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# THE JOURNAL OF THE CORE CURRICULUM

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#### Image sources for the composite front cover design:

Scan of a stack of the Core textbooks, b2016. Scan of Beethoven's manuscript of "Moonlight Sonata," c.1802. Malinowski with islanders, 1918, photo likely taken by one Billy Hancock. *Back cover:* Detail of the head of a horse of Selene from the east pediment of the Parthenon, 438BC-432BC. transcription, published in 1902, of the Old Babylonian cuneiform text known as the Meissner tablet (characters from the same tablet were incorporated into the design of the Spring 2016 Core tee-shirt). Drawing of neurons by Santiago Ramón y Cajal, 1899.

### Editor's Note

The words "Core Curriculum" bring to my mind the image of the Core column, the one you see on the title page. That image carries with it a sense of fortitude, of eternity, of foundation. Our studies mirror these values; whether we're reading *Gilgamesh* or *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, we're engaged with influential texts that have weathered the tests of time and have earned their place within the Western canon. However, the Boston University Core as we know it is about more than what we study—it's about community. Core is a place where students and professors connect through a shared love of learning, and to challenge each other's ideas, and to forge relationships that make our years at BU a little more meaningful.

The Journal of the Core Curriculum is the perfect blend of our curriculum and our community, where we immortalize our discussions with the texts we study. The editorial team and I are therefore proud to present the twenty-fifth issue of your *Journal*. In this landmark issue, we decided to highlight the work of our social scientists, so as to bolster involvement and interest in these subjects. The team and I hope you, dear reader, enjoy the work created by your peers and teachers and are inspired to contemplation by these same ideas.

It truly is a group effort to pull together this publication. I would like to thank the editorial team—especially those who worked late into the night—for all their sacrificed hours which could have been spent on homework. We express our sincerest gratitude to Zak Bos, our managing editor, for his inexhaustible work ethic, endless patience, and willingness to share his knowledge with us. Of course, this issue would not be possible without Prof. Tabatabai, our faculty advisor, whose vast kindness and light-hearted attitude creates a positive, encouraging atmosphere to work in. We offer our warmest thanks to him.

Last but not least, I would like to thank Stephanie Nelson for being a fearless director for the Core, and for all she does to preserve, strengthen, and extend the spirit of Core: its classes, programs, and community. Her unflagging efforts have been central these past few years in creating a harbor for learning here at BU, one that so many of us are proud to be a part of.

Thank you for reading!

Atina Irremstei

on behalf of the 2016 editorial team

## The Core Almanac

#### Playlist of CC 102 Walk-in Music for Spring 2016:

- 1. Roochnik on Aristotle: Modern Jazz Quartet, "Bags' Groove"
- 2. Speight on Aristotle: Modern Jazz Quartet, "European Concert"
- 3. Klancer on Confucius: Swan Lake and Janet Jackson, "Rhythm Nation"
- 4. Michael on Lao-Tzu: Guqin, "Flowing Water"
- 5. Samons on Roman History: "The Imperial March (Darth Vader's Theme)" and Beethoven's "Emperor" Piano Concerto No.5, Op.73 (1st Movement)
- 6. Uden on The Aeneid: Ryan Bingham, "Southside of Heaven" and "Hard Times"
- 7. Jorgensen on Gospel of Matthew: Bruce Springsteen, "Chimes of Freedom"
- 8. Knust on Gospel of John: Lauryn Hill & Tanya Blount, "His Eye on the Sparrow"
- 9. Eckel on the Bhagavad-Gita: The Mahabharata (film!)
- 10. Nelson on Inferno: Penderecki, "Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima"
- 11. Appleford on Purgatorio: Solesmes Abbey VIII, "Ascension. Pentecôte. Trinité."
- 12. Sims on Dante: Gianna Nannini, "I Wanna Die 4 U"
- 13. Hawkins on Paradiso: "In Paradisum"

#### List of All Authors and Artists Studied in Core, AY 2014-2016:

Aertsen, Alexander, Alfarabi, Aptekar, Aristotle, Augustine, Austen, Bach, Beckmann, Beethoven, Bhagavad-Gita, Blake, Boas, Bourdieu, Brown, Byron, Cervantes, Chapin, Chekhov, Churchland, Clement XI, Coleridge, Collins, Confucius, Corinth, Cox, Dante, Davis, Degas, Descartes, Dickinson, Dix, Du Bois, Dürer, Durkheim, Engels, Euripides, Evans-Pritchard, Exodus, Forshaw, Genesis, Gilgamesh, Glenn, Goethe, Grosz, Heartfield, Herodotus, Hobbes, Höch, Hochschild, Homer, James, John, Johnson, Joinville, Kant, Katznelson, Keats, Khaldun, Kirchner, Klee, Klinger, Kurzweil, Lao-Tzu, Lareau, Las Casas, Leiken, Lenski, Liebermann, Lindley, Locke, Loury, Machiavelli, Madison, Malinowski, Marx, Massey, Matthew, Mead, Menzel, Michelangelo, Milton, Mollenkopf, Montaigne, Moore, Nicolelis, Nietzsche, Omi, Petrarca, Phidias, Pirsig, Plato, Ramachandran, Rembrandt, Rhodes, Ricci, Rousseau, Sacks, Searle, Sepúlveda, Shakespeare, Shapiro, Shelley, Smedly, Smith, Sophocles, Tacitus, Thucydides, Tilly, Tocqueville, Virgil, Voltaire, Von Baeyer, Wacquant, Weber, West, Whitman, Winant, Woolf, Wordsworth, Wright, Ziegler, and Zimmerman. 2015 Devlin Award Winners: Kush Ganatra and Abagail Peterson; Honorable Mention, David Daniel Ortiz and Liam O'Connell. // 2015 Divisional Award Winners. Ist Year Humanities: Femke Hermse, Pooja Patel, and Shan Qin; 2nd Year Humanities: Brianna Randolph; Natural Sciences: Konrad Herath; and Social Sciences: Hannah Hamilton. // Polytropos Award Winners, 2015. Emre Alpagut, Madeline Aruffo, Rania Ezzo, Nathan Fairchild, Caroline Green, Zoe Guy, Novruz Javadov, Anastasia Kourtis, Gayle Miner, and Jason Porter

#### Core Faculty, Fellows & Administrators, AY 2014-2016:

Binyomin Abrams, Chemistry Emily Allen, Core Evan Anhorn, Religion Amy Appleford, English Kimberly Arkin, Anthropology Jura Avizienis, Writing Clifford Backman, History Thomas Barfield, Anthropology Zachary Bos, Core Cynthia Bradham, Biology Jeff Bristol, Anthropology Matt Cartmill, Anthropology Andrew Christensen, English Alex Claxton, Anthropology Yuri Corrigan, MLCL Dennis Costa, Romance Studies Bill Coyle, Editorial Institute Nicole DePolo, Editorial Institute Jeremy DeSilva, Anthropology Troy Dujardin, Religion R. Christian Engley, English Stephen Esposito, Classics Maria Gapotchenko, Writing Abigail Gillman, MLCL David Green, Writing/Core Kyna Hamill, Core Sarah Hardy, Writing

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*EnCore Alumni Association, Founding and Steering Committee Members, AY 2016-2017:* Zachary Bos, Core '01; Anna Bursaux, Core '01; Fabiana Cabral, Core '08; Erin Mc-Donagh Rubin, Core '08; Josh Gee, Core '05; Kim Santo Core '98; Joseph Sacchi, Core '06; Amiel Bowers, Core '07; Benjamin Flaim, Core '98; Rania Ezzo, Core '13; Rose Grenier, Core '05; Eric Hamel, '00; Chris McMullen, Core '94; and Stephanie Nelson, PhD.

**Core Honors Projects.** In this first semester of the Core Honors opportunity becoming available to Core alumni, three students signed-on as members of our first crop of Core Honors graduates. They are: **GREGORY KERR**, whose project titled "Proving Thucydides Right: Human Nature and the repetition of actions through history" is being supervised by Prof. Samons; **AMEEN KHDAIR**, whose project "Paradigmatic Heroism: The Archetypal 'Hero's Journeys' of Dante-Pilgrim and Milton's Satan" is being adised by Prof. Nelson; and **FARHAN RANA**, who under the supervision of Prof. Sunil Sharma is completing a project tentatively titled "Mapping Muslim Societies: The Journeys of Ibn Khaldun and Ibn Battuta."

How much time do Core students spend in lab? Adding CCIO5 in Fall 2014 + CCIII in Fall 2015 with CCIO6 in Spring 2015, we get 32 + 36 + 32 for 100 hours total. // How much time do Core students spent in lecture? Adding the Fall courses (101, 201, 203, 111) gives 6,120 minutes, or 102 hours. The Spring courses (102, 112, 202, 204, 212) sum t07,290 minutes, or 121.5 hours. The grand total for the 2015-2015 year: is 13,410 minutes or 223.5 hours. // *Finally: How much time do Core students spend in seminar?* Multiplying the number of class sessions each week, by the number of minutes in each class, by the number of discussion seminars, for each course, and then adding those course totals together, we roughly calculate that Core students together spent 143,320 minutes or more than 2,388 student-hours in Core seminars in the 2015-2016 academic year.

Some Recent Faculty Publications. Arkin: Rhinestones, Religion, and the Republic: Fashioning Jewishness in France, Stanford, 2013. // Gillman: "From Myth to Memory: German Jewish Translations of Exodus 12-13" in Exodus: Echoes and Reverberations in Jewish Tradition, eds. Barmash and Nelson. Wayne State University, forthcoming. "Seit ein Gespräch wir sind und hören können von einander': Martin Buber's Message to Postwar Germany." In Nexus 2: Essays in German Jewish Studies, 2014. // Kalberg: The Social Thought of Max Weber, Sage Publications, 2016. Searching for the Spirit of American Democracy: Max Weber on a Unique Political Culture, Past, Present, and Future, Routledge, 2014. // Klancer: Embracing Our Complexity: Thomas Aquinas and Zhu Xi on Power and the Common Good, SUNY, 2015. // Litvin: Four Arab Hamlet Plays: An Anthology, Segal Theatre Center, 2016. // Nelson: Aristophanes' Tragic Muse: Tragedy, Comedy, and the Polis in Classical Athens, Brill, 2016. "Hesiod and the Georgic Tradition," in The Oxford Handbook of Hesiod, eds. Loney and Scully, Oxford, forthcoming. "Time and Storytelling in Joyce and Homer," in TimeAgain, eds. Wawrzycka and Bosinelli, Brill, forthcoming. "Time and Memory in the Odyssey and Ulysses," in Time and Trace, eds. Ostovich and Gross, Brill, 2016. "Classics in Translation" in The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature, Vol. 5, ed. Haynes, Oxford, forthcoming. // Rabinovitch: Jewish Rights, National Rites: Nationalism and Autonomy in Late Imperial and Revolutionary Russia, Stanford, 2014. // Redford: John Singer Sargent and the Art of Allusion, Yale, 2016. // Roochnik: Thinking Philosophically: An Introduction to the Great Debates, Wiley, 2016. // Schwartz: "The Ideological Antecedents of the First-Series Renminbi Worker-and-Peasant Banknote, or What Mao Tse-tung May Have Owed to Dziga Vertov" in Transcultural Studies, 2014.

*Pots of Coffee Brewed.* The Core office has brewed 282 pots of coffee so far in the 2015-16 year, for over 2,500 cups of coffee.



## Dogs of the Core

A guide to some of the furrier scholars you may have encountered in or around the Core office recently.

## CAROLINE AARON Are Utopias Useless? A Philosophical Dialogue

ISCIPULUS, A FIRST-YEAR CORE STUDENT: Professor Esposito introduced *The Republic* by saying if we lived in the "perfect city" Plato devises, CCIOI would not exist. The books we had read already in class would be banned, as well as the songs we listen to before lecture on Tuesdays. He said the city would look more like a totalitarian regime than our current political system. Why, then, would we bother to read it in class?

CAROLINE: We read it for the same reason we read other Core texts: because it is important. Since Plato wrote this book, it has inspired rigorous thought in the minds of many great political, social and philosophical theorists. Notably, it spawned an entire genre of "utopian literature"—i.e., other books and written "systems" of "perfect" societies.

DISCIPULUS: Okay, but my question is: how is utopian literature useful? What does it offer society?

CAROLINE: Utopian literature points out flaws in our society and forces us to question and further define our personal beliefs, which can minimize destruction through conflict.

DISCIPULUS: You're going to have to elaborate on that, Caroline.

CAROLINE: I anticipated that. I'll start by saying the first step to solving a problem is acknowledging that the problem exists. Would you agree?

DISCIPULUS: Yes, I would. Once you know a problem exists, you can define it, and then try to solve it.

CAROLINE: Exactly! So if we can identify a problem in our society, we can try to fix it. But what counts as a "problem in society"? We might be able to answer this by examining what a "utopia" is.

DISCIPULUS: That seems like as good a place to start as any! So: a utopia is a perfect society.

CAROLINE: What do you mean by "perfect"?

DISCIPULUS: I mean that there is no conflict within it. War does not exist, and everyone is content.

CAROLINE: Are you saying unhappiness & conflict are social problems? DISCIPULUS: Yes.

CAROLINE: So in your mind, a perfect society is one in which everyone is happy and there is no conflict. Sorry, but I am going to contradict that... in a moment. Right now I am going to agree with you on the definition of utopia. I do believe Plato would agree with you, as well. We previously decided that if we can acknowledge problems in society, we can move towards fixing them. If we compare our flawed society with a utopia, we can tell where our society differs from the perfect one. Since the utopia is perfect, any aspect of society that differs from it is imperfect, or a problem. Therefore, by noting the differences between our society and the utopia, we can tell what problems our society has. Plato himself recognized this when he said the republic does not really have to exist anywhere in the world; the model of it is what is important.

DISCIPULUS: It seems to me that you have just explained how utopian literature is useful, but you do not seem to agree with your own argument considering you also do not agree with my definition of "utopia."

CAROLINE: I do agree with my argument, but this is only one leg of it. Allow me to explain why I disagree with your definition of "utopia." You say a perfect society is one in which there is no conflict. Where does conflict come from?

DISCIPULUS: Perhaps from when a person or group has something another person or group wants, say land or power or resources, or maybe because two people or groups disagree on how best to handle an issue.

CAROLINE: Okay, inequality and disagreement. You did say the perfect society had neither of these problems. Let us talk about inequality for a minute. Inequality is the opposite of equality, which indicates two or more objects are equivalent, or the same. This must mean inequality indicates objects that are different. Now, would you say all humans are the same, or different?

DISCIPULUS: Of course, everyone is different.

CAROLINE: Exactly. This is why I say human nature cannot exist without conflict. Humans are naturally different from one another, and will never be the same. Although the city is split into factions based on what craft each person is suited for, in *The Republic*, Plato attempts to make people more similar by imposing rules and regulations on society. That supports the idea that conflict is part of human nature. Without, for example, the rule limiting what kind of musical training one should receive, the idea is people would become "unjust" and immoral. So the architects of utopias (such as Plato) try to curb natural human instinct and emotion. They try to make people do something different than what the people naturally want to do. This, according to our earlier definition, is conflict. So, if conflict exists in utopia, it is not, by your definition, a perfect society.

DISCIPULUS: Wait! You said you did not agree with my definition. What is your definition of a perfect society, then?

CAROLINE: A perfect society is absent of *destructive* conflict.

DISCIPULUS: What does that mean?

CAROLINE: Think back to your first example of conflict: war. War is definitely destructive, in that it destroys the lives of many. The utopian curbing of human nature is also destructive, as it censors and destroys an individual's free will. This means the systems described in utopian literature, like Plato's *Republic*, are not perfect societies. That, in turn, means if we compare our society with one in a book of utopian literature and find aspects that are the same, these could be problems in our society.

DISCIPULUS: So that is how utopian literature is useful to society. We use it to identify problems. But if conflict is inherent to human nature, how can we fix these problems? What are we striving for?

CAROLINE: Well, as I said, a perfect society lacks destructive conflict. This means the only conflict that does exist in it is *constructive*.

DISCIPULUS: Constructive conflict? What does that mean?

CAROLINE: Have you ever been involved in a heated philosophical argument in which you and your opponent were very passionate about who was right and who was wrong?

DISCIPULUS: Of course.

CAROLINE: What happened at the end of this argument?

DISCIPULUS: My theory was defeated. My opponent persuaded me he

was correct. His points were too good; he was right.

CAROLINE: You agreed by the end, then. Have you ever still disagreed with an opponent at the end of an argument?

DISCIPULUS: Yes, definitely. But I suppose it was because my opponent could not articulate his point clearly enough for me to accept it as fact, and vice versa.

CAROLINE: You understand my idea of constructive conflict! You see, by arguing, you either learned something true or that you needed to think through your own ideas more thoroughly. If each person forms his beliefs and ideas fully and articulates them as well as possible, only the best arguments would win. These arguments are based in extensive thought that is integral to a perfect society—something Plato recognized in his creation of "philosopher-kings." I agree with him in thinking those who think and argue the most should make decisions about the masses' welfare.

DISCIPULUS: Should not the masses make their own decisions?

CAROLINE: Ideally, all should have access to utopian literature in order for everyone to bring their differences to the table and constructively conflict with one another. However, it is the reality of the world we live in that not everyone has equal access to leisure time for reading and education to understand the texts. This oppression is a form of destructive conflict that needs to be eliminated. Though the concept is not ideal, a realistic way to battle this is merely by allowing and encouraging those who can afford to do so to read utopian literature. In this way they can come up with better solutions to the problem of inequality in education as well as other problems, while also defining their own beliefs in order to articulate them well.

DISCIPULUS: Okay, I think I understand how utopian literature is useful to society now. I just have one final question: you said you disagreed with my saying a perfect society is one in which everyone is happy. How do you defend your opinion?

CAROLINE: Ah, yes, I had forgotten to mention that aspect of my argument. Do you remember how you felt during your heated philosophical arguments, some of which you were persuaded by your opponent in the end and others in which you were not? DISCIPULUS: I remember feeling very angry and frustrated.

CAROLINE: Would you describe yourself as having felt at all happy?

DISCIPULUS: I... suppose not. But I do enjoy a good argument. I like thinking and debating. I, like you and Plato, believe philosophizing to be important.

CAROLINE: So in my opinion, if unhappiness exists in constructive conflict, pure happiness is not integral to a perfect society.

DISCIPULUS: I suppose it is not.

CAROLINE: So, to sum up, how is utopian literature useful?

DISCIPULUS: Well, by comparing our society with a perfect society constructed in a work of utopian literature, one can see where we differ in our systems, and therefore what we should fix about our society. However, much utopian literature actually forms flawed societies, so if we notice similarities between ours and that of the written "utopia," we can identify problems in our society and begin to try to fix them. However, in trying to make our society more perfect, we cannot attempt to abolish conflict altogether, merely destructive conflict. Constructive conflict is integral to human existence and a feasibly perfect society. In our pursuit of perfection we must also not strive for pure happiness in every citizen, as this is impossible due to the existence of constructive criticism.

CAROLINE: By George, I think you've got it! Nice work, Discipulus.

## **ANALECTS OF THE CORE**

The Prince: "And Virgil says in the mouth of Dido: 'The harshness of things and the newness of the kingdom compel me to contrive such things, and to keep a broad watch over the borders."

#### ELIZABETH FOSTER

## On Ajax's "Deception Speech "

ct II of Sophocles' *Ajax*<sup>i</sup> begins with the title character's so-called "Deception Speech," addressed to Tecmessa, his war bride. Ajax is attempting to console Tecmessa, to make her believe he will not kill himself to alleviate his humiliation. In fact, however, he will commit suicide soon thereafter. His soliloquy is therefore referred to as the "Deception Speech." In it, Sophocles makes use of many stylistic devices including personification, characterization, superlatives, tone, simile, foreshadowing, and motifs, in order to create a theme of the inevitability of events, including Ajax's tragic outcome. Sophocles uses these devices to reveal Ajax's true intentions, to build dramatic tension, and to emphasize the gravity of his character's humiliation.

The speech begins with Ajax's personification of Time itself, using the present active indicative tense with diction such as "begets" (II.647), "hides" (II.647), "is taken" (II.649), and "is...proven" (II.649) to personify Time. When he refers to Time's ability to hide all things, it is almost with reverence and relief because, unbeknownst to his family, Ajax has already resolved to commit suicide. Ajax seems to believe that Time will eventually wipe out his humiliation and even his suicide, and that thought consoles him. This is evident in his opening lines that time "begets" (II.647) and "hides" (II.647) all. Ajax observes that Time overcomes "stubborn wills" (II.649), which likely refers to his own stubbornness, and shows how he has changed as a character in that he relinquishes more to others now. This is important because he believes that he has succumbed to the ways of the world and that the only action he can take at this point is suicide. In fact, Ajax even refers to suicide as being "good sense" (II.677), showing that he believes there is only one thing that he can do to escape his shame. Ajax's changes as a character are also illustrated by his admission that "one must yield" (II.668) to "authority and office" (II.670). Surely he

<sup>1</sup> Translated by Stephen Esposito, as appears in *Odysseus at Troy* (Focus Publishing, 2010).

is speaking in a bitter and possibly sarcastic tone, as he clearly does not hold *respect* for the Atreids, but he is admitting defeat. The once stubborn Ajax has finally been humbled, and he no longer wishes to live because of that. In fact, he *cannot* live with humiliation because of what he represents, the ideal hero, which brings up a recurring theme in the play of inevitability.

The theme of inevitability is reiterated through Ajax's poetic description of the passing of seasons and days, and of sleep to wakefulness. He is merely following an order that has been in place for eternity. While some may argue that he chooses suicide because it is the only thing he has control over in his life right now, it is in fact evident that Ajax views suicide as a necessity rather than something that he is choosing, which proves that the act is not in his control. This is further supported by the fact that, for the first time in his life, he calls upon the gods for help with his suicide, which is something he would not have to do if the action were completely in his control. However, Ajax's story also follows a theme in Greek tragedy in which actions are both fated and willed. As for how stylistic devices support this theme, throughout this excerpt from the speech, Ajax's tone is resolute. This is made evident by his use of superlatives such as "all" (II.464), "nothing" (II.648), and "always" (II.676), as well as his usage of verbs such as "shall hide" (II.648), "will learn" (II.667), "one must yield" (II.668), and "all will turn out well" (II.684), which are definite and therefore reiterate the theme of inevitability.

Another way in which the necessity for suicide is made apparent in *Ajax* is through Sophocles' likening of Ajax to his sword. In this monologue—and later in Ajax's "Suicide Speech"—Ajax is compared to his sword from Hector and, ultimately, is tested as a warrior, as weaponry and warrior are often one entity in Greek representations of soldiers. In line 650, Ajax laments that he is no longer like "iron hardened by dipping," which emphasizes his change in character. He also uses a reverse simile to liken himself to a woman right after this, saying that he has lost his "sharp edge" (II.652). For Ajax to liken himself to a faulty sword and then to a woman is something quite significant for his character. This is especially true since Ajax has been shown to be misogynistic earlier on in the play, when he says, "women should be seen and not heard" (I.293). Perhaps this furthers Ajax's reasoning to take his own life, seeing that

he is no longer worthy of being alive, in his own eyes.

Throughout the soliloquy, there is a tone of resolve, which supports the theme of necessity. Tecmessa interprets this resolve as Ajax intending to purify himself and live a life of virtue, since Ajax refers to cleansing at the baths. In fact, however, his resoluteness comes from his decision to kill himself. This is especially apparent when he refers to his wife and son as "a widow and her orphaned son" (II.654) as if the action is already complete. Furthermore, his lack of personal pronouns shows detachment and a lack of intimacy. There is also a lack of adverbs such as 'maybe' and 'possibly,' which might have signaled that Ajax was wavering in his decision. It is therefore incredibly ironic that, though he leaves no room for doubt about his intentions, his entire speech is misconstrued as one of reconciliation, while it is actually a farewell to his family.

Though Tecmessa is convinced that Ajax will not kill himself, and is thus placated, this speech is not truly deception. When Ajax says he will "hide" (II.647) his sword where "none shall see it" (II.659) he is speaking the truth: he will hide the sword in his own flesh. He *will* bury it in a pit, because that is how he will be able to fall on it and kill himself, and his call to Hades is foreshadowing of his imminent death. Hiddenness is a recurring motif in this speech, as well as escape, which is to be expected, considering Ajax is lusting after death.

Finally, there is a foreshadowing of what will happen even after Ajax's death. There is a double metaphor in his words of an enemy becoming "a friend hereafter" (II.680). He is mostly referring to his formerly "hateful" (II.658) sword as something that has become friendly to him, as it will aid him in his suicide. Unbeknownst to him, however, he will make another friend *after* death. That would be Odysseus, Ajax's most hated enemy who helped bring his downfall. In fact, just as Agamemnon represents the worst possible outcome of Odysseus' homecoming, the fate of Hector's corpse represents the worst possible outcome of Ajax's corpse. With the terrible aftermath of Achilles' defilement of Hector's body—resulting ultimately in Ajax's death—the Greeks with their new, painful perspective, now reject vengeance as a dishonorable course of action, self-destructive and wholly to be avoided.

## LYDIA ERICKSON "Waiting for God": A Sock Puppet Burlesque

ur drama opens in a middle school English classroom. Posters with inspirational quotes cover the walls; mugs hang by the sink for anyone who wants tea. In the center of the classroom, two seventh-graders are attempting to erect a cardboard screen in front of an elaborate Silly Putty model, a miniature tableau showing the Sistine Chapel fallen on hard times.

MATT: Okay, you're Michael, and I'm Lucifer. DIANE: Who? MATT: Satan. The Devil. The Prince of Lies. The Morning St-DIANE: Why do you get to be the devil? I wanted to be the devil! MATT: Because I'm older... and better looking... much like... Lucifer himself. DIANE: You're full of shit, like Lucifer himself. MATT: Look Di, the devil has panache. Joie de vivre, a certain je ne sais quoi... DIANE: Just because you say it in French doesn't mean you're not full of... MATT: Merde? DIANE: Yes, that. MATT: The devil has style, Diane. DIANE: Says the guy dressed like a hobo. MATT: It's called coordinated clashing, and that's racist agains hobos. Do you even have a Lookbook? Here, you can be Michael and Gabriel. DIANE: Gabriel doesn't even have lines. At least let me be God! MATT: The devil wanted to be God too, and look what happened to him. DIANE: If you won't listen to me, I'm telling the teacher. MATT: Look, I didn't make a sock puppet for God, okay? Now come on, let's focus, we need to get this recorded by tomorrow. This is what I'm picturing

so far... (begins to read aloud)

Waiting for God: A Sock Puppet Show of Epic Proportion

DIANE: I hate it.

MATT: I haven't started!

- DIANE: But you're already speaking in a phony British accent, which means you've written the script in Papyrus or worse, Comic Sans, and I know it's going to be bad. We should use my *original* script.
- MATT: Um, it was Corsiva, actually? And hear me out, I'm just getting started. You read for Mike and Gabe.

Waiting for God: A Sock Puppet Show of Epic Proportion by: Matthew Woodberry, and \_\_\_\_\_

DIANE: Um, you forgot my name?

MATT: Oh look, it's your line.

DIANE: Mike? Not only am I some loser archangel, I'm named Mike? MATT: I'm pressing record. We're on in three, two...

> Waiting for God: A Sock Puppet Show of Epic Proportion by: Matthew Woodberry, and <u>Diane Crane</u>

#### DRAMATIS PERSONAE:

MICHAEL or "MIKE", played by <u>Diane Crane</u>'s right hand GABRIEL or GABE, played by <u>Diane Crane</u>'s left hand LUCIFER, played by Yours Truly

Scene: The Garden of Eden

Mike. Father, would you please get out of bed? Lucy's been asking for you all day. Gabe. Is 'asking' really the right word? Lucy. Going easy on the old man isn't going to do any good, Mikey Mike. Mike. Lucy, we've talked about this. It's Michael.



*Lucy*. We've talked about everything, Mike. We've been here for millennia and with all that's happened we might as well be *Waiting for Godot*.

Mike. Waiting for Godot?

*Lucy*. I misspoke—you've been waiting here for millennia. You really haven't been paying attention, have you?

Gabe. Waiting for God... or...

Lucy. Don't you have a horn to blow, Gabe? And also lines?

- *Mike*. It isn't easy getting away from work when you're managing the business, Lucy.
- *Lucy.* But did you say that when I asked our old man for better union rights? I don't think so. If you'd spoken up while the old man was still out and about you might at least have Sundays off. Even the hairless apes get Sundays off.

Mike. I guess...

*Lucy*. Sitting around, finishing up everything they should've done during the week if I know the little bastards.

Gabe. For example, writing the script for class?

*Lucy*. I'm going to pretend I didn't hear that, Gabriel, for your sake... What I'm saying is, Michael, imagine what you could do with a whole day to yourself every week.

Mike. I could compose new hymns...

*Lucy.* And I could finally fix that wheel of fire. We're talking about fantasies, here, Mike, not things you're already not getting paid to do. Think bigger. Or smaller, if you have to. What do you want to do?

Mike. I guess I haven't ever really thought about it.

Lucy. Have you thought about much of anything, Michael? Be honest.

Mike. Lucy.

*Lucy.* Alright I'll admit it's harsh, but really? When was the last time you put down that sword and really looked around? There's a big wide spinning world out there, and it's a whole lot more interesting than paradise.

Gabe. Sour grapes, Lucy?

Lucy. See? I got that reference. Tell me you got that reference.

Mike. I...

Lucy. I didn't want to tell you this, Mikey Mike, but we think you may be losing

your edge.

- Gabe. We? Don't include me in this.
- *Mike*. It's not losing its edge—I regularly sharpen the blade. Gabriel, doesn't this look sharp?
- *Lucy*. This is just what I'm talking about, and I'm telling you as your friend, Mikey Mike. You're becoming, well... I hate to say this, but you're turning into a bit of a loser.
- *Mike*. Lucy, I think we both know who history is going to remember as the bigger loser.
- *Lucy.* History remembers whatever the winners write, and last time I checked the old man and me were still mid-gamble. You'd be surprised what people choose to remember, what comes in and out of vogue.
- Mike. I hope you're not trying to suggest that you've gotten popular?
- *Lucy.* Don't say 'gotten', Michael, you know I've always been popular. They don't confuse me with the party god for nothing.

Mike. Party god?

- Gabe. You remember Bacchus? Big horns. Booze and ritual insanity?
- Mike. Oh, the Greek one who turned the people he didn't like into dolphins?

Gabe. That's the one.

- Mike. Lucy, I don't think that's intended to be a flattering-
- *Lucy*. It's better than looking like a snake, Michael. But you wouldn't know anything about that, would you?

Mike. Hm?

Lucy. Michelangelo? Really? You didn't think I'd figure it out?

Gabe. Michael, what's he talking about?

*Lucy.* Don't try to deceive the deceiver, Michael. Even if you didn't paint it yourself, I know you're responsible.

DIANE: Hold it, that's your plot?

MATT: Yes, what?

DIANE: It sucks, that's what. The angel Michael goes down to paint the Sistine Chapel? No one's going to stay awake for that. And why the hell wouldn't the devil like the Sistine Chapel? Every time I look up the Catholic Church is doing something hurtful in the world.

- MATT: You know I'm Catholic, right?
- DIANE: Further proof.
- MATT: Okay, so you don't like Catholicism or me, apparently. What's wrong with the Sistine Chapel?
- DIANE: Well, first of all, it's ugly. The-

MATT: Excuse me?

- DIANE: I hate Renaissance art. Everything is hypercomplex, oversaturated. There's nowhere to focus your eyes and the people are too dramatically posed to fit what they're actually doing. There are only three settings for facial expressions—serene, bored, and anguished. Babies have grown up faces and all the women are pasty and overweight.
- MATT: I'm sorry you feel that way, but we have a project to do, so how about you keep your feelings to yourself?
- DIANE: You've deleted the script I originally wrote, replaced the dolls we agreed to use, and redone the background. I don't know what's wrong with you, but I've kept my feelings to myself long enough. This is a stupid project about a worthless piece of art, and I just want to get it over with, so why don't we skip your dumb sock puppet opera, and make a PowerPoint like normal people?
- MATT: And what exactly counts as a worthwhile piece of art? Would that be your Taylor Swift videos, or...?

DIANE: Let's just get back to work.

- MATT: No, tell me. If you're going to insult me and my religion, then at least tell me what you think is better.
- DIANE: Well, first of all, how about a religion that doesn't hate people? How about that? Michelangelo was obviously gay, and half the time I hear about Catholics on the news it's because they were talking trash about gay people. MATT: Plenty of religions are homophobic.

DIANE: Since when does plenty of people doing it make it okay? The whole point of the Sistine Chapel is to praise God, to make it on earth as it is in heaven, yadda yadda, but they put the Last Judgment front and center.

MATT: What's wrong with that?

DIANE: It's the whole message of the Catholic Church: do what I want, or you won't get into heaven. If it were actually trying to do something good in the world, its big message wouldn't be about fear.

MATT: It could be about hope.

DIANE: Hope's worse than fear. It sets you up and knocks you down again. People have given up on living their entire lives because they were hoping for something better. That's why Christianity works so well to control people. It's all about postponing what you want.

MATT: So you would tear it all down?

- DIANE: I'd make it useful. If it's trying to show us what heaven is...
- MATT: How about this? We need to know what heaven looks like before we can make it happen around here. It doesn't matter whether or not it really exists.
- DIANE: Well it certainly doesn't look like that, Matthew. If there were a real heaven, the whole point of it would be that people wouldn't be judged anymore, and there wouldn't be any hell at all. You would still be loved, but you wouldn't have to change, or act a certain way to be loved.
- MATT: It's beautiful, though, isn't it? Even if you can't agree with heaven, you at least admit it's beautiful?
- DIANE: I like the world better. I would be content with people being kind to each other while they were in it.
- MATT: I think it's beautiful. And I don't think there needs to be a reason for it. I think that even if you don't believe in God at all, the fact that we were able to make something so beautiful is astounding. The highest angels in heaven spend all of their time singing, praising God, and at my church sometimes we say that we are most like God when we are creating, that being made in the image of God means that we are natural creators. And when I create things I feel closer to God, and more human, than when I'm doing anything else. Don't you feel that way?
- DIANE: God is one of the more creative ideas we've come up with, that's for sure.
- MATT: We're not going to agree, are we?
- DIANE: I like the colors.

MATT: What?

DIANE: The colors in the Sistine Chapel. Especially the blues, the azures, the lapus lazuli. They're very beautiful.

MATT: They are.

DIANE: And the puppets you made are very nice. The script is shit, but the puppets are alright.

MATT: Why do you hate the script so much?

DIANE: All of the characters sound like you.

MATT: I see.

- DIANE: No, I mean... it's not going to go anywhere if everyone's too much alike. What we need in the script is a good disagreement and resolution. As it is, everyone is just going to keep thinking they're right... I mean, do you really see Michael caving? And everyone's already rooting for Lucifer.
- MATT: Everyone's always rooting for Lucifer. I was planning on having it ending with them all getting angry at God and grabbing drinks, though.
- DIANE: And no one will be guarding the garden... Okay, let's start again, but near the end of the piece we were writing. They all go off to grab drinks, and some human wanders into the garden, and then they all have to work together to cover it up when God wakes up.

MATT: Lucy's going to love that.

DIANE: But we do have to work in the Sistine Chapel bit. What about that?

MATT: Oh, we'll just stick it in somewhere near the end. You want to come over later?

DIANE: Are you going to try to convert me?

- MATT: I just played the devil as a sock puppet. I am definitely not going to try to convert you.
- DIANE: Okay, I guess I'll risk it. Just for the grade, though.

MATT: Of course. Why else would we hang out?

DIANE: We'll probably end up working late. We should order pizza.

MATT: Agreed. Pepperoni?

DIANE: That sounds perfect.

## ABAGAIL PETERSEN Soldier and Sage

#### Dear Laozi,

I am Aeneas, a Trojan. I understand that you give sage advice. Indeed, I only know who you are because of the renown of your wisdom. My letter will doubtless come as a surprise since you will have never heard of me or my people. I am writing on their behalf and mine, to ask you for guidance.

How to begin? I have seen my city burn, its great walls that stood impervious for generations, ravaged and destroyed. The Trojans are known for our glory, or now, for the glory that once was ours. For ten years we fought to protect our city against our Achaean enemies, valiantly defending against each blow until we were deceived in a moment of arrogance, believing we had been victorious. I am now left to lead our people from the ruins to our prophesied lands in Latium. By the will of my divine mother and the fates I must do this.

It is evening now and I am aboard one of our ships. I feel the mourning of my people close around me, rocking on silent waves. This earth is an empty eye, gazing up at the broad heavens stretching in eternal convex. How could the desperate be so destined?

My whole life has been a preparation for death. From the time I was a boy, my father taught me "that meeting death was beautiful in arms" (II, 426) and to honor glory. How can I die for anything other than Troy? Rather than dying in our great city, I must pull my relics and my family from the wreckage, and lead my people through long nights below the greater powers of the gods. And towards where? As what kind of people?

Just before leaving, I re-entered the city, looking for my wife, Creusa. Her ghost came and turned me away sweetly, casting me towards my long exile with loving words. I knew then that the past had died. I feel as Cato does in Dante's Purgatorio I, lines 85-90: "Now that she dwells beyond the evil river, / she has no power to move me any longer, / such was the law decreed when I was freed."

Great Laozi, all I have left is my son and the holy relics of Troy. I must lead my people, but please, I ask for your guidance.

Most gratefully yours,

### AENEAS

Aeneas:

It is true: your city is gone. As you have said: "the past has died." Aeneas, the past was never lasting. Your people, your relics, are already no longer what they were. Your wife is correct. She and your city are no longer yours.

You find yourself upon a path. Yet what path can you follow if you search for its end point? The way is lost, your energy futile. In this way, you will never find your new home. If you actively search for it, you will lose it. Be wary of those who claim to know the direction. I wrote for my own people:

The difficult and the simple complete each other.

The high and the low fill out each other.

Front and back follow each other.

Consider these thoughts as you contemplate your role as leader.

Do not accept or dismiss what may come. Simply allow. By doing so, you and your people will pass through whatever may come.

Do not consider glory and dishonor, for they are one. Your glory will create dishonor, your dishonor, glory. If you understand they give birth to one another, you will simply allow yourself to be filled, emptied, and filled. A river allows itself to change. For this reason it remains constant, forever a river.

Do not search for your destiny. It follows your past. Do not re-create the past; it distracts you from the path. The path is your destiny. Think of nothing more.



Dear Laozi,

A long time has passed since I have written to you. I fear I have changed.

I have seen more blood spilled than I contain in my own body. After draining so many lives on the battlefield, how is it that when I touch myself I am solid? What fills and hardens me, so that I still feel the resistance of bone and flesh against my fingers? My people and I have made it to our destined lands, but I have come to the same painful truth that a starved lion realizes as it drags its matted coat across the savannah: it is nothing more than an animal, and I am nothing more than a man.

I'm alone in an unfamiliar grove, not far from the spent battlefield, which barely weeks ago cradled the bodies of hundreds of men. As I pass each tree I caressed the bark with my callused hands, finding tenderness in my own skin against the rough wood. I ask you: What is blood to a tree? Trees splinter, are cast into flame, are bent to build hulls of noble ships... and yet the ones who live, stand for an eternity without drawing a single breath. Is this what you would call power? Constancy?

They are not gods. Yet these trees have observed every action on this black earth with the attentiveness of a mother watching her sleeping child. What was Pallas's blood, yards from here, to them? What is mine now, pulsing, against the trunk of this tree I lean against? The battle's won—a prophecy fulfilled for my divine mother and for the rest of my race. My father will be proud of the honor that I have brought to our line and I now will be immortalized for my heroic deeds— or so History will say, whose hand is small and writes like that of a child...

I write to you because I saw the world clearly on the battlefield. It was shining, imploring, and I took my sword and thrust it deep into its throat. I remember who it was exactly: it was Lausus.

After I had received news about the death of Pallas—a young prince given to my charge—I raced the field, quaking with rage and grief. I felt every man responsible for his death. I cleaved limbs. I heard their screams, their calls for mercy and I sent them all to the shades. My sword found Lausus' body to be like any other corpse, until I caught sight of his face.

His colored eyes frightened me—undimmed, they shone. I couldn't fathom what had gone into that gaze. In that instant I recalled his father—escaped—whom he died protecting. My father. I recalled the texture of his flesh against my sword, soft and young, like Pallas's must have been. The blood trickling down the corner of his mouth, his full mouth—Dido's ebony hair in the mornings. His eyelashes, soft, betraying no signs of death: in them the old walls, erect, of Troy.

Looking at Lausus' body, I saw in his eyes nothing other then what must hold the universe together. Every person, act, and hope. I wept bitterly, for in that instant, I knew I killed them all. I think again of Dante: "But fix your eyes below, upon the valley, / For now we near the stream of blood, where those / Who injure others violently, boil . . . O blind cupidity and insane anger, / Which goad us on so much in our short life, / Then steep us in such grief eternally!" Do you know the *Inferno?* These lines come from Canto XI. I wish I had not such reason to know so well the feelings reflected in that tortured landscape.

Laozi, I ask you now again for guidance. What sort of victory has been won? How do I, tired Aeneas, continue?

I have placed my feet in a stream, trying to admire its constancy as you have said. Yet I watch as the current twists away towards the unseen ocean, fathomlessly churning.

I am certain I will not meet a peaceful end.

Your faithful student,

### AENEAS

Aeneas,

Consider your hands. Clasp them. They are immersed, unified. Your fingers weave naturally and join each other, yet you continue to have two hands.

What do you think the blood of one hand is to the blood of the other? They are separate yet share the same blood. Your hands are both with and without. Filled, and emptied. Together, and apart. They are constant.

Aeneas, your exhaustion comes from avoidance. To avoid fear and weakness is to perpetuate their existence. You never were more than a man. A man can be lasting, a hero cannot. A man can be constant, glory cannot. This is why you have been weakened by what you consider to be strength. Lausus was temporary. Pallas, your father, the woman Dido, and Troy were all temporary. They are gone.

One day Great Aeneas will be gone as well. Let us observe constancy.

You are sitting in your grove: The tree's roots are unified with the dust. It is immersed in the world and constantly persists in life. The tree is temporary, yet the tree is lasting. It is lasting because it does not consider rot or axes or fire or even itself. By not thinking on these things it continues on. The trees did see the blood. Yet the blood was temporary, manic. The men fighting did not see the trees.

For this reason, no, Aeneas, I do not call the trees powerful. Power is hesitant. It leaves. You are right in calling them constant for that is what they are.

You say you saw how the universe is held together. You recognized its most constant feature, death. The absence of life, which surrounds life. The two lead and follow each other. You understood, and were frightened. You felt small and weak, you felt profound loss.

### The right hand is the universe, the left the ten thousand things within it. The right hand is the tree, the left is the earth. The right hand is death, the left is life.

All are constant because they each lead and follow the other. They are both within and without, filled and emptied. You fear inconstancy. That is why you dread death, loss, and weakness.

Aeneas, when you die, you will join the churning. You will be the right hand and the waves will be the left. The river is lasting because it does not consider the crashing ocean as it flows towards it, and yet it will become it.

A man can be lasting if he does not dwell on that which harms him, which is power, loss and fear. You will one day die Aeneas, and it will not make you any less of a man.

Yet, you will never be lasting if you do not accept what is constant. You will never feel release until you have made peace with the waves.



#### SHANTI KHANNA

## Is Milton's Eve Taking a Bite Out of the Apple, or Out of the Patriarchy?

In *The Feminine Reclaimed*, author Stevie Davies writes that Milton is "notorious as one of the great misogynists of our literature" (175-177). Be that as it may: Milton's Eve is a strong female character. Though postured as subservient to both Adam and God, Eve rejects her submissive role by taking the apple from the tree of knowledge. Adam tries to keep Eve from transgressing, but he fails because Eve outwits him. The fall is a symbol of Eve's intelligence, power and independence. While Milton confines Eve within a patriarchal Christian power structure, he also gives her a great amount of complexity in her desire to transgress, which makes her a feminist character.

Milton confines Eve in a hierarchy that fits within the Christian tradition. Before describing her physical appearance, Milton tells the reader of Eve's role: "Hee," or Adam, is "for God only" while "shee" (Eve) is for the "God in him" (4.299). Davies writes, "Milton's tracts speak with the voice of revolutionary Protestantism, which, for all its democratic impulses that worked to liberate women ... also by a sharp irony worked to limit and confine their authority" (183). In line with the Protestant tradition of the time, Milton's characterization of Eve places her a rung below Adam in terms of power. Milton also indicates that Eve is a level removed from the worship of God in line 299. This is significant because later in the book, Adam speaks directly with archangels, and even God himself, while Eve does not (8.1). This degree of separation perhaps explains why Eve is the one to transgress and not Adam; she is further removed from God's instruction not to eat the apple.

Eve's role within the Christian hierarchy is ingrained within her physical appearance. Milton writes, "as the vine curled her tendrils which impli'd / Subjection but required with gentle sway" (4.307-8). As Eve is subdued by the
power structure that she operates within, there is a parallel within her appearance; a vine is physically holding her hair back. Also, in this description, Milton refers not only to the swaying of Eve's hair but to how she is easily swayed to break free from her oppression when Satan tempts her into eating the apple. Milton also hints at Eve's desires to escape her submissive role in the following lines: "by her yielded... Yielded with coy submission, modest pride" (4.309-10). The repetition of the word "yielded" implies that Eve is holding herself back, trying to be obedient. Later in the passage, Milton states that Eve's appearance has "mere shows of seeming pure" though she is actually "sin-bred," implying that there is more to Eve than just blind compliance (4.315-316). Her obedient appearance is a mask; Eve also has the secret desire to rebel. She is complex. As Nathan writes, she is "not a person but a composite, or a collection of characteristics ... compliance, curiosity, culpability, blame" (Nathan 4). By painting Eve as a complicated in both her appearance and desires, Milton adds to her strength as a female character.

While Eve desires to break free, Adam tries to confine her to her innocent, subservient role and reinforce the Christian hierarchy. When Eve tells Adam of her dream about eating from the tree of knowledge, which foreshadows the fall, Adam responds that it must be Eve's imagination. According to Adam, Eve is incapable of harboring evil because she was "created pure" (5.100). By brushing off Eve's dream and assuming that she could do no wrong, Adam underestimates Eve's power to transgress. Later, when Eve argues with Adam in attempts to leave his side, he says, "nothing lovelier can be found / In woman, than to study household good /and good works in her Husband to promote" (9.233-35). Adam feels that Eve's desire for independence is not within her role. He asserts that Eve can accomplish good works only through her husband, as per the Christian power structure that the characters operate within. Also, Adam thinks that the world is too dangerous for Eve to explore alone. As Eve continues to persuade him to let her go off on her own, Adam responds, "the Wife, where danger and dishonor lurks /Safest and seemliest by her Husband stays" (9.267-68). Adam does not believe in Eve's ability to fend for herself. However, Eve ultimately wins the argument and leaves Adam, showing that she can match wits with him. She argues, "How are we happy, still in fear of harm?" implying that humans cannot truly appreciate the purity and goodness of Eden while living with such apprehension towards evil (9.326). This rebuttal shows that Eve is logical, calculative and therefore an intelligent character.

When Eve transgresses, it is because she yearns for more power. In her dream about the fall, she takes the apple because she aspires to be like the Gods. Satan says, "taste this and be henceforth among the Gods /Thyself a Goddess, not to Earth confind ... Ascend to Heav'n, by merit thine, and see / What life the Gods live there, and such life thou." (5.77-81) This yearning for Godlike power is inherently wrong in the context of Christian morality; Milton emphasizes this by drawing a parallel between Eve's desire for more power with Satan's. Satan falls from heaven after refusing to accept his low role in the angelic hierarchy, just as Eve falls from heaven after refusing to accept her subservience to Adam (1.155).

Eve's fall is not only a trespass into sin but also a transgression from the patriarchal power structure that confines her. When God punishes Eve, it is because she has strayed from her wifely role. This is why God relates Eve's punishment to her womanhood. God says, "Thy sorrow I will greatly multiply /By thy Conception: Children thou shalt bring /In sorrow forth, and to thy Husband's will /Thine shall submit, hee over thee shall rule" (10.193-96). God also reinforces Eve's submission by telling her again that she is to obey her husband. God also punishes Adam for not keeping Eve within her bounds. As the patriarch, it is his job to keep his wife from straying, but he fails to do so. God says that Adam must work the fields for food because he "has hark'n'd to the voice of thy /Wife" (10.198-99). God not only reinforces Eve's role during punishment, but Adam's as well.

When Adam and Eve are cast out of paradise, Eve refuses to go quietly; she refuses to accept her fate. She says, "Must I thus leave thee paradise?" (11.269). It is Adam who acts more subdued, telling Eve to "patiently resign" to her fate (11.287). The archangel Michael chimes in: "with thee goes /Thy husband, him to follow thou art bound" (11.291). This line implies that not all is lost, since Eve still has her husband. Eve is not given the chance to accept or reject this answer, for this is when Adam begins to speak to Michael (11.296). Michael takes Adam's side and reinforces the power structure by arguing that Eve should be

happy just to be with her husband. Eve's reaction to the fall does not show any hints of remorse. She does not accept responsibility for her wrongdoing. This could show that she still desires for power after the fall, instead of learning the lesson of obedience that God was trying to impart upon her.

Despite the scarcity of female characters in *Paradise Lost*, one can consider it a feminist text. Milton constructs Eve as an independent character with the desire for freedom. Though trapped in a traditional Christian hierarchy where she is subservient to Adam and God, she yearns for the ability to leave his side. By transgressing from God and Adam's wishes by eating the apple from the tree of knowledge, Eve asserts her autonomy and breaks free from her gendered earthly role as a wife to Adam. Consequently, when God punishes Eve, it is not only for bringing the knowledge of evil upon mankind, but also for straying from her place within the Christian power structure. Ultimately, Eve is a complex, feminist character with a desire for independence.

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### ANALECTS OF THE CORE

Montaigne: "I am not sorry that we notice the barbarous horror of such acts, but I am heartily sorry that, judging their faults rightly, we chould be so blind to our own. I think there is more barbarity in eating a man alive than in eating him dead..."



## SAMANTHA ARNOLD Understanding History:

The Constant Struggle Between Points of View

Ithough they both approach their subject material in similar fashions, Thucydides and Ibn Khaldun display their individualized approaches to history through discussion of a specific event in time and a daring attempt to cover history itself in full. Both of these attempts at explaining historical events for posterity encounter major obstacles, especially in those cases where an author combines accounts of the event from multiple sources with the most accurate account of history as a whole from their perspective in time and space.

In his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides approaches history much like a case in a court of law, mindful of the various sources that go into a historical account, from the events that actually took place to the objective accounts of witnesses involved in important events. Thucydides describes his approach to investigating history: "One cannot rely on every detail which has come down to us by way of tradition" (1.20). Thucydides takes it upon himself to find the closest general understanding of the events he describes through careful evaluation of human tendencies that skew history from the truth. This approach thrives on the cross-examining fashion upon which it is built, minimizing personal bias or witnesses' flaws in their individual accounts by keeping only the aspects that are the same across all accounts, leaving his work to read much like modern-day textbooks. However, Thucydides' historical account can suffer as a result of this process, for he only provides us with the end result of his efforts, leaving his audience unaware of what exactly he omitted from the text or the reasoning behind why he did so.

Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* attempts to achieve the polar opposite of Thucydides' work: providing a history of the world as he knows it. Like Thucydides, Khaldun understands the complexity of the task at hand. Khaldun looks at past accounts of history and explains their flaws, in order to show the human tendency to not question what they are told is the absolute truth. Khaldun's approach to history lies in his strong foundation of providing reasons for the components of the world he describes, using a kind of scientific method to describe them. The major drawback to Khaldun's approach lies in the exquisite size of the task he takes charge of—he simply cannot write a completely accurate history of the world, for he does not know of all the world's people and their histories. Khaldun understands this: "Perhaps they have written exhaustively on [social organization], but their work did not reach us" (Khaldun 39). Another major disadvantage of this approach lies in his lack of acknowledgement that the world will change with time. His work will not last with roots so deeply set in the past. For example, his scientific methodology does not compare with the understanding of biology and physics today, though there are still components of Khaldun's "science" that still ring true, such as his explanation for why fish die out of water (Khaldun 37).

In the end, Thucydides wants his account of the events surrounding and entailing the Peloponnesian War to survive through the ages, whereas Khaldun wishes his account to provide the most reasonable account of history at that time. In their search for truth, both authors try to discuss human error, but in doing so, create an analysis of human behavior on top of their investigation of human histories.

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## **ANALECTS OF THE CORE**

Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*: "Indeed, it is certain that average comfort has increased on all levels of the social hierarchy, although perhaps not always in equal proportions."

# My Father and Him

This original song was performed by the Fish Worship blues band as a prelude to the Spring 2016 Classics & Core co-production of Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus*, (a.k.a. "The Braggart Soldier"), directed by Prof. Sophie Klein. An American father back from a recent war; a rock star.

(Quiet acoustic guitar and drums:) I never could get my father to talk about the war What things he'd seen, what things he'd done He kept his thoughts behind the door

Where he might sit for hours, till time for us to eat He watched our table manners, listened to our youthful feats He must have killed people, and seen comrades die Felt the weight of victory, heard foreign women cry

Led or sent men to their deaths, and somehow he survived Left for work with a straight face, his department thrived My father kept a low profile, focused on our tasks Whatever be the truth of glory, he was not the one to ask

#### (Rock band:)

Here he comes in red lights, burning up the stage Killing them for two hours, then attends a rage Standing up for peace, does it standing up with the girls Buzz-cut, mohawk, purple spikes or bouncing curls

Got his boys with pistols, gals with press releases Entourage t'curry him and honor his caprices Presenting the Fall of Troy, with hungry lions named Achilles Selling out the stadium, got a plunging chestline just for the fillies Groupies cat-fight naked for his spotlight kiss Long lists of volunteers eager to be beat up by his fists Camera shoots him, upward angle, crotch-laces to curling belly hair Triumphing First Citizen of the empire of the air

Severed heads of great men projected on the scrim Orgasms of fire, forty-piece orchèstra backing him Tops of polls, hits, sales, viral beyond accountants' count Don't mess with this idol, or else you're going down

Thank you, Professor Sophie Klein, our bold *Legatus* Thank you, Professor Klein's class, for the script you've brought us Thank you actors, the occasion's got a great prognosis Plautus, here it comes again, your *Miles Gloriosus* 

It's the Miles Gloriosus	/TT· · 11 1 / 1·1 1 · )
It's the Miles Gloriosus	(His neighbor doesn't like him)
	(Gonna try to spike him)
It's the Miles Gloriosus	(Vernerland her to see him)
Miles Gloriosus	(Young love has to escape him)
	(His slave knows how to jape him)
Here he comes,	
	the Miles Gloriosus!

Fish Worship line-up for this performance: Prof. James Jackson, Astronomy, lead guitar and vocals; Prof. Jay Samons, Classics, bass guitar and vocals; Prof. Brian Jorgensen, Core, rhythm guitar and vocals; Edmund Jorgensen, Core alumnus, keyboard; Prof. Wayne Snyder, Computer Science, harmonica; Dr. David Mann, psychiatrist, percussion; and special guest Prof. James Uden, Classics, rhythm guitar and vocals.

To view photos and video from this spring's performance, visit: youtube.com/watch?v=ILqzPnOaz2U

## KONRAD HERATH Ovid's Dido: A Necessary Correction

🔰 iven that Dido's soliloquy in Vergil's *Aeneid*, Book IV 819-875, has a specific function in the telling of Roman history, Ovid's interpretation of the late Carthaginian Queen in his Heroides VII is a more complete and faithful portrait of Aeneas' late lover. Emperor Augustus commanded the poet Vergil to write a grand account of the founding of the Roman people-the task was to glorify the empire as well as the sovereign. While the epic poem may not have been entirely what Augustus wanted, Vergil's work is saturated with mythological accounts serving as historical foundations for actual Roman history. Such is the nature of Dido's rant, wherein she not only condemns Aeneas for abandoning her, but also beseeches the gods to create strife between the people of Carthage and Aeneas' descendants, or the Romans. Thus did Vergil fictitiously establish the root of the conflict between these two civilizations. However, given the utilitarian nature of this speech, it does not accurately reflect the character developed earlier in the poem. Ironically, it is the Ovidian interpretation of Dido during her swan song that is the more loyal rendering of the myth's tragic heroine. Ovid accordingly ensures an accurate depiction of Dido by emphasizing the intensity of her madness, her supplications to Aeneas, and by how she asserts the Dardanian's complicity in the death of their unborn child.

Although there are traces of madness exhibited by Vergil's Dido, Ovid's interpretation, which stresses her insanity throughout the letter, is far more characteristic of the queen. In the context of the myth, Dido is obsessed with Aeneas: she violates her vow of celibacy, deludes herself into believing they have entered into a marriage, and even resolves to commit suicide once she learns that her lover must leave her shores and continue his divine quest. The logical conclusion from this is that such an individual would be thrown into madness, consumed by lustful rage, yet the Dido of the *Aeneid* is instead fixated on her



wrathful curse of the Trojans. While such an act could also be indicative of madness, it seems odd that Dido would be even remotely concerned with the fate of Aeneas' descendants. However typical a hereditary vendetta in Greek and Biblical mythology may be, this gesture is incompatible with suicidal ideation. Furthermore, why would she want the Carthaginians and the Romans to be warring? Thus Vergil's thinly-veiled function of the soliloquy bleeds through, betraying the true nature of Dido's character. Even though Vergil's contextualization of the conflict between Rome and Carthage is base and distasteful, he does, albeit briefly, reveal Dido's mad passion. "What am I saying? Where am I? What madness / Takes me out of myself?"" (Book IV 825-826). She also logically curses Aeneas: "But fall in battle before his time and lie / Unburied in the sand!" (Book IV 862-863). (It should be noted that this is a particularly heinous indictment, as the Greeks believed that leaving the dead without a proper burial was a sacrilegious affront to the gods.)

Despite these indications of Dido's madness, they are eclipsed by the aforementioned curse which concludes the soliloquy. In this way, Vergil's Dido appears at odds with what circumstance would dictate, eliminating much of the character's depth. The Queen of Ovid's imagination, however, is in complete accord with how Vergil himself had established her, as her lines are rife with madness. Her obsession with the Dardanian is in fact blaringly obvious. "My sleepless eyes cling, always, to Aeneas: / I've Aeneas in my mind day and night... though I complain of his treachery, still I love him more" (p. 1). "If it's shameful to marry me, call me friend not wife: / so long as Dido is yours, she'll endure anything" (p. 5). This obsession, intrinsic to Dido's character, is tragically absent in the Vergilian counterpart of this speech. Ovid also illustrates the delusional aspect of the Queen's madness, as her obsession with Aeneas has blinded her to the halt of construction and progress in her city. "You are not moved by New Carthage, its growing walls /... Where might you create a city as good as Carthage..." (p. 1). This additional dimension of Dido's crazed mental state not only helps to provide a more complete delineation of the character, but to establish a more logical understanding of the disposition which leads to her death. Though Vergil does mention the instrument of suicide before Dido takes her life, Ovid appropriately incorporates the sword in the letter to Aeneas, writing, "... tears fall from my cheeks onto the naked blade, / which will soon be stained with tears of blood. / How truly fitting your gift is for my death" (p. 5). The explicit intent to commit suicide not only conveys the extreme insanity to which Dido is victim, but also illustrates the tragic relationship between love and death, for they are linked by the same underlying passion. The image of the sword, first "naked," then bloody, is heart-wrenching and deeply moving, providing a beautiful embellishment to Dido's character, one which Vergil ought to have incorporated.

It is only natural that when one partner terminates an affair the other would plead for its continuation, yet the Dido of Vergil is far too preoccupied with curses to even recognize this alternate course of action. Given that Dido's obsessive love, or infatuation, with Aeneas has been made clear, it seems rather odd that in her most dramatic moment Dido does not implore Aeneas to remain. Appropriately, the Dido of Ovid does, and in fact spends the majority of the desperate letter begging Aeneas to stay. Her first strategy is to warn him of the dangers at sea, and how the waters which have plagued him would pursue him no more should he remain in Carthage: "Why, unless you're ignorant of how furious the seas can be, / do you so often, so wrongly, trust the waters you've tried?" (p. 2). "Led by this god, are you not driven by adverse winds, / and endlessly scoured by ravening seas?" (p. 4).

Despite Dido's proven madness, she manages to make a rather compelling argument, as Aeneas has already spent years being tossed about by Juno on the angry waters of the Mediterranean. She cleverly points out how Aeneas is blind to all the misfortune he has experienced, and how what Jove ordains of him has brought about tremendous suffering and frustration. Although it is highly ironic that the mad queen also plays the voice of reason, in her despondency she would try to be as persuasive as possible. Indeed she is, as she goes on by tempting Aeneas' ego, promising him joint dominion over a new Troy: "Transform this happier Phoenician city into Troy, / and rule this place, and hold the sacred scepter!" (p. 4). While this marketing point to transform Aeneas from visitor to leader is naturally appealing, it is perhaps ineffective, as by the will of the gods he will be a king anyway, with a new Troy to rule over in Italy. In any case, Dido would have entreated Aeneas by any means possible, a fact which Virgil illogically ignored.

Although it could be argued Ovid took excessive liberty in creating a pregnant Dido, in doing so he established more believable circumstances and was even able to add a sadistic dimension to Dido's character. What a misfortune for Vergil to have missed such an opportunity! Since Aeneas spent about a year with Dido and about the same amount of time as her lover, it is perfectly reasonable that she conceived. Not only does a pregnancy make the narrative more credible, it makes the character of Dido more realistic. She is not merely the stock female character of Greek or Roman poetry, who sleeps with the hero only to be left by him. She is in fact a fully-developed heroine who will have to bear the burden of raising a child who was abandoned by his or her father. Accordingly, Aeneas is no more the blameless, pious servant, chosen hero of the gods, but a traitor to his own blood. Naturally Dido attempts to make Aeneas feel guilty for his choice, but she takes it to the extreme, revealing a monstrous part of her own identity: "You add the infant's death to the unhappy mother's, / and you'll be author of the funeral of your unborn child" (p. 4). This egregious, disgusting threat serves as testament to Dido's insanity and to her desperation for Aeneas to remain. Dido's madness is clear, but is her willingness to destroy her fetus as a means of revenge indicative of something far more sinister? There is no precedent in the *Aeneid* to conclude that Dido is evil, yet Ovid's suggestion that fierce hopelessness can bring about wickedness is deeply intriguing. Despite the discussion of the prose, forcing a reexamination of Dido, as well as of Aeneas. This stark deviation from the Vergilian account therefore merits praise for the powerful elements it adds to Dido's character; Vergil's poem would be more powerful had he pursued this route.

Loyal scholars of Vergil might label Ovid a plagiarist, yet it was Ovid's duty to reconstruct Dido. Vergil created an enormous contradiction in his own work when he belittled a fully-developed character by using her to merely explain history. In many instances the Aeneid does not reflect the intended will of Augustus, so why did Vergil choose to vulgarize Dido for such a purpose? Considering that the desired objective of the work was to please the patron Emperor, Vergil's distaste for the commission may have affected the quality of his writing. In any case, the literature of the ancient world is notorious for the low quality and poverty of its representations of women; thanks be to Ovid for giving Dido the fully developed portrayal she deserves. To be fair to Vergil, he does give the Queen just treatment during her death. Even though it was considered by the Greeks and Romans to be a dishonorable act, Dido's manner of suicide reveals a key component of her character, (however partially romantic and overheated) which is recognized by both Vergil and Ovid. Dido was a great and powerful queen, mired in tragedy, who against much opposition established a proud and glorious city and people. It is therefore only fitting that she has the death of a hero—one by the sword.

# PETER J. SCHWARTZ Formulating a Thesis ... or, Chaos and Cosmos<sup>1</sup>

Thesis (n): A proposition laid down or stated, esp. as a theme to be discussed and proved, or to be maintained against attack [...] a statement, assertion, tenet. From Greek  $\theta \dot{\epsilon} \sigma i \varsigma$  putting, placing; a proposition, affirmation, etc. (source: *Oxford English Dictionary*)

ince the beginning of time, people have tried to make statements about the world..." No, wait, sorry, that was an early draft. Let's try this instead:

n the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep... And God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day."

Okay, I'd say that's a better way to begin. But I didn't write this, so I should footnote it: Genesis 1:1-2 (NRSV). So now let me revise my thesis:

"Since the beginning of recorded literary history, people have used language to try to make statements about the world; like the author(s) of Genesis, they have understood the act of making such statements as a matter of using language to make distinctions, of marking differences, in order to make a cosmos out of chaos."

Of course, we in the Core know that Genesis is not the beginning of literary history. Here for example is something much older: "When above the

A lecture delivered at a plenary session on writing for the students of CCI02, Core Hu-I manities II: Antiquity and the Medieval World, on February 18, 2016.

heaven had not (yet) been named, / (And) below the earth had not (yet) been called by a name; / (When) Apsû primeval, their begetter, / Mummu, and Tiamat, she who gave birth to them all, / (Still) mingled their waters together, / And no pasture land had been formed (and) not (even) a reed marsh was to be seen; / When none of the (other) gods had been brought into being, / (When) they had not (yet) been called by (their) names, and their name(s and their destinies) had not (yet) been fixed, / (At that time) were the gods created within them. / Lahmu and Lahâmu came into being; they were called by (their) names."<sup>2</sup> That's from the *Enuma Eliš* (I.I-IO), the ancient Sumerian cosmognony or creation myth upon which the first lines of Genesis are clearly based; same tradition as Gilgamesh. It seems the ancient Sumerians thought, like the Hebrews, that naming and worldmaking had something to do with each other.

Once again, I may need to revise my thesis. But first, a Core-inspired reflection.

These two cosmogonic narratives seem at first to leave creation to deities. But if you keep in mind, first, that these texts are, as texts, *human* artifacts, things made by people; and second, if you note that the Lord of Genesis gave *man* the power of *naming* the things in the world: "So out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name" (Genesis 2:19); and third, if you stop to think that texts such as these have been used by humans for ages in order to order their sense of the world, then I think you will understand how Genesis and *Enuma Eliš*, as artifacts of ordered language, both *represent* and *enact* the making, by humans, in language, of cosmos—an ordered universe—out of chaos—disorder.

As a theme in the Core, this should sound familiar. I'll give more examples. Let's fast-forward a thousand years, and four weeks in our syllabus—"In the beginning was the word." That's from the Gospel of John (I:I); the Evangelist's

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis: The Story of Creation*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 18.

word for "word" is  $\lambda \delta \gamma o \zeta$ , logos.

Or take Aristotle: "Those who regulate their desires and actions by a rational principle will greatly benefit from a knowledge of [the] subject [of ethics]" (*NE* 1095a10-12).<sup>3</sup> *His* word for "rational principle" is *logos*, whose fundamental meaning, according to his translator Martin Ostwald, is "speech,' statement,' in the sense of a coherent and rational arrangement of words; but it can apply to a rational principle underlying many things."<sup>4</sup>

Or we could visit cc202 and watch Goethe's Faust reinterpret the Gospel of John: "In the beginning was the *act*." What, *not* the word, but the act? Yes: the *act of writing the word*, of producing our human cosmos through language: *logos* understood in a humanist sense, as a *human* act.<sup>5</sup>

Or we could ask Confucius, who's very concerned to name—to define things correctly: "Let the ruler be a ruler; the subject, a subject; the father, a father; the son, a son." In his historical moment of chaos, the stakes of a failure at naming are really quite high; indeed, it's a matter of survival: "If indeed the ruler is not a ruler, the subject not a subject, the father not a father, the son not a son, then although there is grain, how will I be able to eat it?" (*Analects* 12.11).<sup>6</sup>

Or, finally, take Lao Tzu, who describes such distinctions as this while also rejecting them: "Tao called Tao is not Tao" (*Tao Te Ching* 1); "Is and isn't produce each other" (2).<sup>7</sup> This description of how language works is correct. In language, where most of us live, most of the time, "is" and "isn't" produce

<sup>3</sup> Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, trans. & with an introduction and notes by Martin Ostwald (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999), 6.

<sup>4</sup> Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, 6n10.

<sup>&</sup>quot;It says: 'In the beginning was the Word.' / Already I am stopped. It seems absurd. / The Word does not deserve the highest prize, / I must translate it otherwise / If I am well inspired and not blind. / It says: in the beginning was the Mind. / Ponder that first line, wait and see, / Lest you should write too hastily. / Is mind the all-creating source? / It ought to say: In the beginning there was Force. / Yet something warns me as I grasp the pen, / That my translation must be changed again. / The spirit helps me. Now it is exact, / I write: In the beginning was the Act. " Goethe's *Faust*, lines 1224-37, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Anchor, 1961), 153. *The Analects of Confucius*, trans. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 82.

<sup>7</sup> Lao-Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, trans. Stephen Addiss and Stanley Lombardo, Introduction by Burton Watson (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993).

each other: "hard," as a concept, depends on "easy," as its antithesis, just as, say, "high" is determined by "low," or "white" by "black"; likewise, the initial cut to raw stone, or smooth wood, determines the possible subsequent cuts that will yield a shaped sculpture, while the first word from your mouth in a conversation, your first sentence upon a blank page, determines, restricts, *enables* all subsequent discourse.<sup>8</sup> For a blank page is chaos, the unlimited possibility of all things, without direction, intention or meaning; your first sentence is the beginning of creation, your separation of heaven from earth, your naming of what you intend to discuss and distinction of this from what you do not, your first day of worldmaking.

Because, you see, the beauty part is that we, your teachers, are asking you not just to *read* about this, but to *do* it—to make your own ordered worlds, to make cosmos on paper. For that is what writing is: the *creation*, by humans, of order from chaos, of pages of prose from a *tohuwabohu*, a *naqbu<sup>9</sup>* of inchoate thoughts, impressions, insights, feelings, convictions, and life experience. We are doing no less than to ask you to make cosmos from chaos, to create new worlds. Not that you need to be asked, since this is the ongoing task of all life: making entropy into order, as well and as long as we can. We all know that entropy wins in the end, but also that what we make can resist it, and sometimes survive it.

This is why, in the *Arabian Nights*, you have Scheherazade telling tales to an angry king to delay her own death. This is why, in Boccaccio's *Decameron*, you have seven women and three men removing themselves from the plagueridden city of Florence, from an urban cosmos in social collapse, to set up a well-ordered, graceful alternative world of language and beauty. Like Scheherazade, these men and women use narrative against death, recounting a hun-

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Niklas Luhmann, *Art as a Social System*, trans. Eva M. Knodt (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 26-36.

<sup>9</sup> Heb. tōhū wā-bōhū: Gen. 1:1, "without form and void," "a formless waste" (*The Anchor Bi-ble: Genesis*, trans. with an introduction and notes by E.A. Speiser (Garden City, NY: Double-day, 1964), 5n2; Akk. *naqbu*, "the deep" (*Epic of Gilgamesh*, Tablet 1, line 1: *Sha naqba imuru*, "He who saw the Deep") may mean either the "deep body of underground water believed to supply springs and wells, that is, the cosmic realm of Ea better known as the Apsû," or "totality." *Gilgamesh: A New English Version*, trans. Stephen Mitchell (New York: Free Press, 2004), 230.

dred stories in well-ordered language over the course of ten days, one story per day per person, following rules of comportment, bounding themselves against social and physical disintegration. And then we have Shakespeare, whose sonnets promise eternal life, in language at least, to his—alas!—merely mortal beloved: "Nor shall Death brag thou wand'rest in his shade / When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st. / So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, / So long lives this, and this gives life to thee" (Sonnet XVIII).<sup>10</sup>

So now you know why your professors treat misplaced apostrophes (it's!), the word "relatable," and "Since the beginning of time..." like the end of the world: to us, such errors feel like the seams at which cosmos turns into chaos. I'll confess that I, too, am inclined to side with Confucius on this, at least in principle: I don't like to sit on a mat that's not straight, I don't like to drink lattes from paper cups, and I am possibly unduly irked by a sentence that doesn't quite say what it means to say, that violates order in grammar or usage, that departs too much—or, really, at all!—from its very significant task of *creation*, of making order from chaos. In this sense at least, a misplaced comma really *is* a disordered world.

To be sure, a well-ordered world is a goal, not an expectation—it always has been. Sometimes you need to sit down, and a crooked mat is all you've got. "[W]e should *try* to become immortal as far as that is possible and do our utmost to live in accordance with what is highest in us," says our friend Aristotle (*NE* 1177b34-36). Yet even he seems to admit that humans can never be quite as gods: the life of the man supremely happy by virtue of the activity of his intelligence "would be more than human" (*NE* 1177b27). In other words, the conquest of chaos involves constant effort; it's an ongoing process, one never completed, and maybe never completely successful—which is not to say that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Shakespeare, Sonnet XVIII: "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? / Thou art more lovely and more temperate. / Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, / And summer's lease hath all too short a date. / Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines, / And often is his gold complexion dimmed; / And every fair from fair sometime declines, / By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimmed; / But thy eternal summer shall not fade, / Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st, / Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade, / When in eternal lines to Time thou grow'st. / So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see, / So long lives this, and this gives life to thee. "

it's not worth doing.

That was an aside, and a long one, but I hope useful, because it suggests why my thesis *matters*. Half of the reason I did all that was to *convince you* that my thesis matters, and half was to *show you* that part of the *work* of a thesis—any thesis—is to convince one's readers or listeners that it matters. My thesis at this point is that *it's important for you to use language well, and I've got evidence to back that up*.

So why didn't I just come out and say this up top, thesis-statement style? "Hello, scholars, let me tell you: It's important to use language well."—For a couple of reasons. One, you would yawn. It's a boring way to say the thing; it's obvious, you've heard it before, and it's exactly what you would expect me to say, after which you might just fall asleep as I droned on with horror stories about spelling mistakes on resumés. Instead I took my time with it, played around some. You can play too, if it serves your purpose. Your thesis, contention, hypothesis does not have to come as your very first sentence, and it does not have to take the form of a statement; there can be better ways to draw people in than to show all your cards right up front. So why did I do what I did—open with a bad sentence, revise it, pull it through texts you have read to make my argument clearer?

First, to amuse you: I want your attention; that's one way to get it. Ancient Roman rhetorical theory has a technical term for this: *captatio benevolentiae*, capturing your benevolence, "a rhetorical technique aimed to capture the goodwill of the audience at the beginning of a speech or appeal."<sup>II</sup> This is one trick you'll want to keep in mind; call it a hook, if you like.

Second, I wanted to situate my argument on common ground, to make you feel that what I am saying has continuity with things you've already been thinking, to say, in effect: You know this already, let me show you in what way you know it, so I can show you in what ways you don't. Another form of *captatio*, maybe: making you feel at home, doing my best to gauge what you know and to match how I argue to that. Which, incidentally, is something you always want to do when you're writing: gauge where your audience is, what they might

<sup>11</sup> https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captatio\_benevolentiae, accessed 2/13/16.

care about, what you share, and what still needs to be explained.

The third reason's slightly more complicated. Let me put it this way. What's the enduring attraction of "Since the beginning of time..."? "Since the beginning of time, people have tried to make statements about the world" is a crappy opening. You all know that. Why do people feel tempted to start things with sentences like that? Let's go back to the problem of worldmaking. I believe it's the unmarked white page, the frightening chaos of unlimited possibility, the deer-in-headlights question: What's my first sentence?—Who, me? How do I say to my readers, indeed to myself, what I mean to talk about? How do I let people know it's a *thing*, and a thing worth your reading me writing about?—"From the beginning of time" leans on solid authority—it's hard to top God!—Repeating his act of creation, it says, or suggests: "The thing I am writing about, that thing *exists*—it has existed since things have existed; therefore, you, the impatient reader (and I, the insecure writer) cannot possibly doubt its significance."

Problem is, that's some heavy artillery; you don't need to borrow so much authority to validate saying what you want to say, and indeed your act of doing so makes you look weak, insecure, unsure of *own* authority—quite the opposite of what you want. It's hard to be God, to create, but the fact is, *you* are the god of your three-page or six-page world: you have the right to say: "Let there be *this argument - this* is my thesis."

So suppose you begin your paper by writing: "I've decided to talk about Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*, and what interests me in the *Ethics* is the thesis that 'we should try to become immortal as far as that is possible and do our utmost to live in accordance with what is highest in us." Not so good either, and I see you wince: all your teachers to date have said "Don't use the first person pronoun—never say 'I'." In fact, the rule is not absolute, it's a convention—but there are good *reasons* why it's a convention, and thus good reasons to keep it in mind. If you write "I've decided to talk about Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*, and what interests me in the *Ethics* is X," this invites your reader to ask: "Why should *I* care what interests *you*?" Unless you're a Very Important Person whose tastes or opinions or whims I might care about simply because you are you—and even then—I'd like an argument, not an opinion. I want reasoning

that will persuade me *because it's persuasive*, that will interest me *because it's interesting*—reasoning, description, narration, explanation that is objective and not subjective. In fact, the more authority you establish with objective argument, the more credit you'll have with your reader and thus the more leeway to use the word "I"—but that's a matter of tact, or shall we say: practical wisdom.

So how *do* we say "I've decided to talk about the *Ethics*" without saying "*I've* decided to talk about the *Ethics*"? How about this: "In the *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle argues that 'we should try to become immortal as far as that is possible"? It's a little bit boring, but it does the trick. It says this: "I am writing about the *Ethics*—about this here idea in the *Ethics*—and the fact that I'm doing this implies of itself that the matter is interesting." *This thing exists and I'm writing about it*. 'Nuff said. It isn't really far off from the Lord of Genesis, who doesn't say "I think this place could use some light," but: "Let there be light." Such a sentence makes you, the writer, present as a directing force and an authority, not as a character: "Let there be this discussion. It will be about this, and not about everything else."

This first distinction, you have to admit, makes it much easier to deal with your blank white page: your first sentence will always severely restrict the range of things that the second can be about, the second sentence will make the third that much easier, and so on—which is why, within reason, it's a better idea just to start than just to *think* about where you could start. (You can always revise.)—That goes for all sorts of things, not just writing.

So where was I, what's next? Let me continue with my thesis, which is you'll have noticed—not a single sentence: "In the *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle argues that 'we should try to become immortal, as far as that is possible, and do our utmost to live in accordance with what is highest in us' (*NE* 1179b34-36). Yet even he seems to admit that humans can never be quite as gods: the life of the man supremely happy by virtue of the activity of his intelligence 'would be more than human' (*NE* 1177b27). Can humans be more than human, or are they doomed to unfruitful attempts to approximate the Divine?" *Sentence r*: Here's a statement. *Sentence 2*: Here's something that seems to contradict it. *Sentence 3*: A rhetorical question suggesting what may be at stake in a resolution of the contradiction: Is the contemplative life possible, or impossible? Should we keep trying, or give up now? Here, now, is a *sentence 4* qualifying the point, and a *sentence 5* making it clear what's been changed in the line of my argument:

"Aristotle refines the point: 'A man who would live [such a life] would do so not insofar as he is human, but because there is a divine element within him. [...] [I]f it is true that intelligence is divine in comparison with man, then a life guided by intelligence is divine in comparison with human life. We must not follow those who advise us to have human thoughts, since we are <only> men, and mortal thoughts, as mortals should; on the contrary, we should try to become immortal, as far as that is possible, and do our utmost to live in accordance with what is highest in us' (*NE* 1179b29-36). In other words, divinity is possible as a goal, a direction, a guiding star, asymptotically, not as something that can be arrived at—and this does not detract from its value."

That, I think, is a thesis, albeit with several parts.<sup>12</sup> It's more than one sentence, and it takes time-although not too much-to get where it's going. Let me put on my Germanist's cap and read this as an example of dialectical reasoning-though perhaps in fact less in the manner of Hegel than in that of Aristotle, who pioneered such reasoning. Sentence 1, what we can call the thesis: "Here's a statement." Sentence 2, antithesis: "Here's something that seems to contradict it." Sentences 3, 4 and 5, resolution of thesis and antithesis into a synthesis, which can then work as a more complex thesis. My more complex thesis-my first attempt at synthesis-is, at this point, the recognition that "there's a tension between the aspiration to live a contemplative life and its possibility, and Aristotle both recognizes the tension and suggests that it should not stop us from doing our best to resolve it." Now my paper can take things from here. It could agree with Aristotle, or disagree with him; my sentence 6 could run: "Indeed, one could say a life lived for a higher, if unattainable, goal is a happier life," or conversely: "Yet one could say that frustration is hardly divine; perhaps contemplation is not quite the answer." This is an example of what Maria Gapotchenko, in her talk earlier this semester, called a

In fact, it was not clear to me that the final sentence of this passage is (strictly speaking) my thesis until students and colleagues pointed this out to me in the Q & A session after I presented this talk for CCI02—further proof that it may take a writer some time to discover the nature of his own argument!

"two-way conclusion," reminding us that such conclusions are always an opening for further thinking—effectively, a new thesis. My conclusion, now, could go roughly in one of two ways (some people go both ways). Whichever way it will be, I've established a *vector*—that is to say, forward motion, and a limited range of directions my writing could go—as well as a *program*: that is, a clear sense of what sort of questions I mean to address. I've also begun a procedure of *exploration*: I haven't led with a statement I think to be true and have only to prove.

I may possibly think there's a right answer to my question, but stating that baldly up front has two downsides. One, it's offputting: as with using the first person plural, why should your reader respond to your statement "I think this!" with anything but "Yeah? Who cares?" Two, and I think more important, you don't want to short-circuit your own process of discovery; you don't want to block exploration with certainty in advance. Ask your text a question, your text will answer-if you listen carefully-and the answer may not be what you expected; in fact, it's unlikely to be what's expected. The text itself will argue with your interpretation of it, and help you to get it right. It will also lead you to questions you hadn't thought of-new questions, new answers, new questions. But this can't happen unless you listen to your material: your texts, your own sentences, your thinking processes, your own excitements and irritations. Listen to all of that honestly, see where it takes you. That's really the joy of writing, because writing's a process of thinking. If you believe that you know in advance what you think and just stick to that, well then pretty much all you can do is repeat what you said the first time, without ever a single new thought. And that's *really* dull.

Which brings me to one more thesis. -No, two.

#### Thesis One:

You already know that when you want to say something about a text, you'll want to quote text to prove it. I'd like to add: if you want to quote something, write it out; don't cut and paste it. Writing it out is like walking through a landscape; reading is like flying over it; cutting and pasting is maybe like booking a flight on Expedia.<sup>13</sup> Writing it out, you'll see and appreciate details in real time, in thinking-time, and that means you'll notice things that could correct your initial impression of what's going on there, which—trust me—is almost always inaccurate; flying over it, cutting and pasting all you will see is what you thought you saw, and little will happen to change that. To put the matter in natural-science terms: you need to allow your data to correct your hypothesis; only then will your hypothesis fit the data. That means, in effect, that your thesis may always be changing, and you need to let that happen.

#### Thesis Two, which follows from Thesis One:

The order in which you discover things may not be the order in which they will best make sense to your reader. A written account of your process of exploration may not really achieve the shape of an argument, a clear explanation, or even an adequate description; in fact, it probably won't. This means that often there comes a time in the process of writing when you'll have to *completely reorganize everything*. That's roughly the moment when you discover, while writing—while in the midst of your exploration—just what it is you've been trying to say. At which point much of what you'll already have done may suddenly feel

<sup>&</sup>quot;The power of a country road when one is walking along it is different from the power 13 it has when one is flying over it by airplane. In the same way, the power of a text when it is read is different from the power it has when it is copied out. The airplane passenger sees only how the road pushes through the landscape, how it unfolds according to the same laws as the terrain surrounding it. Only he who walks the road on foot learns of the power it commands, and of how, from the very scenery that for the flier is only the unfurled plain, it calls forth distances, belvederes, clearings, prospects at each of its turns like a commander deploying soldiers at a front. Only the copied text thus commands the soul of him who is occupied with it, whereas the mere reader never discovers the new aspects of his inner self that are opened by the text, that road cut through the interior jungle forever closing behind it: because the reader follows the movement of his mind in the free flight of daydreaming, whereas the copier submits it to command. The Chinese practice of copying books was thus an incomparable guarantee of literary culture, and the transcript a key to China's enigmas." Walter Benjamin, "Chinese Curios," One-Way Street, trans. Edmund Jephcott, in Selected Writings, Volume 1, 1913-1926, ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1996), 447-8.

useless and stupid. Don't panic—it isn't useless and stupid; at least, not all of it is. Still, you will need to restructure, and cut, and tweak, and trash prose and find quotes and rethink, and that can be painful. Really, it can be excruciating, and in the timeframes we give you in college not always possible. Ideally, you need to push through this to excavate your own thesis, discover your real line of argument, and restructure your text to argue it cleanly and strongly. This is what writing teachers do with students' first drafts: we look at your papers and try to divine what you're *trying* to do, then advise you on how you might reorder things so as really to *do* it in a second draft. This is called *editing*, and you can and should learn to do it without us; our job is to show you how.

I think I am reaching an end, which means I should maybe talk some about conclusions. You know your conclusion should follow, somehow, from your thesis. "In summary, let me repeat in my final paragraph what I've been saying all along." Yes, that's intensely boring, I don't know what your high schools were thinking. Of course, if you've been exploring, you haven't been "saying it all along." Your thesis may not simply be your first sentence up top, though we do hope you've let your reader know early on where you meant to go. Your thesis is something developing in clearly-marked parts *all along* your path of discovery, or of argument.

One very good way of letting your reader know where you mean to go is to choose a good title. Let me repeat that: *You need a title*, and one way or another *it needs to state your intention*. I guess that's *another* thesis. Let me argue it. What was my title? "Formulating a Thesis." Because I declared as much, you've known all along that that's what I came here to talk about; every time that I've used the word "thesis" I expect you've thought "Yes, this is about formulating a thesis," and during my tangents I figure you've wondered—I'm hoping productively—how is *this* about theses? As I wrote this talk, I constantly asked myself the same question: Is *this* about formulating a thesis?—And how about *this*? The title's worked all along—for me and for you—as a check, or a gauge, or a measure, of whether I've done what I set out to do: that is, to talk with you about formulating theses. Looking back, I can see that I've given you a definition and practical tips and some ways of thinking about the problem, plus all along I've been modeling *making theses*—some bad, some good. I've also suggested what is at stake in clear formulations and what may be spooking you about making them, and encouraged you to view your theses as *hypotheses*—that is, as questions to texts and as explanations of data that allow the data itself to correct them. I'm not sure I've done everything I could do in the way of prescribing a positive method for making theses, but I'm not sure there *is* one, or *only* one; you need to develop your thesis from your material. Which is to say: from the occasion and from your own needs—from *this* text or *this* work of art or *this* thing in the world, from something that bothers you or intrigues you, something you feel you would like to disprove, or explore, or clarify for yourself, even if maybe you're not quite sure why. Trust your gut to identify what that thing is, then use your mind to explore it. Ask the text a question that *matters* to you, and let it answer. Why bother, otherwise? You're not doing this for *my* sake.

So in sum I think I'm satisfied with my title. The title is not just a matter of hooking the reader or of truth in advertising, though it's surely that too; it's also a check on whether I've done what I set out to do. If I had called this talk "Starting a Paper," that would have fit some parts, but hardly others; I'd have seen a need to change either the talk or the title, and seeing the need automatically diagnoses the mismatch of my intention to the real outcome; it shows me there's something wrong.

But now, my conclusion. My thesis, which took several forms in the course of my talk—that is, what I have argued—works out in total to this:

Since the beginning of recorded literary history, people have used language to try to make statements about the world; traditionally, they have understood the act of making such statements as a matter of using language to make distinctions, of marking differences, of making a cosmos out of chaos. This may reflect an eternal tension, in human life, of a necessity of making order with the forces that work against it—including, especially, entropy, and, at the limit, death. In Aristotle's *Ethics*, concern with this tension takes the form of a recognition that although we are only human and thus only mortal, yet "we should try to become immortal, as far as that is possible, and do our utmost to live in accordance with what is highest in us"—which means, roughly, that we should do our best to make order through "the activity of our intelligence," for such activity "constitutes the complete happiness of man, provided that it encompasses a complete span of life" (*NE* 1177b23-25). In other words, we should do our best to make order and sense as long as we can, however difficult that may be; because *order is life*, even though it can't last and will never be perfect. When you are writing, you participate in this process, in this very long human tradition of making cosmos from chaos—of setting the mats straight, and of refusing to sit on the crooked ones. Like Aristotle, Confucius, Lao Tzu and so many others, you are doing this—making a livable order—both for yourselves and for the human race as a whole. That's why it *matters*: what you say, what you write, the questions you ask, the answers you find, how you put things. For in the beginning was *logos*—language as act: every sentence orders the world. It's *your* choice how you order your world, but you need to think with some care about how to *create* order, and thinking, we know, is a process. I hope I have helped with that process.

## **ANALECTS OF THE CORE**

Dante Alighieri: "Beauty awakens the soul to act."

Allen Miller wrote this short poem on the blue book he turned in with his Fall 2015 CC 203 final exam, titled "A Haiku for Core." It reads:

this was a long test i hope you have a nice break my hand really hurts.

# Gilgamesh in Kallipolis?

odern Western societies assign a superlative value to freedom of speech and expression, believing these rights to be essential for guaranteeing political self-determination and popular participation in government. However, Western civilization has not always been so open to these democratic values; in fact, the eminent Greek philosopher Socrates, as portrayed by his student Plato in the Republic, argues that the socially liberal attitudes promoted by artistic and creative liberty introduce faction and decadence into civil entities and exert corrosive effects on the morality of individuals and communities. Thus, in the verbal construction of his ideal city Kallipolis, Socrates advocates not only censorship of contemporary artists and writers but also retroactive revision and prohibition of philosophically "offensive" material in religious texts and masterworks by great literary craftsmen such as Homer. In a society where cultural expression is forcefully wedded to a strict set of philosophical values, would the Mesopotamian Epic of Gilgamesh withstand the scrupulous scrutiny of fastidious censors or be cast aside as an example of a work which fails to instill the proper values in its readers? Although the ultimate messages conveyed by Gilgamesh, namely that death is not to be feared and the good of the city surpasses and validates individual life and will, are very much in conformity with Socratic principles, its specific narrative details and epic art form would require revision in order to properly adhere to the laws of Kallipolis.

The overarching messages of *Gilgamesh* strongly coincide with Socratic principles integral to the foundation of Kallipolis. Socrates argues that guardians cannot be effective in service to the community when handicapped by fear of death: "Do you think that anyone becomes courageous if he has that fear [of death] in his heart?" (*Republic* 3.386a.7-b.1). Gilgamesh's pursuit of immortality may be ultimately unsuccessful in achieving its original goal—namely, the bodily evasion of death—but after losing the magical plant granting eternal life on his homeward journey, the king is forced to come to terms with his unavoidable demise. He realizes that death's inevitability does not obliterate the value of life but rather suggests that each individual's miniscule life can be immortalized in service of a greater entity, the city. It is this realization—that while each person's solitary life may seem fleeting and insignificant, the sum of these lives working in harmony for the development and betterment of a greater social organization can in fact achieve a certain degree of historical immortality—which forms the crux of Gilgamesh's reconciliation with his own frail humanity.

Although this process of self-discovery takes a decidedly different narrative course than does Socrates' dry dialectic argumentation in the *Republic*, the authors' conclusions are so surprisingly similar that, if considered on the basis of moral takeaway alone, *Gilgamesh* would be readily admitted into Kallipolis as an ethically affirming and virtue-instilling document. One could also draw plausible parallels between the philosopher's intellectual journey from ignorance to enlightenment and Gilgamesh's physical journey to visit Utnapishtim in hopes of discovering the secret to eternal life. The moral takeaway of *Gilgamesh*, although discovered through a very different process than philosophical dialogue, exhibits surprisingly profound harmony with the Socratic principles employed in constructing the ideal theoretical city of Kallipolis.

Although the general messages communicated in *Gilgamesh* are largely compatible with the Socratic precepts expressed in the *Republic*, specific passages and narrative details within the story would certainly require serious revision, if not total removal, in order to conform to Kallipolitan regulations. For instance, Socrates vehemently criticizes the sensitizing influence which emotional outbursts by heroes and gods in literature might exert on impressionable young guardians:

If our young people listen seriously to these stories without ridiculing them...none of them is going to consider such things to be unworthy of a mere human being like himself....he would chant many dirges and laments at the slightest sufferings. (*Republic* 3.388d.I-6)

One example Socrates discusses is Achilles' reaction to the death of his

dearest companion Patroclus, where Homer makes the near-invincible warrior restlessly traverse the seashore in distress and "pick up ashes with both hands and pour them over his head, weeping and lamenting" (Plato Republic 3.388b.I-2).

Achilles' behavior in this episode is strikingly similar to Gilgamesh's when confronted by the pitiable death of his closest friend Enkidu:

Gilgamesh wandered in the wilderness grieving over the death of Enkidu and weeping. (*Gilgamesh* 48)

Gilgamesh sheds his royal attire in exchange for an animal skin (*Gilgamesh* 54), an outward transformation reflecting the inward havoc wrought by the close and tragic proximity of his friend's death to his own waning life. Of course, for Socrates, this behavior—especially coming from a demigod king, two-thirds divine by birth—is completely unbecoming of his character and psychologically damaging to readers, encouraging hysteria rather than rationally detached coolness in the face of tragedy. Such passages would have to be altered in order to be consistent with Kallipolitan law.

Furthermore, portrayal of the gods as anything but the perfect ideal of steadfast morality to which humans aspire is essentially considered blasphemy by Socrates, and *Gilgamesh* violates his strict standards many times throughout its narrative by portraying the gods as deeply flawed, emotionally unbalanced and ruled by faction and turmoil. It is worth noting that this divine privilege of constantly maintained perfection largely extends to demigods as well (*Republic* 3.391a-392a)—Gilgamesh himself was a demigod and therefore similar rules would apply to him, raising further problems due to his imperfect portrayal in the poem. Gilgamesh's utter depravity at the beginning of the story, where his soul is thoroughly dominated by tyrannical impulses, would certainly raise Socrates' ire as does Homer's portrayal of Achilles in his illiberality, pettiness and arrogance.

*Gilgamesh* treats the gods in a manner sharply divergent from the guidelines Socrates demands, particularly in its very negative portrayal of Ishtar, 66

the goddess of fertility. Socrates argues that positive portrayal of the gods is imperative in developing a moral citizenry: "Indeed, we must not allow any stories about gods warring, fighting or plotting against one another if we want the guardians of our city to think that it is shameful to be easily provoked into mutual hatred" (Republic 2.378b.8-10). Gods are not the cause of all things, "as the masses claim," but only the cause of the small number of things that are good, since they themselves are immutably good (2.379c.2-5). Upon reading Gilgamesh it is obvious that the poem violates nearly all of these criteria. The gods are shown in council arguing over the fate of Enkidu and Gilgamesh; there is obvious tension between Shamash, the sun-god who protects the two heroes, and Enlil, god of breath and wind (Gilgamesh 37); Ishtar threatens to "go / to the underworld and break its doors and let / the hungry dead come out and eat the living" unless her father allows her to send the Bull of Heaven to punish Gilgamesh (32). Ishtar herself is the antithesis of the Socratic ideal of the gods: she is wicked, foul, lustful and cruel, vengefully visiting evil upon the hero she fails to seduce. Whereas men in Kallipolis are expected to faithfully follow righteous gods, self-righteous Gilgamesh rejects the will of the evil goddess, a reversal of moral authority which the poet portrays as admirable rather than perverse. The gods are the cause of a number of misfortunes, sending the Bull of Heaven to terrorize Uruk, cursing Gilgamesh and striking down Enkidu with disease. Gilgamesh's portrayal of overpowering emotions and imperfect gods clearly violate Socrates' rules for proper artistic expression and therefore would need to be altered to accommodate the laws of Kallipolis.

It is impossible to ignore the fact that the very art form which defines *Gilgamesh*—epic poetry—was unrelentingly attacked by Socrates in the *Republic*. Although he admits a "sort of reverential love" for the great Greek poet Homer (*Republic* 10.595b.9), Socrates attacks poetry (as well as art in general) as being irredeemably imitative—the imitation of an imitation, as he claims, useless for the education or edification of the soul and emotionally inflammatory. In Socrates' view, such derivative work, concerned only with copying the already-diluted images of sensible reality, is incapable of accurately grasping the truth of "what is" or true essence underlying all things. To extend his famous "allegory of the cave" (*Republic* 7.514a.1-520a.5), art and poetry are essentially the sub-

terranean prisoners' attempts at copying or describing the shadows on the wall, their final products consequently removed a further degree from the world of forms. Therefore, Gilgamesh would have to be severely altered or possibly rewritten, translated into prose and stripped of overly emotional and explicitly blasphemous passages, before gaining admittance into Socrates' "beautiful city."

While its objectionable narrative content and epic art form would disqualify *Gilgamesh* from inclusion in Kallipolitan education or entertainment, its ultimate message certainly conforms elegantly to the lessons Socrates hoped the city's culture would help instill in its guardian class. It is a testament to its internal consistency and integrity as well as its repressive ideology that Kallipolis would prohibit a work of such simple beauty and emotional power from dissemination and performance within its walls. As contemporary Western society grapples with culture wars and complex questions concerning the ethics, value and definition of art, (not to mention its possible social and behavioral repercussions,) Socrates' vision of Kallipolis stands as an educational yet terrifying example of the consequences of unlimited governmental control over free speech and expression.

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## **ANALECTS OF THE CORE**

The Prince: "It is much safer to be feared than loved."

Petrarch: "To make a graceful act of revenge, / and punish a thousand wrongs in a single day, / Love secretly took up his bow again, / like a man who waits the time and place to strike."



#### KYNA HAMILL & JUSTIN LIEVANO

# "Twang Goes the Core"

a country/folk music playlist for Core, curated collaboratively with the experience of an elder & the vigor of a youth

1. Ryan Bingham: "Hard Times" // Mescalito, 2007

#### Professor James Uden writes: >>

"It's the same pain in different ways," says the father to his son in Ryan Bingham's plaintive 'Hard Times' (2007). The father is one of the weary desperadoes in the West Texas setting created by Bingham; but, he could just as well be Aeneas, who tells his own son to learn hard work from him and good fortune from others (*Aeneid* 12.595-6). Sung with a gritty, weathered voice that seems to have lived an entire life apart from the singer's 26-year-old body, 'Hard Times' celebrates the same world of struggle as Vergil's great poem."

- 2. Grimes: "California" // Art Angels, 2015
- Johnny Cash singing "Man Gave Names To All The Animals" by Bob Dylan // Johnny Cash Christmas Special, 1981
- 4. Bonnie Rait: "Something to Talk About" // Luck of the Draw, 1991

#### Professor Kyna Hamill writes: >>

"Sometimes I think that all broken-hearted love songs could relate to Dido and Aeneas after he leaves Carthage. However, in this song by Bonnie Rait, the gestures of laughing "just a little too long;" standing "just a little too close;" and staring "just a little too long" could also reflect the moments between the lovers leading up to the cave scene. Rumor, as we know, is having a great time in Carthage in the *Aeneid* book IV."

- 5. Greg Laswell: "Comes and Goes" // Three Flights from Alto Nido, 2008
- 6. Kimbra: "Carolina" // The Golden Echo, 2014

- 7. Shania Twain: "Man! I Feel Like A Woman!" // Come on Over, 1997
- 8. Lana del Rey singing "Chelsea Hotel No 2" by Leonard Cohen, 2013
- 9. Mumford & Sons: "Hopeless Wanderer" // Babel, 2013
- 10. Sia: "Where I Belong" // Colour The Small One, 2004

#### Justin Lievano writes >>

How do we find ourselves at the intersection of Australian pop-singer and modern English matron? The character of Mrs. Dalloway represents a kind of older, Victorian ethos that concerns itself with social custom and the success of her party. Though Clarissa finds herself the subject of Peter Walsh's criticism, which shakes her confidence in her way of life, her party is a success; for the day at least, Clarissa's model of living prevails. Her perspective, however, has been altered by Septimus Warren Smith's death. Sia's chorus captures this development from uncertainty (due, perhaps, to judgement) to reassurance.

> *So don't treat me bad just be glad I am strong I know where I belong And soon you will see we are blessed and complete There's a place here for you with me*

Moreover, the final line of the chorus expresses a feeling of familiarity and connection, which reflects the admiration that Clarissa comes to feel for Septimus after learning of his fate.

- 11. Milk Carton Kids singing "Wish You Were Here" by Pink Floyd, 2015
- 12. Bessie Smith singing "Nobody Knows You When You're Down And Out" composed by Jimmie Cox, 1929

#### Professor Kyna Hamill writes >>

"Clapton did a version of this song in his album 'Unplugged' in 1992, but I like this version better. Bessie Smith's voice digs deeply and slowly at the fickle nature of Fortune. Perhaps Machiavelli might find some comfort in this song."

- 13. Johnny Cash singing "Hurt" by Kurt Cobain // Hurt, 2002
- 14. Damien Rice: "The Blower's Daughter" // O, 2003

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- 15. Mark Broussard: "Home" // Carencro, 2004
- 16. Jeff Buckley singing "Hallelujah" by Leonard Cohen // Grace, 1994
- 17. Josh Garrels: "Words Remain" // Jacaranda, 2008
- 18. Hank Williams, Sr.: "I Saw the Light", 1948
- 19. The Avett Brothers: "Morning Song" // Magpie and the Dandelion, 2013
- 20. Bruce Springsteen: "My City of Ruins" // The Rising, 2002
- 21. Billy Bragg: "Ode to Joy", 2009
- 22. Jo-Dee Messina: "Bye Bye" // I'm Alright, 1998

#### Justin Lievano writes >>

"Come with me on an imaginative journey. Picture Elizabeth Bennet as a fire-haired country music star in the late 90s, writing a song about the moment of Darcy's first proposal, in which he confesses that he pushed Bingley away from Jane, and that he loves Elizabeth. Thus, you have 'Bye Bye,' a song about a woman who has had more than enough of a man's tarrying and plainly rejects him. Jo Dee tells her suitor 'I've got pride, I'm taking it for a ride,' which reminds a listener of Elizabeth's line, 'I could easily forgive his pride, if he had not mortified mine.' Though our imagined Elizabeth/Jo Dee hybrid can acknowledge that her suitor has appealing traits ('boy, you sure look good there, standing in the doorway, in the sunset light'), she knows that he is not worth the effort, and is 'leaving with what's left of [her] heart.'"

- 23. Cowboy Junkies: "Misguided Angel" // Trinity Sessions, 1988
- 24. Dolly Parton: "Coat of Many Colors" // Coat of Many Colors, 1971

#### Professor Kyna Hamill writes >>

"Dolly Parton reminds us in her song 'Coat of Many Colors' of Joseph's fancy coat translated as 'ornamented tunic' by Robert Alter in Genesis 37.3. For me, however, I think of the patchwork idiom in Montaigne's *Essays*; of quotes patched together, and ideas reinforced by Montaigne's own idiosyncratic preoccupations. Plus, I'd like to imagine Montaigne in his study with a pair of earphones listening to Dolly's song and eating pizza."
#### JOY LIN

# Poem in the Style of Lao-Tzu

Those who appear to be stupid are not truly stupid. Those who appear to be clever are not truly clever.

Asking after knowing much is called intelligence. Telling without thinking much is called ignorance.

Bending down, Like a full ear of rice.

Shining gently, Like a pearl in the sea.

Therefore the sage, Appears soft and dim.



# Four Sonnets

IX. "For You"

I'm happy for you and him whom you've met To me for you he seems a perfect match The both of you at length I'd place my bet For on the two of you love seems to latch The way your cheeks reflect the longest wave When in his hands your head he slowly takes The way he makes your heart appear so brave Consigning to oblivion your breaks Illuminating all that makes you great Revealing all your beautitudes in kind I'm sure his love is more than simple fate And better than all else that you will find But thus the fable that I tell is through; The truth, my dear, is hiding in plain view

XIV.

The love of fortune finds me not in tow And love of honor lives so far away A love of fame resides in places low While love of pleasure finds no light of day No love of thrill or Argonaut exists Such love of distant lands is distant more And love of power in no way subsists While love of work is naught but simple lore Though some love art, I find no pleasure there Whilst love of wisdom takes no strong control And even love of self I give no care While love of God does nothing for my soul For how can I love anything less true Than that which I have come to know as you?



#### XVII.

Let letters speak for words which cannot speak For voices can seem so errantly dull E'en timbrous voices do sound gravely bleak Compared to this—a ship with writing's hull And though mine may sound sweet when said alone When mixed with others becomes nothing great I shall not praise my own or thus condone The ones who claim a sword o'er pen a trait And tongues can be so brazen or baroque While giving nothing more than canker show But lines can cause emotions which invoke The subtle parries which cause everglow So thus I lay my fame with blackest night Instead of air which any can give flight

#### XIX.

Shall Heaven judge me harshly for my sins? Or Hades reject me for being soft? My state suspends me between these regions And keeps me like the dusk in time aloft I fear that God will see me in such light Believing that my soul cannot repent But surely Hell will not foresee my plight As being worthy of a punishment Denouncing my transgressions gives me naught For judgment on me has ere-fore been passed So finding myself in a trap so caught Unto the wind my fate I thusly cast Yet how can God judge harshly for my thought When loving you is something he begot?

#### ALLEN MILLER

# Hobbes and Non-Contractarian Government

In his book *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes argues that there is a contract made among the governed in which they agree to accept the decisions of a sovereign. In doing so, Hobbes became the originator of social contract theory, which would go on to have enormous influence on other thinkers, such as Locke and Rousseau. However, despite the impact of Hobbes' contribution to social contract theory, applying Hume's criticisms of contract theory to Hobbes' work reveals that Hobbes' government requires little to no consent from its citizens whatsoever. In this essay, I will begin by discussing the state of nature and self-interest before moving on to the obligation of obedience to government and how it is established. I will then conclude by arguing that because the government's power and actions are not affected by consent, a Hobbesian government actually has no need for a social contract.

The first point that is necessary to establish before we can arrive at this conclusion is that there is a difference between the legitimacy of a government and the presence of an obligation to obey that government. Brownsey directly targets this statement, starting by acknowledging Hume's question, "Can we seriously say, that a poor peasant or artisan has a free choice to leave his country, when he knows no foreign language or manners, and lives, from day to day, by the small wages which he acquires?" (Hume para. 24). Brownsey agrees that the practical inability of many people to leave their country shows that today's governments must be illegitimate by contract theory, but also notes that, "the idea that most actual governments are *not* legitimate would, by most people, take some getting used to. But the fact that a thought is startling should not be taken for a refutation" (Brownsey 133). Thus Brownsey agrees that most governments are not legitimate as defined by the social contract theory, but also notes that its people are not parties to a tacit social contract, it may yet have rightful authority over

them" (Brownsey 135). Brownsey later goes on to add, however, that "it must be acknowledged that to establish a moral obligation to obey government is not to establish rightful authority" (Brownsey 144-145). Therefore, if we accept that most governments are illegitimate by Hume's theory, we have two possibilities: either there is never an obligation to obey government or there must be a measure other than legitimacy that determines obligation to obey.

Here we can apply this question to Hobbes to find the solution. Hume actually agrees with Hobbes in his opinion of the state of nature, saying, "In reality, there is not a more terrible event than a total dissolution of government, which gives liberty to the multitude," (Hume para. 14). Hobbes more directly states that "men have no pleasure, but on the contrary a great deal of grief, in keeping company where there is no power able to over-awe them all" (Hobbes 75). It is logical to assume that no individual would want to be in perpetual grief and fear, so it would be best to try to leave this state of nature, if only for the individual's own benefit. Hobbes argues that this is in fact a general rule of reason, that "every man ought to endeavor peace, as far as he has hope of obtaining it, and when he cannot obtain it, that he may seek and use all helps and advantages of war" (Hobbes 80). To paraphrase, Hobbes sees it as necessary, in pursuit of self-interest, for every individual to pursue peace when possible. When this is not possible during states of war, individuals can do whatever is possible to advance themselves. This, by itself, does not mean we must or must not obey government.

Hobbes also states that the Law of Nature is that "a man is forbidden to do that which is destructive to his life or taketh away the means of preserving the same" (Hobbes 79). We can reasonably assume Hobbes is aware that people do in fact act against this law in the form of suicide, for example, which indicates this "Law" of nature is more of a natural obligation, as it can be broken. Nevertheless, it is therefore a natural obligation to try to form a government because "humans ought to endeavor peace" for their own self-interest, and government is the only way to escape the state of war present in nature (Hobbes 76).

With this in mind, we can effectively rule out a lack of obligation as the impact of governmental illegitimacy, as one is clearly still obligated to obey the government because it brings relief from the state of war. There then must be

some other measure by which we determine an obligation to government.

To find this justification for an obligation to obey government, we turn to Hume's discussion of the public good. He says, "A small degree of experience and observation suffices to teach us, that society cannot possibly be maintained without the authority of magistrates, and that this authority must soon fall into contempt where exact obedience is not paid to it" (Hume para. 35). Hume also very heavily relies on common opinion to prove his points in a way that aligns quite well with Hobbes' view. Brownsey summarizes Hume's point in saying that "a common opinion that something is virtuous, wrong, or obligatory proves that that something is indeed virtuous, wrong or obligatory," (Brownsey 140). Because it would be unrealistic for a society to actively wish for its own destruction, Hume's metaethics of the majority argue that doing what is necessary to maintain society is in fact obligatory. Because Hobbes believes there cannot be a society without government, it is reasonable to conclude that the Humean belief that a person being obedient to government aids society would also be true for Hobbes. Hobbes argues, "[people] being thereby bound by a covenant to own the actions and judgements of one, cannot lawfully make a new covenant amongst themselves" (Hobbes 110).

Hobbes goes on to extend this restriction by arguing that one cannot even justifiably break the covenant made with society. This effectively means that because society, as a group of individuals, forfeits rights to a government, an individual can no longer break their covenant because doing so would betray their promise to the rest of society, which would ultimately harm society and therefore the public good. Because disobeying the government is effectively breaking the covenant, this means that any disobedience is in opposition to the public good. Thus, we've established that the public good, that is the continuation of society, requires people to obey the government. This raises the question—why should an individual be obligated to act toward the public good?

The first thing to recognize is that without government, Hobbes does not believe society, and thus any sense of a public good, could have developed. Therefore, rights must already have been given up to a sovereign in some manner to bind individuals to government. Hobbes argues that upon giving up these rights, citizens are necessarily subject to punishment for violating authority by saying those bonds "are the Bonds by which men are bound and obliged, bonds that have strength, not from their own nature [...] but from fear of some evil consequence upon the rupture" (Hobbes 81). Thus, immediately it is clear that to attempt to violate governmental authority, via breaking laws or any other means, is naturally subject to punishment by that authority even if one's actions were justified by the Law of Nature, for "covenants without the sword are but words, and of no strength to secure a man at all" (Hobbes 106). An individual must then compare what they might gain from disobeying with the resulting consequences of exiting government. Except for cases of legal emigration, in which the citizen has the sovereign's consent to remove themselves from sovereign authority, exiting government means moving into the state of nature.

Because the state of nature is the state of war, and "To this war of every man against every man, this also is consequent: that nothing can be unjust. The notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice, have there no place," then those who violate governmental authority are not protected by the rules of morality (Hobbes 78). If nothing can be unjust, the government is able to enact whatever punishment it desires, even death, as the relationship between the government and individual has become characterized by war. In this state of war a man cannot assume the safety of even his life, let alone his possessions, even when he must "lay down his right to all things, and be contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himself" (Hobbes 80). The individual is obligated not to oppose the public good of government unless it is more dangerous than a state of war. The situation in which the state of war becomes preferable is only likely to happen if the person perceives a very low likelihood of surviving the government's action, such as if the government were rounding up and executing all blue-eyed people. In all other situations, because government is better than the state of nature, a citizen is obligated to obey for his own self-interest.

If one is obligated to obey due to self-interest, however, a contract is wholly unnecessary for a government to demand obedience. Hobbes argues that the original contract that created government is motivated by "the foresight of [people's] own preservation" which helps the group get "out from that miserable condition of war" (Hobbes 106). They do this by entering a covenant "to direct their actions to the common benefit" (Hobbes 109). Hume, on the other hand, believes that such an idea is ridiculous. In cases where a government is already in place, Hume argues "that conquest or usurpation [...] is the origin of almost all the new [governments] which were ever established in the world. And that in the few cases where consent may seem to have taken place, it was commonly so irregular, so confined, or so much intermixed either with fraud or violence, that it cannot have any great authority" (Hume para. 19).

This disagreement between Hume and Hobbes is most interesting in that it ultimately leads to the same conclusion. Hobbes himself notes that, "covenants entered into by fear, in the condition of mere nature, are obligatory" (Hobbes 86). If then we assume that some conquest or usurpation occurred and citizens obeyed out of fear of the new dictator, according to Hobbes this is still valid. Furthermore, Hobbes says that through natural force a man can "make his children submit themselves and their children to his government" (Hobbes 109). While in this case "his government" is referring to the father, when looked at generally this shows that power obtained by force is valid. In both of these cases, the individual being put into the "contract" with the government is never truly consenting to be governed, and yet the outcome is the same. Even in the theoretical scenario posed by Hobbes of a large group agreeing to "confer all their power and strength upon one man, or upon one assembly of men," we note that the outcome does not change based on the consent of an individual once the government is established (Hobbes 109). Essentially, the government and people's obligations to that government do not change based on whether or not consent is originally and continually provided. In fact, the only case in which a contract would ever be considered is if there were no government preceding the covenant which creates a new one, which according to Hume simply doesn't happen in modern times (Hume para. 7). Therefore, even though Hobbes is considered a contract theorist and speaks of a covenant being the creator of a sovereign, the presence of consent is wholly unnecessary for his government to function.

The idea that a contract must be established between citizens and their government is very appealing to most people. It naturally implies that they are

an active agent in government and that they choose what is happening around them, to an extent, rather than simply being acted upon. However, the appeal of an idea does not make it true. Even though we've shown the contract is not necessary, it is important to note that this does not make the government any worse for its citizens. The government still fulfills its role of protecting citizens from the state of nature, and so is still working very strongly toward the public good in a Hobbesian sense. It is also important to recognize that even though a contract may not exist, an individual is still bound in the same way to their government, with the same exceptions. Simply because a government does not require consent does not mean that a citizen loses their right "to save himself from death, wounds, and imprisonment (the avoiding whereof is the only end of laying down any right)" (Hobbes 87). Thus, while it may be startling to consider that consent is not an integral part of governance, it does not necessarily imply a government any more tyrannical or cruel than one founded on consent.

Ultimately, a Hobbesian government would be far more stable than a consent-based government, and thus would do a much better job of keeping people out of the state of nature. If it is able to accomplish this, then it is almost always in a citizen's self-interest to accept the government, regardless of whether that changes anything

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# **ANALECTS OF THE CORE**

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

# Flights of Freedom

Which have a sphere in the sphere is a sphere in the sphere is the interval of the sphere is the isolated in the interval of the sphere is a sphere in the sphere is a sphere is a sphere in the sphere in the sphere is a sphere in the sphere in the sphere in the sphere is a sphere in the sphere in the

God is a divine being and distinct from the human world. Therefore, He must communicate with the realm of Earth by way of angels as messengers. While in the Gospel of Matthew there is no specific mention of angels having wings, they are often depicted with them in art. The Gospel of Matthew also references "the Spirit of God descending like a dove," which draws attention to birds, another symbol of flight, a symbol that features prominently in both the *Conference of the Birds* and the *Divine Comedy* (3.16). Dante's angels in the *Divine Comedy* are winged and mainly reside in *Paradiso*. Other creatures, such as Satan, Geryon, and the griffin have wings as well, while Dante has figurative ones. Though flight is present in all three texts, wings exist in a variety of forms with each form symbolizing a different meaning. For example, in Matthew, angels descend to Earth, whereas in *Paradiso*, those with wings ascend to Heaven.

Wings establish a powerful connection between the earthly and heavenly spheres. The presumed wings of the angels in the Gospel of Matthew represent freedom and the knowledge that God brings to humans. Angels are sent down to Joseph in dreams several times, which gives a sense of flight. The first time, the angel tells him, "do not fear to take Mary your wife . . . she will bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (1.20). Angels act as messengers of God, and in doing so, bridge the gap by flying between the earthly and the divine. They possess superior knowledge and carry important information such as instructions to Joseph to flee Egypt with his mother and Jesus (2.13). Also, in speaking and interacting with humans, they spread God's word, bringing them closer to Him.

When Jesus is resurrected in the Gospel of Matthew, an angel comes down from above and speaks with the women. The text says, "But the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has risen, as he said" (28.5-6). The angel being present for the resurrection of Jesus is important because God cannot directly speak with the disciples, and the angel offers an indication that Jesus will keep his promise, teaching his followers to believe. The angels also help carry out God's tasks and desires, giving credence to His supernatural abilities, and playing roles in revelations. They can perform tasks which God himself does not, such as when Satan challenges Jesus, saying "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will give his angels charge of you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up" (3.6). The angels attend to Jesus, which proves that he is truly a miraculous being, and in doing so, they help to enlighten those who lack faith and trust in God. They fly between Heaven and Earth, bringing news which leads humans to God.

While the angels use flight to carry messages between God and humans, the birds flying to the Simorgh allegorically represent the soul's journey to God in the *Conference of the Birds*. The birds, who express different human flaws, receive information about the existence of the Simorgh from a feather, a common emblem representing flight. The hoopoe tells the birds that, "The Simorgh first appeared to mortal sight – / He let a feather float down through the air, / And rumors of its fame spread everywhere" (736-751). Feathers are found on wings, which are significant in flight, and so the fact that the Simorgh gained recognition through a feather also demonstrates how wings are an expression of teaching, learning and freedom. This revelation of the Simorgh that Jesus is

about to be born (1.20). The two worlds cannot directly meet, but through the winged medium of flight, it is possible to become one with God.

As the angels in the Gospel of Matthew descend from above, the birds in the Conference of the Birds make their own journey in the opposite direction, flying upwards toward their king, the Simorgh. These birds, in the beginning, are all "flightless," since they have no true purpose for their wings, but they gain knowledge and opportunities to stretch their wings on their journey to the Simorgh. The situation is similar to the story of the moth; the one who flies closest to the flame is consumed by it and knows "the hidden truth of which we cannot speak" (3991-4008). By flying, one literally approaches the Truth—God—as the birds see themselves reflected in Him when they finally reach the Simorgh (4221-4243). Out of the thousands of birds on this journey, only the wings of thirty are strong enough to carry them through. Most of the birds failed and perished on the journey (4144-4162). Their wings need strength in order to see God, similar to Dante. The hoopoe acts as an angel, because he is sent by God to guide and teach the birds. He wears "on his head Truth's crown" and the birds look up to the hoopoe as a knowledgeable leader (671-688). Flight to God is the only easy and logical means for the birds to travel to the Simorgh and is critical in linking the flawed "humans" to awareness of the truth and perfection of God.

In the *Divine Comedy*, Dante makes a journey very similar to the journey of the birds, since he has metaphorical wings for his ascent to Heaven. In *Paradiso*, Cacciaguida says to Dante, "I owe my gratitude/ to her [Beatrice] who gave you wings for your high flight" (XV.53). Again, these wings become symbolic of a flight to God. By gaining wings, Dante has the freedom to move between Earth and Heaven and can therefore be closer to God and Beatrice, whom he loves as much as God. Beatrice grants Dante these wings and they open up for Dante the Inferno, Purgatory, and Paradise, places where no other living being is granted access. They allow him to have these learning experiences and to rise up to ultimate knowledge of God. Wings, though metaphorical, play a necessary role in Dante's flight and ascension.

At the end of *Paradiso*, Dante says, "I wished to see / the way in which our human effigy / suited the circle and found a place in it - / and my own wings

were far too weak for that" (XXXIII.130). In this case, the strength of his wings represents the extent to which Dante can understand God. The stronger the wings, the further one will go and the more knowledge one will gain. The same relationship between wings and knowledge appears in the *Inferno* when Dante meets Satan. Satan has "beneath each face of his, two wings spread out, as broad suited so immense a bird . . . They had not feathers, but were fashioned like a bat's; and he was agitating them" (XXXIV.46). While Satan has wings, he cannot fly as Dante can with his symbolic wings. Satan's wings are not feathered, and Dante says in *Paradiso*, "whereas in mortals, word and sentiment . . . are wings whose featherings are disparate" (XV.79). Dante equates feathered wings with word and sentiment, and it makes sense that Satan, who lacks feathers, also lacks language. He does not speak and sits in the Inferno, eating the three sinners (XXXIV.53). Satan's featherless wings further demonstrate how different forms of wings indicate various levels of spiritual knowledge and status in the afterlife.

In *Paradiso*, Dante refers to the Eagle in the Sphere of Jupiter, who is made up of many souls and speaks about God's Eternal Justice. The Eagle says to Dante, "therefore, the vision that your world receives can penetrate into Eternal Justice no more than eye can penetrate the sea" (XIX.58). In saying this, the Eagle is describing a vision of Justice as another form of truth or knowledge. While humans are unable to see it, those winged creatures who ascend towards God can. Since divine justice is represented by a winged creature, and since Dante only learns of justice as a "winged" being, wings and flight hold an important connection to learning and seeking truth about God. The Eagle is a very powerful feathered bird, so the strength of its wings can attest to its representation of Eternal Justice. It found its way by flying from Earth to God, similar to the birds in *Conference of the Birds*.

The Empyrean in *Paradiso* is filled with angels with wings, and Dante learns from Bernard that he is seeing the angel who tells Mary that she is pregnant with Jesus (XXXII.109). This angel, though not mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew, is among the thousands of angels who surround the Virgin Mary. The fact that they all live in and travel back and forth from *Paradiso* demonstrates flight as a means of freedom. They are similar to the angels of Matthew

who serve God and carry messages. While wings do provide a communication purpose between Earth and Heaven, they are also a means of transportation to God, such as Dante's symbolic wings, and the wings of the birds in *The Conference of the Birds*. Additionally, wings are representative of knowledge, as their qualities shed light on the abilities of those who have them, and beings with wings are often in roles of instruction. The freedom of wings allows one to surpass gravitational constraints, and become one with God. Wings and flight not only reveal truth, but teach the earthly to find God, and tie together two infinitely separate worlds.

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# **ANALECTS OF THE CORE**

Michael Young on Malinowski: "One of the nicknames given him by Trobianders, Topwegiglier, means 'the man with loose shorts', apparently, writes Michael Young, 'because of his habit of hitching his trousers while trying to focus his camera.' ... There was another nickname as well, Tosemwana, meaning Showoff or Performer."

Locke: "The state of war is a state of enmity and destruction."

Aristotle: "Man is by nature a social animal; an individual who is unsocial naturally and not accidentally is either beneath our notice or more than human...Anyone who either cannot lead the common life or is so self-sufficient as not to need to, and therefore does not partake of society, is either a beast or a god."



Shown: "Dante and Beatrice" by Scheffer. On next facing page: "Dante and Virgil" by Corot.

# Two Depictions from Dante

The colorful descriptions and rich imagery of Dante's *Divine Comedy* have inspired innumerable works of art. Two paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston—"Dante and Virgil" by Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (1859) and "Dante and Beatrice" by Ary Scheffer (1851)—depict a particularly strong influence of Dante the poet. In the following explication, I shall endeavor to enumerate some of these affinities.

Corot's painting depicts the very first Canto in Dante's *Inferno*, in which three carnivorous beasts accost Dante while he tries to escape a darkened wood. Just as it appears that the beasts will devour Dante, the poet Virgil appears to him, saying that he has been sent by Beatrice to guide Dante out of the woods. Corot's painting is mostly dark, with a pale white light filtering through the trees to the left side. In the lower center, three beasts surround Dante and Virgil: a she-wolf, a lion, and a tiger (modified from the leopard that appears in the text). The beasts are terrifying due to their foreign nature and their appearance in the Italian woods. There is no light coming through the trees on the right, and the trees are so tall that they engulf the entire scene. Dante appears to be afraid, shying away from the snarling she-wolf and into the arms of Virgil, who points deeper into the darkest portion of the woods.

The artwork drives the viewer's eye to the center, especially towards Dante, whose bright red cap captures attention. While the other colors in the painting are dull or dark, the vivid red stands out. This draws the eye specifically to Dante, who is the central figure of the painting. The viewer's eye then goes to the left side of the painting, which is the brightest portion of the scene. Generally, one feels safer in light, because darkness tends to harbor terrifying creatures. However, in this work, Virgil's arm is beckoning for Dante, and by extension the viewer, to move our attention to the darkest part of the wood. Neither Dante nor the viewers know what lurks in the dark, which compounds our natural fear of the darkness. If there are frightening beasts such as a leopard and lion in this comparably brighter spot, what lies hidden in the dark? Corot conveys the fear and uncertainty felt by Dante in the beginning of the *Inferno*. He uses dark colors in order to take advantage of humanity's fear of the unknown, and paints the beasts who surround Dante with menacing faces. The lion and she-wolf snarl and creep close to the central figures, while the tiger crouches, waiting to pounce. The viewer recognizes that the characters are being threatened, and can also sense the potential danger in the dark ahead. The light shining through the trees to the left seems the most appealing option for the protagonists of the artwork. This light represents Dante's hope of escape and redemption as he travels to Paradise.

In the Ary Scheffer painting, Dante is shown in Paradise beside his beloved Beatrice. She is the central figure and focal point of the composition, standing on a pedestal that raises her to the center of the canvas. She is garbed in pinks and white, a figure of femininity and purity. Her light robes and gentle expression are akin to depictions of the Virgin Mary, who traditionally wears light blue and white robes and has a gentle, motherly expression. Dante, on the other hand, wears bright red and black robes and a red cap, which provides contrast between him and Beatrice. He stands on the ground beside her pedestal, which gives the viewer the impression that Beatrice is greater than Dante. The couple is surrounded by a pale gold and blue background, and above them is a white arch. The lighter colors represent the purity and good of Paradise, and make the viewer feel calm. Dante seems as though he does not belong, as he is the only figure wearing dark colors and is standing below Beatrice. As he is still living and has yet to be sentenced to eternal punishment or ascend to Paradise alongside Beatrice, he is out of place, and Scheffer makes sure that the viewer notices it.

The paintings depict the two final destinations in Dante's afterlife. Corot's painting uses dark and muted colors to express the hopelessness and terror that Dante feels. The light to the left of the scene represents hope for Dante, and foreshadows his trip to Purgatory and then Paradise. Scheffer's painting uses lighter, gentler colors to give the viewer a sense of peace. The pale colors represent the purity and good of Paradise, and they contrast with the dark and malevolent colors of Hell.

The appearance of Dante himself is noticeably difference in the two paint-



ings. In Corot's depiction of the first Canto, Dante appears weathered, with all of his hair covered by a red cap, and the rest of his body draped in a black robe. His dark clothes are enigmatic of his emotions: Dante is frightened, and has almost lost all hope of being saved. Virgil, as Dante's guide and salvation from the forest, is clothed in white and wears a relaxed expression, contrasting Dante's panicked appearance. His guide in the other painting, Beatrice, has a similarly relaxed countenance, and is gazing up to Heaven. Dante is looking up at Beatrice in a reverent manner, as she is both his savior and the object of his affection, while additionally representing Heavenly love for mortals.

Alongside the use of color, the artists use the placement of figures to draw the viewers' eyes. Corot makes Dante, Virgil, and the three beasts small figures in the center of the painting. When the eye goes to them, they seem dwarfed by the tall trees and are enveloped in the dark. In contrast, Scheffer places Beatrice in the center of his painting as the largest figure. The viewer is drawn to Beatrice as they recognize the similarities between her and her Biblical counterpart, the Virgin Mary. Dante is more of a side figure in this painting, looking up reverently at the divine being before him as mankind is meant to look at Heaven. The focus of Corot's "Dante and Virgil" is on the surroundings and the feelings they evoke, namely fear. Beatrice seems to be the main focus of Scheffer's "Dante and Beatrice." Her position at the center of the image, as Dante gazes upon her, is representative of her as the paradise for which Dante strives.

Both these paintings evoke strong emotions in the viewers. Corot's evokes a sense of fear by utilizing dark and muted colors, and by making the scenery around the characters large and menacing, almost engulfing Dante and his guide. He also portrays snarling animals and gives Dante a frightened appearance in order to convey his fear more strongly. Scheffer, on the other hand, uses bright and gentle colors to give a sense of purity and peace, as would be expected of Paradise. His central figure, Beatrice, is garbed in these light colors as well, and has a peaceful and motherly expression, similar to that of the Virgin Mary in Biblical artwork. While using similar methods of expression, both artists manage to create very unique aesthetics and emotions for their pieces.

# BRIAN JORGENSEN A Kind of Jacob: *The Poet John Milton*

#### Introduction: The Presence of Milton<sup>1</sup>

et us imagine that last lecture<sup>2</sup> was attended by a man rather oddly dressed in a short, gray cloak, with bright eyes but blind. Sometimes the eyes would roll a little in an odd, disconcerting way. He would be wearing a short, bright sword, and there would be enough bitterness and sternness in the blind face to make you just a little wary of this blind man with a bright sword. The face would also have the purity, the severe and joyful look of someone who, like Jacob, had wrestled with God and been given a blessing. You remember the story.

Someone would have to help this person—John Milton, you now realize sit down, but despite his blindness he would move with grace and ease. Of moderate height, well-proportioned, ruddy like the young David, light brown hair. "Deportment sweet and affable, gait erect and manly, bespeaking courage and undauntedness." He might just sit there listening to the music, because he was skilled in, and a lover of, music. He had a fine singing voice. But if you talked to him, let's say about Core, explaining what this class is, you might realize how immensely learned he was, and how seriously he took the classics. He loved them, knew and memorized them in the original languages, arranged them in his mind, tasted them, drew wisdom, thought, and beauty from them—and yet finally he rejected them for another book which he knew by heart: the Bible. Milton is there where, as Prof. Devlin puts it, the vibration of the Classical pillar and the Hebrew pillar create Christianity.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This talk was originally delivered as a lecture to CC201 on December 10, 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Ricks's lecture for cc201 on Milton's *Paradise Lost* in December 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. James Devlin (1943-2010) was a philosopher, a programmer, and a foundational member of the Core faculty from its inception. The Devlin Award is named in his honor.

As last week's lecture went on, you might above all have noted his intense power to listen. My final goal today is very much like that of Prof. Ricks: to encourage you to listen to Milton, to language unfolding itself in meaning and music together in a central poem of our language, something far beyond the mere denotations of words. If your read silently, to listen with your eyes something that cannot be done fast. Milton sets the tempo.

The goal is like that described in a story I mentioned last year. Let me retell it now. The great Irish flautist James Galway was playing for the first time at the Royal Albert Hall in Britain. As an Irishman, he was nervous. "I began to play," he says. "It was Mozart. And I felt the hush, a silence such as I had never heard before. And I realized they weren't listening to me; and they weren't listening to Mozart; they were listening to what Mozart was listening to when he composed the music."

Something similar is possible with Milton; perhaps because of his own sensitivity to music, perhaps in some part because of his blindness, certainly because of how he trained himself, there is a quality in his verse that points to the unsayable, the things that can be heard beyond hearing, that Galway talks about. This is a major aspect of what makes Milton a great poet. It involves hearing great things in small, in lowering the threshold of what makes a difference to you—sounds, rhythms, vowels. It may seem precious—you have to have the courage. It opens realms. Not just music *or* meaning, but music *as* meaning. You heard this as you listened to Prof. Ricks read.

# The Role of the Poet: Milton, Plato, and the Ancient Quarrel

What Milton wanted from his wrestle with God was to become a great poet—someone as definitive as Homer or Vergil, the poet of his people. Let us look at Milton's idea of what a great poet is, and let's do so by contrasting it with what Plato says about poets.

Of course by poets Plato means all manipulators of image and speech: journalists, moviemakers, television—hard to believe some television is made by people, but it is—rock musicians, jazz musicians, etc. But Plato is not just thinking of the lesser moneymakers and sophists. He is also thinking of people at the level of Milton—Homer, Aeschylus.

#### Plato: Poet a persuasive liar

The poets, Plato's Socrates says in The Republic, might have to be exiled from the truly just state, they are so dangerous. Why? They appeal to the part of the soul that doesn't care what's true. They mix lies and truth about the very most important things, leading us to tolerate, or love, or be righteous about, the untrue. God-many have accused Milton of lying about God. What is truly noble and what only seems noble: Milton's Satan-the rebel, the angel who dares say no; the one who will not submit, will not be defeated, will not be beaten; the buffeted courageous explorer of chaos, finder of new worlds; the hater, the seducer- is an inspiration to Blake, Shelley, for starters, and we see everything through and with him at the start. Milton offers us images of how life really is. For instance: of man and woman; of nature paradisiacal, as it was meant to be; models for emotional imitation and for judgment; he is one of the greatest poets of interpersonal love between man and woman. And yet his doctrine includes the subordination of woman to man-though his poetry also seems to belie this. Do you notice how we feel sorry for Satan, how right Satan's arguments about God seem to be, how stirred and sympathetic we feel as this magnificent being is reduced to crawling through chaos, and the thrills and awe we feel? And he is setting out to destroy us. There is an aspect of our souls which almost prefers the darkness and vastness and courage and adventure of hell, that sympathizes with Satan's refusal to give up, that sympathizes even with Satan's realpolitik, his management of his fascist empire, and his determination to destroy what is beautiful and fresh and innocent. And so on. Plato says bad is more fun to read about than good.

So you can see, Plato says, why I had Socrates insist that there is an **ancient quarrel between the poets and the philosophers**—those who love images and artistic creations and music, who believe that inspired and crafted language opens the way to truth, or that the immense charm of truth and lies mixed is not so dangerous—and, on the other hand, those who believe that yes, rhetoric is absolutely necessary, but who love wisdom and science and truth, reason, truth capable of general statements, arrived at through reason.

## Plato: Yet the poet is necessary

Yes, Plato, greatest of Western thinkers, we say, yes; but we know also that you wrote not sermons or treatises, but dialogues, and not one dialogue but many. That you wrote a kind of philosophical poetry—for instance, in the Myth of Er, or the Myth of the Cave. We know that you had meanings for the many and meanings for the few. We are of the few, and we know that, if you read *The Republic* closely, or read *The Laws* even while half-asleep, it turns out that the philosopher needs the poets, and any decent society needs the poets, for the following reasons:

- for the education of young in play, music
- for praising of good people and blaming of bad
- for festivals of worship, burial, marriage, coming of age, etc.
- to write poetic preambles to every great law, so that we see not just why it is harsh but why it is attractive, and how it grows out of human needs and fulfills human nature
- to refine our pleasures so that we not only take pleasure in higher things, but our perceptions of things expand, our human possibilities expand, we live at the proper level
- and to give the philosophers things to think about; general, or extreme, or refined images, sayings

In other words, the poets, like it or not, are for one whole part of life, the part that is in common, the supreme educators; and for the other part of life, the ascent of the individual mind, or of a few minds in dialogue, a great source. And indeed, philosophy may even need poetry to persuade the self of the lover of wisdom. Also, the philosopher can, at best, reach a few, meaning really five or six. But we have to deal with the many. Justice involves the many. The philosopher uses argument. But our souls contain more than reason: we need the poet's music. And the philosopher needs the high and strange experiences. We need the poets.

## Milton: Truth is beyond philosophy

Milton would wholeheartedly agree. The poets with their music educate men's passions and assumptions, and through passions and assumptions values, our attunement to beauty and truth. The poets present images and speeches that stir thought. They put truth to work. However, Milton deeply disagrees with Plato about two very important things:

(1) Plato believes there is a natural hierarchy, a hierarchy given by nature, such that, for human beings, the philosopher is above, and in a sense should rule, the poet. Plato says that poets work through inspiration, divine frenzy, and that they play to the crowd; and therefore, poets, in the best cities, ought to be answerable to wise legislators, to truly wise men. So always, Plato will put the disciplined man of knowledge above the poets. Of course what he wants to do is not abolish poetry but create a new kind of higher philosophical poetry. Socrates rejects poetry not out of stiffness or cloistered virtue but because he thinks he has found something higher and better, more full of love. He thinks he has found what poetry, if it but knew itself, is aiming at: the blazing, creatively begetting power of the truth. Shakespeare and Dante may be such poets.

But Milton disagrees profoundly with Socrates, and in so doing shows he is of the poets' party in the ancient quarrel, and deeply conscious that he is so. The reason is this: Milton does not believe philosophy can reach true wisdom. He believes true wisdom comes from God, and that therefore, superior to the Greek philosophers, great as they are, are the Hebrew prophets through whom God spoke directly. Philosophy is, finally, those fallen angels reasoning in Hell, as Prof. Ricks pointed out last time, and never getting back to Providence. Milton believes that a merely philosophical poetry would not just stop short, it would be errant. So no human legislator can tell an inspired poet what to say. And perhaps, with Milton, we should go further. He was a lover of liberty. He did not like authority. He was a rebel whose deepest value was freedom—but not democratic freedom, the freedom of anyone to do just about anything, but





the freedom to fight for the truth. Each man. Milton was a fighter. He believed any real life was a fight. Even when blind he wore a sword; and you see how wonderfully he describes the noble armor and weapons of the angels. We become ourselves, have any kind of merit, through contest and struggle. He loved relaxation, hated laziness.

Milton does everything he can to become a philosophical poet, a lover of wisdom: he studies philosophy, science of all kinds, together with the rhetorical arts; he studies, as Plato says one must, the events of his day, the patterns and horrors and accomplishments of history, the wisdom of the classics. If he were sitting here he would recognize what we are doing in the Core Curriculum, but he would wonder why we didn't do more, much more.

But in the end, truth transcends human wisdom, and the prophet, the divinely inspired man, is the one to pass it on. And he does so not to please the crowd, but to warn, inspire, instruct the few who can hear him. This is what Milton means by "Fit audience though few," and it is related to what he makes of Calvin's doctrine of election. For Milton, the elect are not those eternally ordained to be saved, but those who are able to receive the truth and live by it. Where do they get this truth? How do they hear it? We will come to that.

## Milton: We live by grace

But first we need to go even further. We don't live just by truth, Milton says, and perhaps not even primarily by truth. We live by grace, that is, a power from beyond us. The word "grace" is a good one because it shows that this power is freely given, is a graciousness; and it shows that this power is reflected in things graceful, in physical and mental and artistic grace, in grace under pressure. It is something like the sudden presence of the flashing-eyed god-dess Athena in the *Odyssey*. It is in the incredible grace Aristotle, inventor of biological science, saw in the body of a fish, the grace you hear in music and see in dance, in a stand of cosmos flowers floating on their green stems, in the shape of a human form, in athletics, or in a person doing the right thing—a grace which seems not just physical but mental, is a distant echo of how things once were. So Milton's description of the Garden of Eden, for instance, is a description of natural beauty and grace inseparable from the higher meaning of

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the graciousness and goodness of God. The curls of the grape, caves, hills, high trees swaying with their living names, valleys, pure air, the shapes and behavior of animals, the songs of birds, including the amorous nightingale, the almost military turning overhead of the stars, all part of grace. The air is grace; it has an emotional and moral quality, a quality of blessing, as it does in Beethoven's music. As Satan approaches Eden, he comes into a purity you sometimes feel when you get out of the city:

And of pure now purer air Meets his approach, and to the heart inspires Vernal delight and joy, able to drive All sadness but despair. (IV, ll. 153-156)

To breathe pure air is nature's gift of purity and joy; only Satanic despair can overcome it. And this extends to physical pleasure, including pleasures of taste and sexuality. Milton calls paradise delicious. In it moral qualities and physical qualities are inseparable. A condition the romantics, particularly Wordsworth, will want to reclaim.

So those are some of the reasons Milton puts the poet/prophet, the epic poet/prophet, above the legislator and philosopher. He has, in fact, a different theory of knowledge; we will come to say more of that.

## Plato: only a few types of poetry acceptable

(2) I said there was another disagreement with Plato, and this has to do with what kinds of poetry great poetry ought to be. Plato seems on the whole to prefer to narrow musical things rather than expand them. Poetry should show that the good and pleasurable go together (it's precisely the point, Milton says, that they don't always), it should make manifest how the noble and good are the same, it should not stir up certain passions but let you see them at a distance, knowing them for what they are. It should inspire thought. *The Republic* is a Platonic poem.

## Milton: Need many types of poetry

Milton has a different theory of poetic responsibility, and again it has to do with a different reading of the world. He believes in many different kinds of music. He believes in showing you a figure of evil so magnificent and put-upon that you may well take its side. He believes in giving you the arguments against God's law, and the arguments for tasting the forbidden fruit, the woman's argument and the man's, and giving you the rhetoric in which mankind can praise itself for being so daring as to disobey God's seemingly arbitrary and envious command, and defy or endure God's over-the-top punishments. He believes in showing marital quarrels in magnified language. He educates your emotions, senses, and your sense of history and geography.

Milton's faith is that the liberty of a properly tempered mind and heart will, through grace, lead to salvation. Maybe the only way. Through struggle. It's a transaction in which the divine is involved. If you read his poem at only half-power, he knows, you may well come to wrong conclusions. He is willing to risk this, even willing to risk himself coming to inadequate conclusions. In this poem, he puts himself on the line—in the lines. The poem is a kind of bet with the devil and a wrestling with God. A true poem could not be otherwise, Milton believes—and this is because of his view of the limitations of human knowledge and human nature, even the highest part of human nature, and because of his view of nature as a whole.

#### Milton on the way things are

Let me develop this very briefly from theology through ontology through natural philosophy through epistemology to morality to aesthetics.

**Theology:** Milton, very much like Spinoza, believes that God is everything, including substance. Milton is a monist. Milton found intolerable and evil the dualism between matter and mind that Descartes propounds. The physical world is not mechanical, and not to be scorned. But on the other hand, Milton refuses to believe, as Spinoza teaches, that there is no such thing as freedom, that everything is God, that God is necessity, and therefore everything must be as it is.

Ontology: Milton, while agreeing that God is everything, and there is

nothing else, says that God withdraws part of his powers from part of himself, thereby making what we understand as matter. This is an idea Milton borrows from Jewish mysticism—the *zimzum* that Prof. Devlin mentioned. Once God has done this, there is the possibility of free, and in some sense independent beings. There can be Chaos, which you have seen Satan voyaging through and talking to. In Chaos, there is apparently sheer chance; there can be angels; there can be the universe, hanging, like the galaxies in *Men In Black*, by a golden chain from heaven, which is in the empyrean; there can be empty space; there can be men and women who stand on their own feet and make choices for which they are responsible—including two primal choices that bring "death into the world, and all our woe."

**Natural philosophy:** since everything is of God, Milton believed that nature and natural man had in them a divine goodness and beauty, though these were partially corrupted; so sex, for instance, music, trees, breezes, food, were divinely wonderful if used properly. And grace, from this point of view, is an awakening of the original divine harmony, a healing power. Plato believed that our minds were related to the divine, the rest not.

So for Milton, other people were divinely beautiful—and also hateful, as devils. This is obvious from *Paradise Lost*, with its descriptions of nature before the fall, and of Mammon, Belial. Milton has shocked many people by saying that sex was an important part of the prelapsarian life of Adam and Eve. *Paradise Lost* contains some of the most beautiful love and nature poetry ever written, and sex is a great, divine mystery, and of the essence of being human. It perhaps rivals language and reason in its holiness and beauty. And it is personal communion of one human being with another.

"O Fairest of creation."(IX, 896-907) Eve, of course, is where Milton focuses all his poetic powers for rendering the goodness and beauty of original nature. All the garden is a reflection of Eve, and she contains it all in herself. You remember from last year Plato's doctrine of the ladder of beauty, in which you ascend toward the essentially beautiful by seeing the beauty of many different beautiful things. This is how Milton put together his portrait of Eve. Consider this quote from his letter to Diodati, in which Milton writes to a friend shortly after finishing *Paradise Lost*: Not with so much labor is Ceres said to have sought her daughter Proserpina, as it is my habit day and night to seek for this idea of the beautiful... through all the forms and faces of things (for many are the shapes of things divine) and to follow it as it leads me on by some sure traces which I seem to recognize. (letter to Diodati, 1667)

## Harmony and spiritual growth of individuals; private over public

Another important fact about original earthly nature: it centers on the companionship and harmony of male with female. Angels make love, but they are unisexual. God created woman and man and the possibility of friendship and commitment and mutual growth between them. Milton is one of the great poets of marriage—and unlike Homer, he does not talk about marriage by having the couple separated for twenty years and only briefly together (though of course the whole house is vibrating with them in Books 17-23 of *The Odyssey*). And this creative harmony between man and woman—creative in that it creates children, which there would have been in Paradise, creative because each learns through and with the other, things one could not have known otherwise, each ascends to higher things—this creative harmony, this bond, is one of the highest things about us. This is partly for what might be called a political reason, put best by Plato in his *Laws*, where it says:

The first stage in the creation of any society is surely conjugal conjunction and association? Certainly. Presumably, then, if the legislation of any society is to be sound and right it must start with a marriage law. (721a)

But the more than political, higher than political reason is that this bond is sacred, naturally good, and politics is not. Love between man and woman, harmony between them, creativity springing from them, choosing the good between them, learning and living life, is far higher than politics in *Paradise Lost*. So whereas Thomas Hobbes says "Man's life is nasty, solitary, brutish, and short," and so one needs a severe politics, Milton, who disliked Hobbes, replies "No, quite the opposite, man's life is originally, and still in part, noble, companionable, reasonable, and immortal."

And this is why Milton makes the amazing move of putting the epic in a wider context. Remember, epic is supposed to show us man and the cosmos through a hero. Milton sees private life as something that transcends the heroic—indeed, he calls the heroic into question.

## Satan viewing Adam and Eve

Satan is the inventor of politics, and in fact Milton puts into his mouth the justification used, let's say, by the Nazis, the communists, any tyranny that comes to destroying life and family life and private happiness and thought, an unbelievably horrible and splendid moment as Satan, first seeing Adam and Eve and already determined to do them harm, sympathizes with what will befall them—i.e., the evil he will do them:

Ah gentle pair, yee little think how nigh Your change approaches, when all these delights Will vanish, and deliver ye to woe (IV, ll. 366-68)

and says:

And should I at your harmless innocence Melt, as I do, yet public reason just, Honour and Empire with revenge enlarg'd, By conquering this new World, compels me now To do what else though damn'd I should abhor. (IV, 11. 388-92)

Original nature teaches us to put the private far above the public. This is in a complex relationship to Plato.

## Milton and the Puritan Revolution

Like Plato, like Dante, who both saw civil war in their time, Milton earned his convictions about the nature of public and private, about society. And I want to tell you a little about that. Milton early on in life determined he would be a poet. He accomplished some poems that, if they were all he had done, would be among the great things of English poetry—*Comus*, *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, *Lycidas*. He gave himself a ferocious education because he believed that the poet, as Socrates says about Homer, had to know about everything—poetry was the art that looked at things whole. But history intervened.

At a certain point, Milton decided to essentially lay aside all his poetic ambitions, and to engage with all his strength and literary skill in the politics of the Puritan revolution. Milton was a Puritan. He was, of course, on Cromwell's side, and defended the beheading of Charles I. He took an important position in Cromwell's government, and wrote and thought at great length about the events. Here is how he describes his involvement:

I saw that a way was opening for the establishment of real liberty; that the foundation was laying for the deliverance of man from the yoke of slavery and superstition; that the principles of religion, which were the first objects of our care, would exert a salutary influence on the manners and constitutions of the republic; and as I had from my youth studied the distinction between religious and civil rights, . . . I determined to relinquish the other pursuits in which I was engaged, and to transfer the whole force of my talents and my industry to this one important object. (*Second Defense of the English People*)

In other words, Milton thought that a great and good historical change was possible, and that he, the philosopher/poet,—though we have said he was not, finally, a philosophical poet—could contribute to it. He became a pamphleteer—part propagandist, part scholar, part critic, part vituperator and scrapper. He became an exponent of political theory. He put himself in the service, as critic and apologist, of a cause he believed in. He became Latin Secretary for Cromwell's government, a job which contributed to his loss of eyesight. And as times got worse and worse, his thought deepened.

During his time of public involvement, Milton saw everything you can imagine of politics. He saw behind-the-scenes maneuvering, debate, fighting

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in the streets, wars, foreign policy, brutal repression, terrorism, the strengths and weaknesses of politicians, ideals compromised to hold onto power, the worst kinds of spiritual pride, deceit, selfishness, foolishness, rabble-rousing. Days and nights of terrible anxiety in which you have to work yourself to death. Rage of groups and of individuals. Milton learned to do all kinds of hating and name-calling. He saw, and he learned thoroughly, political man, and he learned a lot about the dangers of religion mixed with politics, which you remember Francis Bacon and Spinoza were concerned about. Milton used much of what he learned from his public years when rendering the conclave of the fallen angels in Book II of *Paradise Lost*, as well as in the war in heaven in Books V, VI, and VII. He came to understand the political passions, the meaning of power. And this is where *Paradise Lost* starts: with the suppression of a rebellion. Milton is a poet deeply aware of and concerned with force; his life taught him that behind all the talk there is violence. Good itself will have to fight evil.

*Paradise Lost* starts with the fallen angels on their backs in a lake of fire, overcome by violence, building civilization out of Hell, and in so doing parodying heaven; and it ends with a man and woman, hand-in-hand, looking at Paradise for the last time, seeing it degenerate before their eyes, memorizing it, as it were, so Milton can write his poem, and walking out of Paradise and into the world. This is Milton's lesson in a nutshell. What we are finally is wanderers hand-in-hand, errant beings, like Petrarch on Mt. Ventoux—not gazing, as Petrarch at Laura, but walking hand-in-hand. And God is the Providence ahead of us.

When the Restoration came, Milton was in danger of death and torture. He had to go into hiding for a while. He ended his life politically, though not socially isolated, blind, in poverty. Recall the description from *Paradise Lost*:

though fall'n on evil days, On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues; In darkness, and with dangers compast round, And solitude. (VII, 11. 25-8)

Note the metaphor of fall. It goes, of course, throughout the poem, which

is full of falling and rising motions. Milton is saying that his being fallen on evil days is part of the Fall of Man. We can expect falls of all kinds. The texture of our life is falling and rising.

#### The Fall a Consequence of Freedom

How is the Fall even possible? If original nature was good through and through, and could change for the better, so it wasn't static, why are things now full of falling? Because higher than our splendid physical nature, higher than friendship between man and woman, higher than our minds, is freedom for moral choice. Essential to Milton's attempt to "assert eternal providence and justify the ways of God to man" (what's the word for that? **Theodicy**) is that man and woman were free, that they began adequately informed about the nature of things, and their primal choice, and all their choices since, were real choices, not pretend choices. To those that think God should have stopped Adam or said it was all a joke afterwards, Milton says: "Many there be that complain of divine providence for suffering Adam to transgress. Foolish tongues! when God gave him reason, he gave him freedom to choose, for freedom is but choosing; he had been else a mere artificial Adam, such an Adam as he is in the motions [puppet shows]." (*Areopagitica*)

We are not puppets, and so we must live with our choices, Milton says. Nature is not a game, an illusion, a little trick of God's, but something to which God has granted reality. That really was the knowledge of good and evil in that fruit. They really did choose that. God really did say "Trust me, be grateful to me, and don't choose that." Because of birth, we are bound up with each other, we are physically descended from each other, and this is a source of love and concern—and shared genes and shared educations. Even Eve, you remember, is part of Adam. This is one reason we are all implicated in Adam's and Eve's fall: we are his natural descendants, and God takes nature so seriously that He does not simply step in and start it over and cancel it. Our children are our descendants, and inherit things from us. An abusive father, or a father full of resentment, passes the effects to his child. A mother on drugs passes the effects to her child. We need to look ahead, as Adam and Eve did not do very clearly at the moment of the Fall. Eve looks ahead but is fooled or lies to herself.
And this is why, Milton says, to this day knowledge and goodness and pleasure are split asunder—what is true does not coincide with what is good or what is pleasant—and human relationships and goodness are split asunder also—you can have deep love and the lovers can do evil, like the movie *Natural Born Killers*. Mind and matter are split, or seem to be, as Descartes saw it. God is not immediately present, nor do we immediately read him in creation, but has to be reasoned out of our own subjectivity. Things seem different ways to different beings at different times. We see how things seem to Satan, Belial, Adam, Eve, angels, and so on. Perspective, as Prof. Nelson says, seems to rule much if not all of our knowing and perceiving.<sup>4</sup>

You can see that this has much to do with the Renaissance, a time of knowledge, of knowledge as power, of subjectivity, seeing the world from different, fragmented or distorted viewpoints, which may turn out to be our only knowledge of the world. Think of Don Quixote.

### Result of Fall: Good and evil grow up together

But when, induced and deceived by evil, we chose knowledge of evil, both our inner nature and our outer nature—Fell. We now have a taste for evil. And from that point on, good and evil in this world became inseparable and sometimes indistinguishable. This is why the philosophers can never know truth, and why we cannot put pure goodness into action; we can only learn better and better how to do it, through experience, often harsh. And this knowledge is only available through experience—an Aristotelian doctrine—and through education, literally, of our *good* taste, as Prof. Ricks pointed out. Not just our reason, but our aesthetic sense, our passions, our enjoyments, our pleasures, must all be reeducated—and this is why Milton's poem is permeated with metaphors of taste in the literal and figurative sense. It's why the poem makes so much of tasting the fruit. We still have a taste for it, and our taste must be reeducated. It is why a great religious poet would be so important—to teach us to have a taste for good.

And this has implications for the kind of poetry you would write. It would

<sup>4</sup> Stephanie Nelson's lecture for CCIO2 in March 1996, "On *The Aeneid* as a War Poem."

be a poetry of high and varied experience, including experience of evil: specious, persuasive arguments; the heroism of evil; the persuasiveness of doing bad; the offensiveness of the good; the beauty of, and pity and sympathy for, another person.

We are going to acquire that good taste only through tasting evil and good mixed together. We cannot acquire it through reason alone, nor can we reason our way through this world. Our reason is flawed, easily flattered, and the world is not reasonable. Our freedom, our wandering, has to be exercised in ways that could be dangerous to us—we have to risk making mistakes of judgment, mistakes of belief, mistakes of action.

Milton, before he wrote Paradise Lost, says:

Perhaps this is that doom which Adam fell into of knowing good and evil, that is to say, of knowing good by evil.... As therefore the state of man now is, what wisdom can there be to choose, what continence to forbear, without the knowledge of evil? (*Areopagitica*)

# Evil is on the loose and can disguise itself

But it is even worse. Evil is active, powerful, on the loose, and can disguise itself. And only God can tell the difference:

For neither Man nor Angel can discern Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks Invisible, except to God alone, By his permissive will, through Heav'n and Earth. (III, 682-4)

Note that God permits a very active evil. He doesn't tell you.

# Milton: Moral knowledge outweighs any other kind

And so, for Milton: moral knowledge is higher than scientific or any other kind of knowledge. Justice demands a ranking of knowledge.

# Knowing what man is outweighs scientific curiosity

If we thought the earth was at the center of the universe, but understood better how to rule ourselves, the importance of man and woman, the proper use of nature, we would be better off. Simply giving ourselves power, indulging our curiosity, at the very least echoes the Satanic, the exploring of chaos and hell, the building of Pandemonium. Remember Prof. Costa's lecture on Augustine, and the emphasis on *curiositas.*<sup>5</sup> Ours is not ultimately a world of reason and science, it is a world of good and evil. A huge expansion of human knowledge gives us television, better kitchens, easier lives, self-regulating political orders so that we don't have to spend so much time on politics, freedom for good or evil or just plain slobbing around, all so that we may become-better people? Or has it made us worse? Bacon's Great Instauration has come about, Milton would acknowledge: we have incredible technology and our speculations reach to the very origins of the universe, the Big Bang. We may overcome death. But all this, he would say, is accomplished with man's double heart, good and evil. We yak about controlling nature and forget that we are within nature, fallen nature. The great task of mastering ourselves, something each of us must dono politics can do it—is by and large neglected.

### The one essential text is the Bible

Where do you get this moral knowledge, the power to make good choices? From experience, and one other source: you read the Bible with all the most up-to-date philosophical and theological speculation, all your imagination, all your knowledge of classical authors, all your knowledge of life. The Bible is God's Word, and thus it is endlessly meaningful, and often not literal at all. Its word must be kept, its meaning construed. This is Protestantism combined with Christian humanism, and might remind us of Friedrich Hölderlin, who says "What the almighty father who reigns over all desires above all things, is that the sacred letter be well-construed."

<sup>5</sup> Dennis Costa's lecture for CCI02 on Augustine's *Confessions* in March 1996.

### Moral knowledge, the Bible, Banishing the classical world

So for Milton there is a sacred text at the center of things. He is willing to dedicate all of his skill, to risk all of his yearning for fame, to commit himself heart and soul to the poetic interpretation of one story from Genesis chapters one through three. In so doing, he quite consciously banishes all the classical world, its learning, its gods. This is a great and terrible thing for Milton to do for himself, and for his times, and for us. It was something difficult for him, a great act of renunciation, violence, and faith. As you see in Book I, all the pagan world, including the Greeks and Romans, are idolaters or devil-worshippers.

# The Poet stands between the people and the gods

So Milton's understanding of the role of the great poet is unlike Socrates and very much like that of the German poet Hölderlin: "The poet stands between the people and the gods." The poet takes the sacred things, and passes them on, makes them part of the linguistic possibilities of his time.

### Milton and Dante on God

Well, if the poet stands between the people and the gods, what about Milton's God? In my opinion it is not a success. First of all, it is not a success theologically. It is a Calvinistic God, though Milton's theology is, I think, far preferable to Calvin's. Milton passionately disagreed with Calvin about human freedom, and especially freedom to listen. He disagreed with Calvin about art. But about the abyss, about the vengeance of God, he seems to have agreed more than we would like, though he reinterprets it.

But I want to dwell more on the artistic failure which is, I think, a valuable failure. An obvious contrast to Milton, one we have read, is Dante. Let's briefly recall Dante and some things about his poem: How God is presented; His relationship to the human; and what worship of God is.

### How God Is Presented

In *The Divine Comedy*, God turns out to have been present throughout the poem, but we only see God at the very end after an immense process of

preparation involving all aspects of life and thought and a purifying of the soul of the poet. And even then, the theme is the ineffability of God. And one sees God, not so much acting as by His being sending love throughout the universe.

Milton does not seem to have these ineffability problems. With Milton, God shows up as a character early on, in Book III. "Dante has trouble expressing God?" says Milton. "Well, try this." He is a ruler, anthropomorphic, sitting on a throne—and we are already prepared, by Books I and II, to see him as a tyrant. Satan and the others make a plausible case that appeals to our own feelings—fallen, disoriented feelings, Milton would say.

Also, unlike Dante, Milton's God talks, and there are almost always two ways of hearing what he says. If you think of Him as the source of all goodness and being, there is a wondrousness, a magnificent beneficence, even joy and inspiration about much of what he says. Properly understood, you can see why it was terribly wrong for Satan to rebel, and why Satan's courage and refusal to submit is endlessly sad and evil. But if you think of God as a huge figure sitting on a throne, ruling the universe, you get the picture of a nervous, self-justifying, ponderous, pompous, arbitrary, cruel person. You are invited to guess at his motivations rather than to understand the order of things. [Sir Francis Bacon might have appreciated Milton's portrait of God.]

# God and the Human

In other words, second point, Milton's God looks and acts human. For Dante, one of the ultimate mysteries is how, looking into God, he sees a human form there:

As the geometer intently seeks to square the circle, but he cannot reach, so I searched that strange sight: I wished to see the way in which our human effigy suited the circle and found place in it (*Par.*, XXXIII, 133-138)

Milton simply goes ahead and shows God as human, sitting on a throne, dispatching messengers, listening to his own praises, egging on other divine

beings, etc. Bold of Milton to show an active, pondering, commanding God.

### Worship

So, third, what would it mean to worship this being? Dante shows God gathering all human possibility into a living form, a rose, fulfilling the minds, hearts, souls, of all the blessed. He shows us millions of angels darting back and forth among the people, a living vibrancy of light and music and mind and growth. He shows us he himself, Dante, gazing into God until his desire and will are moved like

a wheel revolving uniformly—by the Love that moves the sun and the other stars. (*Par.*, XXXIII, 144-5)

Milton, when he wants to talk about worship, shows troops breaking into adulation that sounds to us, at least at times, like tyrant worship. He shows us subservience and the kind of affirmation we may suspect comes from fear of being thundered at. We hear much more than this, and Milton's universe is charged with the grandeur of God, but we hear this as well.

Let's use one passage to put all this together.

The idea of the Son sacrificing himself for man, of God becoming man out of love, is a profound one. But look at how, in Milton, it comes about. God is speaking, and he is foretelling the future:

#### Man disobeying,

Disloyal breaks his fealty, and sins Against the high Supremacy of Heav'n, Affecting Godhead, and so losing all, To expiate his Treason hath naught left, But to destruction sacred and devote, He with his whole posteritie must die, Die hee or justice must; unless for him Some other able, and as willing, pay The rigid satisfaction, death for death. (III, 11. 203-212) Milton uses, as he does throughout, the language of politics and power supremacy, height, treason, obedience—to express the fact that God is sheer goodness itself and the source of everything. This seems a very bad metaphor. And again, God seems to be using third-person abstractions to talk about Himself, as if trying to hide His part in this: high supremacy of heav'n—you mean yourself, o high supreme one? "And so losing all"—is this some kind of law of being, high supreme one, or could you have given man a less all-ornothing test? And why *must* man—and all his posterity, for heav'n's sake—die? It seems to be, only because God says so, and the same thing seems true of "Die hee, or justice must"? All justice will vanish if man doesn't die? Are you perhaps offended, High Supreme, because he tried to become you? There is a theological meaning to this, one worth considering, but that's not what we hear.

And the rhythm and wording of "the rigid satisfaction, death for death." God is, of course, setting things up for the Son to make his heroic and compassionate offer. But we feel God's rigidity, and, God help us, his "satisfaction" with the idea of sacrificial death—the rigidity of the dead body. And remember, God *knows* that the Son is going to offer himself, so the whole thing is kind of a stage-show. At the same time, the rigidity may be, in a moral or theological sense, what keeps the universe from collapsing. We are, in a way, at the problem of Apollo and the Furies here.

There are important consequences to Milton's presentation of God, since it is an honest and deeply thought-out presentation of the Protestant deity:

One is, that the theology of omniscience and sacrifice has to be rethought, and the image of this God, which works out the theology, is a big reason why we have no satisfactory concept of God today and why we need one. By trying to do what he thought needed to be done, Milton shows this need: once we have a great poet who feels the need to "justify the ways of God to man" we may well suspect that we need a new conception of God. By putting God honestly into a poem, attempting to assert and justify him, Milton showed why we cannot live with God until we have a new theology.

Second, Milton shows us the difficulties of presenting God as a person. One can do this the other way around—present a person as God, as the Gospel of John does. But Milton often does not succeed, as a poet, in making us love, respect, or even find tolerable, this God. But he does show us something very interesting: he gives a terrible and portentous portrait of the man who assumes he is God. His God comes off not so much as a tyrant, I think, but as an intellectual who demands the sacrifice of actual living beings to his superior knowledge and sense of justice. Milton's God adumbrates the coming of all those ideologies in which men play God, those ideologies which are substitutes for religion: Marxism, Leninism, totalitarianism, Fascism, Stalinism, Nazism. His God is a Marxist/Leninist playing with history—for good ends, he says, but really of, by, and for power. Milton's God is in interesting ways like the being whom Plato, in his Republic, warns us against, the almost-philosopher.

# 'Grasping the lightening-flash': Providential Inspiration

Milton was very much a man of his time. A great poet always is. Great poets seem to always and only arise in an era when something is happening, good and bad, to the human spirit. Hölderlin describes what such a poet is supposed to do:

Yet it behoves us, poets, Under the storms with uncovered heads to stand, With our own hand to grasp the very lightening-flash And to pass, wrapped in song, The gift to the people.

Hölderlin says the poet "grasps the very lightening-flash." As the storm breaks, he is standing up in it—as Dante, Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, all very much men of their time, did. The poet is inspired by something dangerous, as Plato seems to acknowledge. And while Milton is an unsatisfactory portrayer of God, he is, as I began by saying, an inspired listener. He doesn't just listen to words. He listens to what Galway was talking about.

Milton upset some of his contemporaries, and perhaps upsets us, because he claims, and seems really to believe, that his poem came from God, that it was divinely inspired. He believed, I think, that the bitterness and sacrifices of his life, his blindness and failure and isolation, his piety and passion, his devotion, called this forth from God—that he, the great listener, deserved to hear, just like Jacob, crippled, you remember, by his wrestling, deserved a new name. Part of his assertion of eternal providence is the trajectory of his life—from defeat, blindness, and isolation come the great poem he has struggled for.

In other words, when Milton thinks of God not as ruler, but as Providence, that which brings, out of the wandering and strife and defeat—Fall—of history and being human, something higher or better, Milton is great. I haven't even dwelt on this.

So we come to Milton, blind, dictating *Paradise Lost* to a series of amanuenses. Milton describes the poem as coming from

my Celestial Patroness, who deigns Her nightly visitation unimplor'd, And dictates to me slumb'ring, or inspires Easy my unpremeditated Verse. (IX, ll. 21-24)

And here is how it apparently went, according to an early biography of Milton, apparently from eyewitnesses:

He, waking early, had commonly a good stock of verses ready against his amanuensis came; which, if it happened to be later than ordinary, he would complain, saying that he wanted to be milked. The evenings he spent in reading some choice poets, by way of refreshment after the day's toil, and to store his fancy against morning.

In other words, God spoke through the great poets and thinkers of the past. And through the very qualities of language. And most particularly, in the Biblical texts and the Greek and Roman texts, which is where the language and imagery of his poem come from. These were alive in him as he slept, and he composed upon waking, easy and unpremeditated, except by the entire history of poetry and thought.

In his lecture, Prof. Ricks dwelt on those lines in which Milton describes that process of reading at night—actually, being read to—then, full of thought

and language, in his blindness beginning to sing like a bird and like the greatest of the old poets, Maeonides, who many of you will know by the name Homer.

From Jonathan Richardson, a biographer who spoke to many people who knew Milton: "The posture he was usually in when he dictated: he sat leaning backward obliquely in an easy chair, with his leg flung over the elbow of it; he frequently composed lying in bed in the morning ('twas winter sure then)."

# The movement of Paradise Lost and the Divine Comedy

So, in Autumn and Winter, and in the Autumn and Winter of his life, Milton composed *Paradise Lost* through classical studies, experience of politics, Providence, and Inspiration. And we might end by once again comparing him with Dante. Dante's poem is a pilgrimage with the poet as pilgrim, and Vergil and Beatrice as guides. It moves, as he moves, in a cosmically ordered fashion from earth, down through hell, up the mount of Purgatory, higher and higher in heaven, helicoidally, as Prof. Costa says, in an ascending spiral, to the vision of God.<sup>6</sup> This is the Middle Ages.

How can we describe Milton's Renaissance poem? Like Dante, he is very much present in it, but he is solitary—no guide, though all the past is in his mind—blind, his hearing intensely alive. The movement of his poem is much more springing and abrupt and vertiginous than Dante—a poem of Fall, rise, and wandering. Milton is plunging into Hell, then rising to Heaven, then following Satan to Earth, then on Earth Adam hears stories about heaven and the fall, then back to Earth for the actual Fall, then to Hell, then to heaven, then to Earth again. The overall motion of this poem is fall and rise within fall and rise in great complexity. It is a poem of the mind and feelings educated through motion of many kinds, as you might expect from what I've said earlier. It is a poem of enforced exploration; of man, and the superhuman, challenging God.

And it ends, not with a vision of God, as does Dante, but of man and woman, hand in hand, facing choice, facing the world, and the motion is wandering—that motion Prof. Costa stressed with the Latin word *errare*. And the word, even though the two are hand-in-hand, is "solitary." No Raphael is going

<sup>6</sup> Dennis Costa's lecture for cc102 on Dante's Paradiso, April 1996.

to visit them and explain things, the animals are no longer their friends, the great companionable place is theirs no longer, and is already decaying. They chose, like Satan, a kind of loneliness, but it will be tempered by guidance and transformed, in unlikely ways, by Providence. The emphasis is on choice, of great possibility opening out of huge, irreparable loss; note the beautiful line endings:

The World was all before them, where to choose

(Note how this line-ending places emphasis on choice.)

Their place of rest, and Providence their guide: They hand in hand with wand'ring steps and slow, Through Eden took their solitary way.

(XII, 11. 646-49)

# **ANALECTS OF THE CORE**

Paradise Lost: "Solitude sometimes is best society."

Dante: "Consider your origin; you were not born to live like brutes, but to follow virtue and knowledge."

Austen: "I do not wish to avoid the walk. The distance is nothing when one has a motive."

Julius Adams Stratton, of MIT: "As a great educational institution, we shall fall short of our mission if we fail to inspire in our students a concern for things of the spirit as well as of the mind. By precept and example, we must convey to them a respect for moral values, a sense of the duties of citizenship, a feeling for taste and style, and the capacity to recognize and enjoy the first-rate."

Nietzsche: "The deepest insights spring from love alone."

### JUSTIN LIEVANO

# A Conversation with Bruce Redford

o celebrate the career of Professor Bruce Redford, one of Core's, and BU's, finest scholars, it was suggested to me that I interview him, to give future generations of Core students a glimpse into the mind of our dear friend. I was dreadfully nervous, for I felt that I was doing something akin to approaching a figure on the Sistine ceiling or a figure in relief on the Notre Dame and asking: "Do you have the time to please tell me something about yourself? What have you seen?"

In view of such trepidation, I must ask you to forgive the sometimes shambolic nature of my questions and to turn your attention instead to the erudite answers given by Prof. Redford. I have presented our conversation nearly exactly as it played itself out, and I hope that it will inspire in readers the same kind of awe I feel for this beloved member of our Core Curriculum family. –JL

Justin Lievano: I suppose to start, if I can ask you to look back a bit, could you tell us about your own undergraduate experience—defining moments, humorous anecdotes, anything that really captures the experience of undergraduate education for you?

Bruce Redford: Yes, that's a difficult question for me to answer because I was an undergraduate at Brown University soon after Brown essentially jettisoned its curriculum, and substituted the old curriculum with what is still called "the New Curriculum," even though it officially began as long ago as 1969. This was a utopian moment in American education, and there was a group of student reformers at Brown who convinced the faculty and the administration that undergraduates were rational adults who should not be treated in a patronizing way, and should not be compelled to take certain courses in designated areas and disciplines; that rather, with astute advising, each undergraduate would be inspired to make a wonderfully inventive but also coherent set of individual choices that would yield a much more meaningful educational experience. Something of the utopian glow was still alive at the university when I arrived two years after the big change that I have just described. I recently met a woman who graduated the same year I did from Brown, 1975; she majored in Art History. We did not know each other, but we were comparing notes and we ended up with remarkably similar reflections and narratives, centering on the fact that this utopian notion of faculty and students working together to design individual educational experiences can only really be successful if the faculty is one hundred percent invested in spending as much time and energy with individual students as is required to make sure they make informed choices, through conversation and so forth, trying to figure out what the individual student actually is looking for...

Unfortunately, I did not have the kind of supportive advising that would have made this New Curriculum successful. I came already interested in both literature and visual culture. I started out as a Classics major, very much interested in archeology, but was also interested in English and European Literature. I had some marvelous experiences with specific professors, but I made some terrible choices for lack of careful advising. So I did a lot of floundering, and in fact worked my way through four or five different fields over the course of four years there. A positive way of presenting this experience would be to say that I wasn't floundering so much as figuring things out

JL: Exploring, as they say. That's our sort of admissions lingo now, exploration.

BR: Right, right, but the deficiencies of this approach to education were revealed even more powerfully to me when I began my teaching career at the University of Chicago, when the Core Curriculum was still very much at the center of the College of the University of Chicago. At this point in the early eighties, when I joined the faculty, it was essentially impossible to begin majoring in anything until you were a third year undergraduate because most of your time up to that point was spent taking very rigorous, very thoughtfully conceived, interdisciplinary courses in each of the four divisions into which the university was divided. So, I taught for ten years in one of the yearlong humanities Core Curriculum sequences called "Greek Thought and Literature." It was a team taught course in which people from the Classics department, people from the English department, people from Art History, people from Philosophy designed and taught together this course that began chronologically with Homer and ended with Plato, but mixed up things in a very interesting way, so that the purpose of this kind of educational foundation had been very carefully thought through, and the faculty was, by and large, passionately invested in making the Core Curriculum work.

JL: To a related question, do you find, or does it seem to you that your own educational experience differed very greatly from the kinds of experiences that your own students report to you? That is, do you think that students today, students that you teach, are receiving the same



kind of passionate investment that wasn't necessarily always there when you were an undergraduate? And I assume that experience also probably motivates you to try to give students the same kind of investment.

BR: It does. Well, Brown was and still is quite unusual; part of the New Curriculum involved jettisoning all university-wide requirements, so there were no language requirements. There was no requirement to do anything in a far-flung field. Let's say you entered as a poet, you could spend really all of your four years exploring aspects of poetry. My specific problem then, which continues to be a problem for me now, is that there are certain fields and certain areas of inquiry that really are necessarily chronological and sequential.

A simple example would be learning Ancient Greek. One of the ways in which I floundered is that, because I had done very well in my first year of Ancient Greek as a freshman at Brown, I was told that I could skip the intermediate Greek course and go straight into an upper-level course on Ancient Tragedy, which also had graduate students in it, and I was not prepared for this. But, there were other experiences like that in which I was permitted, either through bad advising or the absence of advising, to make ill-informed selections, so that instead of emerging with a kind of coherent mosaic, I ended up with individual bits and pieces, and I had to try and figure out a way of putting the pieces together myself. I'm not quite sure whether I'm answering your question directly, Justin, but Brown still has no curriculum to speak of, and its philosophy continues to be that eighteen year olds are fully-formed adults, and with, again, proper advising...

JL: So, to redirect my question then, when you're teaching, when you're advising and working with students, do you find yourself trying to put together their pieces, or help them put together their pieces in way that wasn't your experience? Or do you try to imagine paths for them? Is that part of your approach to advising and helping students?

BR: Yes, and trying, in a non-patronizing way, to tease out the questions, the topics, the ambitions that they have. So always trying to make a balance between the individual talent of the student, and my own conviction that to do significant work in

Facing page: these screenshots show Prof. Redford speaking in CC 201, in September 2015, about the Renaissance and Petrarca. The source video is online at online at youtube.com/watch?v=w0s8nCgjUig.

certain areas, you need to have certain sets of tools. In order to do Y, you need to have done X and so forth in certain cases, and so forth and so on.

JL: If I can ask you a sort of inverse of that same question, through your experiences as an educator, would you say that your students have had a profound effect on you over the years? Is there a way in which working with students has changed your manner of thinking about the kind of texts that you encounter in your own work?

BR: Absolutely, and one of my concerns about graduate education in particular, but this is beginning to be a concern about undergraduate education, is that for some very good reasons, including the pressure to make money, to pay off debts, choose a reasonably lucrative career, which is also being combined of late with a cultural shift away from the humanities, toward the hard social sciences and the sciences, students are narrowing themselves prematurely. If we're in the business of making citizens, which is one way of thinking about the goal of a liberal arts education, then we are creating an impoverished citizenry by enabling this kind of premature specialization. The problem grows all the more acute at the graduate level-this is going to speak directly to your question in just a second-because I would say that eighty percent of the teaching I've done over thirty-five years now has tapped into questions I explored and facts I learned before I began to write my doctoral dissertation, and the smarter the student, the more likely you as a teacher will need to field a question in a class on Chaucer that suddenly asks you to comment on Auden. If all you can say is "I'm terribly sorry, that's not my area of specialization," then you really have failed your student. So, another way of making the same point would be to say it's crucial to have as wide of a repertoire as possible as a teacher in order to help students develop their own repertoires, and obviously, good teaching is very much a collaborative enterprise. One of the pleasures I've had in the Core here is that there is not only a coherent set of texts and a coherent set of questions and goals, but a tremendous investment in communal enterprise.

JL: If I could turn for a moment to the Core Curriculum. Could you relate for us an experience in Core that you think crystallizes what it's like to be a Core student, to be a Core educator, to be a part of that community? I mean, do you have in mind a certain memory that really captures the esprit de Core, as it were?

BR: Well, what comes immediately to mind is your wonderful response to my question at the lecture, about memorable first lines in the major literary texts. You immediately raised you hand and gave us all the opening line of *Mrs. Dalloway*. That was

a tremendously gratifying moment in Core for me because it turned the lecture into a conversation, and it suggested that there was at least one kindred spirit out there who was, as it were, on the same wavelength.

#### JL: Well, I'm glad to have been part of that with you!

BR: But, there have been multiple encounters in Core classrooms and quite often outside the classroom. One of my pleasures is that when a conversation officially ends because the hour is up, quite often I have the feeling, when I come back two days later to teach the same group, that somehow the conversation has continued in the interim between the first class and the second class. It seems to me one valuable feature of the communal atmosphere of the Core Curriculum is that the conversation goes on much of the time.

### JL: It is beautiful place. It's a shame we're both departing at the same time...

BR: Right, and also within BU, and this is not true of the University of Chicago, which is a much, much smaller university. But, I think that I would have felt lost had I come to BU as an undergraduate. I think it is a place that's still, even though we're now officially working to create one BU, still a very fragmented as well as a very large place, and I feel as a faculty member... I won't call it shelter. That's too dramatic, but a sense of home within the Core Curriculum.

JL: Can I ask then, a question that wasn't on the list I sent you ahead of time? You mentioned fragmentation, and the effort to create One BU, and to be autobiographical for a moment; I find that fragmentation is not necessarily bad. I think that it allows places for individual students to explore strange interests, things they never thought they might do before, or lets a student who might feel strange about an interest, sort of guilty, explore things in a protected place. You come to the Art History department or to the English department and the curiosities that you thought were useless or financially unsustainable are valuable and important. I wonder do you find that same thing? Do you find that fragmentation allows for a certain protection for students who've found it, who've had that eureka! moment, and come to a place that feels new, and exciting, and challenging?

BR: I'm not sure that we're using fragmentation in the same way. I was using it negatively. For you, it suggests diversity and opportunity, correct?

#### JL: (frantic, embarrassed nodding)

BR: If we're understanding fragmentation that way, then absolutely. The positive side of what we're just describing is that the University conceived as a whole offers

many different possibilities. Outside the Core Curriculum, some of the most gratifying teaching I've done at BU has been in courses, for example, a course called The Borough, which looked at seventeenth-century European culture through the categories of the theatrical, the sexual, and the spiritual, so it mixed things up generically, mixed things up chronologically, and when I taught this course at least twice, I had not only CAS students, but students from CFA. So, I remember a moment when we were talking about the painter van Dyck, and his self-portraits, and a young man raised his hand and said, "I'm a senior, majoring in painting in CFA and I just stayed up all night painting a life-size self-portrait in the nude..."

BR & JL: (sharing in a moment of bemused chuckling)

BR: Fortunately, he did not go into detail.

JL: Explicit detail...

BR: *Explicit* detail, all right; but he did talk about brushwork in a way that related his own experiences as a practicing painter, thinking about the problem of self-representation, to the issues we were exploring as a group.

JL: That's brilliant... I mean, a little revealing, but brilliant. If I can ask, then, about mixing, as it relates to you ('mixing paints'? If I can find a way to work that in as a pun when typing this up, I should... ), to talk about mixing, and interdisciplinary teaching. I wanted to ask you about your professional path through English literature and into Art History, to first ask you chronologically or historically how that happened, how you came to be Professor Redford, Chair of the Art History Department, rather than teaching in English, and then to ask you what you think has been rewarding about that transition, what has been most transformative or important to your development not only professionally, but personally about moving through fields as opposed to finding one and sticking with it, which of course is viable too. I know plenty of people who've done that who are excellent, but we're here to talk about you today, so if you wouldn't mind...

BR: Great, well this could be a very long narrative, but I'll try to keep it as compressed as possible.

I am the child of two diplomats; I was born and raised abroad. My parents took the decision not to send me or my two siblings away to boarding school ever, so the country we happened to be living in became a kind of educational laboratory, and I went to a series of very small, in some ways quite bizarre, international schools. What I learned there was supplemented many times over by the travel that my parents took us on. Every vacation, there would be at least one trip, which was in some ways the perfect preparation for the kind of eclectic official educational experience that I have found and have created for myself... It radically unsuited me for life in America because I found myself dropped into an American suburban high school in the late sixties, and I was in every respect unprepared for that. I've been trying to recover from the trauma ever since, but there were, again, a few wonderful teachers in high school.

One of my themes would be that ultimately it's the teacher more than the subject that has the power to make a transformative difference. That's certainly been true for me. So my spirit was not broken in high school thanks, really, to two literature teachers. Because I had spent three years of my boyhood in Turkey, and had become absolutely fascinated by classical and Byzantine art and architecture, I went off to university thinking that I wanted to become a classical archeologist. That was fortified by the fact that I had excavated for four summers on the island of Cyprus, and so what I pieced together from the semi-chaotic situation Brown that I have just been describing was, officially speaking, a major in English but there was a large component of religious studies and an even larger component of classics. Then I went off to Cambridge University in England to do a second BA in Medieval Studies, which was even more interdisciplinary. It folded together language, history, anthropology, and archeology, and then I had to make a decision about the field in which I wanted to take my PhD, so I came back to America and went to Princeton for my PhD, concentrating at that point in eighteenth century English literature. But the classical and the visual parts of my earlier education were always there, and I was given the opportunity not only to teach in the Core Curriculum at Chicago, but also to design small seminars that allowed me to return to my interest in art history. Initially, that turn came through exploration of travel writing and the Grand Tour in particular, and my most decisive turn to the visual professionally came when I wrote a book called Venice on the Grand Tour, which was based on the experience of teaching a seminar on travel writing, and studying the portraits that these young travelers commissioned of themselves in Italy. But the University of Chicago, for all of its admirable commitment to wide-ranging exploration across disciplines, was, as many Universities still are, very much committed to traditional disciplinary structures. So, I was offered the chance to come to Boston University to join the University Professor's Program. It was created in the early nineteen-seventies by a small group of very innovative, interdisciplinary

scholars who collaborated on an undergraduate curriculum that had its own core, and then out of that foundational core experience, each student essentially designed his or her program. It was an enormously exhilarating experience for me and it allowed me to cultivate my interest in the classical tradition and my interest in art history, and also to advise doctoral dissertations that did the same kind of border crossing. The program was dissolved, and I found a warm welcome in this department, and it's a source of great pleasure and pride to me that I'm ending my career as chair of this department. There was never any indication that because I am not a card-carrying art historian and I have, to put it gently, an unorthodox background that I was not well-suited, that I was not well-qualified. Does that answer some of your questions?

JL: It does! Indeed it answers all of them. I have to say, to speak personally for a moment, that I find your story, coming here, being part of this department, and being able to succeed despite having an unconventional background very inspirational. It feels to a person—maybe not to all people like me—but it feels to me like philology, boundary crossing as you said, is shied away from, is something that frightens people, or discourages people. So it's always exciting to see someone like you who makes it work, who does it successfully.

BR: Thank you very much. You know that I've written a book on the Society of Dilettanti who were eighteenth-century British travelers, connoisseurs, and collectors, and what I try to do in this book is not only to study the group, but to recreate what I call "the culture of curiosity" in Enlightenment Europe. This was the last age in European culture before the first age in which we continue to live, the age of the professional, so it's pre-disciplinary, and the model of an educated person was very much that of someone animated by delight, desire, and curiosity to range far and wide, and make connections. So, no one says, "Well, hold on. You're not entitled to comment on this issue because you're not a physicist"—quite the opposite. It's a very exhilarating moment, and part of what I continue to lament both as a scholar and teacher is the degree to which our educational and cultural lives are increasingly bound by professional concerns, and an obsession with credentials. This is really something of a "hobby horse" to Lawrence Sterne's term.

I see far and wide people insisting on being called "Doctor," and signing themselves "Joe Smith, PhD." I see people advertising their dubious works on how to lose weight fast or have a happy life by calling themselves "Suzy Jones, *PhD*." This bespeaks, I think fundamentally, an insecurity, if we have to legitimize ourselves, authenticate ourselves, through the display of credentials that may or may not signify expertise.

JL: It's also strange in that it puts certain people in the position of gatekeeper to knowledge, or to understanding, and it's incredibly strange to say, or to believe, that some people have access and have to give it to others. That seems almost medieval...

BR: So, back to the Core. For me, part of the excitement of the enterprise is that the over-arching goal is not memorizing the dates of the Peloponnesian War, or being able to recite all the titles of Plato's dialogues, but a set of informed questions. So what I like to think of is an encounter with a new poem in *The New Yorker* twenty-five years from now, in which my class on the Petrarchan sonnet gives the student, at the very least, a preliminary set of ideas and ways of approaching this new literary work; or, the natural sciences part of the Core makes this graduate, twenty years down the line, capable of reading a white paper on global change, and of course not passing judgment on the hard science, but being able to assess the argument that the way that the evidence adduced did or did not develop and support the argument.

JL: Right, thank you for turning this conversation back toward productive topics rather than an elegy on the state of things. On the subject of Core and on the subject of great works, I wonder if there is a great work in or out of Core that you would recommend everyone read, or that has been most important in your experience as a reader, as a learner. Is there—this is nearly an impossible question—but is there one book that everyone ought to know, that everyone ought to experience?

BR: Well, I'm going to back into that difficult question by saying that my favorite composer by far is Mozart, and my favorite English language novelist is Jane Austen. I think you know both those things already. So I would hope that everyone gets to know Austen's major novels at some point during her or his life; I'm not going to play favorites within the Austen canon, and so too I would hope that Mozart would also cross people's paths in some significant way at some point. An indispensable book... in English fiction, I would say George Eliot's *Middlemarch*. In Italian fiction, I would say Visconti's *The Leopard*. In French fiction, I would say Laclos' *Dangerous Liaisons*. In German fiction, I would say Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks*...

JL: Feel free to continue. I mean, take the answer as far as you like. You're giving me brilliant recommendations now of things I must know. But, if you feel you've given enough, this will suffice.

BR: (amusedly) I think I'll stop there.

JL: On a similar subject, the subject of exciting works, passions, you mentioned you're very passionate about Mozart and Austen, so my next question has to do with your profession. That is, if you had twenty years of uninterrupted, fully funded research time, and you could conduct your research in a very comfortable climate with a very nice office, what would be your white whale of a project, something you maybe wanted to chase, but didn't?

BR: That's a great question. I'm beginning to teach myself Spanish; it's very exciting to learn a new language, always. In my case, it's made both more easy and more difficult because I have French, and Italian, and some Latin, and for obvious reasons beginning to learn Spanish is, at least on the surface, less onerous because I can use what I know already. I am determined to learn Spanish properly. Spanish, as you probably know, has a large component of Arabic in its lexicon, so there is a large section of the working vocabulary of Spanish that has no cognates in other Romance languages. One reason I want to learn Spanish is that as a result of alarming developments in America's political climate, I have developed for the first time in my life a streak of activism, connected with the plight of immigrants and migrant workers, and my, I hope, non-professional passion over the next twenty years will be using my Spanish to do what I can to help them. I will be moving to New Mexico, which is a very good place to do this kind of work. But my new academic passion is for colonial Latin American painting and architecture; again, Spanish is going to be crucial. But I've become absolutely fascinated in the last five years by connections between European and Latin American art, specifically portraiture, and so my new project, which I may never live to see completed, is a study of colonial Mexican portraits.

JL: That's wonderful! To share another of my anecdotes, my father was a first-generation immigrant from Colombia, and in fact did not teach me Spanish...

BR: Because he hanted you to assimilate, yes?

JL: Exactly. So, your project excites me.

BR: You haven't asked any questions about globalization and its effects on curriculum. I don't know whether you want to go there or not.

JL: If you want to take us there, I'll follow!

BR: One of the challenges that Core is facing—and we've had quite a few discussions of this on the Core faculty—is how to respond responsibly to shifts in the canon, yes? This has already happened certainly on the high school level, and there are both gains and costs. For example, my niece and nephew who graduated from high school ten years ago now were reading Toni Morrison, and were reading a book called *Guns*, *Germs, and Steel*...

JL: As we are still reading in the Core Social Sciences, or were as of a few years ago when I took the course...

BR: They were *not* reading *Great Expectations*. They were not reading *Hamlet*, and my concern really is not so much that, in some sense, Toni Morrison has replaced Dickens, but that the experience of reading a truly complex and challenging text, what you might call an immersive experience, is being replaced by a canapé experience of having morsels, delicious, appealing morsels but nonetheless morsels. So it becomes increasingly difficult if you teach, as I've been trying to do, the masterpieces of European art and literature, which are embedded in a very rich cultural context.

My new book is on allusion, and again allusion has been at the center of my interests for thirty years now at least, both as a student of literature and art; what does it mean to quote or allude? What does it mean to make a work of art that depends upon the viewer or reader's ability not only just to spot the quotation but, as we were saying class recently, to, in some sense, assess the way in which what has been imported has been remade by virtue of being shifted into a different context. So, much of what used to be at the center of a humanities curriculum is becoming less and less accessible. How do you open up these materials to students who are interested in them but do not have the experience either of having read the works or seen the pictures that are part of the fabric of this work that you're attempting to teach, but also don't have habits of attention or concentration... I think I'm slightly wandering off point here, but back to this issue of globalization. For obvious reasons, a fourteen-week semester, for example, or a four-course load... you simply can't add on; if you add on, you have to subtract. So, questions of priority and questions of value come very much to the fore.

Is it more important to have just some tiny little experience of classical Japanese literature as a way of understanding a much different cultural tradition than it is to have a sustained, immersive experience in a single tradition? These are questions that Core is exploring and that the University as a whole is exploring because the hot topic now is the new general education requirements. What should every BU student know?

JL: It seems to me, based on what you've just said, that you're suggesting that morsels are not enough, that they offer a kind of access which is limited in the way that it does not permit a full, cultural understanding of the circumstances that surround its production. BR: And there's a certain kind of tokenism in which your one class reading three chapters of *The Tale of Genji* leads you to believe that you have a handle on the Japanese literary tradition.

JL: Right, in my senior year of high school we read The Heart of Darkness and Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe, and that was our "Africa," and that was problematic for a number of reasons I've found since coming to university, but eighteen year old me had no way of knowing that. So, I may be asking you another impossible question, but what do we do? I wouldn't know how to address the problem without saying "take it all in; grab as much as you can."

BR: Well, back to Core yet again, I think what we do is emphasize questions and methods. In Art History, which is splintering in several ways; it's rushing toward the contemporary-this is true in other humanistic fields as well-ninety percent of the doctoral dissertations currently being written in America in art history are on topics post World War II, and you can see immediately the kind of deformation that this produces, especially because many major contemporary artists, especially in countries like Germany make their art out of allusions to the past. So the field is splintering in terms of history and chronology. It's also going global in some very exciting ways. In this department, we now have our first Latin American specialist and she is already in conversation with our European Baroque specialist to design a course called The Global Baroque, in which through issues of trade, for example, what's going on in The Netherlands in the seventeenth century and what's going on in Peru in the seventeenth century are not only juxtaposed but intertwined. I think these are very positive developments, but it means that a curriculum and a field are being contested as we now say. Things fall apart; how do you hold them together? One answer is by emphasizing the questions and methods that are the most relevant and the most rewarding to ask, and that's one of Core's strongest suits, as we were saying a few minutes ago. Finally, it's not about substance. It's about modes of interrogating the material.

JL: I think that's a lovely way to end. Thank you for your time! And for illuminating for us the ways in which Core allows us to retake for our own knowledge things that might otherwise be lost.

#### WEIYI HU

# Free Will and Foreknowledge: Problems with Milton's Theodicy

I n seventeenth-century Europe, a trend of solving the question of theodicy—the justification of existence of evil in a world created by an all-good God—arose among scholars in that Christian-based society as a tool for defending God's justice. As a renowned scholar of the period, the English poet John Milton was among the people who endeavored to provide a legitimate reason for the dichotomy of a benevolent God and wicked human beings, and he gave his own thoughts in his verse epic *Paradise Lost*. Milton successfully offers a comprehensive system to analyze theodicy. He transfers the cause of evil from God to mankind's own free will and explains the reason why God allows evil to be a component of free will. However, he fails to settle the conflict between God's foreknowledge and mankind's freedom, and he too closely models God after mankind, which undermines the persuasiveness of his explanation.

In a theodicy, a defense for God's glory in an impure universe is a crucial task, and Milton's well-founded defense is that evil comes from mankind's own free will as opposed to coming directly from God. Milton believes that God is the creator of all beings, including angels, human beings, animals and plants, but God is not the controller of the destiny of these beings. Rather, He enables them to think and act freely. Milton attributes to God: "I made him just and right / Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall" (III. 98-99). That is, a human being acquires the right to act in terms of his or her own will, which may help to maintain goodness and simultaneously cause depravity in the person. Although the reality of mankind's existence relies on the creator, and human behaviors are monitored by the creator, the creator neither meddles in any situations nor takes charge of decision making. Human beings can choose freelythey have the choice to choose between sin or good deeds. Thus human beings can pollute the originally innocent world by their own sins, as soon with Adam and Eve. God gives Adam and Eve freedom, which ultimately leads to their temptation and subsequent fall, which marks the entrance of evil in this world.

By setting free will as the essential cause of evil, Milton highlights a distinction between God and mankind, underscoring the uniqueness of God. If one grants that free will brings evil to this world, it is logical to believe that a human being's free will is not perfect, since imperfection may only create more imperfection. Leibniz, who shares Milton's idea of theodicy that free will is the cause of vice, describes privation (freedom) as "a special kind of 'deficient cause' of sin" (136), an idea that is examined by Tad M. Schmaltz in his essay "Moral Evil and Divine Concurrence in the Theodicy." In other words, because free will creates something flawed (that creation being evil), it must be flawed itself.

Accordingly, attributing the cause of evil to freedom is equal to acknowledging the flaw of freedom. At the same time, God also has free will, which must be perfect because God is almighty and all-good. In Milton's theodicy, mankind's imperfections serve as a foil to God and highlight His perfections. As a result, Milton asserts that God is the sole perfection in the whole universe, and this perfection is not the source of human evil. God does not make human beings to be predisposed to fall; rather, He just permits the fall by granting free will, a permission that is called into question because some people contend that it is unreasonable for God to allow something to contaminate this innocent world. To justify God's permission of free will and sin, Milton claims in his poem that free will can add grace to this universe:

Not free, what proof could they have giv'n sincere Of true allegiance, constant Faith or Love, Where only what they needs must do, appear'd, Not what they would? what praise could they receive? (III. 103-106)

The poet believes that free will itself is a grace that we receive from God, and it is necessary for us to have a sense of God's mercy and love. Without any freedom, the universe may escape the terrors of evil, but the purity of universe will be pointless since human beings were not able to exercise their own judgements and *choose* that purity. Only with free will can mankind think and feel independently, and only by thinking and feeling independently can they understand the beauty of universe and the blessing of God. The fact that hu-

man beings have awareness of the grace of the universe and the love of God makes everything more meaningful. As a result, God permits free will for the propagation of grace.

There is an objection to Milton's explanation of God's permission of free will. This objection maintains that God's permission simultaneously increases grace and engenders more sin. However, this objection can actually be refuted by Milton's theodicy—Milton proposes his version of the universe and free will is superior. According to the opposing view, *original* sin—the first instance of disobeying God—is the threshold of all other sins. This ordering of the geneal-ogy of sin is recorded in Peter Fisher's article "Milton's Theodicy":

Adam as the progenitor of the entire human race forfeited the perfect freedom of all future generations and entered into a bondage to sin and death....it is the cause of all subsequent evils—the imputation of guilt, the degradation of the mind, and the death of the body. (40)

Assuming that the hierarchy of sins is correct, we can reason that free will is the cause of a variety of sins, and God's permission in this case seems very irresponsible. Nonetheless, even if free will is the cause of a multiplicity of sins, this has no influence on the fact that grace is increased more than sin. This is because sins are just potential results of freedom and not all sins are destined to be created, whereas the grace created through free will is destined. Because free will guarantees a better world with only a *likelihood* of increased evil, the advantages of God' permission outweigh the disadvantages of it, and it is therefore sensible.

On the other hand, because of his own motive to defend God, Milton depicts an image of God who is self-protective, which severely weakens the validity of his poem's theodicy. While illustrating the indispensable role of free will in the production of evil, the God in Milton's text repeatedly emphasizes that human beings should not blame Him for their fall. God says, "whose fault? / Whose but his own?" (III. 96-97), and also contends that "They trespass, Authors to themselves in all / Both what they judge and what they choose" (III. 122-123). In no way should an omnipotent creator be so egoistical and focus so much concentration on absolving Himself.

A God with such a self-defensive image will without question decrease his authority because, as historian Dennis Danielson writes in his *The Cambridge Companion to Milton*, "such a context thus makes it very difficult for us not to feel the same skepticism regarding this speaker's motivations that we would feel in any analogous human situation" (6). In fact, replacing the divine character with a mundane and earthly human image is a sensible approach for Milton since he is incapable of capturing the true character of God. However, the God in *Paradise Lost* is too arbitrary and authoritarian and is hugely incompatible with the presumption that God is both benevolent and omnipotent.

Despite the fact that this problem is intense, it can hardly be solved because it is caused by the limitation of human imagination. All imaginations are based on real objects we have seen and memorized. Since no one sees the true image of God, the only strategy for any writer is to use the human image as an exemplar of God. Furthermore, as a creature that is imperfect, mankind is not able to figure out the nature of true perfection and divinity. This limitation of the human mind, as a result, will always be a huge constraint in a theodicy which may never have a solution.

There is, nevertheless, an interpretation of Milton's unreasonable depiction of God, which emphasizes his political purpose against monarchy. Milton is known as an opponent of episcopacy, a government ruled by the church, and an opponent of absolute monarchy, so he is actually not in favor of describing God as a monarch. In a review of Michael Bryson's *The Tyranny of Heaven: Milton's Rejection of God as King*, Louis Schwartz, a Professor of English at the University of Richmond, reveals Bryson's idea that:

The man who wrote the antimonarchical tracts. . . would never have thought monarchy a proper metaphor for understanding the true nature of the divine, and this explains why so many readers have found the portrait of the Father as an absolute monarch problematic. (239)

Even if he dislikes the idea of God as an autocratic ruler, Milton still sets the image of God in his unfavorable way in order to accentuate the inconsistency between God and monarchy. Because most English residents in the seventeenth century link the power of a monarch to divinity, the poet hopes this dramatic inconsistency in *Paradise Lost* can change the public's fetishism. As Bryson states, Milton pictures the defective and unpalatable image of God so as to "push seventeenth-century English readers to reject their habit of imagining God that way, a habit that he believed made them too quick to accept the authority of an earthly monarch" (239). The poet endures the incompleteness of his theodicy for a bigger aspiration of transforming people's beliefs. Although this defense for Milton makes his problematic depiction of God more acceptable, we still should not ignore its negative impact on his theodicy.

Another failure of Milton's theodicy can be seen in his effort to emphasize the concurrence of God's foreknowledge and mankind's freedom, as he fails to offer detailed justification. The concept of foreknowledge appears in Book III:

As if Predestination over-rul'd Their will, dispos'd by absolute Decree Or high foreknowledge; they themselves decreed Their own revolt, not I: if I foreknew, Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault, Which had no less prov'd certain unforknown. (114-119)

Milton expresses his opinion that even if God is omniscient and is capable of foreknowing everything, the foreknowledge does not affect mankind's free will. Foreknowledge and freedom are seemingly contradictory concepts because foreknowing the result of an event is a credible sign of predestination, which is the antithesis of making decisions freely and independently. Hence, Milton's thought can be regarded as untenable if further explanation is not provided. Unfortunately, he does not explain in *Paradise Lost* why and how God's foreknowledge is not in conflict with mankind's free will. This omission of additional interpretation obviously causes his theodicy to be less convincing.

A valid verification of the concurrence of foreknowledge and freedom is thus imperative for the argumentation of Milton's theodicy, and Leibniz gives a sound solution by differentiating foreknowledge and predetermination. Leibniz realizes the conflict between free will and predetermination as well, and he stands on the side of free will because "necessity contrary to morality would make activity meaningless, since it implies total predetermination in spite of human will and error" (25). From his perspective, which is the same as Milton's, free will guides an internal experience of human being which controls actions. Nevertheless, Leibniz also holds the point of view that "human liberty does not mean perfect indetermination or indifference, but indetermination in reference to the idea of absolute necessity" (25). Freedom only denies an absolute determination of all results, but those results are still conditionally predetermined.

A point in favor of Leibniz's theodicy is that though we do not know any specific future because of free will, "we know that an event will occur in one of two ways, depending upon the choice of action we take" (25). This conditional necessity allows God's foreknowledge: God can see all possible results in advance, but human beings are not deprived of the right to choose. In spite of contradicting predetermination, freedom does not exclude foreknowledge. God simply has perfect knowledge of all possibilities, rather than controlling the outcomes. Consequently, the co-existence of human free will and divine omniscience is verified.

Although there are weaknesses in Milton's theodicy in *Paradise Lost*, some of which cannot be fixed, we should not repudiate the logic and comprehensiveness of his theodicy. In addition, there are viewpoints from other scholars that can be treated as complements to his theodicy. Milton's explanations may always remain as inconclusive conjectures, but the conjectures reflect the poet's ideology and his attitude towards God and human beings.

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### LILY FILIPOWSKA

# Engaging with Utopian Literature

The main function of religion is to guide the practitioner's soul into a better state for improved wellbeing. Ideally, by performing inherited rituals and reading holy texts, the practitioner learns to adapt his life-style to match that of his religious authority. In this lens, utopian philosophies such as those outlined in Plato's *Republic* are no different than the stratagems that religions use to inspire change in their followers. In the same way the Bible hopes to increase love in the world by presenting a peaceful, compassionate Christ, utopian literature spurs the formation of a discerning mindset that crosses literary contexts and influences the tangible world. However, reading the Bible does not make the reader a Christian; likewise, utopian readers must be active participants in their analyses. Developing a utopian mindset is crucial to creating real change in a dystopian world.

Initially, Socrates' question-laden, detail-heavy, abstract musings on justice prompt frustration in the uninitiated-in the words of Polemarchus, "give an answer yourself!" (Plato 1.335d) Indeed, this demanding style of philosophical thought reflects the nature and purpose of utopian literature: to reevaluate the status quo. Utopian writings provide an alternate, albeit inherently unattainable, alternative to the "current" model, which varies based on the historical context of the writing. The Republic provides a systematic analysis of justice through the use of question, thought experiments, and modification of previous understandings. Even the seemingly most insignificant pebble of a rock is not left unturned. Creating a utopia requires the reader to deconstruct seemingly-familiar concepts: family, justice, knowledge. In the face of this existential crisis, the reader has two choices: he can shut down from the conflicting ideas and passively fall into the background of the discussion (as Polemarchus does), or engage it head-on, pushing the argument like a boulder over a hill (as Glaucon and Adeimantus do). Such discussions are difficult to tolerate in times of personal prosperity: if the system does not seem to falter according to one's relative perspective, why bother fixing it? Indeed, this idea has been quantified

by Edgar Kiser and Kriss Drass in their research into the production of utopian literature in the United States and Great Britain. In times of economic and hegemonic decline, the rate of utopian publications increased between 1883 and 1975 (Kiser 291). If the *status quo* of the majority of people is failing, the conversation opens to accommodate discussion of alternatives. What once was a stable model now becomes debatable, and utopian literature fills this vacuum through its encouragement of differing social arrangements.

Based on Kiser and Drass' assessment, one would believe that modern America is surely on the up-and-up with the disproportional ratio of dystopian to utopian literature currently published. Indeed, with the recent popularity of young-adult dystopian novels such as *The Hunger Games*, one would wonder whether utopian literature is still relevant. While utopia concerns itself with how to make the presently inadequate situation better, dystopia seeks to highlight how it can get worse. These two points of view start in the same place, namely the unhealthy society, and provide an understanding of how humans should or should not act in order to achieve a better community structure.

Both utopian and dystopian genres arrive at the same conclusion, but through significantly different means. Utopian literature sees human nature in an optimistic light. If we humans simply rearrange our souls, family constructs, educational systems, or a number of other variables, we can achieve perfect harmony. Conversely, dystopian literature suggests that human faults lead to the demise of morality, freedom, justice, or other virtues. Taken superficially, these two ideas seem synonymous because of their shared outcome. Whether we act in accordance with the values of the utopia or heed the warnings of dystopia, we will achieve the perfect state. However, the implications of these two ways of achieving order are vastly different. Utopias claim that change is possible; certainly Plato's *Republic* is didactic enough on the process of changing. This positive view has an almost religious impact, and indeed, many utopias are rooted in religion. Being absorbed by the message of utopian literature can be soothing, stirring, or frustrating. Regardless, the experience gives the reader the perspective necessary to see the faults of humanity not through the cynical lens of what *could* happen if they are unchecked, but by seeing potential solutions.

Furthermore, the inherently pessimistic tone of dystopia prompts inward

analysis rather than progressive movement. Utopia concedes that yes, man is fallible: even philosopher-kings of the Kallipolis must control their honor and appetite-loving souls. Nevertheless, the utopian prerogative is to find the way in which these imperfections will fit in a perfect society. Dystopia, on the other hand, provides no more information into the nature of perfect society than what is antithetical to it. Like children, we can abandon a behavior that is looked down upon, but we cannot know what the correct behavior is by punishment alone. It is impossible for human vice to be totally overcome; utopia offers leeway for human flaws, while dystopia only condemns them. Most of the solutions suggested through utopian literature have failed in practice, but the possibility of there being one grand, unattainable solution prompts the

mind to question: Can a solution be found? What would it entail?

Plato's isomorphic description of the soul suggests that the soul will become just if it is surrounded by a just city and vice-versa; for example, performing harmonious music will lead to inner harmony of the performer. I apply this idea to utopian literature in a slightly revised context. Utopian literature does not provide the answer to a perfect world; if it did we would not have a whole genre of it. Instead, utopian literature (as opposed to dystopian) propagates the idea that problems to social issues *can* be solved. A utopian mindset can be achieved through analysis of utopian literature because it prompts the reader to become an active critic of the problems he faces. This occurs directly in Plato's dialogues because throughout the progression of Plato's logic, the reader can step in and answer one of his countless questions himself. A perfect society is not realistically possible, but utopian literature pushes the reader to look for the grains of truth in those unrealistic arguments. In this way a cycle of investigation, questioning, and solution-posing is formed in the mind of the utopian reader and can be applied to their personal struggles for creating a better world. Individual blueprints for Utopia fall in and out of historical relevance, but the Platonic legacy of curious thinking and discussion remain.

Plato might argue that the prevalence of dystopian literature in modern popular culture is both the result of and a propagator of the dystopian environment in which we live. The pessimistic attitude of dystopia has seeped into American culture, producing a country which focuses on the negative potential outcomes of situations rather than looking forward to and creating positive solutions. Plato notes that there are three states of being: a level of pleasure, at which the philosophers can glimpse; a middle state that is neither pleasure nor pain; and a lower level of instability and frustration. The relief of pain seems pleasurable when in fact is it neither pain nor pleasure, and likewise the removal of pleasure seems painful (9.586a-b). In a similar way, dystopian literature draws our gaze down from the middle ground into the negative possibilities of everyday life. Consequently, our social system, which has the potential for as much good as bad, suddenly seems completely hopeless. On the other hand, utopian literature elevates the mind to allow it to be able to see the problems of society as things than can be solved with the proper rearranging.

However helpful they are, there is a disconnect between the idealistic hopes presented through utopian literature and their execution in this quasidystopian society in which we live. Despite the unattainable nature of utopia (the name itself means "no-place"), there is one realm of the tangible world that can be seen as a microcosm of utopia: art and theatre. The arts provide a safe haven for utopianism to thrive; they are incubators for new ideas. By interacting with utopianism directly, actors and audiences are able to propagate the Platonic ideal of questioning the *status quo* in a safe way. While utopian literature on a broad scale increases as an entire nation declines in prosperity, the arts can similarly act as pressure valves, regulating personal frustration with the state of one's individual affairs. Truly, "utopias die, utopianism does not"— while the ideal state is far out of tangible reach, small scale change can occur if we look up to the positive potential of ourselves and our society (Blaim 16).

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# Religion as a Social Force

Cocqueville's observations of religion in *Democracy in America* are similar to the issues pertinent to Weber's *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, yet Tocqueville is not listed among the founders of the sociology of religion (V, 395). Lack of recognition aside, the authors found that Tocqueville and Weber "both allowed that ideology plays a role in social change" (V, 405). The progression towards individualism is the main consequence of this role, which, according to both, stabilizes society (V, 405). As it turns out, Tocqueville focuses on the family unit as a stabilizer based in faith and morality, where all are virtuous for the sake of being virtuous, while Weber expands on religion's social role and applies its influence to small groups, rather than the family, based not necessarily on faith, but in morality, where virtue is defined more externally.

Tocqueville and Weber both recognize the importance of Protestantism in particular to their arguments about the social role of religion. Despite its negative elements, according to Weber, Protestantism, more so than other religions, fosters an environment which allows its influence to be focused in small groups, which stabilizes the society. For a Protestant, the particular church attended is critical, as the "small groups" formed become the people with which faith and morality is discussed and influenced. If a Protestant were to move from one state to another, a new church, and therefore a new "small group," would need to be found. Catholicism, on the other hand, does not have this; if a Catholic were to move to another state, the church would remain the same. The structure of the faith is such that regardless of location, the service will be the same across the world. Rather than having these "small groups," the focus is less on the individual and more on the Catholic community as a whole. Because Protestantism has these church "divisions" into small groups, it allows for closer associations within different sects and churches. In these groups, the individual's morality and faith is heavily emphasized. The consequence of these small groups is that an individual's faith is regulated as it is checked by a close
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community. Tocqueville also recognizes this shift, yet describes it less explicitly, as he focuses on the family unit. Both Tocqueville and Weber recognize the emphasis on the individual in a community in Protestantism, and because of this they are able to understand its social role.

In contrast to Weber, however, Tocqueville focuses his explanation of religion's social role on the family unit which is based on faith and a particular moral code. In the Americas, as Tocqueville immediately recognizes, state religion does not exist, yet religion's influence on politics goes without argument (T6,8). Religion aids in giving the people a moral compass and with this comes freedom, as in Tocqueville's view, "The reign of liberty cannot be established without that of morals, nor can a foundation be given to morals without beliefs" (T11). There is thus, according to Tocqueville, a direct tie linking religion to liberty, and with that, the stability of the state. But how can this arise in a government with a separation of church and state, i.e. no state religion? Tocqueville points to the family unit. Americans, more so than their European counterparts, take marriage as a sacred bond that unites two families under one roof (T132). With this union, plus children, the family becomes "the picture of order and peace" and with that comes stability, since families are permitted to freely practice their religion of choice (T133). Tocqueville claims that women accordingly have the power to oversee and regulate the family's belief system from the home (T132). Within this environment, those in the household are able to freely express opinions and build a moral code through religion, learning from each other (T133). In "regulating the family" on a basis of religious morality, families collectively "regulate the state" (T132). This is the indirect influence that Tocqueville claims is "even more powerful" than religion directly influencing politics, and the reason that the United States could not function properly without freedom of religion (T132). The stability of the democratic government naturally stems from a moral family unit, but when the freedom to exercise religion is extinguished, the family unit is undermined, which, in turn, creates instability in the government.

Unlike Tocqueville, Weber expands on religion's social role and applies the idea to different Protestant sects, as well as to small groups without faith. By sects, Weber means religious faith-based small groups and by "small groups,"

he means groups that may or may not have a basis in faith. Tocqueville's family unit is a sort of religious small group, and because of this, Weber and Tocqueville's findings are comparable. Weber recognizes the tie between religion and the social life, as "the question of religious affiliation was almost always posed in social life," yet sees the movement from faith-oriented sects to a question of moral character, as he notices the same question is also posed "in these arenas of business life that depended on permanent and credit relations" (W210). Weber recognizes that the rationale behind this question has shifted from one of faith to one for deciphering "moral character" (W214).

Weber claims that in America, "the kind of denomination [to which one belongs] is rather irrelevant" (W213). This is different from Tocqueville, as Tocqueville's emphasis was strictly on faith-based family units. For Weber, it is not so much that a person belongs to "your" sect, rather that a person has a sect with which they can claim affiliation (W214). With this affiliation comes a "determination of moral worth" that does not require a religion (W214, 212). For Weber, the *religious* title does not matter as much for the person, or society, as the title itself. His description of an American group that wore badges in their buttonholes similar to the French Legion of Honor Badge is an example of a small group without a faith-base (W214). Small groups like this are relevant, as they set the foundation of the "spirit" of the area (W215). Both the sects and small groups have similar effects on society, as Weber points out that a small group like the Legion of Honor affects the society much like a religious sect does-the ethic remains, even if the theology is gone from the small group (W (Kalberg)184). Within these different small groups, one could prove both his or her self-worth as well as gain a "ticket of ascent," given their associations (W216). Those within the group aim to help each other in order to raise the group higher, socially or politically, and given the "status" of a particular group, others would judge a person's moral worth, and base business decisions on this information (W216,212). With each of these groups in a pseudo-competition, with each individual in many groups aiming at gaining more self-worth, "the significance of the sects expands beyond the realm of religion. American democracy, for example, acquired its own dynamic form and unique imprint exclusively from them." (W231). Weber realizes that the small group associations

may not be grounded in faith alone or may not be grounded in faith at all, but have an external element; it is best to appear moral and honest, rather than the old focus on the individual's internalized virtue.

Weber explains a negative result of this: the steel cage. One becomes so immersed in his or her own individualism, that he or she becomes incredibly isolated. The individual also becomes a slave to the material goods of the area. The moral worth is determined more and more externally, so one must follow the material "trends" in order to maintain their placement in society. Weber recognizes this negative consequence of Protestantism and the movement to a more externalized determination of moral worth (Weber, 177). One no longer pursues goodness and virtuous behaviors for virtue's sake, but "the pursuit of gain" externally becomes the end-goal (177).

A shift is clear from Tocqueville to Weber's descriptions of religion as a social force; Tocqueville discussed the faith-based small groups focused on individuals with internalized worth for the sake of being virtuous, and Weber recognized the small groups focused less on faith, and more on gaining moral worth externally. Morality shifts to be less about true virtue, and more about perceived virtue. Weber brings us to Benjamin Franklin's words, a Deist, to describe this phenomenon; "The most trifling actions that affect a man's *credit* are to be regarded..." He describes an instance where a man sees an indebted man playing billiards and asks him for money, where if he had seen the indebted man working, this "makes him [wait to pay] easy six months longer." It is not so much that the indebted man has the money to pay him back, but if caught working, "it shows, besides, that you are mindful of what you owe; it makes you [the indebted man] *appear* a careful as well as an *honest man*, and that still increases your *credit*" (W78). As we see in the use of the word "appear," it is the outward appearance of a man which determines his moral worth.

Following the trend from Tocqueville to Weber, if this internal to external shift continued, the result would show a rather cynical world. The groups would still be foundationally moral, but the intent of the individuals may leave this morality behind. One's true beliefs do not matter to the group as much as the status gained by group association. Rather than entering into a group for the sake of virtue in any sense, one would enter into a group to "get ahead." Morality would be lost if this shift were to continue completely; what consequences would this have on the stability of the society? If the focus becomes entirely external, how will those virtues that truly resonate with groups be distinguished from those who do not believe and just joined for their resume? Although Weber and Tocqueville do not predict the future, their discussions on religion's social role lead to an understanding of the shift from an internalized family unit to an externally focused small group that determines "moral worth." In one sense the regulation of the family's morality aided in fostering true virtue in the individual, yet in another, these small groups allowed the individual to morph their sense of morality given other's opinions, and their worth became more externalized. The apprehension that Weber had of Protestantism, when referring to the steel cage, becomes remarkably plausible, as perceived morality is observed because of these small groups; if the trend were to continue, perhaps this perceived morality would completely replace true morality.

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### **ANALECTS OF THE CORE**

Aristotle: "To be conscious that we are perceiving or thinking is to be conscious of our own existence."

## FARHAN HOODBHOY Examining Lao-Tzu

am a progressive. Growing up, I was fascinated by technology. At the tender age of three, I would often overturn the chairs in my mother's office, much to the delight of her co-workers, playing with the magical wheels and their associated hardware. During my formative years as a middle and high school student, I would often provide technological support to the faculty, much to the chagrin of the IT staff. I appreciate the beauty in innovation, in humanity's never-ending quest to better itself. This appreciation extends just as much to the world of silicon as it does to the world of carbon; there is a reason why my shelves are lined by the likes of Hobbes, Locke, and Marx. To me, humanity's greatest strength has always been its innate desire to improve, to search for new questions and for new answers. Daoism, then, surprises me. Its fundamental message may run contrary to who I am, but I nonetheless find myself agreeing with much of what it has to offer.

Perhaps the greatest strength of Lao-Tzu's political theory is his message of simplicity. Lao-Tzu's historical description of a government "divided," of "fields overgrown," and of the ruling class "glutted with food and drink," their personal wealth "excessive" (53), bears uncanny resemblance to modern-day America. Excess begets political corruption, which then causes inequity in both the natural order and among the hierarchy of humanity itself. In Lao-Tzu's world, humanity is thus rendered a contradiction of itself, of individuals who "reject compassion, but want to be brave, reject frugality, but want to be generous," ultimately leading to a world populated by people who "reject humility, and want to come first" (67). He laments the complexity of humanity, and further submits that the root cause of this is the inherent problem with humans, namely that "people are difficult to govern because they are very clever" (65). To Lao-Tzu, complexity is the root cause of the problems humanity faces; humanity's greatest strength is also its greatest weakness. Lao-Tzu's solution, and, thus, the crux of his political theory, is simple in both form and execution-to approach each aspect of life in its most fundamental, base aspect, "through self contemplate self, through family contemplate family, through community contemplate community, through country contemplate country," and "through world contemplate world" (54). This solution is most certainly attractive, at least when initially examined. An America according to Lao-Tzu would be one where her citizens were introspective, seeking only to satisfy their basic needs, her towns and communities similarly seeking to satisfy only what was required of them, and of a federal government seeking only to satisfy the people's needs. In this ideal world, corruption, poverty, and incompetence are rendered as relics of the past, and this new world order provides a self-sustaining model for life.

The very world order which makes Lao-Tzu's political philosophy so tantalizing is also its greatest weakness. Lao-Tzu's simple, agrarian model of society would be a perfect model for the world if humans were not what they inherently are—motivated beings designed to evolve and mature. He recognizes that "humans are born soft and weak," and that "they die stiff and strong," yet submits that, ultimately, "the strong and great sink down," and the "soft and weak rise up" (76). Lao-Tzu is not referring to a larger battle between the poor and rich, but rather to what he sees, erroneously, as the greater truth of humanity; it is striving to be simple, to devolve. Lao-Tzu, and, thus, Daoism, inherently misunderstands the trend humanity invariably displays towards changing and evolving in order to improve upon itself; he laments the cycle of the very nature he supposedly is beholden to.

Lao-Tzu's ideal regime frightens me. Its fundamental message that humanity must exist in its lowest possible state, marketed to the lowest common denominator of existence, where individuals have only primeval needs, and few, if any desires, is a society where I simply could not exist. Everything about what I love—the complexities of modern politics, fine foods, neoclassical architecture, the nirvana of silicone and steel that are late 1990s and early 2000s BMWs—simply runs contrary to Lao-Tzu's fundamental philosophy of striving for the absolute minimum of human existence. To me, what makes humble Homo sapiens human is the idea that a higher plane of understanding not only can be attained, but that it must be attained. I could never exist in a world according to Lao-Tzu; I, as Farhan Hoodbhoy, would simply cease to exist, replaced by a creature who bears only his likeness. Lao-Tzu's political theory may be fundamentally flawed, but it still has nuch to offer to democratic discourse. The successes of Bernie Sanders and

much to offer to democratic discourse. The successes of Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump in the New Hampshire primaries prove that Americans are not only more distrustful of the government than ever before, but are far more polarized across party lines than in any time in this nation's history. Lao-Tzu's message of unity, therefore, is most pertinent. Lao-Tzu likens "governing people" to "living off the land," that one can "become the country," and thus "nourish and extend it" (59). To Lao-Tzu, "the more prohibitions and rules, the poorer people become," and, thus, "the more they commit crimes" (57). In a nation struggling to find the balance between regulation and the free market, and between that free market and the government's duty to protect its nation's natural beauty, Lao-Tzu's philosophy certainly holds weight.

Furthermore, in a rather ironic twist, Lao-Tzu's teachings are most applicable when examining the controversy over the NSA's digital surveillance of Americans. Lao-Tzu warns that "if government investigates and intrudes, people are worn down and hopeless," and that "if there is no principle, principle reverts to disorder," leading to "confusion" which "hardens and lingers on" (58). Indeed, while it is certainly true that Lao-Tzu would undoubtedly be horrified by the very existence of the United States of America, it would appear that, in order for a society built upon the yang, upon the bedrock of improvement and reason, the yin of understanding natural tendencies is equally as important. Perhaps, then, Lao-Tzu was right, at least on a fundamental level of understanding. Human beings should be bold enough to think they can change the world, but they should also strive to understand that very world they are trying to change.

**NB:** The edition of the Tao Te Ching cited in this essay is the translation by Stephen Addiss and Stanley Lombardo. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993.



## RACHEL QUILLEN Beethoven's Ninth: Two Symphonies Acting as One

B eethoven's Ninth Symphony is unique in a plethora of ways, the most important being that it is in effect two symphonies in one. The first, second, and third movements could function on their own, without the extended finale that is the fourth movement; yet it is in the fourth movement that the defining characteristic of the Ninth is found. While featuring some of the Ninth's trademark themes, including the "Ode to Joy" choral section, the importance of the fourth movement is twofold: it concludes the symphony as a whole by recapitulating the phrases and themes of the first three movements, and it brings the entire opus to its emotional climax. The 'embedded symphony' phenomenon deepens the Ninth Symphony's journey into human emotion, both by evoking the initial three movements with use of parallel tones and structures, and by explicitly conveying the joy of humanity with both orchestra and chorus, thus adding the final level through which one can ascend into Joy.

If Beethoven had eliminated the fourth movement from the Ninth, using only the initial three movements in the opus, it could still function as a complete symphony, albeit one with a less flashy and dramatic conclusion; yet by employing the fourth movement as the finale and including the anomaly of the 'embedded symphony', Beethoven better enforces the overall impact of the first three movements and is then able to move beyond them. By distorting the traditional symphonic progression of *allegro*, *adagio*, *scherzo*, and *finale* into *allegro*, *scherzo*, *adagio*, and *finale*, Beethoven has already created a sense of structured disharmony, leaving audiences in a state of anticipation as to the nature of the conclusion. The graceful, hopeful final bars of the third movements. However, the confusion of order is made all the more important given the eventual structure of the finale. The first movement develops from the simplest foundation into an aggressive, passionate, fighting piece interspersed with numerous passages of hesitation and contemplation. Ralph Vaughn Williams describes this movement as "...a curious hesitancy...[Beethoven] seems to handle it and meditate on one aspect of it after another" (Williams 21). The initial bars of the fourth movement will mirror this alternation between *fortissimo* and *pianis-simo*, confident and contemplative.

The similarities between the first movement and the 'first movement' of the fourth are primarily seen in the alternation of dynamic and tone, laying the first level on which Beethoven will build this "symphony". Evolving from a sudden and unique—in its discordant tone—chord, the 'first movement' then progresses into an extensive *recitative*, in which Beethoven alternates between the orchestra *tutti*, which recapitulate previous themes of the first three movements, and the cellos and contrabasses that dissect these themes, working together to move forward and create a new melody (4.0:00-4.2:23). After this extensive *recitative*, the orchestra finally reaches the first introduction of the "Joy" theme (4.2:24), which the cellos and contrabasses that dissect the theme of the full movement, joined gradually by the bassoons and violas (4.3:37), then the first and second violins (4.4:13), and finally the orchestra *tutti* (4.4:50) in a series of variations on the main theme. This 'first movement' concludes at the end of the *presto* section of the fourth movement (4.6:09).

The parallelism between the full second movement and the 'second movement' of the fourth is perhaps most poignant when considered in the "theme -development-theme" structure, and this construct will serve to support the building climax of Joy. The second movement of the Ninth is described by Vaughn Williams as having "...[a] rhythmical dance nature...[with] insistent, almost hypnotically constant rhythm" (Williams 26); and this strong, quick beat drives the movement for ten minutes with little chance for a respite. Despite this bold rhythm, there are few harsh passages; from 3:38 to 6:35 the tone is almost sweet and pastoral before the introductory phrase, complete with strong string bowing and pounding timpani, is repeated. This overall tone is echoed in the 'second movement' of the Ninth's fourth movement. Beginning immediately after the *Presto*, the orchestra *tutti* erupts in a sudden flurry of notes, as does the actual second movement, followed seconds later by the real surprise—an unexpected baritone soloist (5.0:07). This soloist continues into a *recitative* passage, before being joined by the rest of the chorus during the chorale development of the "joy" theme (5.0:48-5.3:34). Then Beethoven introduces the 'Turkish march' passage (5.3:34), which parallels the middle section of the second movement. This segment, noted as *alla marcia allegro assai vivace*, also contains the aforementioned strong, defined beat that Williams describes. From the 'Turkish march' comes the multicolored explosion of the full chorus and orchestra *tutti* into the "Joy" passage (5.6:46). This echoes the latter section of the second movement, again complete with the dancing beat. By mirroring the "theme—development—theme" structure, Beethoven then prepares the audiences for the *andante maestoso* section.

Much like the third movement itself-the 'slow movement'-the 'third movement' of the fourth serves to develop a new tone compared to those developed in the previous two sections, while introducing new, more moderate themes that deepen and layer the impact of those brought to the foreground in the first two movements. The Ninth's third movement, defined as adagio molto e cantibile, functions as the calm before the storm that is the finale, while also serving as what could have been a conclusion to a different version of the Ninth. Vaughn Williams writes, "[T]his slow movement is...the vision of unknown regions... and the unfathomable sigh of regret at the end. Truly, this symphony is an inexplicable mystery" (Williams 36). If Beethoven had completely eliminated the fourth movement from the Ninth, leaving the third to serve as the conclusion, the overall tone would have been entirely different: the sense would perhaps be that the battle had been won, but the troops are left yearning for home and happiness, uncertain of what the next day may bring. As Vaughn Williams describes it, "The point is that it is one of those beautiful, far-off visions of happy things which have already been noticed so frequently in this symphony" (Williams 38).

The 'third movement' of the fourth lacks such ethereal beauty, but its purpose is just as vital. The only true similarity between the two is the *andantel adagio* tempo, because while the third movement is peaceful and hopefully melancholy, the third section of the fourth movement is for the most part a tangled knot of choral lines that recapitulate all the text that they have already delivered in the second section. The opening (5.7:37-5.11:11) is magnificent in

its relative simplicity, especially considering its placement directly following the crescendo of the orchestra and chorus at the end of the second section. However, this beautifully simple orchestration and harmonized, unified choral lines reminiscent in tone of the third movement is complicated by the entrance of the *allegro energico* section. The chorus and orchestra repeat the main "joy" passage with a different beat and time signature—6/4 instead of the previous 6/8—and then the chorus splits into its individual parts, with each voice singing a different line while the orchestra plays the reincarnated "joy" theme, continuing until 5.12:58, when the theme returns to one similar to the opening of this 'third movement', then concluding at 5.13:56. While this version of the third movement features a more regally triumphant 'joy', rather than the quiet, melancholic happiness of the Ninth's third movement, the redevelopment of the "joy" theme adds more depth to the conveyed emotion given its placement soon after the ecstatic explosion of the theme in the 'first movement' (5.6:46).

"Now," Vaughn Williams writes of the fourth movement as a whole, "Hell breaks loose" (Williams 40). Much like the fourth movement itself, the 'fourth movement' of the fourth is a chaotic and wild conclusion. Given the winding, tumultuous journey the audience has just traversed, this burst of acceleration and dramatic, forceful stop seems almost inevitable, and indispensable for the colossal structure Beethoven has created, which allows for the sudden, climactic explosion of Joy by building continuously in stages so that the entire structure does not collapse under its own emotional weight once the final brick is laid. With the transition to allegro ma non tanto (5.13.37), the soloists begin a full gallop before being joined by the chorus singing altogether different lines at different times. This general disorder continues with relatively simple orchestration until the prestissimo (5.16:38). It is here that the triumphant climax is finally reached: the chorus repeats the "joy" theme one final time in a battlecry, then the orchestra *tutti* assumes control once again (5.17:52) and, with a full charge from the strings and four final measures of a flurry of sextuplets from the flutes, oboes, clarinets, and bassoons, the movement, and the symphony, ends on a single, unified quarter note.

The risk of duplicating the structure of the symphony as a whole in the fourth movement, the "embedded symphony", is that one could interpret the design as overdone, and trying too hard, as it were, to deliver the punchline with an actual punch. Despite his general admiration for the first three movements of the Ninth, Ralph Vaughn Williams is at times nauseated by the fourth movement: "For me there are certain passages in the Ninth Symphony which I find hard to swallow... even [in the choral finale] there are certain things which stick in my gizzard" (Williams 2). He notes and accepts the occasional banalities and ostentatious ornamentations, but is particularly harsh on the role of the chorus; however, he must admit that "...[Beethoven's] magnificent failure (if failure it be) [is] something much more worth hearing than lesser men's successes" (Williams 8). However, Williams' derogatory remarks on the Ninth seem to be more a matter of personal taste than true musical criticism—after all, he "is not a pious Beethovenite" (Williams 2).

David Benjamin Levy offers a much more moderate analysis of the Ninth in his book on the subject, elaborating not on his own emotional responses to the piece and its structure, but on the importance of Beethoven's adherence and commitment to the process, because if the 'embedded symphony' structure had not been completely embraced by the composer, it would have failed in its purpose and the opus as a whole would suffer. Levy quotes Charles Rosen, the musicologist who postulated that the fourth movement is structured like its own classical symphony, then introduces his own theory based on Rosen, that "the finale's structure is not only the articulation of a four-movement symphony, but is a microcosm of the entire Ninth Symphony itself..." (Levy 93). While he divides up the movement slightly differently, for example, including the introduction of the vocalist and the vocal *recitative* in the 'first movement' and having the 'fourth movement' begin at the allegro energico as opposed to the allegro ma non tanto, Levy's analysis offers an in-depth examination of the musical theory behind Beethoven's anomaly. He notes that it is particularly important that "... the finale of the Ninth conjures a reminiscence of all preceding movements, and not just [one in particular]" (Levy 95).

The question then remains why Beethoven would desire to recall the three preceding movements while structuring the fourth as a symphony in itself. Levy writes that critics either fault the finale for its lack of order or seek to impose their own, both of which destroy the movement's potential (90). Ralph Vaughn Williams, as has been noted, is overtly critical of the chorus, claiming that the music is "... unsingable... [making] a noise like a dog being run over by a motor-car," though he does attribute this in fairness to "... a wrong method of approach...they [the chorus]...regard it as a very difficult vocal exercise and do not attack it boldly as a jubilant shout" (8-9). He remarks in several places that Beethoven launches the audience into heaven, only to bring them back down to Earth again with pedantic ornamentations of otherwise beautiful phrases (12). However, it is in this supposed shortcoming that the overall purpose can be deciphered: this is a symphony about the joy of *humanity* and the beauty of heaven *on earth*, not an attempt to transcend the stratosphere. Regarding the finale, Levy asserts that its "events fairly transport the listener on a wave of enthusiasm as Beethoven revels in the rapprochement of faith and Enlightenment idealism, of the worldly and the sacred" (120-1).

Indeed, by further examining his first three movements within the 'embedded symphony' that is the fourth movement, Beethoven strengthens their emotional impact and fulfills their yearning by magnifying the Joy, by using the chorus to turn implicit emotional responses into explicit, jubilant praises, and thus ascending to the overt peak of human Joy.

NB. Timings are keyed to the Karajan recording, referenced as (track.minute:second).

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### **ANALECTS OF THE CORE**

Milton: "What is dark within me, illumine."





# Rousseau: Freudian Fraud

utobiography is a genre that lets its writers go on about themselves, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's The Confessions being one example. In French, the hot breath of 'The' and the heavy sibilance of '-sions' thin to a sleek Les confessions; either way, Rousseau himself is not lost in translation, and he slithers in both. The circuitous prose of the opening paragraph, when Rousseau wets his lips to whet that sly but not so silver tongue, is symptomatic of the narcissist. Underlying every action is an insatiable need to satisfy a cancerous esteem, and so in some form or another he must pontificate; but tactfully, since he doesn't want to give the game away. If he does, it can be ugly, or perfectly benign and quite adorable, like the eccentricities of the aloof, intelligent madman whose special intonation of humor Nabokov captures so precisely in Charles Kinbote, the agonist of his most perfect work, Pale Fire. Kinbote, though he may resemble a pale shade among the many Nabokovian ghosts, is all together ficticious, and is presently strolling somewhere in paradise with Humbert and Dostoevsky; Rousseau is different, since he is real. If Kinbote is cheating us, then that is on Kinbote, since we have given Nabokov the authority to let his characters do as they please and to convince us of the reality in which they play. We must, in turn, judge this reality on its merits and demerits as a work of art. Peculiarities are not necessarily defects, so we take them as deliberate; but if by some blunder the author suspends verisimilitude, then we criticize that conjurer not for deceiving us, but for the crime of not having kept us induced long enough.

In reading a novel like *Pale Fire*, we must look at the web—the novel itself—and not the spider—the author—and infer any relation between the two without drawing a conclusion about the spider itself. But if Rousseau cheats us, and we wake up from hypnosis to find ourselves duped and making love to a chair, then we must rush to our desks for our brightest pen. The maniac who commits treason for the sole pleasure of the activity does not offer us any pattern—one finds only the stochastic droppings of a mad crow. In others, we do find a pattern, and some of these, such as narcissists, abide only by the principle of the self. Many narcissists are known as such because we have interacted with them personally. Since we cannot do this with Rousseau, or because we prefer not to (or if the latter is so bad that we can do neither), we will have to take a different approach; one limited to the medium of print.

He has had all the time beforehand to prepare the world we enter, making our task at once both easier and more difficult. Easier, because space and time do not pose the same problem they do in everyday life. More difficult, because these same problems advantage the artist and magician alike. Nevertheless, we expect Rousseau to falter, and indeed no sooner than we read the first page does the stage-set collapse and we realize that Rousseau fails of his effect.

That is an exaggeration, of course; no sooner than the first line: "I have resolved on an enterprise which has no precedent, and which, once complete, will have no imitator" (Rousseau 17). Or the first letter, to be precise; the first two figures who come to mind as having similarly gotten off to a running start are Byron and Myra Breckinridge-two poets. A third is Nabokov, that Black Swan of American and Russian letters: "I think like a genius, I write like a distinguished author, and I speak like a child" (Nabokov xv). Many distinguished authors, some of them geniuses, have found the manner of the didactic child to be the most congenial form of expression; but unlike Rousseau, at least this one is sincere. That is, though one admires Rousseau for his occasional eloquence and vivid imagination that reaches at times to the point of luridness, one cannot help but to feel by the end of it all a sense of nausea. He goes on to say, "My purpose is to display to my kind a portrait in every way true to nature, and the man I shall portray will be myself" (Rousseau 17). This is the grand surprise that supposedly has no precedent and will have no emulator. He might be stating a truism, but if this is the case then it isn't clear why he has to give it such rhetorical force; tactically, perhaps, this may be prudent if he is trying to give the reader a false sense of grandeur, knowing that he can always resort to answering any allegation of duplicity by accusing the reader in turn for not having interpreted him correctly. This seems too involute and ineffective a way of going about it, though. It seems more reasonable, and the ear concurs, that Rousseau means what he sounds like he means. His great achievement is not

that he creates a portrait, since this has been accomplished by many before him, and at any rate, would be truistic—which we have decided against. Since we have decided that he is trying to go beyond the mere uncontroversial and hollowly laudatory and into immense self-absorption; we can determine what Rousseau is so excited about: being in every way true to nature. The claim is extraordinarily modest, whose paradox is made all the more stark by all the flexing about setting out on an unprecedented enterprise that precedes it. He does not make it through two sentences before the reader detects an irregular pulse, which with the exception of certain statesmen is certainly unprecedented in its own, adorably mischievous way.

Let's give him a chance, though. What does he say after the initial throatclearing? "Simply myself" (Rousseau 17). This could be a self-deprecating play on "simple," though the original French probably makes this even less of a likelihood than it is in English. It is inadvertently self-deprecating, though, in that the keen reader will recognize the nervous phrase as one of the favorite tools among those who practice weasel-tactics. It is rhetorical; we know that, because literally it adds nothing new. So is it glitter or dirt? The effect is made to figure more easily if one amputates the "Simply" and looks at what happens. Alone, "myself" repeats a statement of fact, mentioned in the previous sentence, but the tone here is revelatory and not celebratory. That is, he is not trying to parade the decision, but wants to familiarize his readers and put them at ease with the idea. Yet without "Simply," the room darkens, and as if daring us to imagine otherwise, we sense a flinty Rousseau leaning in to tell us with quiet force, "myself." The next lines would therefore continue in the same dark register: "I know my own heart and understand my fellow man" (Rousseau 17). Let go of his collar you mad dog! "Simply myself"—the tight grip opens to gently pat the shoulder, and the simple appendage turns the grimace. There is also something deceptively ironic about it, since the gusto of the initial burst about setting out to do what nobody has done before nor will do in the future now seems like a relatively mild undertaking. But only relatively, since what others cannot do great Rousseau assuredly and simply can. Nevertheless, the narcissistic streak in this is not readily apparent, but only becomes so when taken in relation to the bold claims it follows and one tilts the lenticular at just

the right angle to see that Rousseau is trying to kill two birds with one stone. First, he implies that as difficult as the task may be, for him it is a relatively uncomplicated and easy affair. Second, the same word, "Simply," is used to affect a genial tone that will put the reader at ease, more likely to overlook the extraordinariness of the first claim.

The thin streak of paranoia begins to assert itself to prominence in the next few lines, when Rousseau goes on in the same affectedly sincere but even less sincerely affected way to say, knees bent, eyes wide, both arms gently gripping our shoulders:

But I am made unlike any one I have ever met. (Rousseau 17)

"But" here is puzzling, since it does not perform its usual function of controverting some aspect of what precedes it ("I know my own heart and understand my fellow man"), but turns out to be quite quizzical if one thinks of it as a tactic used to give the reader a false sense of Rousseau's vulnerability, just before he goes on to exhort that he really is one of a kind. Let's devote our attention to Rousseau as he struggles to bring out the next hard-truth:

I will even venture to say that I am like no one in the whole world.

That long tongue accidentally slips out in the end there, and with the paranoiac self-awareness that is characteristic of the narcissist, Rousseau quickly rolls it back in and, pretending no one saw, says after a quick cough:

I may be no better, but at least I am different. (Rousseau 17)

He knows what we are suspecting and tells us that it isn't *necessarily* true, but after rolling back in the comma he goes against his own mentioning of the possibility that he may be no better than any one "in the whole world" by retaliating, "but at least I am different."

In French, "different" has posed many problems, but there should be no delay here in understanding that Rousseau is saying the very thing he tries

to dissuade us from. Whenever somebody tries to vindicate him or herself by starting "at least," whatever follows is supposed to make him or her better than whomever justice is being served to. In this case, it is any one "in the whole world" and the criterion is his being different-not in the ordinary sense, but as the tone suggests, in an essential one. He leaves it for the reader to decide "whether nature did well or ill in breaking the mold in which she formed me" and stipulates that this "is a question which can only be resolved after the reading of my book" (Rousseau 17). At the outset therefore, Rousseau assigns the reader with a purpose: our judgment on whether it was proper for Nature to hatch the egg that gave us Rousseau and his Confessions is the question we must return to on each of the next several hundred pages, and only after we enter this world can we justly decide the matter. Of course we have our suspicions that Rousseau will omit or soften unfavorable events and fabricate or aggrandize ones that do what he wants them to do. Furthermore, he knows we know this, and will try to dispel these suspicions. The savage is not a saint, but there is saintliness in his prose, and so there must be saintliness in him too; as such, and like all saints, he must be judged guilty until proven innocent.

Supposing that some of the saintly are among the jury, Rousseau tries to prove he is not self-absorbed and hollow by appealing to the hallowed judge himself, Sovereign Judge:

Let the last trump sound when it will, I shall come forward with this work in my hand, to present myself before my Sovereign Judge. (Rousseau 17)

These tactics never do what they are supposed to, and the more desperately they are undertaken the more miserably they seem to fail, often with comical results. Does Rousseau really forget that the Sovereign Judge already has a committee on the job, doing all the recording? No, because aside from the fact that he is a learned man who had studied in a seminary and did all the catechisms, he later bellows in the same paragraph while denuding himself before the Sovereign Judge, "I have bared my secret soul as Thou thyself hast seen it, Eternal Being!" (Rousseau 17). So if he hasn't forgotten, is Rousseau being serious, or is he trying to play a ruse? If he is serious, then he believes he can inform the Sovereign Judge; if not, which the lines bleating leading up to the mock final judgment might suggest, then Rousseau is playing a ruse on the reader, and the speech that he has supposedly meant for the Sovereign Judge is addressed, in fact, to us. One would be an indication that his narcissism could challenge even that of the Father; the other affirms a compulsive need for deceit to the benefit of his own conceit. To the Sovereign Judge, Rousseau says:

Here is what I have done, and if by chance I have used some immaterial embellishment it has only been only to fill a void due to a defect of memory. I may have taken for fact what was no more than probability, but I have never put down as true what I knew to be false. (Rousseau 17)

Again, God doesn't need to be reminded or warned about any of this, but now we know that Rousseau stages a grand confession within another to excuse any fabrication, inadvertent or not, which might later be found out. It is also circular: the figure of God is invoked as a qualifying third-party, but regardless it is still Rousseau that creates the scenario, and still his word that is under question. At least he chooses to end on a sincere note: "But let each one of them reveal his heart at the foot of Thy throne with equal sincerity, and may any man who dares, say 'I was a batter man than he''' (Rousseau 17). Either no man is better than any other, or Rousseau is the best among all—a dilemma that has cropped up before and resolved to show that it is indeed the latter that Rousseau believes and wants us to believe as well. But the sly and sinuous manner of these opening paragraphs, and the feeble attempts used to hide his self-absorption is confession enough.

If there is something wrong with the narcissist then it is not his fault. In some way, somehow, he has suffered a wound. What is supposed to take its place is a scab, and this must be displayed to the others around, whose affection the narcissist must win if he is to go on. He works for the narcotic and fears narcolepsy, and must keep getting one if he is to avoid the other. Paranoia, inevitably, attends all of this; but this is a difficult art and the self is always watching the self. Therefore, the narcissist exists in two modes simultaneously. One is the surface—plaster, but often beautiful; the other goes inside, and whatever is there will be inverted to embellish what is seen on the outside. Both reflect the other, and each exists to the same degree as does the other, the narcissist in both. But the two do not overlap; they do not even work in conjunction. One stands by the other in violent opposition, so unity comes only by way of this conflict—anxiety. This may be manifest in a number of forms. We have glimpsed the devotional self-pitying Rousseau-ian, whom one feels bad feeling bad for. But he might also come to us as the charming monologist, Gore Vidal, who made the terrible thing into an art form. Nevertheless, under the surface ran something which only senility could bring to bear, when the plaster cracked and a crackpot strain previously subdued asserted itself as dominant. In the meanwhile, though, he had a gift, as do all narcissists—he is his own aesthetic form, and has only himself to craft.

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#### ADAM PARKS

# The Inevitable Social Contract

coording to Aristotle, those who live outside society must be regarded as either beasts or gods. Jean-Jacques Rousseau describes the natural man as a beast, driven by emotion, appetite, and instinct. Rousseau's need for society is rooted in inequality between individuals and the drive to advance the human condition. Locke describes humans in the state of nature as self-reliant and governed by only the natural laws. His need for society is rooted in self-preservation and the need for order. Although Rousseau's and Locke's thinking about the natural human condition differ greatly, they both come to the same conclusion: a social contract is necessary if society is to obtain and preserve order, and societal advancements.

In Rousseau's view, the inequality between individuals leads to the formation of a social contract. Inequality is rooted in ever-growing desires to advance the human condition and it causes disputes over status, property, labor, fundamentally everything. This inequality can increase exponentially because some people are better suited to tasks when compared to others while some may be physically stronger. Rousseau first presents the problem of inequality with the distribution of property. Originally, property was shared by all in the state of nature. Once one devotes one's time toward an occupation, one is forced to rely on others for food or necessities one would typically do alone, but this raises the problem of who gets access to property. Individuals may have more cattle that need grazing or need to plant more crops, and without a civil contract it becomes a conflict between "the right of the strongest and the right of the first occupant" (78). Such conflicts over property will be perpetual; therefore a social contract is *necessary* to maintain order in society.

In order to overcome inequality and to advance the human condition, Rousseau creates a social contract that keeps order, preserves society, and creates opportunity for societal advancements. "Rousseau... sought to reestablish the classical conception of the polis on the basis of modern physics; from the modern conceptions of man as a neutrally apolitical animal" (Cavanaugh). This contract can foster better living conditions, better health, more food, and other infrastructures to benefit society as a whole. In a civil society with a social contract, one can no longer act with only one's own intentions in mind. One must consider how one's actions can affect others: "the voice of duty replaces physical impulses and right replaces appetite," man is "now forced to act upon other principles" (Rousseau 167). With the creation of a civil contract, our appetites and physical impulses are replaced with principles and rational thought. By living in accordance with the civil contract society is created and preserved through a series of just laws, and opportunities for societal advancements are created.

Rousseau's social contract exists between two bodies: the sovereign and the legislature. The sovereign consists of the populous while the legislature is comprised of individuals who carry out the sovereign's wishes. The sovereign has the right to choose under what laws to live, but cannot deviate from the original intention of advancing the human condition. Rousseau also mentions the "general will" of the populace (172), defined as the common interest of the citizens, excluding private issues. The sovereign has a responsibility to adhere to the general will as a basis for determining the law. The political authority of the legislature legitimizes the sovereign's goals. "He [the sovereign] who drafts the law does not have any legislative rights" (182). Rousseau is drawing a connection between the people and the legitimate authority; if the people decide the laws, the sovereign has the responsibility to adhere to their will, just as it is the legislature's responsibility to carry it out.

Locke's state of nature is focused on the individual's life, liberty, and possessions and the world's lack of order. In a state of nature one has knowledge of right and wrong, the right to self-preservation, and lives within the confines of the natural laws. Reason is what drives man. It is up to the people to uphold the laws of nature: "this makes it lawful to kill a thief" (Locke 15). Due to the lack of a legitimate authority, not everyone acts in accordance with the natural laws. If one acts unjustly, it is the populous' duty to punish the offender: "for men being all the workmanship of one omnipotent, and infinitely wise maker" (9). To create order in society, some entity must oversee all. To preserve or acquire property, one must put labor into it. Without an authoritarian body to oversea all a dilemma is created; despite putting work into acquiring property, there would be nothing to stop someone from taking action to usurp the land. Locke's state of nature is built solely on prerogatives. In order to make legitimate claims, one must introduce an arbitrator to adjudicate disputes peacefully.

Locke's state of nature and civil society are contrasting. To get rid of a society based on prerogatives, a contract between people and a governing body would need to be created. The people legitimize the government by signing a contract; this free and equal contract, established through direct consent, would institute a common voice for the people so that the government can act accordingly. This contract would allow "a new artificial community to [pool] their powers and resolv[e] to act jointly and collective to uphold their respective rights and liberties" (Waldron). The government's power would be restricted: "a majority decision sets up specialist agencies to which its power is entrusted for the purpose of legislation, the execution of laws, promotion of the public good." To create order and a representative body, one would need a group with separate entities that "have common established law a judiciary to appeal to, with authority to decide controversies between them and punish offenders" (Locke 46).

This legitimate ruling body would be broken into three branches: legislative, judicial, and executive. These factions are responsible for making laws based on consent of the people, impartial judgment during conflict, and enforce the laws and judgment respectively. This is all contingent on the situation: "no one form of government is explicitly singled out as the best... Locke stresses" (Dienstag). Locke moves from a society based on prerogatives and the pursuit of life, liberty, and advancement, to one with a collective purpose of life, liberty, security, and societal developments bound by rules and order.

A social contract is a necessary unifying construct to preserve life, order, and societal advancements. Rousseau would, like Aristotle, view those outside of society as beasts, as they rely solely on emotion. "Rousseau had a profound admiration for the political ideals of antiquity... manifested in his direct borrows from the treatises of Plato and Aristotle" (Tozer). On the other hand, Locke would disagree with Aristotle. In Locke's state of nature, man is driven by reason and prerogatives rather than appetite. It is only once society is

formed through a contract that our appetites can be appeased.

Although their social contracts are different in the way they are structured around emotion and reason, Rousseau and Locke espouse views that converge on a shared notion: that the governing body is supposed to act according to the voice of the people for collective self-preservation, order, and societal advancements. These texts provide fundamental ideas for societies and governments throughout the modern world.

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# Reports on Recent Science

#### ELIZABETH FOSTER: "New Mitochondrial Fertility Treatment Not Yet Legal in the U.S."

Pertility is arguably the most pertinent subject to the human race, since it allows us to propagate our species. Lately, infertility has become a more prevalent issue in the West. According to the Office on Women's Health, a woman is considered to be infertile if she is under 35 and cannot conceive within a year; or, if she is over the age of 35, if she cannot conceive within six months. In 2013, the birth rate in America was the lowest it has been since 1986 (Howe) while the average age of new mothers is rising (Christensen), and the number of children conceived through in-vitro fertilization (IVF) is increasing. In fact, as of 2012, 1.5% of babies born in the United States were conceived via IVF (Christensen). Since 1978, when the first IVF-conceived baby was born, over five million children have been born through this costly process (Eley). While IVF is relatively successful, it is not a viable option for women older than 35, or for women who have faulty eggs. Ova-Science, a global Massachusetts-based fertility research plant, recently introduced a revolutionary form of treatment to the market called AUGMENT, directed at women who are infertile due to having weak eggs (Kirkey). Unlike IVF-which is for patients with healthy eggs who just need a medium through which to get pregnant-AUGMENT is a process in which unhealthy eggs are made viable before IVF can ensue. AUGMENT is meant to "enhance" IVF, according to OvaScience. The process itself relies on egg precursor cells and mitochondria. Egg precursor cells, discovered in 2004 by Jonathan Tilly (Park), are relatively unstudied and can be found in a woman's ovarian lining (CBS). These stem cells are immature and therefore have many mitochondria which are responsible for the production of energy in the body. In contrast to egg precursor cells, some infertile women's mature egg cells do not have enough energy to combine their chromosomes with male chromosomes to produce an embryo. Without this energy, fertilization can be detrimental to the offspring, resulting in Down's syndrome or even death (Kirkey).

AUGMENT resolves this problem, as Kirkey explains, by collecting three pieces of tissue from the ovaries during a "laparoscopic biopsy," freezing them, and then obtaining the mitochondria once the samples are thawed. A month later, the actual IVF process begins by using drugs to cause the prospective mother to release several eggs. These mature eggs will be collected and injected with sperm and the previously collected mitochondria; this produces embryos that can be frozen for later use. The mitochondria from the egg precursor cells are supposed to be more efficient than the mitochondria in the mature egg cells, which are weak. Therefore, injecting highly-productive mitochondria from a woman's egg precursor cells into her mature egg cells should allow for the reproduction of the superior mitochondria. This will eventually allow the embryo to form and to stick to the uterus.

While there has been success with AUGMENT—the first baby, Zain, was born in Canada in April of this year (Fang)—several scientists still doubt its efficacy. The Food and Drug Administration in the United States still has yet to approve it, since it is considered to be a form of gene therapy (*CBS*). Furthermore, AUGMENT has not been tested on a control group (Couzin-Frankel), and scientists believe that it needs to undergo further testing before it can be deemed safe.

However, it is difficult to find control groups for such tests. This is because these tests require the participation of infertile women. While about 10% of American women fit into this category, according to the Office on Women's Health, this group is still small enough that it is difficult to find matches for factors such as age, weight, diet, and more. Furthermore, performing "experiments" with AUG-MENT is difficult to put into practice, considering that the treatment deals with human life, and therefore ethical issues are bound to arise. As a source in Kirke's article said, the effects will last a lifetime, and the individual bearing the greatest burden of the experiment cannot consent. Then there is the fact that Pope Francis, who represents over 1 billion people, spoke out against IVF specifically, saying that people are not treating life like a "gift" but as a "right," though he did not mention AUGMENT (Eley).

The issues go beyond ethical concerns, however. As previously mentioned, some scientists are wary of AUGMENT because of its use of egg precursor cells which were only discovered 11 years ago and have not been sufficiently researched. Also, since the first AUGMENT baby was born only months ago, no one knows

if there will be any long term effects on the child. Recording any long term effects will be a laborious task; the first baby and the 9 others about to born due to AUG-MENT (Couzin-Frankel) will need to be followed throughout their lifetimes. Finally, some scientists believe that more tests will prove AUGMENT to have a low success rate, since the problem with many non-viable eggs in the first place is a lack of DNA. And while mitochondria carry their own DNA, this boost may not be enough for many women with weak eggs (*CBS*).

There are definitely reasons for which AUGMENT should be available in the U.S.; as of now, it is only available in select institutions in Turkey, Canada, and Dubai in the United Arab Emirates (Couzin-Frankel). Though AUGMENT is almost twice the cost of one IVF treatment—a cost of \$12,400 versus \$20,000 (Christensen)-it could ultimately be less expensive for desperate couples as it is common for couples to pursue more than one IVF treatment. Of course, the couples who use AUGMENT will have to pay for IVF in addition to AUGMENT; but, in the one test that has been published so far, in which 17 out of 26 women became pregnant and 9 held the pregnancy, there was a 35% success rate. This is comparable to IVF's 30-40% success rate (Christensen). One should note, however, that IVF has outliers and often fails to work for women with poor egg health, while AUGMENT was a success for the women failed by IVF. In a similar test in Canada led by Toronto Center for Advanced Reproductive Technology (the TCART), 60 women were treated with AUGMENT at no cost. "Several women" are pregnant now because of it, and the median age of the participants is 39, meaning half the women are 40 and older (Kirkey). Therefore, AUGMENT appears to be a more viable option than just IVF for older women since women ages 40 and above have only a 3.9% success rate with IVF (Christensen).

This is especially significant today in the West because many couples are opting to have children in their 30s and 40s, and a woman's egg health decreases drastically past the age of 35. AUGMENT is also useful to same sex couples and single women who want biological children but whose eggs have decreased and become too weak to stick to the uterus. AUGMENT is therefore less ethically ambiguous because there is no surrogate mother and there is no "changing [of] the genome" (Kirkey).

In conclusion, it will likely take years, if not decades, for AUGMENT to be-

come legalized in the U.S., due to its mysterious nature and what, if any, side effects it may cause. Though OvaScience claims not to see any problems with AUG-MENT, it is not fair or safe to allow couples to use AUGMENT without knowing the side effects. The scientists need to wait and see if their fertility treatments are actually viable, or if they will ruin lives in the years to come. Only then can this become an option for women with weak eggs.

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#### FRANCIS DIMENTO:

#### "Alzheimer's and Our Brain—Learning More About How We Forget"

Alzheimer's disease is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States. As the generation of baby boomers age, the number of Americans with Alzheimer's will increase dramatically. Only recently have scientists begun to study Alzheimer's, and it is important that more discoveries are made soon. Looking into what causes the disease has to be the most important aspect of research along with sharing information and testing different hypotheses so that doctors may soon be able to treat the disease more effectively. However, the research on Alzheimer's disease is greatly fractured as a field; there are many components of the disease that have not been studied fully, due to the split attention of the researchers.

For example, in 1989, Allen Roses, a geneticist at Duke University, discovered that Alzheimer's and a part of chromosome 19 had an association. Roses immediately began looking into the APOE gene on chromosome 19 to see if he could find any impact it might have on the disease. Working with his wife, Ann Saunders, a mouse geneticist, he investigated the alleles of that gene—APOE2, APOE3, and APOE4—and discovered that people with the allele APOE4 tend to develop the disease. He writes, "Inheriting one copy of *APOE4* raises a person's risk of developing the disease fourfold. With two copies, the risk increases 12-fold." (Spinney) This means that Alzheimer's is more likely to develop in a person who inherits APOE4.

This finding, however, was greatly ignored at the time. Roses seems to think that this is because the study of the APOE gene is complicated since it requires an advanced understanding of lipid biochemistry, and because many people began investigating the protein amyloid- $\beta$ . In 1991, John Hardy and David Allsop presented the amyloid cascade hypothesis, which suggests that Alzheimer's results from the abnormal buildup of amyloid- $\beta$  clusters in the brain. Studies into this hypothesis took off.

Why did studying the amyloid- $\beta$  protein become so popular among researchers? One reason is that this protein may provide insight into why Alzheimer's can kill in a few years or take as a long as decades. In the brains of patients with Alzheimer's disease, proteins called tau and amyloid- $\beta$  tend to build up in clumps, and different strains of the proteins could account for the various rates of progression in the disease. These two proteins have some key similarities with the prion protein, which also causes diseases in the brain. Scientists used their knowledge of the prion protein to learn more about Alzheimer's: "By adopting tools used to study the prion protein, PrP, researchers have found variations in the shape of a protein [amyloid- $\beta$ ] involved in Alzheimer's that may influence how much damage it causes in the brain." (Deng)This is important because some scientists have expressed that the Alzheimer's researchers have not paid enough attention to the work being done in the prion field. The research done in the prion field led to the examination of the shapes of proteins, which is vital to understanding Alzheimer's: "The differences in how prion illnesses manifest are thought to depend on which misfolded [sic] shape PrP takes on." (Deng) What the researchers found when looking at the shapes of amyloid- $\beta$  is that patients' conditions were worse and progressed faster when the amyloid- $\beta$  took on irregular shapes.

While these discoveries are expanding the study of Alzheimer's and working toward a viable treatment or even a cure, there is still much that is unknown about prions. Many scientists warn about becoming too excited, saying, "it is too early to draw conclusions about the clinical significance of discovering different strains of Alzheimer's plaques. Some are wary of linking neurodegenerative and prion diseases, especially when prion biology is still so poorly understood." (Deng) Furthermore, the research around amyloid- $\beta$  have yielded little help for patients with Alzheimer's—the drugs meant to combat the disease "have yet to fulfill expectations." (Spinney)Therefore, the attention has been turned back toward APOE4.

Many different studies are being conducted, but there are two main approaches involving APOE that have been on the rise in recent years. The first involves looking at APOE with amyloid- $\beta$ :

The molecule seems to contribute to Alzheimer's through two distinct pathways, one of which is amyloid-dependent. In both animals and humans, ApoE4 strongly promotes amyloid- $\beta$  deposition in the brain, compared with ApoE3, long considered the 'neutral' form when it comes to Alzheimer's risk. ApoE2, which is considered the protective form, decreases the build-up." (Spinney)

This is a fascinating discovery, one that changes the way Alzheimer's is viewed as it identifies the role the different alleles play in the accumulation of the amyloid- $\beta$  protein. The second approach does not involve the amyloid- $\beta$  protein, but shows that when neurons are under stress, they manufacture APOE as a repair mechanism; however, the APOE4 tends to break down into toxic fragments

that damage and alter cells. With this knowledge, perhaps scientists can develop a treatment that involves re-engineering bad APOE<sub>4</sub> into the harmless APOE<sub>3</sub>.

The human brain is one of the parts of the body that distinguishes Homo sapiens from its ape relatives. The brain is the origin of thoughts and emotions. The fact that there is a disease out there that can cripple it to such a degree and that it is likely to be more widespread in the near future should be a call to work harder at finding a treatment. By combining different studies and methods into the disease, we can come to a better understanding of it and hopefully find a cure or a suitable treatment that gives hope for the future. It is extremely important that we do not give up on this research.

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#### SAVANNAH WU:

#### "Zircons Suggest Earlier Magnetic Field and Oceans"

If you have ever stared at a piece of rock or mineral and pondered over what it can tell about the history of a place, you might be interested in what zircons, the oldest minerals on Earth, would have to say about our planet's early history. Scientists initially pictured the first 500 million years of Earth's history, the Hadean eon, to be a hellish period of volcanism and meteor bombardment that maintained a global magma ocean through lunar observations and astronomical models of the solar system's formation. That is, until the discovery of zircons in the early 1980s challenged this theory (Lindsey). Zircons—hard, tiny crystals made of zirconium, silicon, and oxygen—were buried deep in the crust, heated, squeezed and brought back to the surface to be found, weathered, in the Jack Hills of Western Australia.

Through U/Pb radioisotopic dating, these minerals were first estimated to be 4.1 billion years old (Lindsey). As the age of the zircons discovered climbed from 4.1 to 4.4 billion years old, interest among scientists grew and new techniques, such as the titanium thermometer, were developed to analyze the chemical and physical structure of the rocks to infer the conditions in which they formed (Lindsey). The chemical structure of the zircon suggests that they formed in liquid water and indicates that the early Earth was cooler and wetter than previously assumed (Lindsey). These time capsules are only around 100 million years younger than the accepted age of the Earth and trace elements suggest they came from water-rich rocks such as granodiorite or tonalite. This suggests that total condensation and the initial cooling of the Earth happened within around 100 million years after the moon impact that formed the Earth-moon system (Oskin); that Earth's magnetic field formed 4 billion years ago; and that the early Earth was not such an inhospitable place during the Hadean, as oceans could have formed as early as 4.4 billion years ago (Lindsey).

Material scientist Watson analyzed zircon samples through another lens—he studied the crystallization temperatures of the Hadean zircons through the titanium thermometer and found evidence supporting a cooler and wetter Hadean (Lindsey). The titanium thermometer is an equation that describes how the concentration of titanium in zircons changes as the crystallization temperature of the zircons changes (Lindsey). Watson found that zircons crystallized between 660-700°C, which corresponds to one of the few predictable terrestrial processes: the 650-700°C temperature range in which rocks heated in the presence of water will begin to melt (Lindsey). This piece of data fits with the chemical and magnetometer's evidence that Earth could have been cool enough to have liquid water in the Hadean eon. Martin Whitehouse, a zircon expert from the Swedish Museum of Natural History comments that, "The picture coming out from the zircons is that the early Earth really wasn't a bubbling, boiling magma ocean" ("Zircons").

The crystallization temperatures also agree with the Hadean hydrosphere hypothesis, which suggests that 4.3 billion-year-old zircons formed from magmas and contain re-worked continental crust that formed in the presence of water near the Earth's surface based on heavy oxygen-18 values, which indicates that the rocks formed in a cool, wet, sedimentary process at the Earth's surface (Mojzsis, Harrison and Pidgeon, Lindsey). The magma that eventually formed the zircons could have been formed from sediments deposited on the ancient ocean floor (Lindsey). The existence of a hydrosphere at or near the Earth's surface suggests that within 200 million years of formation, Earth settled into a pattern of crust formation,

erosion, and sediment recycling, driven by rapid mantle convection, a cycle similar to the era of plate tectonics, but at a faster pace in the Hadean eon (Watson and Harrison). Watson explains that Earth 4.4 billion years ago was cool enough to have erosion of continents above sea level with sediments forming, which also necessitates the presence of oceans and liquid water ("Zircons"). Furthermore, hafnium isotope ratios in the zircon crystals signal that lighter minerals were present in continental crust, which could have been recycled down into the mantle 4.4 billion years ago through a process similar to that of plate tectonics ("Geology"). Nevertheless, the existence of plate tectonic action is still up for debate, as Simon Wilde of the Curtin University of Technology explains: "Measuring one spot on a crystal, as opposed to another, can yield very different interpretations" ("Geology").

Another analytical technique, the magnetometer, offers a similar perspective: data gathered suggests early formation of the Earth's magnetic field, which shielded it against harmful solar winds so compounds essential to life could exist early on, affirming the early formation of the oceans and early tectonic plate action. Data from a high-resolution magnetometer that measures iron-bearing minerals inside 25 zircons to identify the strength and direction of Earth's magnetic field when zircons formed suggests that a magnetic field existed around 4 to 4.2 billion years ago and fluctuated in strength from a value similar to today's to about 12% of that value ("Earth's Ancient Magnetic Field"). This magnetic field potentially shielded the Earth against solar wind that could have stripped Earth of its atmosphere of water and volatile compounds that are necessary for life ("Earth's Ancient Magnetic Field"). The presence of the magnetic field also indicates the action of plate tectonics, and perhaps the loss of heat to space as the plates were shuffled ("Earth's Ancient Magnetic Field"). This conjecture agrees with the cooler and wetter Earth that the chemical structure of the zircons suggests.

Analyses of zircons potentially paint a more complete portrait of the history of Earth starting at a time of 4.4 billion years ago. The presence of trace elements found in water-rich rocks, crystallization temperatures close to the range at which rocks heated in the presence of water will begin to melt, heavy oxygen-18 values, and magnetometer measurements that indicate Earth's magnetic field could have shielded it against damaging solar winds 4 billion years ago all indicate that oceans and plate tectonic action could have appeared early in the Hadean. Evidence from zircons suggests that the Hadean eon was less Hell-like than earlier models have suggested, and that life—perhaps in the form of heat-loving microbes—could have evolved earlier than scientists originally supposed (Lindsey).

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HANNAH SALEM:

#### "The Cellular Origins of Pancreatic Cancer"

The human body contains trillions of cells. They multiply, grow, and act as structural mechanisms in order to keep us alive. Damage to a cell's DNA known as a mutation—can be inherited or acquired (GHR). Hereditary mutations are passed down to the child and are present in each cell, because all cells in the body stem from the first fertilized egg (GHR). Acquired mutations can occur through viruses, chemicals, radiation, or replication errors, and are not passed on genetically. In a normal cell, DNA damage either results in repair, which conceives a viable cell, or cell death. However, in cancer cells, the damaged DNA is reproduced throughout the body, spreading faulty information (ACS). The cancer cells typically form a tumor, which invades the tissue or organ and can prevent them from functioning properly (ACS).

Pancreatic cancer is just one example of a cancer characterized by tumors that

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line the organ. The pancreas, an organ that lies deep behind the stomach, facilitates digestion through the exocrine system and produces hormones through the endocrine system (WebMD). Because of the pancreas' location, these tumors are so slow to cause symptoms that they are often detected in the late stages, making pancreatic cancer "the fourth leading cause of cancer death in the country" (Wenner). Most malignant pancreatic tumors affect the exocrine system, which constitutes 95% of the entire pancreas. The most common case of exocrine pancreatic cancer is due to pancreatic adenocarcinoma, a malignant tumor (WebMD). Until recently, the "cellular targets of malignant transformation" were unclear (Stranger & Dor). However, Christopher Wright, a developmental biologist at Vanderbilt University, along with colleagues at the University of California, traced the cellular origins of pancreatic adenocarcinoma to acinar cells in 2013 (MacMillan). This is a critical discovery that hopefully can be employed to make pancreatic cancer less deadly by administering treatment sooner rather than later.

Prior to the 2013 discovery, there existed several theories about the cellular origins of pancreatic cancer. One model proposed that cancerous tumors emerged from stem cells. The basis for this hypothesis was that stem cells replicate easily and effectively. Therefore, they could be more susceptible to malignant transformation if they "require fewer mutational hits." However, this theory has been discredited largely because the existence of pancreatic cancer stem cells has yet to be recognized (Stranger & Dor).

It was also hypothesized that pancreatic cancer could have arisen from ductal epithelial cells. The pancreas is divided primarily into three parts: ductal, acinar, and islet (Stranger & Dor). Pancreatic ductal cells line the tubes of the pancreas that secrete enzymes, and are thought to have the ability to produce endocrine cells (Grapin-Botton). It was believed that ductal epithelial cells could induce pancreatic tumors because of their active presence in many cases of breast cancer (MacMillan, UCHC). Ductal carcinoma, the most common type of breast cancer, is generated in the duct of the breast when the ductal epithelial cells "undergo malignant transformation and proliferate intraluminally" (UCHC). Thus, it was speculated that a similar process could have subsisted in the pancreas.

Similarly, the centroacinar cell (CAC), another pancreatic cell, was also considered a potential cause for the cellular origins of pancreatic cancer (Stranger & Dor). CACs interact with both acinar and ductal systems, and it was primarily their proximity to these suspect compartments that led researchers to speculate about their possible involvement ina pancreatic cancer (Stranger & Dor). Additionally, the expansion of CACs lead to uncharacteristic acinar and ductal changes, known as metaplasia, which is often "associated with pancreatic cancer in mice and humans" (Stranger & Dor). Overall, premalignant lesions, regions of tissue more susceptible to cancer, offer "limited information about the normal cell types from which cancers arise, and the true 'cell-of-origin' is unknown for the vast majority of malignancies" (Stranger & Dor). Therefore, for many years scientists could only speculate about the cellular origins of pancreatic cancer.

It was not until researchers turned to mice that the theories began to shift away from ductal epithelial cells. Former findings revealed that the mouse pancreas develops similar premalignant lesions to human pancreatic cancer, so researchers began experimenting on mice using Kras, which is "the genetic mutation most commonly found in human cancer" (MacMillan). By combining activated Kras with other "genetic tools," Wright and his fellow researchers discovered that activating Kras in acinar cells generated pancreatic cancer (MacMillan). Conversely, activating Kras in ductal cells did not. This was further proven by the fact that acinar cells are much more likely to form lesions, while ductal and stem cells are much more resistant to this malignant transformation (Kopp et al.).

The researchers also discovered that acinar cells can transform into duct-like cells from cells that secrete enzymes, and Wright claims that this conversion "is so destabilized that [the acinar cell] goes crazy and moves off into a dysplastic, cancerous state" (MacMillan). This switch is contingent on whether or not the protein-encoding gene, Sox9, is expressed (MacMillan). This means that this gene could possibly be used as an indicator of the presence of the early stages of a tumor and might facilitate prevention.

Wright called these findings a "complete surprise and reconfiguration of how we think about pancreatic cancer" (MacMillan). This discovery will enable scientists to watch the development of pancreatic cancer from the onset of its formation. This could potentially facilitate prevention, or at the very least make diagnosing pancreatic cancer much easier in its early stages. It is currently one of the most deadly cancers, but this is largely due to its consistently late detections. Now that it is known that the pancreatic adenocarcinoma tumor originates in acinar cells, researchers know more about not only "the cell of origin at the very inception of cancer," but also about pancreatic cancer itself, as they "can watch as things go wrong" and view the whole process (MacMillan).

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Morgan Richards:

#### "Promises & Perils of Rewriting the Genetic Code"

I magine that you could rewrite your genetic code. Science fiction plot lines have explored such a concept in movies like *Gattaca*, with technology so advanced, the possibilities seem other worldly. New approaches in genetic engineering, however, are closing the gap to that fantastical future. At the forefront of these technologies is genome editing, which allows researchers to rewrite, quite literally, the genetic code in almost any organism. This technology is just beginning to affect medical therapy. In November of this year, a cell therapy treatment based in part on genome editing was reported to have saved the life of an infant girl in the UK dying from cancer (Pollack). Although this case serves as a wonderful success story, the treatment has caused some concerns, both in regard to the technique itself and the ethics involved. First, will this therapy make unwanted genetic changes in the donor cells that might adversely affect the patient?

Second, by relying on this new technology, are we opening a door to playing God, by being able to rewrite genes associated with IQ and appearance?

Genome editing differs from traditional genetic engineering both in its approach and what it accomplishes. Traditional genetic engineering relies on adding foreign genes to an organism's genome. For example, pharmaceutical companies are able to produce the human hormone insulin in bacteria by taking the human gene that codes for insulin and adding it to bacteria. It is important to note that the needs to be modified in order to be expressed properly in the bacteria—for instance, by adding promoters (DNA sequences that allow a gene to be copied into RNA) that follow the genetic code of the bacteria. The fact that genes can be placed into a foreign environment has long generated concerns about the use of genetic engineering technology. Specifically, the ability to move genes between species creates concern that such a "transgenic" process is somehow unnatural or artificial and could have unforeseen negative side effects. Another limitation of traditional genetic engineering is that the added gene often crashes into random places in the host organism's genome, which can cause mutations, further adding to the potential complications.

In contrast, genome editing manipulates genes within the genome by using molecular scissors to deactivate or modify single genes (Young). In the example introduced earlier, scientists used proteins called TALENs to cut the DNA of an immune cell donor to deactivate a surface receptor protein that would have caused tissue rejection in patients (Cellectis). It is important to note that TALENs are proteins that bind to DNA of a *specific* nucleotide sequence. These proteins are modular and consist of repeating units, each 34 amino acids long, which recognize a specific nucleotide base (Pennisi). Scientists have deduced the code responsible for pairing a protein sequence to a DNA sequence, so it is possible to design a new modular TALEN that can recognize any particular DNA sequence.

TALENs also contain a specific enzyme called an endonuclease that is responsible for separating DNA. This bifunctional protein—part DNA recognition and part endonuclease—allows scientists to break the DNA molecule within a specific gene. The break is temporary, however; the cell joins the broken ends together, which often causes a mutation at the site. In order for this process to be successful, scientists need to use conventional genetic engineering technology to add the genes for TALENs to the cells that will be modified. In this way, scientists are able to very precisely enter the cell and destroy the function of specific genes.

TALENs are just one example of genome editing technology, but a new approach has recently stepped to the forefront: CRISPR (Young). In contrast to using an engineered TALEN protein to guide the endonuclease to a specific site in the genome, CRISPR technology relies on an RNA molecule to target an endonuclease. Because it is simpler to design and manufacture RNA molecules compared to proteins, CRISPR has more flexibility and is easier to use; consequently, this particular technique has become the "gold standard" in the world of genome editing.

Although the field of gene manipulation is relatively young, technological advancements such as CRISPR and TALENs pave a path for advancements in science that open up a world of possibilities. However, there are both technical and ethical limitations that need to be considered. Amongst the technical concerns is the inevitable imprecision of any technique.

So-called "off target" modifications, caused by the endonuclease or other enzyme being brought to the wrong location in the genome, pose the greatest threat (Baltimore; Young). It is known that such errors occur in TALEN technology (Pennisi); however, less evidence is available for

CRISPR. The danger of off target modification is that scientists will potentially make unintended changes to the genome. If genome editing was used to alter the genome in humans, such off

target changes could lead to disease. In the example discussed above, the genetic makeup of the patient was not altered, but some danger still exists because genome editing could make unintended changes in the cancer fighting donor cells injected into the patient. What would happen if an off target change altered the cells in a way that caused them to attack healthy cells instead of the cancer? In the case of the baby girl who received such treatment, the reward outweighed the risk as her cancer was terminal; the treatment was used as a last effort (Pollack).

Even if genome editing technologies were error free, there would still be con-

cerns, because not all genes' functions or interactions are known. There are roughly 25,000 genes in the human genome, and we currently know the function of only a small fraction of these genes. Therefore, scientists cannot accurately predict what the consequences of most genetic changes would be after they are edited into the genome (Baltimore).

Genome editing also raises a large ethical debate on where the line should be drawn in terms of our involvement in our own biological composition and whether such a technique is the gateway to an unnatural manipulation of our genetic makeup. The main concern is whether or not we are heading down a "slippery slope" (Baltimore)—will fixing disease causing mutations morph into the desire to change aesthetics (think Gattaca or even a new wave of genetic plastic surgery)? These issues were discussed and debated in "The International Summit on Human Gene Editing" in Washington, D.C., in early December 2015 (Achenbach). There was consensus at the meeting that the promise of human gene editing for curing genetic diseases is great; however, the danger of this technology being used to make manmade changes to the human gene pool leaves researchers unsure of where to draw the line (Stein).

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## About Our Contributors

Caroline **Aaron** (CAS '18) studies English, Gender, and Cinema in CAS. She is a member of the BU Film Society E-Board and writes for The Daily Free Press. Caroline is an avid lover of stories and David Bowie, and can usually be found at the nearest movie theater. She would like to take this opportunity to remind the reader that Leonardo DiCaprio has won an Academy Award.

Sammi Arnold (CAS '18) studies English and Classical Civilization. She loves writing and editing prose and poetry and often does it in her favorite bibliophile palace: the Boston Athenaeum. She's a member of the BU Equestrian Team, a Dean's Host, and an Admissions Ambassador. Look for her upcoming feature in the BU literary magazine Clarion that highlights the work of Kenyan and Nigerian poets and authors.

Rosie Carter (CAS '18) studies Philosophy and French. She is from Arlington, MA.

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Lydia Erickson (CAS '17) writes essays, poetry, short stories, articles, and, hopefully soon, novels. She studies English Literature with a minor in Spanish. Lydia originally hails from Palo Alto, California. Hobbies include food, theatre, travel, and reading and writing speculative fiction.

Lily Filipowska (CAS '18) studies Biology on a pre-medical track. Outside the Science building, you can find Lily drawing her own feet, convincing herself that she enjoys analyzing Nietzsche, and basking in the sun like the Leo she is.

Daniel Fitzgibbons (CAS '19) was born and raised in New Hampshire. His interests include music, politics and theology.

Elizabeth Foster (CAS '19) is a Classics major and Core student from Milan, Italy (where her family is stationed, as her dad is in the army). She is currently Latin and Arabic and hopes to start on Ancient Greek this fall.

Kush Ganatra (CAS '18) is a heretic majoring in political science whose name used to be Herschel, until his parents got a better idea. Ever since, his only recourse has been books, especially those by one of his favorite superheroes—Whitman.

Priest Gooding (CAS '18) studies Philosophy (BA/MA) and Economics. His interests include Existentialism and 19th-20th century philosophical and political thought. He is a composer, musician, and martial artist.

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Assistant Director of the Core and teaches dramatic literature in BU's School of Theatre. Prof. Hamill specializes in the iconography of the commedia dell'arte, theatre and war, and theatre semiotics. She has published articles in Print Quarterly, Theatre Symposium, and The Performance of Violence in Contemporary Ireland.

Emily Hatheway (CAS '18) double majors in Chemistry and Philosophy. She really likes to play hockey.

Konrad Herath (CAS '17) studies French literature with a primary interest in gender theory. He's an incredibly cosmopolitan presence in the Core office.

Chloe Hite (CAS '17) majors in Anthropology and minors in Economics. She will be the president of the Word & Way Society next semester.

Farhan **Hoodbhoy** (CAS '19) is an undeclared freshman from Atlanta, Georgia. He balances his studies with his interest in his car.

Weiyi Hu (CAS '18) double majors in Economics and Mathematics and minors in Business Administration and Management. Weiyi is a Core learning assistant and works in the shadowing program of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars' BU Chapter.

Brian Jorgensen is the founding director of Core. His interests outside the classroom include blues music and Japanese *noh* theater.

Gregory Kerr is a Classics and Philosophy major and President-Elect of the BU Fencing Club. When he's not obnoxiously overachieving, he enjoys muttering about Dante and trying his best not to brag about his burgeoning internet fame.

Shanti Khanna is a reader, writer and lover of all things literary. She is pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science with aspirations to become an attorney. She was born and raised in Northern Virginia, but will often tell people she is from DC because it "sounds cooler." Her hobbies include knitting, paying way too much attention to her pet fish (Ruth Betta Finsburg), and hanging out in the Core office.

Justin Lievano (CAS '16) is a voraciously energetic creature making his way up the social ladder. He studies English and American Literature—the latter brings him to tears more frequently than he cares to admit; most recently, it was Emma Lazarus'"The New Colossus"—with occasional forays into Linguistics. Concerning the interview he conducted in this edition of the Core Journal, Justin regrets not asking Professor Redford to address the rumors that he once served as an espionage agent.

Joy (Cherng-yue) Lin (CAS '18) studies Biology. Besides her love of science, she enjoys music and gets excited about the humanities.

Alexandra Lion (CAS '18) is a biology major who hails from Boonton Township, NJ. She thanks the Core for providing her with the opportunity study literature in-depth when she's not otherwise tied up in the lab.

Allen Miller (CAS '18) is studying computer science and economics. He is also a teacher's assistant for Computer Science 101.

Adam **Parks** (CAS '18) hails from Scarsdale, NY. Adam majors in International Relations with a focus on Business, Politics, and Economics in Asia; he minors in Business Administration and Philosophy. He has a passion for languages and has taken classes in French, Mandarin, Spanish, and Greek. He loves to travel and immerse himself in other cultures, and he was lucky enough to go to Athens with Core after freshman year.

Abagail **Petersen** is a nineteen-year-old studying English, who sleeps every night under the light of the Citgo sign.

Rachel Quillen (CAS '17) studies ancient Greek and Latin. She comes to Boston University from Madison, Alabama, and works as a tech director.

Morgan **Richards** (CAS '19) is a Massachusetts native studying the History of Art and Architecture.

Hannah Salem (CAS '19) hails from Maryland.

Peter J. Schwartz is Associate Professor of German and Comparative Literature at Boston University, where he has taught courses in literature, film, and philosophy since 2002. He is the author of *After Jena: Goethe's Elective Affinities and the End of the Old Regime* (2010) and of articles on Goethe, the Faust tradition, Georg Büchner, Aby M. Warburg, and Michael Haneke. His complete translation of André Jolles's classic work of literary genre theory *Simple Forms* (1929) is due out in the fall of 2016.

Yun Shi (CAS '19) is undeclared. She enjoys travel and painting.

Olivia **Simonson** is the Core's resident Business Major. She is the Business Manager of *Off the Cuff*, writes for the *Women's Political Review*, and is a member of the Alpha Kappa Psi business fraternity. The best part of her week is the camaraderie and friendly debate occurring at any given hour between peers and professors in the Core office.

Alina **Szremski** (CAS '17) studies philosophy. She is also head editor of Burn Magazine and a staff writer for Culture Shock.

This issue marks Sassan Tabatabai's thirteenth as faculty advisor of the Core Journal.

Savannah Wu (CAS '19) is currently exploring her academic interests before she settles on one area of study.

#### SASSAN TABATABAI

# Etna

Vapor still breathes from the crater and shrouds the summit in a blanket of gnarled clouds

so white against the blue sky it stuns the eye.

Embers still glow in the heat that still churns the lava that still flows through the furnace that still burns deep within the mountain.

Not many still believe that Vulcan's workshop still lies beneath the rocks

—that he still forges impenetrable shields and swords sharper than razors—

that the crack of thunder one hears is really the crash of his hammer.

But the signs of life are undeniable.

Smoke still rises through the shaft that runs to Etna's core.

Perhaps Vulcan still fumes at the news that Mars had been sleeping with Venus.