Leaving the son of your husband alive? It is as if you are possessed of no foresight at all. (*Turning to Satan, scornfully*) And you! You took on God. I understand your claims behind it but—God? Really? Never fight a battle you cannot win. (*Turning to Macbeth with a superior look in his eye. Macbeth bristles*) And you... are simply incompetent. (*Thoughtful, taking the Core from his pocket and gazing at it, flaunting it before the others who look hungrily at it*) No. None of you is fit to carry within you the awesome power of the Core. I will admit that I did not anticipate our adversaries becoming so powerful. But then, I had not anticipated you being so weak.

Macbeth: And who art thou to judge?

Machiavelli: I am Machiavelli. I both make kings like you and destroy them.

Satan: Mmm, right. Because that went so well for you when Florence changed hands.

Machiavelli: That is beside the point! (*Turns away, frowning, and rubs at shoulders irritably*) It was a one-time aberration. I didn't have the Core then. No one shall be able to extricate themselves from my influence now...

Clytemnestra: (*Loudly breaking in*) If we do not settle this matter and decide who is to have the Core soon, then none of us will have it! They are coming, the insolent brats.

Machiavelli: We will leave this till later. Now we must defeat them. Split up.

Macbeth: Once our tasks are complete, we may return and settle this.

Satan: If you do not come back, Machiavelli, we shall find you.

Machiavelli: I will return. Now go.

(The four separate, Machiavelli slower than the others.) 🌀

THE PURPOSE
OF ILLUSION IN
CERVANTES'
DON QUIXOTE

by Nathan Brown

To say that Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* is a work of fiction would be to see only one glimmering edge of a beautiful sphere. Cervantes' work is fiction that glorifies fiction, needs fiction, undermines traditional fiction and, most importantly, plays with fiction. In this work of more than nine-hundred pages, the structure is fairly repetitive. A middle-aged peasant known as Alonso Quixano molds a persona for himself from the embers of books about chivalry. He travels with his trusty squire Sancho

Panza who generally sees, as a perfect complement to his master, a world devoid of fiction. Don Quixote treats the world as if he were a knight and the folly of this misperception leads to humorous results. To some, this repetition is simply story-telling and does not conceal any hints of social commentary nor philosophical musings. In Erich Auerbach's essay "Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature," he argues that "Don Quixote is not possibly but unqualifiedly conceived not with an undertone of ridicule but as ridiculous through and through" (356). Perhaps, but it seems that Quixote's "ridiculous" antics have a distinct use. The way in which Cervantes plays with illusions has a real purpose in the novel, for Don Quixote as well as for the reader. Bishop Berkeley's philosophical observation is especially apt in this context, "esse est percipi": to be is to be perceived. Berkeley's argument is that man cannot know an object as it is, but only as he perceives it. Therefore, all that individuals know about their world, their reality, is their unique perception of it (although this extrapolation is more extreme than Berkeley may have intended). In *Don Quixote*, illusion is necessary because it undermines conventional perception and provides another way to view reality.

Don Quixote's illusions and subsequent follies are more complicated than they first appear because reality in the novel tends to be unstable. The problem of authorship often leaves the narrative untenable. For example, the story of Quixote is abruptly interrupted at the end of the first part because the author was "excusing himself on the ground that he hasn't found anything more written about these exploits" (70). Soon after, another writer picks up the story again. This strange narrative pause creates a fissure in the credibility of the tale. With two different narrators the reader must start to question the validity of the story. Eventually there stands a myriad of perspectives with the notable absence of Cervantes. However, Ruth El Saffar presents a different take on this topic. In her essay "Cervantes and the Games of Illusion," she writes, "This disjunction between author

and character allows us to appreciate both the character's shortcomings, and those of the literary world that informs his actions and attitudes" (142-43). It is the apparent removal of the original author from the story that leaves the characters untainted by Cervantes' biases. Intertwined with the problem of authorship is that of objective reality. A popular illustration of Don Quixote's madness is a scene in which the knight-errant obtains a barber's basin he believes is a warrior's helmet with magical strength. Always the steadfast pragmatist, Sancho Panza tries to dissuade his master from his misconception saying, "By God this is a good basin—it's worth a piece of eight" (167). The scene is humorous for the reader because he is sure that the "helmet" is, as Sancho believes, a barber's bowl. However, the issue once again becomes, what is true in this story? The characters turn the truth into as many varied concepts as beams of light through a prism. Don Quixote is hopelessly lost in the illusions he is constantly creating for himself while Sancho Panza may be too simple to recognize what is true. Perhaps the reader is responsible for carefully sifting through fact and fiction. Whether examining the authors, the characters, or the readers, reality is thoroughly shaken by a multiplicity of perspectives.

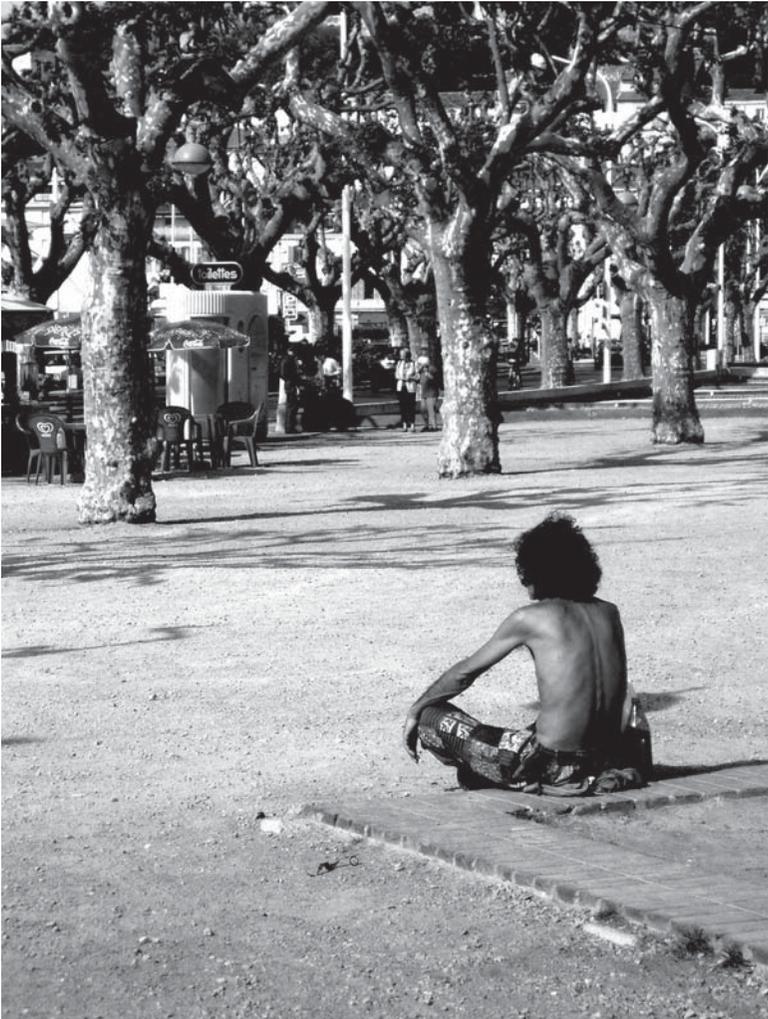
In order to return to the focus of this essay, an epistemological question must be answered: what is the purpose, if any, of Cervantes' use of illusion? In art, writing, language, and imagination, it appears that illusion is a vital means to escape the boundaries of a mundane life and become happier. Similarly, Auerbach considered fiction to be Don Quixote's means to sanity: "He found the order of reality in play" (358). This fact may be seen in the final days of Quixote's life. As if his illusions breathed life into him, when he finally denies the life of a knight-errant he dies. Bishop Berkeley's assertion that objects are limited only by our perception leads to an intriguing conclusion. If he is correct, there is nothing to prevent everyone from living in individual worlds that are utterly separated from the realities of others. Saffar worries about "the intuition of a threat-

ened severance of world and word that would indeed plunge us into chaos” (143). The more discrete meanings attached to a word or object the less significant that thing becomes. For Quixote, worldly objects are whatever he wishes them to be. As stated before, Auerbach believes that Don Quixote reveals nothing but ridiculous fun. However, he also claims that, “It is on the very wings of [Don Quixote’s] madness that his wisdom soars upward, that it roams the world and becomes richer there” (350). His madness or illusion builds a life that is far greater than that which the peasant Alonso Quixano could ever hope to achieve. Quixote has adventures in war, nights of longing, encounters with beautiful ladies, wonderful feasts, successes and popularity. It is not useful to ask whether these events truly happened. Because Don Quixote believed he was living as a knight-errant, he was doing just that, and he grew wiser in his realm of illusion.

The purpose of Don Quixote wearing a barber’s basin and using anachronistically elevated language is to demonstrate that reality is in the eye of the beholder. Alonso Quixano is dissatisfied with his current reality, so he creates a complex illusion to escape into a situation that makes him much happier. Saffar claims that Quixote “is incapable of manipulating illusion and becomes its victim” (144). Superficially this is true because at the end of the novel the knight is bruised and broken beyond repair. However, it appears that the real tragedy of his story is Quixote transforming into a “sane” person at the end of his life and dying shortly thereafter in the hands of reality. ☉

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Spring in Cannes

Andrew Bisdale

DOES SANCHO PANZA READ PLATO?

by Erin McDonagh

Miguel de Cervantes' enthusiastic and luckless would-be knight errant Don Quixote has enchanted generations of readers with delusions of grandeur and knighthood. Despite entreaties from his stoic squire Sancho Panza, Don Quixote fights valiant battles with windmills and sheep, righteously delivers convicts from their punishment, and defends imaginary kingdoms from giant wineskins, all in the name of chivalry. The world in which he lives exists primarily in literature: he derives

its characteristics and events from epic poetry and fables about knights errant which he has read. Despite this eccentricity, however, the question still remains whether Don Quixote's world of sorcerers and damsels in distress is not just as real as the everyday world is to the rest of society. The answer is not as obvious as one might think. Plato pictured reality as an ideal which could not be approached by the material world. Therefore, since concrete objects were only imitations of this ideal, their identity depended upon the thoughts people projected onto them. The function of an object defines its identity, so identities are subjective. Nicolas Rescher agrees with Plato, but for different reasons: as he sees it, material objects have too many characteristics to manifest all at once, and so the reality of something is defined by someone's experience of it. "The finitude of experience precludes any prospect of the exhaustive manifestation of the descriptive factors of any real thing", Rescher explains, and thus Don Quixote's experience defines his fantasy world as reality (Rescher 3). Plato's and Rescher's definition of reality, as dependent upon functionality, supports this view and indeed all of Don Quixote's perceptual discrepancies.

Don Quixote elaborates this theory of functional reality perfectly when he explains to Sancho Panza his love for the lady Dulcinea del Toboso during their venture into the woods for his dramatic self-imposed exile. Sancho remembers Dulcinea as a strong but plain peasant girl, and Don Quixote angrily reprimands him. "Not all poets... really have any such mistresses at all... It is enough for me to be convinced," he affirms; "I depict her in my imagination as I wish her to be, both in beauty and in rank" (216). The point here is that love is a matter of perception: Don Quixote sees Dulcinea this way, and loves her this way, and so this way she shall be until he decides differently. What she is to Sancho does not matter, because Sancho does not love her. Similar logic applies to Mambrino's helmet: empirically speaking, the object is a chunk of metal pounded into a half of an empty sphere. To the barber, who needs a bowl in which to wash

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

The fact that Don Quixote has a different perception of reality than those around him does not necessarily make him mad or change his own identity in any way. Throughout the text, except where it pertains to things like castles and adventures and fantastical characters, he is a man of intelligence and good judgment, which both the narrator and Don Quixote's fellow characters affirm. When he gives his thesis about the difference between a knight's hardships and those of a scholar, the narrator remarks that "Don Quixote was developing his arguments in such an orderly and lucid way that for the time being none of them listening to him could believe that he was a madman" (355). Most readers would agree that Sancho, though simple and greedy, is at least sane, yet he falls into agreeing with Don Quixote about some of his delusions. Sancho is a simple peasant, Don Quixote is a brave and unfortunate man, and as Erich Auerbach says, "the fact that Sancho is playing a rogue's game [encouraging his master] and that Don Quixote is enmeshed in his illusions does not raise either of them out of their everyday existence" (Auerbach 342). This tendency of Don Quixote to be genuine, eloquent, and oddly sensible endears him to readers who might otherwise distance themselves from a



Normandy 2005

Andrew Bisdale

character so obviously abnormal.

The limitations of Don Quixote's madness are evident towards the end of the story, when three peasant girls approach on donkeys and, despite Sancho's beautiful descriptions of their palfreys and jewels, Don Quixote sees nothing but three homely girls and smells nothing but "raw garlic that poisoned [his] very soul" (Cervantes 550). Here the roles apparent throughout the story have reversed: Sancho extols the beauty and nobility of the three women in eloquent, descriptive language, while Don Quixote, who has no immediate need to see what is not there, stares "with clouded vision and bulging eyes at the woman whom Sancho called queen and lady" (548). He appears bewildered by this discrepancy, but argues with Sancho nonetheless. "I am telling you, friend Sancho," he says, "that it is as true that

[the alleged palfreys] are asses, or maybe she-asses, as it is that I am Don Quixote and you are Sancho Panza; or at least this is how it seems to me” (547). Of course, having adopted a noble name when he decided to be a knight, the man is not really Don Quixote—however, to illustrate the point, his identity as a Don (a Spanish noble) is intrinsic to his fantasy about knighthood, while the identities of the three girls as noblewomen is not.

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

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South Street 2005

Andrew McFarland

Sassan Tabatabai

GEOGRAPHY OF THE BELOVED

Had Petrarch carnal knowledge of Laura,
A corporeal muse of blood and flesh,
He would bask in her scent, not just her aura,
Put his lips to her nape and knead her hips.
He would chart a map of his beloved,
Carefully trace its outline with kisses,
Plunge into the calm blue of her eyes, find
Porcelain cheeks veiled by golden tresses.
He would press his face to her heaving bosom,
Listen to her heart race through her breast,
Brush his stubbled chin against her thigh
And watch the marks fade from her skin.
Her body would harness his restless spirit
And keep him warm through winter nights.

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE SELF

by Jonah Blustain

During four semesters of Core Humanities, I read about countless characters, in countless situations, with countless motivations. By asking the question “Which character is Good, and which is Evil?”, one delves straight into the value system of the particular student. The Core values, if one pardons the pun, of each person varies wildly; one character or author who may embody the most holy and respectable of values to one student may be the epitome of utter hedonism and despicable behavior for another. Therefore, I propose a slight change in the question, from “Which character is Good, and which is Evil?” to “Which character is ‘good’ and which character is not ‘good’?” For the purpose of this discussion, the two characters to be analyzed will

be Goethe's Faust as the character that embodies 'good', and the Biblical Job as the character that embodies qualities and does things that are not 'good'. Job and Faust are not the moral foil of one another, but their situations are remarkably similar. Both men are victims of malicious designs by their respective Gods. Only their interactions with, and the subsequent consequences of, their contact with God can determine their worth.

'Good' and 'bad' qualities are difficult to differentiate, but there are inherent traits that can be used to evaluate the quality of the individual. I must agree with the philosopher Kai Nielsen in that "man ought always seek his own good" (502). I also am of the opinion that the courage to hold God and the divine accountable for His/Her/It's actions is 'good' (Regis 53), and that under no circumstances should any amount of brow-beating discourage a person from receiving what is due to him or her. In addition, those qualities and those things that are beneficial to a person's evolutionary success are also to be considered 'good'. The ability to choose good mates and to fulfill even the basest biological need is paramount to a 'good' existence. In short, the most important quest in life should be self-improvement and the sustenance thereof, and only through the analysis of one's hard work can one's 'good' be valued. As such, a man that has everything given to him is just as weak as someone who strives for nothing and therefore has nothing. These criteria will determine the worth of Faust and Job.

When the reader first meets Faust, he is a powerful and well-known man. As an honored scholar in all fields he is inundated with admiring students, villagers, and even has the respect of God Himself. He has acquired for himself a position that would leave him quite comfortable for the remainder of his years, except for his relentless ambition. Faust, however, has found himself in the opposite situation: he constantly sought to know more, to delve into the whole array of experiences available "for knowledge has been [his] lifelong quest" (Salm 329). Having accomplished everything possible, Faust now describes

himself as a “poor, silly man, / No wiser now than when [he] began” (1.358-359).

God and the devil Mephistopheles see his unfulfilled ambition and come to an agreement. While God seems to admire Faust for his ceaseless activity, a ‘good’ quality, and describes him as a “young tree” that will “blossom and bear fruit in rich profusion” (1.310-311), the devil maintains that he can turn Faust away from God with promises of exotic pleasures. He later makes a wager with Faust, stating that if Faust ever reaches a point where he wants a particular moment to last forever, he will lose his soul to Mephistopheles.

In order to experience these esoteric things, and thereby profit by them, Faust wagers with the devil, the idea being that a wager is a partnership of equals. In matching what he knows to be true about himself, that he has greater aspirations than the pleasures of this world, he allows the devil to flounder in his own self delusion. Faust gives himself an advantage over the devil, and by extension, the divine. He makes this bet: “If any pleasure you can give/ Deludes me, let me cease to live!” (1 1696-1697). He is a ‘good’ person because he sought his own benefit through someone who was to use him ill: he turned a situation that would have turned out negatively for himself, i.e. losing his soul to the devil, into something positive for himself, i.e. gaining the devil as a powerful tool for his own ends.

The second step that Faust makes on his travels with his tool, the devil, is to see a witch who makes him a potion to grow younger. This new, fitter, more vigorous Faust critics describe as “Faust, the Superman, the titan, whose heart is filled with an insatiable urge to action and power, a man who disregards all human limit” (Merkel 11). This analysis proves Faust is a ‘good’ man in two different ways. First, it is God himself who states that to err is human (1.317), but to strive is divine. Faust does this by wrestling not only with his tool, the devil, but also with the limits of his human form on his quest to better himself.

In the Old Testament, Job has the same problem as Faust.

God initially described Job as “Blameless and upright, one who feared God and shunned evil” (Job 1:1), it is no wonder that he comes to the attention of Satan. After a small discussion, God, as He seems apt to do, proposes to allow Satan to test His loyal servant. Satan has raiders kill all of Job’s family and servants and God personally rains fire down onto his livestock. When Job learns of this he cries,

Naked I came from my mother’s womb,
and naked I shall I return there.
The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away
blessed be the name of the Lord. (Job 1:20)

Job’s blessing, after God has personally caused destruction to his things, and directly aided Job’s downfall can only be described as cowardly and senseless. After all of this punishment, Job attempts to stand up to God, but fails. It is here that the extended metaphor, Job’s lawsuit against God, becomes important (Steinmann 89).

Preceding the actual suit, Job has three ‘friends’ who postulate as to why this destruction has befallen him. The theories range from Job’s own evil deeds to this just being a ‘teaching moment’ for Job (Steinmann 86). However God just does not care for Job in any meaningful way, “He never once mention’s Job’s suffering or suggests that he is even concerned about it” (Steinmann 86). Therefore Job, desperate to regain his old life back, attempts to take God to court. He says:

Oh, that I knew where I might find Him! That I
might come to His seat! I would present my case
before Him. And fill my mouth with arguments. I
would know the words which He would answer me.
Would He contend with me in His great power? (Job
23:4 - 23:6)

Thus, the question posed by Job's friend, Eliphaz, is: "Can a mortal be more righteous than God/ Can a man be more pure than his Maker? (Job 4:17-4:18)." Many would answer in the affirmative. However, Job, as one who buys into the system that caused this misfortune to come to pass, takes at face value the flowery speeches that God makes. He is awed by the descriptions of knowledge that God has. Job assumes that anyone who can "loose the belt of Orion" (Job 38:31), or "Satisfy the appetites of young lions" (Job 38: 39) is necessarily moral and 'good'. It is this sheep-like acceptance of accepting everything at face value that differentiates Job from Faust. While Faust sees the inner meaning and the machinations of Mephistopheles, Job blindly follows his deity. Since he is awed and brow-beaten by the one that has wronged him, it is hard to reconcile this weakness of character with any idea of 'good'.

The idea of the 'good' also comes out in the services that the protagonists have their particular manifestations of the divine perform. Faust has Mephistopheles perform acts to help him woo a young lady. One has to agree that it is 'good' to want a mate, just so is it 'good' to act in one's evolutionary self-interest. The choice of Margareta as Faust's mate can also be seen as biologically 'good'. By choosing a mate that is both young and still, assumedly, a virgin, Faust albeit subconsciously has provided himself with a woman who, it can be assumed, will bear him healthy children whose paternity is not in question, and due to her young age she will bear quite a few of them as well.

Job also has a wife and a large family in addition to a large plot of land and great material wealth. However, when his house and family is destroyed, he sits by and does nothing. While Faust is out in the world bettering himself and portraying all of the qualities to be considered 'good', Job sits on the rubble of his looted homestead and scratches himself with a potsherd (Job 2:8). While Job does get everything that was taken from him returned, and more, it is merely a handout. He worked for nothing and strove for nothing, and embodies these things that are

not ‘good’. He says that the Lord gave him everything, and just so He can take it all away. Faust, on the other hand, received no handouts, so by Job’s own logic, is a better person because he owes his success to no one but himself.

While Faust works to challenge God’s messenger, to better himself through striving for a goal, in the end Job just suffers. Faust works the machinations of the divine in his favor, gaining longer life, exciting new experiences, and for a time, a young wife, all through his own cunning; here is a man that can be considered ‘good’. Job on the other hand challenges God and gets beaten down with half-truths and rhetorical questions. While Faust bets with the devil as an equal, Job, the petulant and sulking whiner must take God to court in a ludicrous farce reminiscent of daytime TV talk shows. Job gets everything handed back to him in the end, a glorified consolation prize while, in comparison, Faust emerges much better off due to his cunning. Now, which one seems to be the ‘better’ person? ☹

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S'CORES

Composers often borrow remarkable elements from previous works to evoke a particular image or feeling, or to pay homage to an honored predecessor. Johann Sebastian Bach uses trombones in his *Saint Matthew's Passion* to illuminate the spiritual theme of the piece, while Mozart uses them to illuminate the spiritual nature of a single character in *The Magic Flute*. Mozart stretches the bounds of traditional music further with his poignant three note opening, and it is important to realize that the notes themselves have meaning outside their melodic purpose. Beethoven, building on the composers before him, was the first to use trombones as orchestral instruments, and employs them to contort the three-note backbone for his 5th Symphony. These three pieces show the progression of music from a commissioned craft to an introspective art form as one composer builds and extends from previously existing works.

The image shows a musical score for the opening of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, marked "Adagio". The score is for a full orchestra and includes the following instruments: Flauto I, II; Oboe I, II; Clarinetto I, II; Fagotto I, II; Corno I, II; Clarino I, II; Trombone I-III; Timpani; and Archi. The music is in 3/4 time and begins with a "Tutti" dynamic. The first measure features a three-note chord in the bass clef (F, C, G) and a similar chord in the treble clef. The second measure continues this pattern. The third measure introduces a triplet of eighth notes in the treble clef. The fourth measure features a "Viol. I" part with a "p" dynamic. The fifth measure has an "sfz" dynamic. The sixth measure has a "p" dynamic. The seventh measure has an "sfz" dynamic. The eighth measure has a "p" dynamic. The score is written in G major and 3/4 time.

Opening of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*

Violino I
Violino II
Violoncello
Contrabasso

ff *p* *ff* *p* *ff* *p*

The image shows a musical score for the opening of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. It features four staves: Violino I, Violino II, Violoncello, and Contrabasso. The music is in 4/4 time and B-flat major. The first two staves (Violino I and II) start with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic, while the third and fourth staves (Violoncello and Contrabasso) start with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The score shows the first few measures of the piece, with the violins playing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and the cellos and basses playing a similar pattern in the lower register.

Opening of Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*

Passio D. N. I. C. secund. Matthaeum

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the opening of Bach's St. Matthew's Passion. The title is written at the top: "Passio D. N. I. C. secund. Matthaeum". The score is written in a cursive hand and features multiple staves, including vocal parts and instrumental accompaniment. The music is in 4/4 time and C major. The opening features a complex texture with multiple voices and instruments, including a prominent role for the organ. The notation is dense and characteristic of the Baroque era.

Opening of Bach's *St. Matthew's Passion*

Jessi McCarthy

THIS HOUSE AND I
ARE TOO ALIKE

The crack in the wall
is a perfect summation of this house
and of my heart
with two long breaks at exactly 90 degrees
We both were built, and rebuilt
by some mad architect who
with precise imprecision reformed
with concentric oddity
the many rooms twisting steeply upward
and lit landings where the cold permeates
like that time I met her
and you two were the only ones laughing,
it was cold then too,
and we both know, quietly, that
if my intellect didn't serve as a testament
to my modest intelligence
they would think and did think
that there was nothing but space
between my ears
and let's be honest,
the sight of me confused them
just like this twisting house
confuses everyone and loses me.
I'm afraid my rooms are
just too broken
and even though my walls,

like the one above my bed
are falling down from constant habitation
I am afraid
that you will get lost in
my twisting darkness
disoriented and hopeless
or, perhaps worst still,
you will find yourself on a cold landing
elucidated but shivering.
This house and I are too alike,
both falling apart
in perfect right angles.

CONTRIBUTORS

In his spare time, ANDREW BISDALE (History, Photojournalism) enjoys taking pictures and playing music. He thinks Core is pretty rad.

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NATHAN BROWN (International Relations, Spanish) is from rainy Seattle and loves Boston when it is not ten below zero, plus wind chill. He will be sad to leave the Core but is delighted to be able to bring his many literary companions with him as he moves on.

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Next semester, ANNA HENDERSON (Psychology) plans on studying Shakespeare and painting in Oxford. Her passions include the Yankees, Bob Dylan, and Wordsworth.

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ERIN McDONAGH (English, French) hails from Mequon, Wisconsin. She is an English tutor and an active member of Habitat for Humanity. She likes reading, dancing, and exploring Boston. She has recently realized that Core will soon be over and is now frantically rereading Aristotle, trying to find her purpose.

JESSICA (Jessi) MCCARTHY (Archaeology, Art History) writes poetry (rarely), draws (often), and techs for theatre (too much). From Gilgamesh she learned the crucial lesson that when we come to the end of what might seem to have been a fruitless journey, we need only to stop and consider the cities we have built to realize all we have accomplished.

ANDREW MCFARLAND (History) thinks of himself a human being with an affinity for maps, night swimming, cold grasses, and the like. His natural state is motion, even while sleeping. He has been influenced by Joel Meyerowitz and Alex Webb. He is of Boston.

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