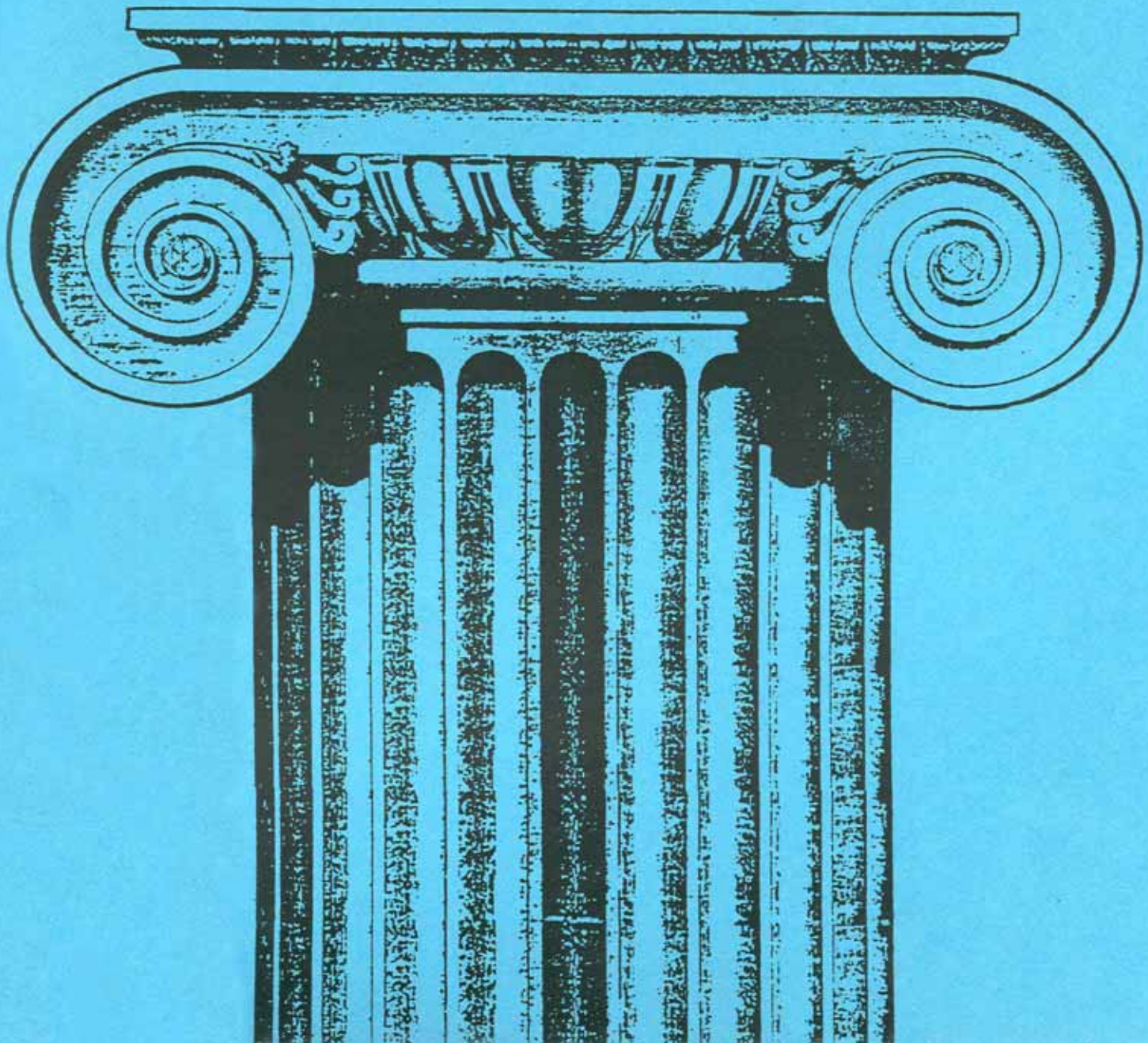
The Core Journal

Volume IV



The Core Journal IV

A Collection of Essays

Spring 1995

"If I have been able to see farther than others, it was because I stood on the shoulders of giants."

--Sir Isaac Newton

Editors

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Introduction

This, the fourth issue of the Core Journal, represents a selection of some of the finest work done in the program this year. Over fifty papers were originally submitted, and the eighteen which we found most original, intelligent and invigorating are printed here. The journal presents, as much as possible, the scope and breadth of the Core Curriculum, from the *Odyssey* to *Leaves of Grass* , from Lao Tzu to Rousseau. The essays themselves run the gamut from whimsical and experimental to more traditional textual analysis, but all —we hope— will provide an entertaining and informative read.

Our thanks go out to Dean Jorgensen, and especially to our faculty advisor, Professor Speight. In addition, we thank all the professors who prodded students into submitting, and all those who eventually did give us their works for consideration. We appreciate the contributions of the entire Core community in making this publication possible, and hope it provides a reward equal to our satisfaction with the final product. And finally, we have no intention of forgetting the help of all those who made xeroxes for us (there were over 750 pages of them). And don't worry, we remembered to recycle.

The Core may be, on the surface, just another series of courses, but each student, and each instructor, inevitably invest the curriculum with something more. If nothing else, the Core has birthed us into a new world, setting up an intellectual framework which we will never loose sight of. Standing at the threshold of an experience which has consumed countless hours of the last two years of our lives, we, for our part, feel as Dante must have when, in Purgatory, Virgil addresses these final words to him:

> Await no further word or sign from me:
> your will is free, erect and whole— to act
> against that will would be to err: therefore
> I crown and miter you over yourself
> (XXVII, 139-42)

Now if only we too can ascend into Heaven and touch the face of God...

-The Editors, April 23 1995

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A Lesson Best Learned:

The Legacy of Agamemnon
in ***The Odyssey***

Ryan Hawkins

November 7, 1994

Throughout the first half of *The Odyssey*, Homer, speaking through various characters, recounts the murder of the Akhaian hero and king, Agamemnon, by his adulterous wife, Klytaemnestra, adding further details with each narrative. In his postscript Robert Fitzgerald refers to these slight modifications through retelling as "incremental repetition"[i], its effect being to introduce new elements to the narrative that reflect the current storyline. Each new detail is significant in that it brings forth a theme or concept that is relevant to the ongoing struggle of those involved in the storytelling.

Homer introduces the reader to Agamemnon's murder at the very outset of *The Odyssey*, having Zeus mention it during the opening council of the gods at Olympos. Here Zeus sets the tone for the entire story, establishing the theme of Man's folly, or his seemingly blind tendency to do wrong despite receiving ample warning from the gods. Aigisthos was told by Hermes that to murder Agamemnon would seal his fate and ensure his own death at Orestes' hands; naturally Aigisthos did not heed Hermes' warning, and as of the opening council of gods in *The Odyssey*, he lies dead with his partner in crime, Klytaemnestra.

From this set-up Athena immediately addresses the plight of Odysseus, trapped by the goddess Kalypso on Ogygia; Homer's transition here is not incidental. Just as Aigisthos did not take seriously the warning of the gods, Odysseus was specifically told by the shade of Tieresias (a wise man of god-like stature) to avoid the slaughter of Helios' cattle. As Odysseus later reveals while recounting his adventure, he failed to control his crew and several of the sacred cows were butchered, angering the sun god Helios and bringing down a boat-shattering lightning bolt from Zeus as restitution. Homer's lesson is that Man's plight is of his own doing - not the fault of cruel supernatural beings. Despite having been told that their actions would incur severe punishment, both Aigisthos and Odysseus proceed to do wrong.

The next account of Agamemnon's murder occurs as Telemakhos goes to the wise man Nestor at Pylos. Nestor stresses the value of leaving a strong son behind to protect the family house, just as Orestes was left behind to avenge his father's death by slaying the adulterous Klytaemnestra and her suitor, Aigisthos. Here the mantle of responsibility is placed on Telemakhos' shoulders, being the son left behind in Odysseus' absence. It is a weight that Telemakhos is not yet ready to bear however, as he exclaims, " I wish the gods would buckle his [Orestes] arms on me!"[ii] This emphasizes Telemakhos' immaturity, his

inability to grow out from underneath his father's heroic shadow, or at the very least his reluctance to do so. The very reason Telemakhos has been sent out on his expedition by Athena is so that he can "find himself" in the very course of "finding" his father. Telemakhos requires a catalyst before he can reach maturation, unable to do it on his own accord, and news of father, dead or alive, eventually provides this catalyst, enabling Telemakhos to take action.

This particular narrative also raises the issue of infidelity and hightens the suspense as to how long Penelope will remain faithful to Odysseus. Nestor describes Klytaemnestra as being initially faithful to Agamemnon, rebuffing Aigisthos' advances,[iii] just as Penelope does when confronted by the invading suitors in her home. Klytaemnestra, however, eventually gives in to Aigisthos, raising the question of how Penelope will be able to fend off a multitude of suitors when Klytaemnestra could not resist one. Now in further retellings and other epics, such as Aeschylus' *The Oresteia*, there are clear differences in Penelope's and Klytaemnestra's characters - Klytaemnestra being portrayed as one driven to bloodlust by past injustices - but Homer, through Nestor, chooses to not focus on Klytaemnestra's dark side in this particular account; this is so that he might draw the parallels between the two wives separated from their husbands and under pressure from outside influences.

The story of Agamemnon's murder is again invoked by Menelaos, who recounts to Telemakhos a conversation he held with the Ancient of the Salty Sea. The Ancient of the Salty Sea described Agamemnon as returning home overjoyed and blindly falling into the trap that Klytaemnestra and Aigisthos had ensnared. Evidently Agamemnon's folly was assuming that nothing had changed in his kingdom in the ten or so years since he set out for Troy, making no attempts to determine the loyalty of his followers before coming aground. In this Homer sets a precedent by which Odysseus' decision to return home in disguise can be seen as being highly logical and strategic.

In addition the Ancient's retelling of Agamemnon's death stresses the inevitability of punishment for wrongdoing, and therefore justice. When Menelaos begins to mourn for his murdered brother, the Ancient demands that Menelaos cease his weeping, practically promising that Aigisthos will pay for his crimes in the end by announcing, "How soon can you return to Argos? You may take him [Aigisthos] alive there still - or else meanwhile Orestes will have dispatched him."[iv] The Ancient is essentially saying that

Aigisthos' death is inevitable, no matter who carries out the deed. In the same sense, the suitors must also suffer for their abuses of Odysseus' house, and whether its by Odysseus' or Telemakhos' hands is irrelevant at this point. This is a concept that reverberates throughout *The Odyssey*, taking the form of dreams involving swooping eagles snatching up geese and divine pronouncements. There is never a doubt that the suitors will suffer a violent death at the conclusion of *The Odyssey*; what is in doubt is how this bloody event is going to occur, and therein lies the suspense within the narrative.

The final account of Agamemnon's murder by the shade of Agamemnon himself provides the climax to Homer's incremental repetition, presenting the primary lesson that Odysseus must learn from Agamemnon's plight. Odysseus must oppress all desires within him to return home triumphantly, and instead set forth upon his homeland in secret, disguised as a lowly beggar. The shade of Agamemnon warns Odysseus to trust no one, not even Penelope. However, at the same time, Agamemnon suggests that Penelope is distinctly more virtuous than his adulterous wife Klytaemnestra, describing Odysseus' wife as being "too wise, too clear-eyed, sees alternatives too well"[v]; this suggests that Penelope just might be more than capable of handling herself in Odysseus' absence, and just might set a precedence for those who believe that Penelope was in fact aware of Odysseus' disguise from the outset and arranged the test of the bow accordingly. Nonetheless Agamemnon's point to Odysseus is that not even the most virtuous of souls can be trusted, especially women, because there is no way of guessing how they might have changed in a few decades of absence.

Agamemnon's description of his murder also emphasizes the change in attitude towards death and violence that takes place over the course of *The Odyssey*. Up until Odysseus reaches Hades and is forced to confront death, violence is treated almost casually by all those involved in Homer's narrative. With Agamemnon's words though, there is a turning point; the shade of Agamemnon states, speaking to Odysseus, "In your day you have seen men, and hundreds, die in war, in the bloody press, or downed in single combat, but these were murders you would catch your breath at,"[vi] and then proceeds to describe the bloody scene at his house. Agamemnon's murder, and - as Odysseus will continue to discover - death in general are not to be taken lightly anymore. Odysseus shows that this lesson was well learned by immediately returning to Kirke's island to bury his crewmate Elphenor and later asking that the old nurse,

Eurykleia, to not excessively celebrate the slaughter of the suitors. This can be seen as a lesson learned for the Greeks as well, who by Homer's time, began to value justice more highly than vengeance, through which the only punishment for any crime was a brutal death.

However the significance of Agamemnon's story to *The Odyssey* - and any Greek epic for that matter - goes beyond the themes highlighted by Homer's incremental repetition; As Robert Fiztgerald points out in his postscript, Agamemnon's murder provides a demonstration of the Greek moral code, and more specifically the punishment for breaking it. Homer presents this moral code to the reader from the very outset, through Zeus' discussion with the gods at Olympos. "Greed and folly double the suffering in the lot of man," Zeus says[vii], and then goes on to puzzle over Aigisthos' crime as a way of providing an example. Aigisthos' infraction against the Greek moral code is a multiple one: adultery, inhospitality (or more specifically the invasion of one's home), usurpation, murder, and greed. The Greeks tolerated a significant amount of plundering and pillaging following military conquest, even stomaching the slaughter of innocents during war, but drew the line at cowardly plotting and trickery (as opposed to open confrontation on the battlefield) against a fellow Akhaian, as characterized by the actions of Aigisthos and Klytaemnestra.

Even more upsetting to the Greeks were illicit intrigues within the family, especially those leading to the murder of a kinsmen or betrothed, as exemplified by the horror that accompanied Agamemnon's story. The shade of Agamemnon, as noted earlier, declared to Odysseus that the whole butchering of Troy paled in comparison to his own murder at the hands of his ruthless wife, Klytaemnestra. The very idea that the murder was committed by Klytaemnestra herself makes the story even more hideous to the Greeks; the shade of Agamemnon tells Odysseus, "There is no being more fell, more bestial than a wife in such an action."[viii] The idea of a disloyal wife is so revolting to the Greeks that the gods utilized it as a form of punishment; Odysseus, when speaking to the shade of Agamemnon, noted, "That was the way that Zeus, who views the wide world, vented his hatred on the sons of Atreus - intrigues of women, even from the start."[ix] Therefore the retelling of Agamemnon's murder emphasizes this horrendous concept of what is, to say the very least, a dysfunctional family, and provides a backdrop by which to compare the state of Odysseus and his family, thereby arousing suspicion as to what this state will be by the conclusion of *The Odyssey*.

Thus the significance of Agamemnon's murder to *The Odyssey* is two-fold; not only does each individual retelling provide some insight and embellishment of themes relevant to the ongoing characters, but they also provide an overall historical reference by which the reader is able to understand what is at stake in the present narrative. As Robert Fitzgerald points out, this historical background is a common element of the Homeric style, referring to it as a "constant background of retrospect and allusion to the past."[x] It is through the incremental repetition of Agamemnon's story that a precedent is established, and by comparing Odysseus' plight against this precedent, Homer creates an element of suspense. As so often is the case in Greek tragedy, there is a slight suggestion that Odysseus is fated to follow in Agamemnon's footsteps - unless of course, Odysseus can change his ways dramatically. And it is from this that Homer's final, ultimate lesson can be derived: one must learn from the errors of those who have come before, or be doomed to repeat them.

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[i] Homer. The Odyssey. Trans. Robert Fitzgerald. pg 496.
[ii] Ibid. pg 41. line 222.
[iii] Ibid. pg 43. lines 285-6.
[iv] Ibid. pg 69. lines 581-3.
[v] Ibid. pg 199. lines 519-20.
[vi] Ibid. pg 198. lines 482-5.
[vii] Ibid. pg 2. lines 50-1.
[viii] Ibid. pg 199. lines 496-7.
[ix] Ibid. pg 199. lines 507-9.
[x] Ibid. pg 498.

A Furious Speech:

The Blood-Curdling Tongue of Clytaemnestra

Ryan Hawkins

November 24, 1994

"So he goes down, and life is bursting out of him -
great sprays of blood, and the murderous shower
wounds me, dyes me black and I, I revel
like the Earth when the spring rains come down,
the blessed gifts of god, and the new green
spear splits the sheath and rips to birth in glory!"

- Aeschylus, *The Agamemnon*, lines 1410 - 1415

These are the lines spoken by Agamemnon's adulterous wife, Clytaemnestra, as she stands over her murdered husband, slain by her own hands. Clytaemnestra's lines work on several levels, beginning with the purely literal, provided by the diction and description of the action, to the purely abstract, provided by an elusive (and possibly accidental) allusion to Greek theogany.

Looking exclusively at Aeschylus' choice of words, or diction, the passage emphasizes the violent action that has occurred: the stabbing of Agamemnon with a sword. Clytaemnestra describes "great sprays of blood" in a "murderous shower", but more important is the usage of expressions such as "[the] spear splits the sheath" and "rips to birth". These phrases refer to an entirely separate action, yet still evoke an image of a tearing or stabbing force. Through this Aeschlyus perpetuates the intense, vicious imagery induced by Agamemnon's murder, and the effect becomes even more pronounced by having the murderess herself, Clytaemnestra, deliver the lines.

However, irregardless of the violent tone, Clytaemnestra's words are not a literal description of Agamemnon's death; Agamemnon, although the complete details are unclear, is entrapped in a "net" made of several robes in an effort to keep the warrior-king from defending himself when Clytaemnestra delivers her killing blows - therefore "sprays of blood", which suggest a violent thrashing about, is not likely an accurate depiction of Agamemnon's final moments. Nonetheless this is not an oversight by Aeschylus, for it serves a purpose. Clytaemnestra's bloody depiction of Agamemnon's death stresses the violent nature of a deed committed behind closed doors and therefore out of sight of the audience. The audience, through the revulsion that even Clytaemnestra feels towards Agamemnon's final moments, understands the horrendous nature of the crime committed and the inherent, *psychological* violence within, even though it may have been an act that lacked any excessive *physical* violence, or gore. In addition Clytaemnestra's exaggerated depiction stresses that Agamemnon was no ordinary man, and therefore would not die an ordinary man's

death; Agamemnon - in spirit at least - does not passively keel over, but dies in a "murderous shower" of blood "bursting of out him", symbolic of the energy or power within the great warrior-king that Argos loses with his death.

On a less literal, word-for-word level, these six lines reveal Clytaemnestra's grasp of the horrendous nature of her actions, and how she might even feel some remorse for what she has done. Clytaemnestra states that Agamemnon's blood "wounds me, dyes me black", implying that she feels as much emotional pain as pleasure from her actions. In the midst of her speech, she hesitates - "and the murderous shower wounds me, dyes me black, and I, I revel" - before addresssing her emotions, as if for one moment uncertain as to how she should react, rather than stating outright that she exults in her crime. Here Aeschylus portrays Clytaemnestra as not just another blood-thirsty psycho-killer, but something more human, who possesses some hint of regret for her actions - and in doing so, Aescylus may be suggesting that Clytaemnestra was just as much a victim as anyone else. It was after all, Agamemnon who inflicted the first blow by sacrificing their daughter, Iphegenia, and then leaving for Troy, causing Clytaemnestra's sorrow to fester until mutating into a desire for vengeance in his absence. In a sense there is a certain amount of inevitability in Clytaemnestra's actions, something entirely outside of her control, that is attributed to a mother's undying, passionate love for her children. Following her daughter's sacrifice, Clytaemnestra sees only one possible source of retribution: the murder of her husband, Agamemnon.

Finally, on a more abstract level, Clytaemnestra creates a metaphor that may have an unintended effect. She compares her revelry to that of "the Earth when the spring rains come down," and "the new green spear splits the sheath and rips to birth in glory!" Aeschylus' intended effect for this metaphor is to suggest that through Agamemnon's death a rebirth has occurred, that Clytaemnestra is a new woman and that the cycle of vengeance, the family curse, can now come to an end; in fact the idea that one is reborn through tragedy, as noted by Professor James Johnson in a Core lecture on November 3, 1994, is a recurring theme in Greek drama. To emphasize this new beginning, Clytaemnestra introduces Justice to the city of Argos in attempt to remove an individual's right to seek retribution and instead distribute that right to a panel of jurors - the cycle of vengeance, at least in its current form in *The Oresteia*, has indeed come to an end.

However Clytaemnestra's metaphor also alludes to a part of Greek theogany that is significant to *The Oresteia* - the birth of the Furies. The Furies, symbolizing the desire for bloody retribution (and Clytaemnestra's in particular) in *The Oresteia*, were created as a result of scheming by Gaia, the goddess of the Earth, against her husband, Uranos, the god of the Sky. When Uranos oppressed his children for fear that they might overtake him, Gaia convinced her son Kronos to act against his father; Kronos severed Uranos' testicles at sunset when the sky came down to the Earth, and the testicles fell to the Earth to produce the Furies. Ironically enough, the Furies would then go on to become the champions of vengeance against the very thing that produced them, or acts of violence perpetrated by children against their parents. Clytaemnestra's description of the "spring rains" coming down to the Earth, especially when these spring rains are used in conjunction with Agamemnon's "murderous shower" of blood, evokes a parallel to Uranos' falling genitalia; and then these spring rains bring forth new life - and more importantly new life with violent undertones - that relate to birth of the Furies.

Intended by Aeschylus or not, the allusion to the Furies' birth serves a purpose. Clytaemnestra, after killing Agamemnon, realizes the inevitability that she too will become a victim of the same bloodthirsty desire for vengeance that drove her to slay her husband, or the ruthless retribution represented by the Furies. Clytaemnestra is dyed in black, or marked as the next victim, by Agamemnon's blood as it falls to the Earth to procreate the Furies and perpetuate the cycle of family violence.

WHO WAS EVE?

Shannon Parrott
10-10-94

WHO WAS EVE?

Genesis, through the stories of Eve, offers a muddled view of the role which women are to occupy. It is generally understood that it is Eve who bears the blame for the original sin and the fall from the garden of Eden. The excruciating pain which women suffer in childbearing is a constant reminder of her digression; but where did Eve come from and what is her ordained role?

In the first Genesis account woman is created along with man; there is no distinction as to the order of creation. However, in the second account of creation woman is created last, behind even the animals. Understanding the order of creation is integral in understanding the role which Eve is to occupy. Just as the first born son is often seen as superior, the creation of Eve after man can be interpreted as a sign of her subordination to him. There exists in the Jewish tradition a woman named Lilith who some believe was actually Adam's first wife, created before Eve.

Within the first account of human creation (Gen 1) there is no distinction as to who was created first. In fact, it appears that man and woman were created in one act. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen 1:26, 27). If the order of creation is proof of superiority than this story should leave no question as to women's equality. However Genesis 1 is the latter of the two creation stories, written, "perhaps as an editorial attempt to counter some

of the more antifemale and anthropomorphic interpretations which the other account has occasioned" (4:37). At the time of its writing the subordinate position of women was already established.

In the second account God takes a rib from the sleeping Adam, "and the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man" (Gen 2:22). Following the line of reason outlined above Eve is clearly an inferior in this version of events. Further, Eve is not even created independent of man but is taken from a part of him. Without man the woman could not exist.

Another way of understanding the second creation story is to look at it not as the creation of woman from man but rather the creation of two gendered beings from one androgyne. If this is the case then the second story can simply be viewed as a different version of the first with man and woman created together. Such interpretations are based primarily in linguistics. In Hebrew the word 'adam means simply "person", no gender implied, and ha-'adam "the person" (4:37, 5:9). Gendered words are not used until Genesis 2:23. It is in attempting to translate to English that gender is revealed. The English language lacks a non-gendered pronoun and the tradition of patriarchy leads translators to substitute "he" where gender is not specified.

The order of creation, however, is not the only thing that points toward a subordinate role for Eve. In Genesis 2, just as

Adam names the animals in a show of dominion over them, he names the being whom God presents to him saying, "she shall be called Woman because she was taken out of Man" (Gen. 2:23). Later, after man and woman are condemned by God to be thrown out of the garden of Eden, "The man called his wife's name Eve," (Gen 3:20) The clearest message of Eve's subordination comes in Genesis 3 where she is condemned by God for eating the forbidden fruit, "your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you" (Gen 3:16).

There is, however, the question of whether Eve was indeed Adam's first wife. Jewish tradition holds that in the first creation account it is Adam and Lilith who are created together, thus equals. This story, though not contained in the Christian bible, is in the Apocryphal books. When Adam asks Lilith to have intercourse she agrees until he tells her to lie beneath him. Believing in their equality she refuses to take the subordinate position at which point Adam asks God for a more 'cooperative' woman which he is given in Eve. Lilith then becomes an evil spirit. (1) If one takes this interpretation to heart then women's assigned role of subordination is clear, but one is still left with Lilith. Was Eve then created in the image of Lilith? And if Lilith was sent from the garden for her refusal to subordinate to Adam, are then all acts of women's insubordination sinful? Information on Lilith is not abundant making such questions difficult to address. Lilith, for the most part, exists as a biblical footnote.

If Eve was not Adam's first wife then the two Genesis accounts may be two parts of the same story, the first being the creation of Lilith and the second of Eve. In creating Eve from the rib of Adam God assures that they will "become one flesh."(Gen 2:24), that is compatible. When Adam first sees Eve he is pleased, saying, "This **at last** is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" [emphasis added] (Gen 2:23). "At last" would seem to indicate a progression of events which was in fact the case: first the animals, then Lilith, and "at last" Eve. This view of the two stories is also convenient as it seems to explain away the first story's equality and leaves the reader with no doubt as to Eve's role as a subordinate.

It is clear that assigning a definitive role to Eve is difficult. It is impossible to view Eve without viewing her through the cultural context of our time. Subordinate to man, in the image of God, the Virgin Mary, bringer of sin: Eve bears many faces which are not easily reconciled. Just as those who would like to see woman in a subordinate role will always interpret the Bible as being in their favor, so too will modern feminist scholars, eager to shed the chains of Eve, continue to read it in theirs. As the first woman in the Bible and the mother of human kind, Eve certainly demands further study.

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The Creation Myth of Babylon and Genesis:
A Comparative Study
By Yu-Ming Chang

Myth, in most cultures, represents the subconscious revelations of the culture's collective mentality. In this way, myth allows for the expression of the fundamental nature of the human psyche. Thus, myth often forms the basis of philosophical abstractions and theological propositions. In fact, it can be argued that theology and philosophy are, in reality, logical extensions of myth into the realm of consciousness. Myth, within these contexts, then, is the medium through which humanity's deepest perceptions of existence are asserted, a perception so deeply entrenched in the subconscious that it can only be adequately expressed in a grand mythic form and, very often, in the unspoken and underlying force of religious thought. Thus, many different "mythological" and religious narratives of distinct cultures actually shadow each other with common archetypes: particularly if those cultures grew somewhat concurrently with each other. And frequently, as in the case of creation myths, or cosmogonic cycles, there are common motifs that draw the different traditions together at the onset. These motifs may be myriad, but the most fascinating aspect of cosmogonic traditions is the creation of "form from formlessness." Yet, from these similar beginnings, significant and profound differences become apparent as the creation myths and traditions of different cultures develop and progress. In essence, these different cultures begin the cosmogonic cycle with similar states of proto-existence of the universe that ultimately leads to contrary messages of the nature of creation and being. In

fact, because cultures are different, contrary interpretations of said archetypes become varied and rich. One of the most interesting examples of such incongruities and divergences in the path and messages of creation myths that arise from the "form from formlessness" motif are found in the creation accounts of two geographically related peoples: the early Israelites and Babylonians. The two accounts in question are, of course, the Hebraic chronicles of creation as detailed in Genesis (Gen. 1-2) and the Babylonian creation epic of the Enuma Elish. The evolution of the hierarchical order of existence in the Babylonian mythos and that of the Hebrew convention begin with a similar premise, a formless beginning in which no "spoken word" has been uttered and, thus, no names to give form. Yet, despite this overwhelmingly fascinating correlation, the two accounts diverge to reach polar ideological conclusions.

The state of the "universe" before form, in the two traditions in question begin, as mentioned, in like manner:

> In 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 the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters.
> And God said... (Gen 1:1-3).

> When on high the heaven had not been named,
> Firm ground below had not been called by name,
> Naught but primordial Apsu, their begetter,
> And Mummu-Tiamat, she who bore them all,
> Their water commingling as a single body; (Tablet 1:15).

As can be seen, the matching imageries of *void*, a watery formlessness that was the universe, is common in both

traditions. Both creation stories also share the conceptualization of an essence of being in the *void* that arises to give form. Another commonality is the motif of the power of the spoken word; demonstrated by the creation of form from speech, "And God said...(Gen 1:3)," and "When high the heaven had not been named, Firm ground below had not been called by name...(Tablet 1:1-2)." Yet, despite these shared motifs, the very differences that separate the distinct cultures of the Hebrews and Babylonians become apparent in the same texts where the similarities arise. The most noticeable and important difference is, of course, that the Enuma Elish is a mythology based on polarities, the fresh water Apsu, and the mother sea dragon of chaos, Tiamat, while the Judaic creation story begins without polarities: one single God who does not blend waters, but rather, is the only essence in the primordial sea: a sea without form. Here lies the fundamental difference that sparks the divergence of ideological conclusions of the two creation epics; the order of a universe created by a succeeding hierarchy of gods as opposed to the hierarchy of one single embodiment of absolute power.

The second important difference that ultimately defines the ideological differences between the two traditions arises, interestingly enough, in the way in which the new universal order is created from formlessness. In Genesis, chapters 1 and 2, God himself, from the primordial void creates existence from his word. It is a structured universe that is orderly created, step by step:

> And God said, "let there was light..."
> ...And God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters..."
> ...And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together in one place, and let the dry land appear..."
> ...And God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to separate the day from the night..."
> ...And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures..."
> And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds: cattle...Let us make man in our own image, after our own likeness..."
> So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all his work which he had done in creation...(Gen 1-2:3).

Yet, the Enuma Elish, provides a very different view of creation. It is a process of the spontaneous joining of mother chaos, Tiamat, with the formless fresh water of Apsu, that begets another polarity Lahmu and Lahamu. And "before they had grown in age and stature, Anshar and Kishar were formed surpassing others (Tablet 1:11-12)." It is interesting that the creation of order is not only a generational progress, unlike that for the Hebraic tradition, but also that none of it was the result of a conscious decision by the progenitors. In Genesis, "God said," in the Enuma Elish, however, "the gods were formed within them (Apsu and Tiamat.)" It is only later, once the evolution of the Gods had produced Marduk, that the spoken name, the spoken word that a structured universe comes into being.

What the above texts indicate is that, for the early Israelites, God, even before the creation of the structured universe, was the pinnacle of evolution, if such a term is

applicable. After all, God is not mother chaos, but merely exists. The Babylonian epic however, begins with the personification of mother chaos, Tiamat, and the increasingly ordered progeny that arise. It is only at the point in which the first gods appear, namely Anu, that a discernible image could be used: "Yea, Anshar's(third generation from Tiamat) first born, Anu, was his equal. Anu begot in his image...(Tablet 1:15-16)." God, in the Bible, does not need such generational processes to create form. One the sixth day, according to Genesis, chapter 1, or on the day God created the earth and heavens in Genesis, chapter 2, God creates man in his own image. The language of the text, therefore, suggests that God is already fully developed. God creates structure, he does not, unlike the Babylonian epic, need to evolve into structure before creating the formed universe. This second difference, is closely related to the afore mentioned contrast based on the opposing ideologies of the monotheistic mythos, and a polar polytheistic mythic system, in that the second "difference" is the logical extension of the first. God can not evolve since he is the only being, the only essence that exists in the void. The polar opposites, however, in the Babylonian epic, by its intrinsic nature demands a joining between the two, thereby insuring a hierarchical structure based on generational progression. Yet, again, it is this essential contrast between the evolution of structure as recorded in the two traditions that will, at length, help define the underlying division

between the ideological theories on the creation of the universe in question.

While it is obvious by now that the canonical Hebraic tradition could never allow the creation of the material universe out of existing matter, the opposite for the Enuma Elish, holds to be true. In the Babylonian epic, where the god Marduk is the apex of the generational evolution of the gods, it becomes necessary for the younger order to supplant the older. The two can not coexist since they are of opposing universal structures. The old order, while composed of polar, are both formless. Anu and the new generation of gods, the exemplar god Marduk, are, finally, creatures of form and structure. Marduk, for example, is described: "four were his eyes, four were his ears; when he moved his lips, fire blazed forth...(Tablet 1:93-94). Here, the formed must battle the symbol of chaos in order to finally create a structured and material universe. This tradition is demonstrably different from the omnipotent God of the Hebrews, whose "form" can not be understood or seen, yet is obviously the highest "order" that exists.

Yet, since Marduk, the hero of the Enuma Elish, the apex of order and strength of the gods, is a being of material, he must also use materials to build the structured universe:

> When he had vanquished and subdued his adversaries...
> ...The lord trod on the legs of Tiamat,
> With his unsparing mace he crushed her skull.
> When the arteries of her blood he had severed,
> The North Wind bore it to places undisclosed...

...Then the lord paused to view her dead body,
That he might divide the monster and do artful works.
He split her like a shell fish into two parts:
Half of her he set up and ceiled it as sky,
Pulled down the bar and posted guards.
He bade not to allow her waters to escape.
He crossed the heavens and surveyed the regions.
He squared Apsu's quarter, the abode of Nudimmud,
As the lord measured the dimensions of Apsu.
The great Abode, its likeness, he fixed as Esharra.
The great Abode, Esharra, which he made as the firmament.
Anu, Enlil, and Ea he made occupy their
places...(Tablet 4:125-147).

Marduk in this manner creates, from existing chaos, the now vanquished mother chaos, sky, the sea, and finally, the abode of the gods. It is interesting to note that Marduk is described as the "perfect" one among the gods. Nevertheless, despite this correlation to the Judaic God, Marduk is at best a material god. God speaks and his word creates. Marduk uses the vanquished body of mother chaos to form the structured world. In fact, as was alluded to earlier, the only point at which the power of the spoken word becomes a substantial force is after the creation of the world and the naming of Marduk. This naming, as described in Tablets 6-7, by the great Assembly of the gods, attributes the fifty great powers of Marduk to him in a symbolic manner. God, however, needs no such namings; his name is already a shibboleth. Here lies the third great difference between the two fascinating traditions; the creation of the Hebraic universe by God is through his expressed word, while the creation of the Babylonian universe is through the defeat and "recycling" of the older order. In fact, it may seem that the new gods and structured universe are nothing more than particles created and left over by the chaos dragon

Tiamat. The implication of this becomes very clear when taken in context with the other two differences.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the Enuma Elish is that, as a myth, it subtly suggests that the fundamental conflict in the creation of the universe is a paradox at best. Tiamat, slain by Marduk to create the "new world order," is never entirely destroyed. She is the progeniatrix of the gods. It was her mixing with Apsu that created the very beginnings of an order structure in the first place. The world is created out of her cleaved body: Marduk, the worlds, and indeed, every other divinity and reality are nothing more than the substance that was once Tiamat. Here lies the basic contradiction of this myth: the world is created from divinity. Yet, the process was not begun on any conscious level by that divinity. Tiamat, from whom the world is created, never wanted to create the said world. Yet, her progeny, the creations from her substance did. Thus, in a very simplistic manner, it can be argued that "God was involved, yet not involved" with the creation of the universe. This is a fact that is belied by the Babylonian viewpoint of the three differences that have been noted. The polarity of being from the primordial ocean that led to the first gods, through a seemingly spontaneous manner, which ultimately leads to a hierarchical structure that overthrows the primal polarity inevitably lends its self to the paradox which states that the creation of the universe was planned and at the same time unplanned.

Here, however, is where the Hebraic tradition significantly differs. With the Enuma Elish, the basic paradox of that mythos combined with its polytheistic structure, creates a theology based on the evolution among the gods. The existence of the gods, therefore, is not one of timelessness and infinity. While it may seem so to the average human life, the Babylonian creation myth clearly states that the gods were not responsible for their *being*. They were brought into this world not of their own free choice, hence, while the gods are powerful, they cannot be omnipotent: especially if there are more than one of them and are capable of destroying each other. With the Jewish tradition, however, no such paradox of the God's involvement and power can be readily questioned or refuted. While it is possible to pose the question, "What was there before God," the text of the Bible does not really allow the question of god's involvement to be asked. As has been established, God was the single force that existed before the creation of the universe, God did not follow an evolutionary progression (at least in Genesis), and finally, God created an ordered structure by merely releasing the spoken word. God, since he is the only deity, must be omnipotent. After all, if he is not, there are no other criteria against which to judge him. God is involved with the creation of the universe, since it is through his express power that creation begins. God, unlike the Babylonian gods, is not a power that originates from chaos, it seems. Rather, God existed in order before a structure for order was created: the Babylonian gods, on the

other hand, slowly developed into a structured order of hierarchical progression. Thus, as can be seen, while the creation stories of the Israelites and Babylonians share common motifs at the very "genesis" of the epics, the divergences of culture ultimately result in opposing ideological views on the underlying basis of creation.

The Efficacy of Shadows

Hannah Hintze

12/94

The Efficacy of Shadows

Nothing in The Republic is so clear or so emphatically stated as Socrates' great distrust of and aversion to images. In the cave analogy, prisoners spend their lives making "judgments about shadows". This means that for them, "truth is nothing other than the shadows of artificial things". (515c)[1] Such shadows or images are "silly nothings", and those who are forced to look at them are deceived, knowing nothing of reality and manipulated by any puppeteer.

Escaping bondage is worth pain and distress; the prisoner might even need to be "dragged...away from there by force along the rough, steep, upward way." (516a) According to Socrates, the man who has managed the ascent, and has escaped the world of shadows will "want very much 'to be on the soil, a serf to another man, to a portionless man', and to undergo anything whatsoever" rather than live the way he did before, in the confusion and darkness of images. On the divided line, the segment for images ("shadows, ...appearances produced in water and in all close-grained, smooth, bright things") is on the end of the visible realm which is most obscure.

Socrates' complaint about poetry (image-making) is that its concern is appearance and not reality. Poems "*look* like they are; however they surely *are* not in truth". (596e) Poetic images, Socrates says, are "three times removed from

the truth". Such dealing in image is merely "shadow-painting and puppeteering". (517c)

But Socrates' harsh condemnation of images and image-making puts us in a quandary, since Socrates *is* the puppeteer of The Republic. His entire argument through the work is based upon and aided by images: the city, the divided line, the three part soul, and the myth of Er. In fact, his severest condemnation of images occurs in the most elaborate of his images, the city in speech.

Here, his discussion of justice and the higher things begins at the very bottom, not with perhaps a few specific images to aid the argument, but with an avalanche of sights, sounds, smells, and tastes in all their dazzling variety and specificity: "plows, hoes, shoes ...markets, currency...barley, salt, olives, cheese, figs, beans, myrtle-berries...perfume, incense, cakes....painting, embroidery, gold, ivory....choral dancers, contractors, teachers, wetnurses, relish-makers, swineherds" (371-373) His city's complexity loads the image with all the ambiguity of contrasting particularities. Why would Socrates start a discussion about justice and the Good in the bowels of the cave with this most ambiguous and bewildering image? Does he, contrary to his overwhelming condemnation of images, find some use in them?

We may try to vindicate Socrates. Perhaps he is the only "good poet"; since he is "in possession of knowledge when he makes his poems", all of his images for teaching are

somehow not obscure, not flawed, and in some way perfect of their kind.

But this is precisely *not* the case with "the city in speech", which is flawed throughout by facile assumptions. Is it plausible that each man in the city desires only one job? Or likely that the guardians' manipulation can annul familial longings? But this weakness is deeper yet. Socrates' three classes are hardly a perfect reflection of the three part soul. In fact, the image is flawed from its foundation: the tidy and for some reason uncontested assumption that soul and city differ in size, but not in shape. We, and Socrates' interlocutors, will "let these things pass" for a while, but their flaws remain. According to Socrates himself, his images "admit of many doubts". (471d)

When Socrates finally moves on from his difficult city, one supposedly ordered by censorship, communism, and the "noble lie", to the clarity of a truly ordered soul, we feel relief. The weaknesses of the city in speech have repelled us, but in so doing, they have also propelled us upwards, to look to the soul, the thing itself.

Could this be the other possible vindication? Socrates is the "good poet" who is "in possession of knowledge when he makes his poems (images)", but knowing the truth, he willingly creates images which "admit of many doubts" so as to propel us up and out of our dependence on images. Are our objections to his "city in speech" the first steps

towards a clear view of reality? Does Socrates teach by image because he knows that its intrinsic limitations and confusions will cause us to lose our faith in images and demand instead the thing in itself?

Perhaps, if Socrates' city were a better image of the soul, his listeners would be content to "make judgments about shadows", and never escape the cave. It seems that Socrates' flawed images force us away from a slavish acceptance of any pleasing picture and force us towards thought, philosophy, and finally, real knowledge.

Thus, according to this argument, the more flawed the image, the more surely it will propel us up towards knowledge, but although many of the images at the *beginning* of The Republic are particularly inadequate, Socrates also uses better images later on that seem to correspond well to things themselves.

Take, for example, Socrates' second image of the soul, the three-part man, lion, and hydra. Each animal corresponds better with the real part in the soul than did the three classes of the city. Is this, then, the dangerous kind of image which looks so perfect that it will not occur to us to look beyond it? Are we deceived into thinking that this shadow, because it *looks* like the truth, *is* the truth? Seeing this, do we recognize that it is "third from what *is* and [is] easy to make for the man who doesn't know the truth"? (598e)

These better images - the divided line, the cave, the three-part beast, the myth of Er - do we recognize that they are images, and not the things in themselves? Do we recognize that they are good shadows, but shadows nonetheless, and not real knowledge?

How could we not recognize them for what they aren't? Socrates has been trumpeting in our ear from the very start. "Images are not the truth!" "Beware the poet!" "Only the dialectical way of inquiry proceeds [to the good], to the beginning itself in order to make it secure." (533b)

And if that is not enough, he is willing to build in the decay of his own image, the aristocracy. He has made the flitting qualities of shadows quite clear. Certainly, by the time he introduces his better images to us, we realize that they must be flawed shadows of the things that really *are*. Yet they are better. They do not repel and thus propel us. How then do these better images serve the student of philosophy?

Socrates' final image, the myth of Er, is an image of that level of reality which not even Socrates has attained. It is a grand and striking picture of that level; the reality which it mirrors is infinitely more grand and striking. The myth of Er does not *repel* us by its flaws, rather by its excellencies it *entices* us up into the light.

Indeed our very knowledge that the awesome heaven it describes is merely a dim shadow of the real heaven, heightens our desire for those excellencies which are

supreme. Whether by repelling us away from shadows to reality, or by drawing us through shadows to the reality which is beyond, image, even because of its flaws, moves us to philosophy, and into the realms of the Good.

[1] All quotes from the Republic, tr. Allan Bloom (New York: HarperCollins Pub., 1991)

Yu-Ming Chang
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A Comparision of the Opposing Political Ideologies Between Confucianism and Taoism.

The influence of philosophy on the scope and course of Chinese civilization has been comparable to that of religion in other cultures: it permeated the mentality of the aristocracy and defined the intellectuals and educated. Philosophy in China, like religion in the West, became the modus operandi with which human behavior was delimited. Thus, philosophy, in the Middle Kingdom, formed the basis of its ancient political thought and the foundation of its governmental structure. There is a paradox, however, in that the Taoist philosophy of non-action and the Confucian belief of action and example should both shape the course of Chinese politics and, hence, history.

The Taoist political philosophy actually stems from the theory of "non-activity," a state of "naturalness" and spontaneity that comes from the unnamable and universal *Tao* and is made tangible to the individual by the force known as *Te* (morality). According to this theory, a person should restrict his actions to what is natural and necessary. This means that one must follow his *Te* without arbitrary and contrived effort. Simplicity, to the Taoist, becomes the key principle to life, for the *Tao* is the untouched and simple "Uncarved Block." *Tao*, then, is simplicity itself, and *Te* is only slightly less simple. In essence, the man who is to follow the *Te* to reach the *Tao* must make simplicity the goal of life.

It is from this ideology, then, that Lao Tzu teaches that the ideal state is one ruled by the philosopher sage. It is the sage that can and should rule, of course, for it is only the enlightened that is truly in harmony with the simplicity and "naturalness" of the *Tao*. Interestingly enough, and contrary to most political theories, the ruler's functions in this case, is not to perform actions for the people, but rather to undo actions previously

executed. The wisdom for this ideology, according to Lao Tzu, is that the difficulties that plague human existence are directly related to the amount of actions done. In fact, too many things are done unnecessarily and life must be simplified to eliminate problems:

> ...The more prohibitions and rules, the poorer people become. The sharper people's weapons, the more they riot.
> The more skilled their techniques, the more grotesque their works. The more elaborate the laws, the more they commit crimes.
> Therefore the Sage says:
> I do nothing...And the people transform themselves...And the people govern themselves...And the people become prosperous...And the people simplify themselves. (Tao Te Ching Ch 57)

As can be seen, the first act of the sage ruler is to undo all the arbitrary social rituals previously established and follow a path of simplicity. This does not mean, however, that anarchy and lack of moral judgment are advocated by the Taoist philosophy. On the contrary, the Taoists advocate a social order founded on what is in effect, a super-moral force; a force that bases morality (*Te*) not on social principles, but rather an universal power, the natural law of the *Tao*. Correct behavior, another words, is inherent in man because humanity comes from the *Tao*. Thus, to enforce moral codes of conduct, such as restrictions and prohibitions, is to flow against the grain of the *Tao*. The legislation of unnecessary social rituals, then, only serves to push people against the moral force of the universe, thus giving them weapons with which to riot. And, as simplicity is ignored and pretentiousness becomes the hallmark of a society, ostentatious and pseudo-intellectualism replaces beauty and the natural serenity of art. Only simplicity and "non-action" allow for happiness among men.

To attain this more enlightened state, the sage ruler, then, must undo all of unnecessary rituals of civilization. Lao Tzu writes:

> Banish learning, discard knowledge: people will gain a hundred fold.

> Banish benevolence, discard righteousness: people will return to duty and compassion.
> Banish skill, discard profit: There will be no more thieves.
> These three statements are not enough. One more step is necessary:
> Look at plain silk; hold the uncarved wood.
> The self dwindles; desire fade.

Of course, Lao Tzu does not advocate ignorance of the people when he states that learning should be banished. What Lao Tzu means in actuality, is that the traditional method of rote memorization and relying merely the knowledge of the ancients does not teach wisdom. Similarly, benevolence and righteousness, which are moral qualities, cannot be legislated, as the Confucians claim, but can only come naturally. The underlying depth of these two seemingly paradoxical statements is best illustrated in an old parable written by Chuang Tzu, a Taoist philosopher:

> There was a once a king who honored the teachings of the ancients and Confucius above all else and committed all his days to reading their legacy. One day, a maker of wheels was outside in the courtyard near the king when he exclaimed to the king that the teachings of Confucius were meaningless. When the king demanded an explanation upon pain of death, the wheel maker said, "I am over sixty years old. I should be retired by now, but no matter how much I teach my son, the slow chisel for precision and the fast for quickness of the cut, he can never seem to learn how to use the two together to form a perfect wheel. That is why, after all these years I'm still making wheels. The books you read, my king, are like the lesions I teach my son. You can memorize the facts, but they do not tell you how to use them."

Thus, while one can teach facts and gain knowledge, wisdom, benevolence, and righteousness cannot be taught. Wisdom, benevolence, and righteousness are internal qualities. It is only through the simplicity of the uncarved block, and the purity of the unpainted silk that one can become part of the *Tao*. The sage ruler must deconstruct the artifice of tradition and superficial rituals. Only then, can the people begin to flow, as it were, with their nature and become wise. The wheel-maker's nature is to be a wheel

maker, while his son's is not. It would be against nature and wisdom, then to force one to learn someone else's nature. Therefore, when the sage ruler acts to undo previous actions, his function is fulfilled.

The Confucian political philosophy, unlike the Taoists, stems from an ideology based on the proper *Li*, or rituals, to be performed at the enforced times. The Confucian philosophy is an elitist conservative school of thought that believes that the *Tao* and *Te*, while natural forces that define the universe and morality, can only be attained through the proper training, education, guidance, and ritual behavior. Confucianism, then, is the philosophy of the aristocracy and all the sociological implications that such ideological structures imply. Only the man-made institution of civilization allows for the attainment of the *Te*. Complexity of organization, then, becomes the guiding principle of the Confucian. Thus, in most respects, the Confucian school is the antithesis of the Taoists'. Yet, despite upholding the traditional power in the Chinese aristocracy, Confucianism proves to be revolutionary, proposing a new definition of the aristocracy. While it maintained the distinction between the superior man and the peasant, the aristocrat is now defined by his talent and learning, not by birth. Men have the capacity to be taught the necessary steps in becoming more enlightened. This idea forms the backbone of the Confucian political theory.

Not surprisingly, the Confucian philosopher, like the Taoist, believes that the perfect state is one ruled by the sage. The fundamental difference between the two schools is that according to the Confucianist, the function of the ruler-sage is to perform as many actions for the people as possible. The ruler-sage must perform many acts

because he becomes the paragon to whom all others aspire to. The ruler-sage must teach the small man:

> The Master said, he who rules by moral force is like the polar-star, which remains in its place while all the lesser stars do homage to it(BookII 1).
>
> The Master said, once a man has contrived to put himself aright, he will find no difficulty at all in filling any government post. But if cannot put himself aright, how can he hope to succeed in putting others right(BookXIII 13).

As can be noted from the above passages, the Confucian places a high emphasis on the direct action of the ruler to properly set the people on the correct path of life. The ruler must put "others right," in the social institution that he serves. Thus, it is expected that acts of righteousness by the ruler will affect the people underneath him. This is a direct contradiction to the Taoist, who claims that the ruler, by "doing nothing," can passively "lead" the people to their natural *Te*. To the Confucian, the people must be shown and taught the *Way*.

To enlighten the general populace, then, the Confucian ruler must legislate and perform as many things for them as possible:

> The Master said, Govern the people by regulation, keep order among them by chastisements, and they will flee from you, and lose all self-respect. Govern them by moral force, keep order among them by ritual and they will keep their self-respect and come to you of their own accord. (Book II 3)

It is interesting to note here, that while the Confucian, like the Taoist, denounces regulation and punishment as a proper method of government, the Confucian will merely replace regulation by strictly enforced ritual. It can be argued that the idea behind the denouncement of regulation is merely one of semantics. To the Confucian, regulations are laws designed to force the populace into a social order without attempting to

encourage a desire for the social order. However, rituals, which are, after all, regulations of behavior, are different because they are actually designed to enlighten and raise the common man to a higher level of intellect. Thus, by forcing people to comply with a code of behavior without teaching them the "good" of that behavior only leads to resentment. The populace, in that situation, is not enlightened and cannot understand the importance for proper behavior. If the ruler functions appropriately, however, the people will become enlightened and set out on the proper path for life.

It is ironic, given the importance of philosophy in the development of ancient China's political thought and governmental structure, that two of her major influences are so diametrically opposed to one and the other. It is the paradox, that the Taoist philosophy of non-action and the Confucian belief of action and example should both shape the course of Chinese politics and, hence, history. However, perhaps this seemingly overwhelming contradiction can be explained by an old Chinese proverb:

> Once a man met an immortal who asked him what he wanted. The man quickly replied that he wanted gold. The immortal touched several worthless pieces of stone with his finger and they immediately turned to gold. The immortal then asked the man to take the gold, but he refused. "What do you want then?" asked the immortal. Replied the man, "I want your finger."

The Chinese have always been an adaptive people, taking the best out of all traditions and intermeshing them in unique ways. The Chinese people were not content with the gold that one philosophy or the other would give so they took the fingers of both.

Tao Te Ching Ch.56:
A Call for Non-action

Erin Green
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"Chih che pu yen/Those who know don't talk./Yen che pu chih/Those who talk don't know" (56).[1] These first lines of chapter 56 of Lao-Tzu's Tao Te Ching lose nothing in the translation. However, interpreting this chapter is not so easily done. Its surface appearance can seem to contrast with its actual meaning. Nonetheless, chapter 56 corresponds with the entire text in that, while it does not directly address the terms, it discusses the role of non-action in the Tao.

One can understand these opening lines by looking to another chapter which also uses the term "yen," meaning talk: "Hsi yen tzu jan/Spare words: nature's way" (23). Both of these statements leave the reader wondering why it is that one should not speak. This question gives way to the notion of non-action. It is said that "The Sage...Practices non-action/And the natural order is not disrupted" (3). The words "natural order" are essential to the understanding of this concept. What Lao-Tzu refers to as non-action would, in modern terms, be considered natural action. There is not a total absence of action, but rather, an absence of disruptive action. Lao-Tzu instructs the reader to "Become one with the dust," thus acting in accordance with what is fundamental in the world (56). This point is conveyed in a literary manner through the repetition and established rhythm of the two middle sections of the chapter. This literary rhythm is analogous with the routine and constancy one establishes in the actions of everyday life.

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[1]This, and all further references in this paper, are to Lao-Tzu, Tao Te Ching, Trans. Stephen Addiss and Stanley Lombardo (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993).

Another striking literary detail is the use of concrete images of action to express the notion of non-action. For this reason, the second section of the chapter may at first be confusing. However, identical phrases can be located elsewhere in the text: "Block the passage,/Bolt the gate:/No strain/Until your life ends" (52). This passage from chapter 52 illuminates the meaning of the same words in chapter 56. The performance of such actions becomes a calming agent that unifies one with the Tao, or rather, with Te. Lao-Tzu states that "Those highest in Te take no action/And don't need to act./Those lowest in Te take action/And do need to act" (38). With Te defined as virtue and moral power, it is evident that one must block more passages and bolt more gates--make more of an effort--to attain the Tao if one is lacking Te. If one is already living with Te, then that individual can maintain the Tao with less exertion, just as one who knows does not need to explain.

The person who is high in Te in this way then achieves "original unity" (56). Lao-Tzu identifies this as the result of those actions that will bring one closer to the Tao. Once the condition of original unity is achieved one exists without challenging any natural forces, and therefore, can exist in harmony. "Sages create harmony under heaven/Blending their hearts with the world" (49).

This original unity seems, at first, to be the subject of the third section of chapter 56. However, the "It" may refer to the Tao itself, which provides for original unity. As was indicated above, the rhythm of this section conveys the presence of nature in non-action. Yet, in this section, the non-action is not voluntary. This

series of statements illustrates the futility of human or earthly action toward the Tao. "Tao follows its own nature" (25). The Tao cannot be understood or achieved through conscious effort. One must naturally live in the way of the Tao in order to acquire it.

It is this characteristic of the Tao that makes it "revered under Heaven" (56). The term "Therefore" not only connects the final line to the previous section, but also presents a cause and effect relationship. The reverence mentioned is a result of the mystery surrounding the Tao. The same sentiment is involved in many religions--a feeling of awe due to a lack of understanding. "The ancients who followed Tao:/Dark, wondrous, profound, penetrating,/Deep beyond knowing" (15).

Chapter 56 is a subtle yet potent part of the Tao Te Ching. This chapter alone provides guidelines for achieving, or rather, living by the Tao. It stresses both the intangibility and the all encompassing quality of the Tao. This is a holistic text. Therefore, chapter 56 must be interpreted with reference to every other chapter and concept that is included in the Tao Te Ching.

Asabiyah:
Civilization's Driving Force

Kyle Kaufman
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For centuries, mankind was content with the works of scribes and chroniclers who simply transcribed events. Only much later did writers grapple with the question of why events happened, or look for an underlying order in society and its patterns; a 'philosophy' or 'science' of society. Perhaps the first of these writers, Ibn Khaldûn sought to explicate and govern political, economic, and intellectual organization, and to detail their respective histories; the result is his monumental *Kitâb al-'Ibar*. One of Khaldûn's most important concepts is that of 'group feeling' or *asabiyah*, which he devotes great sections of his *Muqaddimah* (Book One of the *Kitâb al-'Ibar*) to explaining. For Khaldûn, *asabiyah* is the driving force behind history, causing the rise and fall of dynasties, and hence of civilizations themselves. He sees it as penetrating nearly every aspect of human affairs, from economic wealth to moral worth. While Khaldûn's theory of *asabiyah* provides an intriguing and accurate description of Medieval and Ancient dynastic histories, it falters when a society moves away from despotism, or into the modern age, where the increasing complexity of all branches of society render it too simplistic to provide an accurate model.

Khaldûn introduces the concept of *asabiyah* early on, at the head of Chapter Two in his *Muqaddimah* (pg. 97), and from there on, he uses it consistently to describe the causes of civilization and of its ebb and flow. Group feeling is defined by Khaldûn as the result of a "blood relationship or something corresponding to it" (pg. 98). As such, Khaldûn sees it as the strong, natural bonds forged between people in close contact who grow to depend mutually upon each other. It is a powerful form of respect and allegiance, which embodies a group spirit, a willingness to sacrifice, and die, for the group. *Asabiyah* binds a clan, whether through blood ties, a shared history, or a close symbiotic relationship, for example that of masters and clients (ruler and servants). However the tribal form of *asabiyah* is the strongest and purest, most noble strain (pg. 102). As such, *asabiyah* is also the source of a group's power. In general, Bedouin (or nomad) qualities, i.e. a hard life and strong sense of morality breed *asabiyah*, while the luxury of the city dweller dispels or weakens it. Each separate group in a society has its own

asabiyah, and the one with the strongest comes to the fore as the leading element, eventually becoming tainted with urban prosperity and decadence. Power then focuses on a single leader, and the clan loses its group feeling, leading to the establishment of a despotic dynasty (pgs. 132-3), and, eventually, to its collapse. The progression and regression of a dynasty is thus the practical, observable face of the civilization's *asabiyah*. Within the natural life-cycle of 120 years (pg. 136) the newly established dynasty will progress through four successive stages of development, and then collapse, its *asabiyah* and leadership spent, a new tribe with strong *asabiyah* replacing the former. The four stages of the dynasty are enumerated clearly and repeatedly (pg. 105ff.); the emergent pattern of rise, consolation, decay, and collapse repeats itself again and again throughout the *Muqaddimah*. In such a way, Khaldûn explains, society progresses. Within this cycle is the recipe for the history of civilization, for all aspects of life are tied into the cyclic evolution of the dynasty; a strong civilization/dynasty (at bottom, the two terms become nearly synonymous) possesses some form of strong *asabiyah*, and a weak one does not.

Khaldûn's model of the dynastic cycle works as a descriptive theory for the societies of his own time, and of the older ancient civilizations before them. In such a world as the Maghrib or Mesopotamia, the narrow strip of civilization was surrounded by deserts and plains from which masses of nomadic barbarians swept in periodically. Only an unified, strong society could hope to ward nomads off, since only this sort of government could hope to defeat the fierce and spirited, but formally disorganized, nomads. This unification and strength is what Khaldûn describes as *asabiyah*. As the ruling dynasty ages, and became more prosperous, it grows more inward, and more decadent. The wealth and luxury of urban life, combined with the power and corruption of a despotic monarchy, erode the vital *asabiyah* of a dynasty. The fruits of destruction are therefore sown into its splendor, and the armies, once fattened on conquest, ties of kinship, and new-found worth, now are only paid mercenaries. Only money holds together the weak-spirited state; taxation becomes the dynasty's lifeline. When the financial drain of

the dynasty mounts, the strain weakens the ruler, the economy, and the military. The resulting chronic stress allows the nomads, whether Bedouins, Sleeks, Magyars, or Mongols, to sweep in and destroy. These tribes lived harshly and in close contact, and from this a fierce fighting spirit arose, as Khaldûn demonstrates with the Bedouin (pg. 94). Thus they provided the regenerative, savage element of the dynastic cycle.

This cyclic pattern of despotism was firmly established in pre-modern times, and followed, almost exactly, the rules and constraints set up by Khaldûn. Larger despotic empires, for instance T'ang China, Rome, or the Abbasids, merely prolonged the later developmental stages, due to their enormous size and regenerative powers. In Rome, for instance, a number of ethnic groups were all massed under one system, and once the number of clans around Rome were exhausted, other groups from more outlying regions assumed the throne, while the rulers could call upon the vast resources of the empire as a tax base. The depth of the military and economic reservoirs were quite deep, so the entire system was able to live on, although doomed, for hundreds of years. Finally the entire infrastructure lay exhausted, the nomads swept in, and Rome collapsed. These larger empires are examples of numerous small dynastic cycles existing within one larger cycle of the Roman Empire itself. Indeed Khaldûn comments on the multiplicity of great and small *asabiyah* within a single state as well, and also makes allowances for larger, longer dynasties due to greater size and/or religious fervor (pgs. 129,125). The obliteration of whole cultures is also explained and predicted in Khaldûn's model. When the upheaval surrounding the end of a dynasty is particularly marked or violent, and its general *asabiyah* is spent, the entire civilization can collapse, to be swept away by a new nomadic group. Khaldûn frequently cites the example of the collapse of Byzantine and Persian civilization at the hands of the initial Arab advance (pg. 115, etc.) and his use of these examples makes sense. Despotism, when combined with the relative parity of military strength between barbarians and civilized nations, lends itself to a model akin to Khaldûn's, where successive small dynasties exist one after

the other until the entire society collapses completely, to be built again.

However, this parity between city dweller and nomad (*asabiyah*) and the reliance on despotism, is no longer found today; the advent of the Renaissance has led to the rise of industrial technology, nationalism (and subsequently the nation-state), and democracy/dictatorship. In this profound shift, Khaldûn's model falters, and eventually fails, for the system has been radically overhauled, becoming increasingly complex. As a result, the good descriptive model must compensate, which Khaldûn's cannot do, being fixed. By the Sixteenth century, the pure, primitive ferocity of the nomad had mostly been tamed for two reasons. First, contact with civilization, as Khaldûn comments, is almost entirely one way (pg. 93), and by this time, almost all nomads surrounding civilized areas had settled down themselves. Only truly isolated reaches were untouched by contact with civilization; the Bedouin's were tamed. Second, the increasing technological gap between the city's garrison, armed with cannon and rifles, and the more primitive weapons of the savage, could no longer be easily overcome. Thus, although less advanced cultures could at times resist the assaults of their technological betters, this was an increasingly rare phenomena, as colonialism proved, first in the Americas and later throughout Asia and Africa. Khaldûn's cycle is crippled without the regenerative *asabiyah* of the nomad.

An even greater change is the move away from the clan unit in politics. By the seventeenth century in Europe, and later elsewhere, the dynastic clan was superseded by the nation-state, which employed a nationalism which supplanted *asabiyah* as Khaldûn recognized it. Furthermore, the clan's or city's *asabiyah* was replaced by underlying economic interests and political factions, often widely dispersed and not at all based on proximity or kinship. It can be argued that this still manifests group feeling, but in a more subtle and complicated matter than the *Muqaddimah* treats the issue; it is more akin to common interest, or national spirit. Nationalism and self-interest, though often rival, still both serve to diminish the importance of the family/clan unit. Finally, the rise of

modern political infrastructures such as dictatorships and western democracies have permanently altered the nature of the state, and hence, its evolution. Khaldûn's generalizations can no longer apply when it is not merely a dynastic succession; once despotism is abandoned, the inevitability of his four generations collapses, and alternatives become viable. In short, the advances, or at least changes, in infrastructure, and technology have rendered Khaldûn's theory of group feeling outdated and insignificant.

Ibn Khaldûn's model of group feeling provided a powerful descriptive tool for understanding the workings of a despotic society, but, as socio-political organization evolved, the limitations of his theory are borne out. The basic structure he counted on has changed, and, thus, his conclusions can no longer be as adequately supported, not to mention the element of error and inaccuracy which creeps into his overarching model. But the *Muqaddimah* is not only of interest from a historical standpoint, whether as chronicle or as description of how things once were. His sociological and political theories are fascinating precursors of more modern constructs. There is a good deal of interesting and worthwhile material within them, including the idea of group feeling. Although Khaldûn's conception of *asabiyah* is necessarily constricted, one can remove from it what is specific to pre-modern, despotic societies and see the kernel from which the idea of modern mass movements emerged from. His conception of the cyclical nature of civilizations predates Hegel's. Likewise his political, military, and economic analysis (and conclusions) resembles much modern work in political/economic theory such as *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers.* Like all geniuses, Khaldûn was able to escape the limits of his particular time and milieu, to enter into the realm of seemingly eternal ideas, which, by being crucial (and relatively fixed) elements of man's situation, offer something relevant to even the most distant, modern readers. Eventually mankind may find nothing of interest in Khaldûn's work, but such a future is far distant.

The Conversation Between Sancho Panza, Edgar, and Niccolo Machiavelli

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The Conversation Between Sancho Panza, Edgar, and Niccolo Machiavelli

In a certain room, in a certain dormitory, at a certain university in Boston, there is a desk situated in the northwest corner against a window. On that desk is a shelf which holds various books, including books written by such Renaissance authors as Machiavelli, Cervantes, and Shakespeare. Though these books seem to be perfectly normal, some would say they are "charmed" in that whilst their unsuspecting owner is shrouded in sweet slumber, the characters of the books spring to life and run amok throughout the literary universe of the bookshelf. They try on new settings and genres, visit characters in other works, have debates, or even pal around, exploring until dawn puts an end to their nocturnal festivities. It happened that one night, that famous knight errant Don Quixote decided to visit the noble Sir Gawain over at the other end of the bookshelf. He had apparently gotten word of one Green Knight who was causing Gawain great anxiety, and as he was always in search of a new adventure, Don set out to help his knightly colleague just as any good knight would do. He left in such haste, however, that his kindly squire, Sancho Panza, was left behind in that desolate land of La Mancha. Mourning his master's sudden disappearance, Sancho wandered off...

He sauntered along sadly until he found himself to be within the confines of another book. Sancho stopped, not knowing where he was as he had never ventured outside the boundaries of La Mancha without his master. He then noticed that there was a man walking directly toward him—a young man, not a Spaniard; he instead looked rather British, and aristocratic too. Once the gentleman came within earshot, Sancho began calling out to him, "Hello friend! Do you know what is the name of this place? I seem to have lost my bearings. " Sancho's calls seemed to wake the man out of a trance because he was looking very pensive and somewhat disillusioned.

The stranger replied, "Hello. I am Edgar, recent Earl of Gloucester, and to

answer your question, it appears to me that this setting must be Florence, around the year 1515. May I ask wherefore you have come to this place if not deliberately?"

Sancho answered, "To be honest, I have gotten lost and am completely unfamilial with these parts..."

"You mean 'unfamiliar'," Edgar put in.

Sancho responded with a smirk, "You must be another of those vocabulary correctors. I'll tell you straight out, sir, that I am merely an honest Christian, and that I profess no great learning. What I would like to learn, though, is how you yourself ended up here in Italy."

"It is a long and tragic story, I'm afraid," replied Edgar. "All the leadership of my father's generation has been violently purged in my territory of England, and plenty of my beloved contemporaries have likewise come to a bloody end, and all of this just yesterday. I am the only heir to my father's kingdom and have come here to seek counsel on how I may best serve in my duties as a governor."

"Whom are you going to consult?" queried Sancho. "If you don't mind, I may accompany you as I happen to be interested in questions of government myself. My master, the knight errant Don Quixote, is going to secure an isle for me to govern very soon through his glorious conquests."

Edgar answered, "The man I seek is one Niccolo Machiavelli. I have heard much of his shrewdness in political matters, and hope that he will undertake to teach me how to govern my territory most efficiently and practically. You are by all means welcome to come along, if you think his advice may be of eventual help to you in that position which you hope to attain."

Sancho thanked Edgar most humbly, and the two went on their way in search of Niccolo Machiavelli. The people of Florence directed the travelers to a large, black, and imposing building, with a sign on its huge iron door that read:

NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI

POLITICAL CONSULTANT

Edgar said to Sancho, "I am quite sure that this must be the place." Sancho was very frightened, however, and declared that he did not like the building at all, and would prefer not to go inside. Edgar managed to persuade Sancho that there was nothing to be afraid of, and the two ventured beyond that intimidating iron door. They found inside a man seated behind a modest desk, surrounded by bookshelves which displayed virtually every contemporary and ancient history that one could imagine. Sancho and Edgar introduced themselves, and the man behind the desk spoke:

"Greetings. I am Niccolo Machiavelli. You may be seated. Now, I assume that you have come to me for advice in political matters. With what precisely may I assist you?"

To this Edgar replied, "I have just yesterday inherited the kingdom of Gloucester as a result of my father's death. King Lear, ruler of all of Britain, and his entire family also died yesterday; who knows what my role will be in restoring order in that vast territory which Lear once ruled so capably? I have wondered long and hard about the strife, the suffering, and the deaths that I have been forced to acknowledge, as my ability to deny truth has been smashed to smithereens. Although the causes at the root of this tragedy run deep and are many, I think that I have identified the catalyst which precipitated the violence and accelerated the fatal end: thirst for power on the part of Lear's daughters, Goneril and Regan, and more acutely, on the part of my brother Edmund. It is indeed unfortunate that all three of these people have died, and worse that they took many well-meaning others along; I only wish that the political intrigue and power struggle might end here also, so that there will be no more violence and no more death but rather peace and stability throughout Britain. I humbly ask you to please apply your analytical and pragmatic

mind to my situation and advise me as to what I must do in order to draw peace out of so much chaos."

Machiavelli responded, "It seems to me, Edgar, that you have already made the first step toward fashioning yourself into an effective ruler. You mentioned that you had been 'forced to acknowledge' the reality of your situation, no doubt because of the horror it must have inspired in you. You also said that your 'ability to deny truth has been smashed to smithereens'. This is wonderful because it is of the utmost necessity for a ruler to be able to examine the cold and harsh reality of situations, so that he might gain the upper hand in them and control the action to his own advantage. If a ruler lives in denial of things amiss instead of taking the necessary actions to remedy the problems, he will most certainly be deposed by one who is more properly focused. Your primary responsibility to yourself as a ruler is to preserve your own power, and the only way to succeed in this matter is by dealing with the real existence of enemies and intrigues and dispelling the blind and naive imagination of ideal circumstances."

Sancho, who had been trying his best to understand what passed between Edgar and Machiavelli, finally spotted an opportunity to add to the conversation:

"Why, political sir, should a man dispel the imagination of ideals? Imagination is a healthy exercise, and I've had barrels of fun imagining with my master, Don Quixote, that we are conquering evil in the name of chivalry. And I see no problem with a governor having an imagination; as soon as my master reaps his reward, he is going to make me governor of an isle. Besides which, you know what they say: 'Those who lack imagination are doomed to experience.'"

Machiavelli was slightly amused by Sancho's argument, and replied smugly, "I am aware of all of your exploits because of my nightly research, as I have visited the book of Don Quixote before. I know that your entire existence since you have taken up with that lunatic 'knight' has been based in your imagination, and I repeat

that imagination hath no place in the science of government. On the contrary, Sancho, successful government must be based on experience. The realities of contemporary and ancient history light the governor's path to an effective rule over a stable society. And what's more, you cannot be but 'in the dark', my friend, when it comes to historical matters, as you are quite illiterate."

Sancho, his face red with anger, retorted, "Are you trying to say that because I can't read history that I am unfit to govern? I'll have you know that I've no lack of capacity for that job!"

Machiavelli replied, "While I am sure that in your imagination you will be a masterful governor, I am sorry to say that in reality you are merely a member of 'the people' and not of the more talented class who are suited to rule. You would do best to keep yourself and your imagination out of government, and to attend instead to matters more on your own scale. I suggest your responsibility to your family as a good example."

Sancho, seeing that he was being badly defeated in this argument, appealed to Edgar hoping to find support:

"Do you really agree with what he says, Edgar? It seems to me that you and I will do just fine as governors without all of his high-sounding advice. You'll bounce back from the bad things. It seems to me that you've just met with a misfortune. After all, 'Fortune, as they call her, is a drunken and capricious woman and, worse still, blind; and so she doesn't see what she's doing, and doesn't know whom she is casting down or raising up' (Cervantes 896). Don't fret, Edgar; if we wait a while I'll eventually get my isle and things will also start going your way."

To this Edgar replied, "Yes, Sancho, at first I did consider myself to be merely a victim of poor fortune. Now that I have thought about it, however, there must be something I can do to prevent future disasters."

Machiavelli was by now getting irritated by Sancho's interruptions of his

tutelage, and by his expression of simple-minded and contradictory viewpoints. He said to Edgar, "Yes, there are in fact many things you can do to prevent future disasters, which I will enumerate to you. The submissive approach to fortune advocated by your friend could not possibly run more contrary to your purposes as a governor." It was becoming increasingly clear to Machiavelli that Sancho was hampering his effectiveness in advising Edgar, and that things would go far more smoothly if Sancho was not around. Perceiving that Sancho was a gullible sort of man, Machiavelli interrupted his own discourse with the following: "Hark! What was that I just heard? A horseman approaching? The clank of armor? A knock at my iron door? Sancho, it must be that your master has come to fetch you, and has desperately missed your company in his adventures. Why don't you go and join him outside?"

Sancho fell for Machiavelli's trick quite easily, springing up out of his chair and dashing outside only to find himself standing alone, locked outside that huge iron door. He thought to himself that he was not having a very good time anyway, and decided to seek out his master and to find out whether he had secured an isle for his governorship. Meanwhile, Machiavelli was continuing his discourse on fortune...

"As a governor, Edgar, you must use *virtu* to oppose fortune. Fortune is particularly dangerous in that it threatens a ruler's ability to fulfill his responsibilities, both to himself by maintaining his power, and to society by providing political stability. You must not be submissive when it comes to fortune, as I recently wrote in my book, The Prince, 'it is better to be impetuous than cautious because fortune is a woman; and it is necessary, if one wants to hold her down, to beat her and strike her down. And one sees that she lets herself be won more by the impetuous than by those who proceed coldly'" (101).

Edgar replied, "I'm afraid that I misunderstand your use of the word 'virtue'.

Could you possibly be saying that a ruler should use moral virtue, i.e. good and right actions to oppose fortune? I don't see how that could work, as I have been unfailingly good and morally virtuous and I was still nearly torn asunder by my brother's evil designs. Another point that I don't understand is that you say it is a ruler's responsibility to society to ensure political stability. What about more human concerns? I experienced myself what a horrible life is led by beggars and other social outcasts. Isn't it also a ruler's responsibility to see to it that the needs of his subjects are attended to?"

Machiavelli answered, "I will first respond to your initial question about the meaning of the word *virtu*. The *virtu* that I am speaking about is meant to refer not to goodness or morality, but rather to a certain manliness or assertion of will. You need to acquire more of this kind of *virtu* at the expense of your goodness, Edgar, in order to be an effective ruler. The proof is in the fact that you were 'nearly torn asunder' by your brother, as you put it, because he was impetuous in beating fortune into accordance with his own desires, and displayed an abundance of *virtu* which he eventually spread too thin. Edmund exploited your goodness, which is why I am warning you that 'a man who wants to make a profession of good in all regards must come to ruin among so many who are not good. Hence it is necessary to a prince, if he wants to maintain himself, to learn to be able not to be good, and to use this and not use it according to necessity' (Machiavelli 61). This is the most important key to your success: acquire *virtu* at the expense of goodness and use it to conquer fortune."

Edgar put in, "Yes, I understand the need for more heavy-handed methods, but what about the question of my responsibility to society?"

"To answer your second question," Machiavelli replied, "it is necessary to remind you that government lies in the realm of the real and not the ideal. In the end, people are going to judge your talent as a ruler according to your ability to

ensure political stability. Providing that stability is indeed your greatest responsibility to society, as it means ensuring the greatest good for the greatest number of people. However, although a few incidental beggars do not amount to much in the greater scheme of things, they may be of use to you as a ruler. Be generous to a few of them by giving them clothing and shelter, making sure that the general public bears witness to your kindness, and your popularity among your subjects will increase tenfold. The people will profess their allegiance to you more loudly than ever because they will think you are working hard to remedy social ills, and this affirmation of your power can be had with so little effort on your part."

Edgar answered, "I suppose you are right about my responsibility being to provide the greatest good for the greatest number through political stability. After all, the magnitude of the ruler's concerns does not allow for a focus on individual problems as much as would be ideal. Because I see that my need for a new approach to life is so urgent now that I have become a ruler, I am going to try government based on your principles. I will do my best to come to terms with the truth in every situation, to cultivate *virtu* , and to oppose fortune as forcefully as possible. Might I obtain a copy of The Prince that I can use as a handbook?"

Machiavelli replied, "My book has yet to be published, but I will give you a manuscript because I consider you worthy of my ideas and trust that you will understand them. I wish you the best of success in your new position, Edgar, and hope that you will keep me informed as to your progress."

With that, Edgar thanked Machiavelli for his advice and took his leave, manuscript in hand. He was headed back to his rightful place as a character in King Lear, hoping that he would have success as a ruler and that some author might write a book to tell of it. Perhaps that very book will someday appear on the bookshelf which is on the desk, in the northwest corner of the room, against the window that lets in the first rays of the rising sun.

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Montaigne and Descartes:
Two Different Conceptions of Experience

Leslie L. McGann
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Montaigne and Descartes: Two Different Conceptions of Experience

"Every page of Descartes' writing is soaked in Montaigne."
—Christopher Martin

When one reads The Essays of Montaigne and Descartes' Discourse on Method and Meditations, there emerge many similarities between the two works. Both written by French authors, the works share an autobiographical approach, an easy conversational style, and are saturated with their authors' advocacy of introspection. It is no wonder, then, that parallels have been drawn between Descartes' Discourse and Montaigne's Essays. The purpose of this paper, however, is to draw attention rather to the profound differences between these authors in their conceptions of experience. Furthermore, during the process of examining their conflicting ideas about experience, this paper will show that the similarities between Montaigne and Descartes are only a very thin screen which, when lifted, reveals a strikingly deep disparity in their philosophical views.

Montaigne's and Descartes' different views of experience result from a disagreement at the very core of their respective philosophies regarding the nature of Truth. Montaigne, known as the founder of scepticism, believes that everything can be doubted, and therefore does not believe in objective Truth. He believes only in our perception of truth, which is different and perpetually changing in each of us. He writes in his essay "Of Repentance",

> This is a record of various and changeable occurrences, and of irresolute and, when it so befalls, contradictory ideas, whether I am different myself, or whether I take hold of my subjects in different circumstances and aspects. So, all in all, I may indeed contradict myself now and then; but truth, as Demades said, I do not contradict (75).

In his writing, Montaigne recognizes his adherence to his perception of the truth as the only consistent factor. Montaigne seems to suggest that since we can never know anything for certain, it is the best that we can do to cultivate our perception of

truth through experience. In this way, experience and the cultivation of one's private perspective are so closely linked that Montaigne comes to view experience not as a means to a distinct end, but as the highest possible undertaking in and of itself.

Descartes, however, views experience as a means to an end: the discovery of objective Truth, or certainty. Contrary to Montaigne, Descartes is not willing to accept the cultivation of our perception of truth as the highest possible endeavor. Descartes is on a quest for Truth in the objective sense, which he believes to come from God, and therefore to be perfect and unchanging. Since Descartes believes in the existence of objective Truth and that it is a fixed end which can be attained, he is able to make a distinction between the types of experience that lead toward it, and the types that lead away from it. Valuable according to Descartes, then, is the experience which leads one toward certainty: intellectual contemplation harnessed by a strict method. On the other hand, Descartes is of the opinion that sensual experience has no positive value because it is based on unreliable sense perceptions which prevent us from arriving at Truth. Nor does Descartes assign any positive value to past experiences which led to convictions that may have been outdated or refuted. These serve only to cloud the intellect and to obscure Truth, which is why the first step in Descartes' method involves expunging all previous and doubtful knowledge from the mind.

It becomes obvious through such a comparison that Montaigne is non-discriminatory in assigning value to experience, while Descartes is very discriminatory. Montaigne writes in "Of Experience",

> There is no desire more natural than the desire for knowledge. We try all the ways that can lead us to it. When reason fails us, we use experience—which is a less dignified means. But truth is so great a thing that we must not disdain any medium that will lead us to it (106).

In this statement, Montaigne seems to equate "reason" with philosophical

contemplation, and by "experience" seems to mean active participation in life outside oneself. Montaigne recognizes a distinction between intellectual experience and physical experience, but views them as complements to each other in one's pursuit of truth. This suggests that all types of experience can be helpful in developing one's perspective regarding truth, and seems to call into question the need to follow a method at all, let alone one as strict as Descartes'.

Descartes writes in his Discourse on Method ,

> I tried to clear my mind of all the errors that had previously accumulated. In this I did not wish to imitate the sceptics, who doubted only for the sake of doubting and intended to remain always irresolute; on the contrary, my whole purpose was to achieve greater certainty and to reject all the loose earth and sand in favor of rock and clay (22).

Montaigne would, no doubt, think that Descartes was making a grave error by dismissing old ideas acquired through past experience as useless. Montaigne does not believe that new ideas should wholly replace old ideas, although they may challenge them. Montaigne may have argued that Descartes' old ideas were indeed valuable because they must have been part of the process which led him to his new ideas—the all-important process of experience. This theory of Montaigne's is evident in the fact that when he rewrote his Essays he did not revoke his old ideas which had changed, but amended them instead. Moreover, Montaigne would argue in response to the above quote that people have no choice but to "doubt only for the sake of doubting", remaining always irresolute, because he does not acknowledge the existence of the alternative of certainty. According to Montaigne, there is nothing to gain by renouncing old ideas and negating the value of the experience which produced them; new ideas may be just as uncertain as the old. In "Of Experience", Montaigne writes, "He who remembers having been mistaken so many, many times in his own judgment, is he not a fool if he does not distrust it

forever after?" (115). Just as Descartes disowned his past ideas and experiences, perhaps someday he would come to deny his fundamental conviction, "I think, therefore I am".

Another major difference in the philosophies of Descartes and Montaigne which leads then to different conceptions of experience is the conflict between monism and dualism. Montaigne is a monist in that he does not encourage a split between the mind (or soul) and the body. He writes in "Of Experience" that experience should be "intellectually sensual, sensually intellectual". Descartes, on the other hand, believes that the mind should become independent of the senses. Descartes writes in his Meditations that ideal for comprehending his philosophy is "a mind entirely free of all prejudice and one that can readily free itself from its attachment to the senses" (64). And this next quote leaves no doubt that Descartes is a dualist:

> ...I concluded that I was a thing or substance whose whole essence or nature was only to think, and which, to exist, has no need of space nor of any material thing or body. Thus it follows that this ego, this mind, this soul, by which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from the body...(25).

Montaigne the Monist and Descartes the Dualist (amusing how that works out) differ completely in their assessments of the value of sensual experience. Montaigne believes that sensual and intellectual experience are both valuable and should, ideally, remain combined. He writes,

> He who wants to detach his soul, let him do it boldly, if he can, when his body is ill, to free it from the contagion; at other times, on the contrary, let the soul assist and favor the body and not refuse to take part in the natural pleasures and enjoy them conjugally...(129).

Montaigne's disdain for those who would try to separate the mind from the body is blatantly expressed when he writes, "I hate to have people order us to keep our minds in the clouds while our bodies are at table" (125). Descartes, however, sees no

importance in the body nor the table because they are fraught with the doubt that is characteristic of the sensual, and lack the certainty that is presumably resident in the intellect. He writes, "And we also find so many other things in the mind itself which can contribute to the clarification of its nature, that those which depend on the body,... hardly deserve to be taken into account" (90).

When one examines the disparity between Descartes' and Montaigne's views of the ultimate purpose in life, probable justification for their diverging opinions about sensual experience emerges. Descartes came to the conclusion in his Discourse that the best occupation in this life involved "employing my life in improving my mind and increasing as I could my knowledge of the truth by following the method that I had outlined for myself" (21). Sensual experience has no place in Descartes' goal or his method because he considers it to be a hindrance to his intellect's quest for certainty. Descartes writes, "...there is nothing in the understanding which was not first in the senses, a location where it is clearly evident that the ideas of God and the soul have never been" (28).

Montaigne differs severely with Descartes in this matter as he writes, "We wrong that great and powerful Giver by refusing his gift, nullifying it, and disfiguring it. Himself all good, he has made all things good" (133). Montaigne views the senses as part of God's gift to us, not to be considered detrimental to life's purpose, but rather necessary to it. Montaigne believes that "our great and glorious masterpiece is to live appropriately" (126), which involves both the body and the intellect participating in experience, rather than working against each other. Montaigne uses Socrates, a most contemplative man, as an example of this view:

> Aristippus defended the body alone, as if we had no soul; Zeno embraced only the soul, as if we had no body. Both were wrong. Pythagoras, they say, followed a philosophy that was all contemplation, Socrates one that was all conduct and action; Plato found the balance between the two. But they say so to make a good story, and the true balance is found in Socrates (125).

Once again, it seems that the fundamental cause of the difference between Montaigne's and Descartes' views of experience is their disagreement about the existence of objective Truth. Descartes' belief in Truth provides him with something in the name of which he deems it worthwhile to renounce both past experience and sensual experience. Descartes is of the opinion that the pure and truthful aspects of life cannot be discerned until the doubtful factors have been eliminated. He writes, "There are differences in degree only in the accidental qualities and not in the essential qualities or natures of the same species" (4). Descartes' thirst for this common thread taints his philosophy with an anxiety that is not at all present in Montaigne's Essays.

Montaigne writes, "We are all wind. And the wind, more wisely than we, loves to make a noise and move about, and is content with its own functions, without wishing for stability and solidity, qualities that do not belong to it" (124). Montaigne suggests that the certainty which Descartes desires so intensely to find is absolutely not a quality of human life. Montaigne's categorical doubt ironically liberates him so that he can appreciate all types of experience, and leaves him no reason to renounce the past or the sensual. While Montaigne delights in the diversity of experience, Descartes imprisons himself within his narrow intellectual search for certainty. Which philosophy is better is indeed a subjective question which would meet with various answers, depending on whether or not one subscribes to the belief in objective Truth, and whether one is a monist or a dualist. However, one thing that Montaigne's view offers which Descartes' does not is peace of mind. The breakdown of experience advocated by Descartes seems arduous and unnatural in comparison to Montaigne's plea in favor of building up experience, which occurs quite naturally during the course of a lifetime. Montaigne ends his essay, "Of Experience", by asserting that "it is an absolute perfection and virtually divine to know how to enjoy our being rightfully" (136). The peace of mind that is

characteristic of Montaigne's view of experience makes it much more attractive, more natural, and perhaps more correct than the view presented by Descartes.

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Different Media Presenting a Genre: Tragedy in King Lear

by
Andy Kwong
12/05/94

The differences in the medium of presentation for King Lear resound in how the tragedy appears. The three main types of media are verbal, audio, and visual. The varying methods of the portrayal of tragedy lie in the accumulation of emotion. A visual medium for the most part lacks the build-up, instead emitting one constant effect. An audio medium sways the emotion and can produce successive changes, slowly or quickly, but lacks the concrete vitality of words. However, a verbal medium exults in the symbolism of words, hinting at various deeper things and creating many complex effects.

King Lear in a verbal medium allows the shocking surprise at the death of Cordelia. In the original story Cordelia does not die, but in the current play she does after the father-daughter reunion and as the rescuers are approaching. A painting of the scene could not have anywhere near the same effect, unless a story existed as background. Then one gets back to a verbal medium with a visual aid. A piece of music can start off discordantly like Lear disowning Cordelia and exiling faithful Kent. A fugue can represent conversations decently. Next it can get gloomier and gloomier, gradually sinking in tone until the madness on a stormy heath. Finally, the excitement heightens until the murder with a jarring change in tone. The problem with this lies in the formlessness and abstract experience of the music. Again, a story as the background is necessary. Otherwise, an audience will apply the music to a personal experience, not necessarily tragedy.

A shift in the medium to music alters the nature of the work as true tragedy. The American Heritage Dictionary defines tragedy as: "a classical verse drama in which a noble protagonist is brought to ruin essentially as a consequence of an extreme quality that is both his greatness and his downfall." Music cannot show an extreme quality well. As a nebulous medium, it achieves its peak as representation of the highest laws of the universe. A tragedy smashes the lofty idealism and reminds painfully of human frailty.

Visual media, like painting and sculpting, do not show tragedy as adequately as words. A sculpture cannot portray the ruin and destruction of a man without the sculpture itself being ruined. Then it becomes a broken stone, not a broken man. A painting can show the downfall of a man, but not the greatness of the fall. The poem "Ozymandias" talks of the foolishness of human pride pitting itself against the march of time. A painting of a fallen statue does not connote the same idea. The pride is missing. A man's station is apparent, but not his character. A painting of Lear holding Cordelia will not show the false hope presented in the denouement of the play. The whole previous chain of events cannot connect to this event, this moment trapped on paper. A sculpture of a mad Lear wandering, or simply one of his expression, lacks the crucial circumstances of the ferocious storm and his rambling speech. His affliction could be confused with intense concentration, like that of the blind, tormented Homer in the Museum of Fine Arts. The reasons for Lear's wandering are unimportant. A painting and a sculpture depict something frozen in time, one with eternity. The tragedy would come from the eternal suffering inherent in that one moment,

not the fall from some lofty height. A visual medium displays the tragedy in one moment with no causes, a representation of pathos; whereas a verbal medium shows the causes and makes a statement about humanity. Sentimentality contrasts with definitive statement.

George Orwell once said the sum of human history is a booted foot stamping upon a picture of a human face forever. A visual representation of this has either the foot on or off, both connoting different feelings. However, the words describe a mental picture of the boot rising and falling continually. The possibility of it stopping gives the tableau infinitely more horror. The verbal adds additional dimension to the range of the emotional. Likewise a painting or sculpture cannot give us the same idea of Cordelia's kindness and love. They omit as well the loyalty Lear can inspire in a retainer like Kent. The characters of the players are absent from visual media. A proud bearing short of haughtiness can be achievable in a painting or sculpture, but the expression cannot change. The variability in life and Nature are not present. Visual media inherently possess more limits than verbal media.

Moreover, individual variation is a factor. Every visual rendering of the ideal triangle will not be the same as anyone else's. The ideal triangle resides only in the brain. The visual renderings limit instead of expand imagination and intellection. They can inspire thoughts on other things, but these thoughts will not be about themselves. Words are the *logoi spermatikoi*, the seeds of power. From these, idea springs upon idea. The words reach out and connect the different meanings and aspects within a work and synthesize it into a whole vision, beautiful whole and infinite. Like the Celestial

Rose in Dante's Paradiso, a verbal work has infinitely many layers and is perfect. A visual rendering is static, with words explaining the meaning.

The way to infuse visual art with more meaning and expand it is to make it sequential. Thus, one creates additional dimensions like those of verbal works. Pictures linked in a recognizable order can illustrate a situation much better than one picture. A graphic novel of King Lear can show the underlying events and causes of the tragedy. Words can infuse additional meaning. The ultimate synthesis of this form is the modern motion picture. The pictures merge into one seamless whole, like watching life in all its many aspects go by. The operation involves the perfect camera lens, the human eye, in at least two layers. A camera records the action to be observed and recorded by another camera ad infinitum until the one perfect camera finally sees what's happening, so the work may have meaning. Layer upon layer to be comprehended by mind upon mind. Skull within skull within skull.

The removal of excess coverings, causing imperfect vision is a main theme of King Lear. The play abounds with references to sight. One major character, Gloucester, is blinded. Only after he loses his physical sight, his station, and what he believes to be his old life in a suicide attempt does he perceive the truth. Gloucester's legitimate son, Edgar, is his one virtuous offspring. Only in his mind does Gloucester fall from the lofty height of the white cliffs of Dover Afterwards he can again be the man he once was, before embarking upon the cruelty of hunting down Edgar. No painting, sculpture or music could convey so compellingly and accurately the sinning, fall

from grace and redemption. When Lear strips off his robes, he casts aside visual representation of station and character and only the man remains. Freed of all these earthly preconceptions and prejudices, with the storm raging all around, he communes with the heavens in this manifestation of universal power. Like the layers of an onion, Lear peels off all to reach the heart, the truth. He can now treat all men as men and receives Poor Tom. After Lear releases the viewable presentations of character like dress and obeisance, he can truly perceive Cordelia as she is and loves her without condition. The apparent visual aspects of things always limit.

Of the three main media, verbal, visual, and audio, verbal outpaces them all. It can cover the most ground. The other media rely on it. It has the most layers of meaning and can accomplish the most. The audio medium is second. Its range almost equals that of verbal. However, in tending to the abstract communicates to us less directly. The visual medium stops the intellection process, encouraging imagination by presenting it strongly. With the emission of the constant effect, visual media require many works to present many things. The verbal medium may need only one with layer upon layer of meaning inspiring itself to greater heights while relating to us in a definite manner.

Dialogue Concerning Reason, Passion, and Faith

Timothy M. Freiermuth

The year is 1562. Ominous clouds lurch over the French Alps in the west and soon swirl, settling in heavy gravity around the severe walls of Geneva. John Calvin, author of the widely read Institutes of the Christian Religion *and permanent chief magistrate of the much revered Geneva theocracy, looms over his podium thundering out a lecture to a sparse class at the recently created Geneva Academy. Among the handful of students huddled in the musty classroom sits the Philosopher and the Romantic. The Philosopher perches as close to the front as possible in order to absorb every word hurled down from Prof. Calvin and only pauses from time to time to wrinkle his brow, scratch his chin, and nod pensively. The Romantic, on the other hand, caring not where he sits, moves to the middle of the room as if to shield himself with his fellow students. There he rests, now gazing out the window in reverie, now frenzied over some half-understood point of Calvin's lecture. With a final hammering of his fist on the well-battered podium, Calvin concludes his lesson on the nature of original sin and begins to gather his belongings. The students plod out of the room, hunchbacked from the weight of the dismal sermon. As Calvin turns to leave, he is ensnared by the Philosopher, who, always eager to interrogate his professors, has caught hold of Calvin's heavy black coat. The Philosopher swarms about Calvin as they move in a sickly waltz toward the doorway. The Romantic, after realizing with sad astonishment that he is not a care-free shepherd of the Elysian fields and that the desks arranged around him are not nuzzling sheep, wanders toward the door only to find it obstructed by the Philosopher and Calvin. In a vain attempt to maneuver through them, the Romantic is only politely dragged into the conversation.*

Philosopher: Now, if I have understood you correctly, Prof. Calvin, you were explaining the nature of original sin and the concept of predestination, and trying to show how they are not only compatible, but necessarily coexist.

Calvin: Yes, you are quite right. Due to Adam's abominable transgression, all of mankind is guilty and eternally damned. Moreover, I repeat that there is no such things as Chance or Fortune as men are wont to say. They lack the courage to accept the fact that all is a result of God's just providence.

Romantic: Wait! How can this be? How is it that man, through the seed of Adam, is corrupted? The evidence of man's greatness and nobility stretches back to the shores of Troy and the wanderings of Odysseus. What corruption do the eyes perceive in Michelangelo's glorious David who stands heroic and triumphant after the slaying of the great Philistine? What disdain is nursed for Plato as he emancipates us from our worldly chains and guides us with clear, sweet dialectic to the summit of eternal Beauty? What a marvel is the printing machine of Gutenburg that allows men of every station and every country to cultivate his reason! Such are but a few of the wonders of man. Thus, why do you speak so low of Adam's race?

Calvin: Man, as you have proven, is swollen with arrogance and ambition and blinded by self-love. Consequently, he is unable to see himself and, as it were, to descend into himself, and confess his misery (17)[1].

Philosopher: I concur, for even Aristotle notes that proper self-love, if not checked by our higher faculty of reason, can degenerate to inflated, deceitful pride. Yet, what is this misery that man must confess?

Calvin: Man's eternal misery is the fall of Adam.

Romantic: How could man fall? and from what station does he fall?

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[1]For the sake of the dialogue, I have taken the liberty of using quotations from Calvin's *Institutes* without quotation marks. The amount of bracketing and reconstruction required to fit the quotes smoothly into the dialogue would have been cumbersome. Therefore, I have tried to alter the quotes enough to fit the context and yet without changing their meaning. I have included the pages numbers for verification.

Calvin: Adam, parent of us all, was created in the image and likeness of God. That is, he was endowed with wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and was clinging by these gifts of grace to God that he could have lived forever in Him (15).

Philosopher: In other words, man was perfect before the fall?

Calvin: Indeed, but when Adam slipped into sin, this image and likeness if God was canceled and effaced, that is, he lost all the benefits of divine grace...As a consequence, nothing was left [man] save ignorance, iniquity, impotence, death, and judgment (15-6).

Romantic: What utter nonsense! How can you describe man us such a loathsome wretch when I see before my eyes great works of art, well managed and just governments, noble and courageous men, and a general submission to the law of reason?

Calvin: First, the great works of man are only possible because of the grace of God. It is a mark of man's arrogance to assume that he could sculpt, paint, write, govern, reason, etc., without the grace of God. Second, one must be wary of appearances. If we outwardly display everything good, still the mind stays in its inner state of filth and crooked perversity (16). Third, as you have gleaned history to find the goodness of man, so may I point to history and one will see an equal if not greater account of man's hatred, cunning, and corruption. Certainly, you have not forgotten the merciless rape of the Sabines that founded Rome, the city to which you refer endlessly when discussing the greatness of man. Know that behind man's fleeting glory is the infinite power and grace of God. Beware of how people appear, for evil wears the Angels' masks.

Philosopher: As for me, I cannot be so easily persuaded. Plato affirms man's corrupt nature in the *Republic* when he tells the myth of Gyges' ring. If man had a ring that would render him invisible, he would use it to commit crimes of self-satisfaction. Yet, on the other hand, I am drawn to Aristotle, who maintains that man by nature is neither good nor evil but is made so through his education and the choices he makes throughout his life. If I am to escape neutrality by choosing one side or the other, I am obligated, as a philosopher, to choose according to sound reason. I have read both Plato and Aristotle; I

find both of their accounts firmly grounded in reason and experience, explained in sound arguments. How am I to choose if not by some subjective predilection?

Calvin: Is the answer not clear to you, my most astute student? Surely it does not escape your reason! Among the philosophers who have tried with reason and learning to penetrate into heaven, how shameful is the diversity! As each was furnished with higher wit, graced with art and knowledge, so did he seem to camouflage his utterances; yet if you look more closely upon all these, you will find them all to be fleeting unrealities (65). Truth is pure, distinct, and indivisible, or universal and eternal in the language of your beloved Socrates. Your reverence for human reason prohibits you from ever making a choice; the diversity paralyzes you. What use is your logic now?

Romantic: Philosopher, what is wrong with opinion and subjectivity? I care little for logic and reason and instead have mapped my course by the compass of my heart. I have a passionate belief in the nobility of man. This conviction comes not from dry ancient texts and empty syllogisms, but from experience. I have found meaning in the hearty ballads sung in the taverns, in the smoldering fire ignited by the glance of a young woman, in the heroic tales of Herakles and the tragedy of Agamemnon, and in the subtle brush of the Florentine masters. Such is the navigator who has guided me through rough seas to land in calm harbors of new countries. Am I worse off for it?

Calvin: You are! In criticizing the Philosopher's trust in human reason, you have only substituted his reason with your sickly passions and meaningless experience. Are you so bold to think that you exist of your own will? Even the powerful sun, that circles in an unalterable pattern giving light and nourishment to the earth below, has been placed there by the grace and foresight of God. You too exist only through the will of God; or, do you, so frail and fleeting a thing compared to the sun, believe yourself exempt from God's plan? God, whenever he wills to make way for his providence, bends and turns mens' wills even in external things; nor are they so free to choose that God's will does not rule over their freedom. Whether you will or not, daily experience (which you value so highly)

compels you to realize that your mind is guided by God's prompting rather than by your own freedom to choose (315). As for your navigator, human passion incarnate, this perversity never ceases in us, but continually bears new fruits...just as a burning furnace gives forth flame and sparks, or water ceaselessly bubbles up from a spring (251). To your madness there is no end, for your navigator has measured his arc on faint stars instead of on the immutable, eternal light of God. You are borne off on a current much stronger than your mast and keel can repel.

Philosopher: Prof. Calvin, is not faith a passion? You have chastised both the Romantic and myself for putting stock in passion and reason respectively and yet your faith itself is founded upon extensive reasoning and felt with equal passion. The danger of your conviction is that it cannot be argued. The discourse we have engaged in will always be fruitless for you. As soon as the arrows begin to fly, you cower behind a shield of blind faith. To cease questioning is to cease being human.

Romantic: In constantly striving to cross the abyss to reach God, you loose yourself and all contact with your fellow man. Your life of faith only leads to a hopeless, miserable, passionless existence. For me, that is equal to death.

The dialogue ended abruptly as Calvin, realizing his interlocutors refused to understand, stormed out of the classroom seething with internal rage. Each one left more convinced of his own position and less tolerant of the other two. In this way, Calvin, the Philosopher, and the Romantic shared in an ancient battle begun since the dawn of man.

Two Doctors' Perspectives

Jason A. Florack

March 20, 1995

Dr. Victor Frankenstein sat at a small table at the Parisian café, ignoring a cold and untouched *café au lait*, and painfully re-reading the last few pages of a book. He had selected the book randomly, limiting himself only to the books he had always wanted, but never had the time, to read. He had thought that this work, whose title sounded like an exciting adventure story, would help him forget the terrifying recent events of his life. A few days earlier, he had created something. . . horrible. The fact that the creature had disappeared from his laboratory only slightly eased his mind. And so, like always, Victor had sought solace--or at least, diversion--in the pages of books. Unfortunately, the book he had chosen only augmented his woes.

"'. . . but when I behold a lump of deformity and diseases both in body and mind, smitten with *pride*, it immediately breaks all the measures of my patience. . ."[1] He re-read the passage of his chosen book, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, and closed his eyes, breathing a large, pained breath of shame and remorse. "These words seem to stab at my guilty heart," Victor whispered to himself. "Pride. *Pride*. How could I have ever been so proud, so defiant? I discovered the secret of life. . . in itself, a wonderful accomplishment! But what did I do, but selfishly press forward, telling no one about my find, and create a. . . a. . . *creature*, ghoulish and horrifying. . ." The doctor could not continue, and started sobbing tremendously.

It was not long after his breakdown that Victor felt a hand on his hunched back, patting him politely.

"There, there, sir, what seems to be the problem?" Victor heard from behind him. The doctor would not look up, nor would he answer the question, but his sobbing stopped,

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[1] Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (New York, London: Penguin Books, 1985) 345.

realizing the spectacle he was making of himself in the middle of the outdoor café. He heard the man walk around the table and sit across from him.

"I noticed you were reading *Gulliver's Travels*, sir," said the man. This surprised Victor and his head shot up in confusion. The person who sat facing him was an older man, probably in his fifties or sixties, but his eyes were somehow young, almost ageless and innocent. "The book is one I am very much interested in," the old man continued, "and your response to it especially intrigues me."

Victor sat there, without wiping his wet face, dumbfounded. The pain that he was suffering at this very moment was beyond most man's comprehension, and yet, this man was sitting here across from him, wanting to explain his reaction to *Gulliver's Travels*?

"You wonder why I'm even talking to you, no doubt," said the old man, smiling. "Let me introduce myself. My name is Dr. Pangloss. I am a teacher in. . . well, humanity, I suppose. My theory is that no effect happens without a cause, and that everything happens for the best purpose. I consequently believe that this is the best of all possible worlds, and further, I believe that that book you are reading, *Gulliver's Travels*, proves it."

This was too much for Dr. Frankenstein to handle. "You believe WHAT?!" Victor yelled, alarming the café's patrons, which caused him to blush and lower his voice. "You believe *what*?" Victor repeated in a forced, hushed tone. "How can *Gulliver's Travels* say anything but that man is evil and filthy and disgusting? How can you say, after reading this book, that *this* is the best of all possible worlds? *How*?"

There was a long pause as the two men eyed one another expectantly. Victor wanted an explanation. All he was offered in return was Pangloss' simple smile. When it

became clear to Victor that Pangloss was not about to offer any verbal response at the moment, he continued his own viewpoint.

"Jonathan Swift's book clearly criticizes mankind's faults; there is no room for praise. It says, 'Man is vile and base,' and nothing more. And I, for what it's worth, simply do not have any more optimism in mankind than Swift's Gulliver does," Frankenstein said. A slight pause. And Victor lowered his eyes from Pangloss' gaze. "I can't."

Victor could feel Pangloss' inquisitive eyes hold firm on his pitiful form, now deeply blushing from shame and embarrassment. Victor knew he'd have to tell him *something*. . . Pangloss wouldn't be fooled, not after he'd sobbed in public, and now, blushed for no apparent reason. He figured he might as well tell him.

"A few days ago," the younger doctor began, "I created something. Something alive. . . terribly alive." Pangloss' confused eyes told Victor he was being too vague. "I am a scientist," Frankenstein explained, heaving a sigh. "I have worked at Ingolstadt for several years in natural philosophy, particularly chemistry. Over the course of my studies. . ." Victor's voice almost trailed off, but he managed to whisper the rest. ". . . I learned the secret of how life works. Without so much as a backward glance, I began down the dark path of my destiny, that would lead me eventually. . ." Another pause, and his voice got even softer. ". . .to create a living, breathing creature! But he is not a man, he is a terrifying, inaccurate copy of a man. . . He is of humungous stature, with black lips that form a horrifying grin, and with dark, glittering eyes that search the very soul!" Victor paused once again, his eyes almost reflecting his frightful memories of the first hours of the creature's life. "He is a monster, a hideous wretch. . . and *I* created him! I never stopped

to think about my power over life! I never stopped to think about the implications of my creation! And now. . . this monster has *killed my brother*! He is, as we speak, roaming the streets, amongst innocent people. . ." Tears started to stream down his already damp face. "So you see, I cannot believe in the goodness of mankind. I am an example of its evil. I am one of those Yahoos that Gulliver despises. I. . ." And Victor could not continue, sorrow and shame shaking his body uncontrollably.

Pangloss pitied the man, and was, he had to admit, a little terrified at this news. He didn't quite know what to say. "At times, I will confess, it becomes hard to defend my theory," Pangloss awkwardly admitted to no one in particular. Then his back straightened as he sought more confidence. "But I still maintain my theory of cause and effect. . ."

Pangloss tried to give a confident smile. "I believe you are confusing terms, sir. *Right* is not the same as *best*. The first is a universal term, the second, relative. I suggest that even given Swift's slanted view of humanity, this world is the best one. I never said it was *right*."

"I don't understand how this world of death and destruction could be the best world possible," Victor replied through his tears. "Couldn't man be more like the Houyhnhnms? Couldn't we take their example and be more civilized?"

"No," answered Pangloss quickly, without pausing. "We are not Houyhnhnms, we are Yahoos. . . at least, according to Swift," Pangloss laughed slightly. "And given that we are Yahoos, who are by nature uncivilized and low, we can only expect so much from them, correct?"

"I think there are some men who are much like the Houyhnhnms," Victor said.

"Yes, *some* men. Hardly *all*, or even a large percentage, for that matter. Basically, if one accepts Swift's generalization, we *are* the vile Yahoos, only slightly improved. We fight, we lie, we steal. Over time, we have learned to build governments, and laws--so our fights have become bigger and more complex. And we have learned to build weapons of destruction, resulting in more men and women dying and suffering."

"And *this* is the best world possible? Even when you admit so much about the evil of our world?" Frankenstein asked incredulously.

"Yes, my friend," replied Pangloss. "Why? Because we will *learn*. We humans have great potential, but we are, as of yet, a bit rough around the edges. So, yes, we are vile, and as a result, we are nasty to each other; we hurt and oftentimes kill each other. But this, in turn, is a cause, or will be. Its effect? We will *learn* to be civilized, as the Houyhnhnms are."

"Our learning process, as you call it, may kill us all off first," Victor commented quickly in a mumbled tone.

Pangloss continued, apparently not noticing. "The strongest, best Yahoos will always find a way to survive," Pangloss said. "And they will teach repression of their base tendencies towards war and destruction. This will perpetuate throughout the generations, and then, we will no longer have to teach it. *Goodness* will be the very *nature* of the Yahoo! So, my point is this: things may be bad *now*, but this is the best we can do, at the present. Eventually, things will improve; the present evil will cause future good, as my theory says it should!" he proclaimed.

Victor barely pondered Pangloss' theory. It just seemed too absurd. Especially in light of his own life of late.

"We will *never* learn, Doctor," Victor said, quietly drying his tears with the backs of his hands. "My haste and stupidity in creating a new being proves it. How much have we learned about the awesome destructive power of science and technology? I, of all people, who have studied tremendously, should know it. But I ignored it, thinking I could only cause good. Instead, I have caused death and destruction."

Pangloss sighed. "I am sorry I did not convince you. But I can see we are men of two different opinions at the start, and then, only further polarized from each other by our experiences." The old man rose to his feet, and walked over to Frankenstein, who also politely rose.

"I wish you the best of luck in your world, Doctor Frankenstein," said Pangloss sincerely, holding out his hand.

"And I wish the same for you in yours," replied Frankenstein, shaking Pangloss' hand.

The two men considered each other for a moment with their gazes, and then released hands. Pangloss smiled and turned to walk away.

"Perhaps. . ." Victor started, almost accidentally, turning Pangloss back around to face him. "Perhaps we will meet again, in better circumstances?"

"Perhaps we shall," Pangloss replied, smiling once again. "Perhaps we shall."

NOTE: The characters in this story, Dr. Victor Frankenstein and Dr. Pangloss, were based on the characters in the books *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley and *Candide* by Voltaire, respectively.

Wunderkind

Mozart's genius for expressing personal sentiment through music.

By: Joanne Dolan

Submitted Monday, February 13th.

Wunderkind

Wunderkind: Prodigy or rather, "wonder child"(Wates)

If you were to describe a man dying, would you not generate the image from either something you had seen in your lifetime or on TV or in the movies or something you had read? If you were to explain the relationship between a child and a parent, would you not think of your own? Just as you may find yourself doing this, does not an artist project his experiences into his art? Does he not generate or think of his experiences as he creates? Artwork oftentimes reflects these underlying experiences. And, in some cases, it may find itself resurrecting them.

Let us consider the figure of Mozart. The character of Mozart is that of a most complex and vital genius. He is born on January 27, 1756. Four short years later, he has already begun to compose minor melodies. At nine, he writes his first symphony. At twelve, he writes his first opera. He serves as Court Violinist at the Archi-episcopal Court of Salzburg between the ages of thirteen and twenty-two. He also manages to compose extensively and tour Italy three times during this period. He is dismissed from his position in August, 1777 and upon this change travels to Augsburg with his mother. After a stay in Augsburg, where he meets his beloved cousin Maria Anna, and in Mannheim, where he meets his future wife Constance Weber, Mozart travels to Paris. Here, in Paris, he experiences alone the harsh reality of his mother dying. She dies on July 2, 1778. He returns to Salzburg and receives appointment to Court and Cathedral Organist. He travels to Vienna and, after a quarrel with the Archbishop, resigns his position. This is one to many of his father's disappointments. Mozart settles in Vienna and it is not long before the Emperor commissions him to compose an opera. It is a German opera entitled, *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, and it is received with enormous success. Mozart marries Constance on August 4, 1782 and his eldest son, Carl Leopold, is born in June of the following year. He composes his string quartets and quintet for piano and wind-instruments in 1784. At the age of twenty-nine, he is a Free-mason. His father visits him this year in Vienna. Shortly after returning to Salzburg and much distressed over his son's lifestyle, Leopold Mozart dies in May of 1785. The following three years produce, perhaps, Mozart's most reknowned works: *The Marriage of Figaro* is produced in Vienna in 1786; *Don Giovanni* is produced in Prague in 1787; the three great orchestral symphonies are composed in 1788. Although he travels with frequency to Prague and Berlin, he remains in Vienna until his death in December, 1791. These three final years of his life are equally full of composition, yet little financial recompense. Mozart dies a buried man.

A human character does, however, emerge from this overwhelming biography. Mozart, despite being a *wunderkind*, lived in whimsy, in heartbreak, in frustration, in regret,

and in blessedness. He was a man of "joyous nature, warm-hearted and generous to a fault; a nature containing apparently none of that hard egotism and self-regardfulness sometimes associated with genius."(Mozart—ix) He was known to his companions as a dancer and a rascal. Alone, he suffered physical pain, poverty, and conflictive personal relationships, most specifically with his own father. It cannot be doubted that the dynamism of his life influenced his music. He seemed to create music that embodied his experiences and ideas. His emotions surfaced in musical form.

> I cannot write poetically, for I am no poet. I cannot artfully arrange my phrases so to give light and shade. Neither am I a painter; nor can I even express my thoughts by gesture and pantomine, for I am no dancer. But I can do so in sounds. I am a musician."(Mozart—45)

This element is evident in his work, *Don Giovanni*. Here, the music reflects a certain understanding. The sound not only resonates the meaning of the libretto, but also the composer's perception of situation. Mozart, seemingly, dredges up his past experiences or feelings to indite the most sensitive and accurate sound possible. The listener finds himself incapable of questioning the integrity of the music's emotion or intention. We are captivated by a sound which illuminates the sense. The music seems "right." Four, of many, specific aspects of Mozart's life may be detected in the music of *Don Giovanni*: firstly, the dichotomy of his nature; secondly, his understanding and experience of death; thirdly, his feelings towards his marriage with Constance; and lastly, his relationship with his father. True,the music does not nor could not render a whole account of these aspects. But, their presence is a very real factor. The psychological implications of Mozart's life do seem to influence his music.

Mozart's *Don Giovanni* seems to defy both of the main classifications of eighteenth century opera: opera seria (serious opera) and opera buffa (comic opera). The opera itself is styled in the two-act structure of the opera buffa. But, we cannot say that this opera is comic for it begins and ends with death. Furthermore, we find the music is constantly shifting from the heavy, melancholic sound of drums and celloes to the light, charismatic sound of flutes and violins. This dichotomy is enigmatic, are to we laugh or to mourn? It is probably best to do both. The opera presents characters both to laugh at and to mourn with. Accordingly, Mozart's character too, can be both laughed at and mourned with. He experienced a life of accomplishment and near-tragic end. He, like the multi-faceted cast of characters in *Don Giovanni*, was both seria and buffa. These contrasting characteristics manifest themselves in the overture. The overture begins with the sound of tubas, horns, and celloes. It is serious, foreboding, and dark. After about two minutes this sound builds to a crescendo and in its aftermath we hear the flutter of flutes and oboes. After a few more minutes the two patterns combine and seemingly duel one another. The deeper sounding strings are faced off with winds

and violins. The sound moves from soft to strong then to soft again. The overture ends with the sound seria seeming to have won out. But then, as we know, it is immediately undermined by the comic entrance of Leporello's *Notte e giorno* aria. It is interesting that the first words of the opera are "night and day." Is the opera's divine attribute its resolution of "night and day?" Does Mozart employ his conflicted feelings of joy and frustration to create this sensation? It may be said that it feels as though he does.

Mozart became famous for his school-boyish humor. It is easy to see a similarity between some of Leporello's one-liners and a Mozart-like humor. Certainly, it would not be too much of a stretch to suggest that Mozart may have indeed sympathized with the character of Leporello. It is true that Mozart's cohort in the creation of the opera was a bit of a Don Giovanni. Lorenzo Da Ponte is "a notorious womanizer who by this time [the opera's creation] has been run out of at least one city on moral charges." And, just as Leporello brings his master's plans to life, Mozart brings Da Ponte's libretto to music. It is also true that much of Mozart's life is spent in service to his father. Is he also not a bit of a lackey? After all, Leopold Mozart collected two salaries—that of his own and that of his son. Did not Mozart travel in his family's financial interest? And, didn't he receive great reproach each time he found himself failing? Mozart understood both the comic and servial position of Leporello. This understanding is best exhibited in Leporello's arias. The opening aria in the first act, for instance, is quick, pacing, and capricious. The listener hears a bouncing harmony of strings and a syllabic text-to-note relationship. This scene is meant to be comic and through the enlightenment of Mozart's music, Leporello's complaints are taken as so. Yet, this aria is directly before a struggle and an eventual murder scene. The plot seems to upbraid Leporello's whimsy as much as Leopold's designs dismiss Mozart's fancies. Another example is Leporello's act one, scene five aria *Madamina, il catalogo é questo.* The music is at first teasing and one hears the lighter sounds of flutes playing with violins. Its quickness reflects the outpouring of Don Giovanni's list of conquests. Yet, the second portion of the aria is slower. The final words *voi sapete quel che fa* or the emphatic, *you know what he does,* are more or less opera seria. Mozart is certain to imply a severity in Leporello's character. Both he and Leporello are not always the comedian nor even the servile follower. He, like Mozart, is a comic character acutely aware of men's flaws and the unhappiness life oftentimes has in store.

Perhaps one of the most moving moments in the opera is the death of the Commandant. Mozart creates an emotional and striking scene through his music. The sound is profoundly sensitive to the Commandant's plight. The audience is struck by a sudden halt of action and a gentle, slow ensemble unfolds. It is soft, progressive, and ascending. The voices intermingle and spiral. The music reflects both the slow death of a body and the eventual

freedom of a spirit. The composer even manages to render a sense of lingering by having the instruments continue for a moment beyond the vocals. They are like that of a final breath—slowly taken, slowly held, and then finally, released. They are like that of the spirit surpassing the body's existence. Where does Mozart reconcile such a sense of death? Mozart experienced first-hand only one death at this point in his life. It was the death of his mother. And, it seems, his view of death derived from this occurance. He discovered that death was not all sadness, but instead a progression.

> In those melancholy moments I took comfort in three things—firstly, in whole-hearted, trustful submission to God's will; secondly, in the sight of her very easy and beautiful death, whereby I could picture to myself how she had become happy in a moment of time (how much happier she is than we, so that I could have wished in that moment to journey with her!) and—arising out of that desire as my third comfort—in the thought that she is not lost for ever, that we shall see her again...(Mozart—111)

These three comforts reveal themselves in the Commandant's death scene. They are brought to surface in Mozart's musical expression. First, we sense from the soft and conjunct melody that there will be no more fight between the Commandant and Don Giovanni. The Commandant is submitting to the reality of his defeat. Second, we feel this submission is an acceptance of *sento l'anima partirI* or his *soul departing*. His death is easy, we are not exposed to a long and harrowing fight for life. Third, we know (or least Mozart knows) the Commandant's soul is not lost forever. The Commandant will return. The audience, without perhaps understanding why, is comforted by the slow and drifting music. Mozart's personal understanding of death surges up from beneath his music's surface here.

Marriage and the relationship between men and women are a recurrent theme in both the opera *Don Giovanni* and the life of Mozart himself. One specific relationship particularly pertinent to Mozart is the marriage of Masetto and Zerlina. This marriage is concurrent with the marriage of Mozart and Constance in many ways. Perhaps the most disruptive element in both marriages is rumor. Mozart lived in the Weber home long before he married Constance. This was due both to his affection for the Weber family and financial circumstances. After the announcement of his engagement to Constance, Mozart lived alone. Yet, rumors began to surface suggesting Constance and Mozart had consummated their marriage long before the engagement. "Most people believe we are already married. Her mother is provoked by the rumour and the poor girl herself is plagued to death."(Mozart—201) These rumors threatened their marriage and set one against the other. At one point Constance called off the wedding. Mozart, in turn, wrote her a long and apologetic letter, begging her to reconsider. Ultimately, she conceded. But, the scars of their tussle remained some time. It took

Mozart a long while to forget the shame and scandal brought upon his marriage. "Among all the cowardly slanders uttered... the only one which enrages me is his calling my Constance a hussy."(Mozart—190) Bearing this in mind, one cannot view the marriage of Zerlina and Masetto as very different. Masetto feels the incursion of rumor upon his romance with Zerlina. He has trouble coming to terms with an impurity being cast upon his marriage. We hear in his *Ho capito* aria of act one, scene seven, an anger and retribution. The music is an onslaught, a figurative roller coaster ride of loudening and softening assertions. The sound is solid and constructed with continuous strings. We sense a fight building in his character. Mozart must appreciate Masetto's sentiment. Perhaps he drew from his own personal convictions to vindicate both Masetto and himself through the music. Mozart manipulates his audience to feel that we are ready to go with Masetto and suppress the rumors and man who is harming his marriage. We have a sense of a great wrong being done. Did this feeling of wrong originate in the composer's heart? Given the historical circumstances of Mozart's marriage, it would seem fair to believe it did.

Don Giovanni has no familial characters except that of Anna's father. It is, however, this striking figure that both begins and ends the opera and the character of Don Giovanni. The Commandant or hereafter, the father, is the redeemer of Don Giovanni's injustices. The father in act one attempts to stop Don Giovanni in his wickedness and is killed in the process. He returns in act two to either change Don Giovanni or banish him to Hell. Don Giovanni does not repent his ways and therefore burns in damnation. Don Giovanni has a special relationship with the father. He is the only character who actively interacts with the father. The father admonishes Don Giovanni's behavior. He even goes so far as to try to physically intervene.

This in mind, let us regard Mozart's relationship with his father. The father figure in Mozart's own life was a commandant as well. "After God comes my Papa—that was ever the motto, the axiom of my childhood."(Mozart—90) Until he was about twenty-three years of age, every aspect of Mozart's career was managed by his father. Leopold Mozart introduced his infant son to music and not long thereafter he placed him on display before the world as a "wunderkind." He thought his son would ensure the family's financial security. "I must not, however, permit myself to regret any present expenditure [the cost of touring], for money will undoubtedly come back to-morrow, if not to-day."(Mozart—3) But here began the conflicting relationship between the two. Any child will soon grow away from his father's voice. And Mozart, especially, developed an understandable independence of his father. How can one submit to someone he has already surpassed? He found himself involved and enjoying parts of life that his father disdained. "Leopold...often thought his son was wasting his

talents, trusting the wrong people, and being in general irresponsible"(Mozart—backcover) Mozart was becoming an adult. He began to turn down appointments his father recommended to him. Eventually he broke away from his father completely by insulting and resigning from the Archbishop of Salzburg, who also employed Leopold.

> The days when I used to stand upon a chair and sing you the *oragna fiagata fá* and wind up by kissing the end of your nose are past indeed, but do I therefore honour, love, and obey you the less?(Mozart—79)

Their relationship became so heated that correspondence between the two developed into a series of arguments. Leopold constantly asserted that Mozart's behavior distressed him so much that he was approaching an early grave. "I know that you understand and perceive that our happiness and unhappiness, nay, more, my long life or speedy death is, under God, so to speak in your hands."(Mozart—64) "You 'wish to spare me anxiety,' and in the end you overturn a whole barrel-full of anxieties at once upon my devoted head, so that it almost kills me!"(Mozart—73) Mozart, in return, would explain his hurt and disappointment in his father's anger. "But now that you attribute my course of action to negligence, thoughtlessness and idleness, I have only myself to thank for your good opinion of me, though I must deplore from my heart that you know me—your son—so little."(Mozart—49) "I therefore beg you again most humbly to have a better opinion of me."(Mozart—59) "I am deeply wounded by your biting comments..."(Mozart—79) There was no recourse for this discord. The battle ensued until Leopold's death. A death which is said to have haunted Mozart the rest of his years.

Leopold died only shortly before the composition of *Don Giovanni*. If Mozart were really haunted by the circumstances surrounding his father's death, would it not surface in his first creation since that death? Does Mozart resurrect his father in the character of the Commandant? The father enters in act one, scene one, with a powerful presence. The sound of loud basses and celloes support his recitatives. He is forceful. Yet, his position seems peculiar. He is an old man challenging the young and virile Don Giovanni. The audience is already able to guess the victor of the duel. The commandant is opposing natural order. His music is discordant with the previous ensemble. He is out of his place. Leopold Mozart perhaps was no longer in his place to reproach his son's decisions. Maybe Leopold fought nature a little too long, as well. The return of the father in act two's finale opposes all natural order again. The father has returned from the dead. Is Mozart being reminded of his own father's last reproaches? Does Mozart feel as though he has killed his father? The father enters and commands Don Giovanni to take his hand. The music is winding, building, and intensifying. He offers Don Giovanni a last repentance, *pentiti, cangia vita. É l'ultimo momento!* or *repent and change your ways this is your last hour!* What *did* Leopold say to Mozart before he left Vienna that last time? The music is fearful, loud, and menacing. No one speaks or interrupts

the father's recitatives which are accompanied by horns, drums, and loud emphatic burst of sound. The music climaxes into a chilling, blasting, and burning crescendo finalized by Don Giovanni's (Mozart's?) shriek of anguish.

Mozart thought in music. Mozart sympathizes with characters and situations through music. He derives his understanding of these things from his own life. And, with this in mind, we see how he expresses his life through sound. The above mentioned are but a few of the many concurrent circumstances between the characters and scenes of *Don Giovanni* and Mozart's life. These examples, however few they may be, attest to the connection between Mozart's life and his work. They lend proof to the assertion that an artist oftentimes employs his own experiences for expression. Artists create from life, be it their own or observed. One only has to listen in order to sense this.

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* Paragraph two, page one, of this paper is mostly biographical information concerning Mozart's life. This information is largely from Encyclopedia Britannica

The Romantic Utopia:
Rousseau's Saint-Pierre

Kyle Kaufman
2/13/95

> It seemed to me that on that island I should be... freer, in a word, to surrender to the pleasures of idleness and the contemplative life. I should have liked to be cut off on that island as to have no more traffic with mortal man; and I certainly took every possible precaution to excuse myself from the necessity of any intercourse with them (Rousseau, *Confessions*, 589)

In the last book of his autobiographical *Confessions*, Rousseau finally manages to return to a paradise as fulfilling as the idyllic Geneva of his youth. Upon fleeing France, he negotiates to live on an island in the Lake of Bienne, near the Swiss town of Berne. Saint-Pierre, as the small island is called, is a practically uninhabited stretch of forests, fields, and beaches. His Isle de Saint-Pierre provides what he hopes is his final resting spot; a hidden oasis of natural beauty, supporting only him. Although there are others with him on the island, they are barely mentioned in the text. Saint-Pierre, whatever else it may be, is certainly Rousseau's private Eden. This heaven on earth, for Rousseau, assumes a far different meaning than what it has for other writers. The classical notion developed onwards from Plato's *Republic* is here thoroughly gutted, even inverted. Whereas Plato imagines a city of justice, Augustine a city of God, and Bacon a city of science, Rousseau creates an individual world of nature. Rousseau's private utopia is a distinctly new, influential, and Romantic concept.

For Augustine, Plato, Bacon, and countless others, the utopia is the highest realization of man within his social context. It is the perfect society. Man's fulfillment and happiness can only be achieved through a polis, whether divine, technological, or philosophical. The goal of these utopias is to transcend man's natural state, which all view as low, even flawed. The reality of civilization is embraced, and even extolled. Plato's analogy of the soul and the city is universally accepted, and the social and political are higher and more noble than the individuals who compose them. Likewise, Aristotle's celebrated definition of man as a political animal is held as apparent truth. To these theorists, man is inherently social, and therefore unable to live independently. Only through common work can man rise above the limitations of his

nature and environment; society becomes the sole means to progress. And since man, by himself, is imperfect, reason dictates that he must be guided by laws. So the social utopia becomes one of justice, and hence law and order. It is, therefore, regulative and invariably restrictive of what is viewed as the destructive freedom of the individual. The subjugation of the individual to the group is in this manner completed and justified. Interdependency and respect for authority exist as the bywords of such utopias. Whether it be Calvin's Geneva or Hobbes's England, man's need for man, and for order, is stressed. The individual, by himself imperfect, needs society's structure to bring him to full realization.

Rousseau, however, wishes to purge himself of society as well, and to sever all his ties to mankind:

> I was in a manner, therefore, taking leave of my age and my contemporaries and, by confining myself to that island for the rest of my life, was bidding the world farewell (Rousseau, 590)[1].

Rousseau overturns the ideal of the social utopia, and delights in the result. Paradise is now a state of pure individualism, of withdrawal into self. Social order, with all its restrictions and complicating anxieties, is decisively abandoned. The individual exists complete within himself, if only he can escape society's tainting influence. The only second party is nature; and never before has it been so fully incorporated into the Utopian ideal. Bacon includes nature only so far as it may be manipulated, while even the Biblical Eden presents nature as little more than a bountiful, if beauteous, garden. Rousseau goes one step further; instead of domination, he seeks only observation. Nirvana becomes a process of submerging oneself in

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[1]The discord between Rousseau's actual utopia of the *Confessions* and his political one drawn up in the *Social Contract* is a difficult one to resolve. The explanation however, must take into account his wearied state as his life drew to a close, and his besieged psychological condition (especially in consideration of his paranoia regarding "plots" by the Encyclopaedists and others). In addition, Camus's notion of the man who veils his hatred of real, physical men in an abstract love of mankind is worth considering in Rousseau's case. Regardless, one must eventually accept that the utopia closer to Rousseau's breast, and, arguably, even his head is the utopia of Saint-Pierre. After all, the social contract is only established because man's natural state cannot be regained, and throughout the essay Rousseau bemoans this situation.

nature, of a closeness with the natural order summed in his simple prayer: 'O!' (Rousseau, 593). His is a quiet, solitary life of peaceful walks in the garden, a retreat from the social Leviathan. Hardly fallen or unhappy, Rousseau, unlike Hobbes, finds being severed from the continent of man to be a liberating, blissful experience. Individuality, once achieved amid nature, is both perfect and final:[2] "I conceived the further desire of never leaving it" (Rousseau, 595). Rousseau's overwhelming desire to remain at Saint-Pierre leads him to make increasingly strong, and repeated, declarations:

> I should have preferred to be confined to my island by their will than my own (Rousseau, 595)
>
> How gladly... would I exchange my liberty to leave this place for the assurance that I could always remain here... why am I not kept here by force! (Rousseau, 596).

For Rousseau, the eternal wanderer, to desire restraint demonstrates the boundless and infinite attraction of the natural ideal: the one thing consistently most loathe to him is now of utmost importance. And Rousseau, the insatiably desirous man, craves nothing further once he sets foot upon his Eden's shores. In this manner, Saint-Pierre grants him simultaneously the fulfillment of, and hence renunciation from, desire. After traversing the world unsatisfied, a small, secluded island offers him the only totality, the only complete happiness, he ever experiences.

Rousseau's behavior in the gardens of Saint-Pierre introduces a second important distinction between the Romantic and the traditional Western ideal; namely, the activities of the "good man" in the ideal state. Before Rousseau, occidental notions almost always enshrine an active ideal man, pursuing virtue and truth with all his energy; the perfected man is a productive figure. Thus, each man in the classical polis contributes his share to the whole; each man has his work. This notion's dominance persists through Rousseau's time:

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[2]The resemblance of Rousseau's experience with the Buddhist or Taoist monk's immersion in the world-soul is striking, if eventually incomplete. However, it does reinforce the revolutionary, foreign nature of such ideas to Western thought.

even his decidedly anti-utopian contemporary Voltaire advocates such a figure as the best possible man[3].

But where Voltaire works, Rousseau would rather stroll. Rousseau gives up formal work *per se*, and instead turns to an informal pursuit of botany in an extension of his visceral appreciation of nature. Life's activities are centered about a more-or-less passive appreciation of nature's beauty and power. Rousseau decides to abandon himself to his whims, to pursue whatever pleases him, regardless of ever finishing or sharing his 'product'. Indeed, there is no product. Social notions of usefulness and productivity are completely overthrown, and Rousseau idealizes their opposite, desiring to, "live without restraints and eternally at leisure" (Rousseau, 591). He realizes his desire for immersion in a constant present, free from boredom and restriction (Rousseau, 591-2). Rousseau passes, as his natural man did, innocently from one sensation to the next. His "free and voluntary" idleness is equivalent to sleep (Rousseau, pg. 591); his activities the mere playthings of man's dreams. In the end he is left with his mind alone, in what he, using Aristotle's term, calls "the contemplative life" (Rousseau, 589).

In contrast, however, with Aristotle's definition, Rousseau's contemplation is purely the solitary man's knowing and enjoying of nature. Rousseau has eliminated all social and metaphysical aspirations, and made the divine pantheistic. Hence the idleness described above is merely the free indulgence of mind and body in nature's spiritual and physical self. In his "Papinamia", as he terms it, Rousseau carries his individualism to its rational, if subjective extreme. On Saint-Pierre, Rousseau becomes his own private priest communing with nature in a perpetual sleep-state, removed from all external reality. Alone with nature, he experiences the full brunt of its force, which surfaces in his spiritual ejaculation, his "O!" of wonder at that "ravishing spectacle". Here the ideals of

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[3] *Candide*, pg. 144. Martin's words here seem to best express Voltaire' opinion: "We must work without arguing...that is the only way to make life bearable".

carelessness and leisure are again bound up in worship of, and connection with, nature:

> "O Nature! O mother! I am here under your sole protection" (Rousseau, 594)

Rousseau gains oneness and unity; such a strong sense of pleasure and identity that he desires never to leave. He actualizes —to the best of his abilities— the ideal of his natural man. In this Rousseau at last gains freedom. It is the final chapter then, not just in chronology, but also in Rousseau's quests for self-realization and pure communion with nature. His goal of total escape from civilization finally comes to pass here.

In this complete withdrawal from public life, one sees Rousseau's pivotal role as the prime precursor of Romanticism. *Confessions* presents the Romantic archetype of man struggling to free himself from the onerous bonds of society in order to reveal the natural goodness within his heart. The later Romantics owed much to such conceptions; Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey", for example, is informed with the same love of nature, and the same desire to flee from the "joyless daylight" of the city. Tennyson's "Lotos Eaters" likewise bemoans the "trouble on trouble, pain on pain" (line 130) of human activity. Rousseau helps ignite the love affair with a reclusive, contemplative, and restful state to be achieved in Nature's all-encompassing bosom which characterizes so much of the Western literature and thought that followed him. From Schelling, through Thoreau, to Dylan Thomas, such strivings have characterized the Romantic endeavor. Refuge is sought from the ugly bustle of the civilized, increasingly urban, world, and from the complex, shallow, and taxing duties demanded by industrial society. The Romantics share a continual, central quest for the pure, essential, natural man, and for the womb-like quietude of the individual's oneness with nature[4]. The quest is at once both

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[4]Although the author does not have the knowledge necessary to rigorously maintain a psychological interpretation of Rousseau's (and the Romantic) utopia, the resemblance of the Saint-Pierre archetype to the womb is noticeably strong. The quiet, peace, oneness, and lack of work to be found there, and the palpable sense of connection and nourishment derived from nature all hearken back to man's primeval experience before

spiritual and deeply physical; it is felt as a primal Ur-drive and as a divine union.

It is the core tragedy of all the Romantics, and not just Rousseau, that this mythical Eden remains transitory, available only for a brief second after a life of pain. Rousseau arrives after a life of travels and travails, only to be forced to once again return to the world of men. He is expelled amid anguish and great difficulty (Rousseau, 598). Like Oskar in Grass's *The Tin Drum*, Rousseau can never truly return to the 'womb' he so ardently desires; man's social reality is steadfastly opposed to such idealistic daydreams. This failure is common to all those who follow Rousseau as well; Thoreau could not maintain himself forever at Walden, but necessarily returned to the 'reality' of society, while Wordsworth could not gaze forever on the twisting Wye, and Odysseus's crew, Tennyson knew, soon wandered on. Aristotle's definition of man as a political being holds, undiminished by the idyllic, if selfish, wishes of a world-weary generation. For Rousseau, and for all the Romantics, Saint-Pierre, in the end, is but a dream. Even if the romantic is lucky, he will only have the bittersweet pleasure of the elderly Rousseau, looking back on his brief time at Saint-Pierre with wistful regret as his life hurtles on.

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birth. With Rousseau, the added symbolic isolation of the surrounding, protecting (embryonic?)waters further reinforces this analogy, as does his previously cited declaration of nature as his mother and sole protector (pg. 594). A parallel exists with the 'oceanic feeling' which Freud dissects in the initial chapter of *Civilization and Its Discontents* as having the same origins and similar effects, i.e. the sense of spiritual connection.

Life Like the Wind
An Exercise in Idealism

Peter Kovas
2/ 8/ 95

"Swift wind! Space! My soul! Now I know it is true what I guessed at;
What I guessed when I loafed on the grass,
What I guessed while I lay alone in my bed....and again as I
walked the beach under the paling stars of the morning.

My ties and ballasts leave me....I travel....I sail....my
elbows rest in the sea-gaps,
I skirt the Sierras....my palms cover continents,
I am afoot with my vision."

-Walt Whitman, Leaves of Grass-33

Life is a journey. The reason for traveling is the privilege of existence. The act of the journey itself, in its simplest form, is to be in motion, action to be precise. In truth and without complication the traveler should be free to travel unfettered and without limit, like the wind as it sweeps over desert by day and on to oceans by night. The traveler's energy derives from consciousness. However, consciousness, like the wind, affects the stones it sweeps across in its passage, is effected by actions and consequences, and is scattered, reflected, by the awareness of action and the physical limits of the human condition. To elaborate, man forgets and learns, and is subject to the power of mind without truly understanding it. He becomes tied in thought and deed to the physical world where the ramifications of his action manifest, and becomes so entangled in manifestation that he no longer sees, knows, or feels his fundamental energy, that of consciousness and existence itself.

Walt Whitman, in the thirty-third verse of his Leaves of Grass, proposes that man can still feel the life within life. He identifies wind with his "soul", and with a sense of "Space!" That such an energy was found to embrace and support the traveler, such that the liver of life would be as free as the wind if only he could let go of his "ties and ballasts".

If a man could be as the wind, he could learn almost to fly. One could learn that he was not quite as limited as he might have thought. A life as spacious and open as the wind need not be bound to logic or reason, the path need not be marked. What is found, then, is how large life can be. That living life is in fact a wonderful and limitless thing, like the wind as it meanders throughout its realm bound only to the present, without thought of past or future. However this course of action differs and is often seen as contrary to orthodox behavior, as it calls people to free themselves from their imposed restrictions. It is often enough to drive people mad, this emulation of the wind, for it neglects the practicality needed to exist in comfort and in the realms of everyday life.

Indeed when one learns to fly through the journey of life, he can feel his souls, the infinite space within and around them. All the daydreams, all the hopes seem real and yet humble within the magnificence of infinity. When one casts off his "ties" and "ballasts", argues Whitman, he becomes vast in experience and perception, resting his elbows in the peace between the cresting waves. The wind, the free traveler, can explore the high Sierra Mountain tops and cover the land in thought, knowing, and wisdom. Whitman argues that the seemingly unreal experiences of the quiet moments in everyday life are real and can lead a traveller to realization and illumination through opening oneself up to them. The images of mountains and waves, grass and sailing the seas, within the selected stanzas, show the varied terrain a life well-lived can cover, and the commodious experience a life can claim if the liver lets it, his-self, expand. The liver of life, therefore, must act out the consequences of action and be "afoot" with or without the support of the vision.

Max Weber and Karl Marx: *The Origins of Capitalism*

Timothy M. Freiermuth

Max Weber's account of the origin of capitalism is the rough antithesis of Karl Marx's theory. These opposing theories are derived from different assumptions about and notions of social development. Marx proposes a dialectical materialism whereby the dominant economic mode of production, which attained dominance via class struggle, solely determines the entire nature and structure of society. Thirty years later, Weber would oppose Marx, maintaining a perspective resembling Hegel's dialectical idealism. According to Weber, social development is dependent upon the dominant ideology. The difference between these two perspectives becomes particularly apparent when Marx and Weber apply their respective theories to the same question: What is the origin of capitalism? Weber contends that the rise of the specific rational, Occidental form of capitalism was only possible in a society animated by the Protestant ethos (the spirit of capitalism). After establishing that the impetus behind the progression of history is class[1] struggle, Marx maintains that once capitalism establishes itself as the dominant economic system, it produces a corresponding and complimentary ideology.

For Marx, history evolved according to rigid laws similar to those of the natural sciences. In fact, Friedrich Engels would write that one of Marx's greatest contributions is the "discovery" of the *science* of history. The origin of capitalism must be sought in the material / economic development of society. Marx's first observation is that the dominant mode of production is an "acquired force;" a system into which the individual is born and to which he conforms. The origin of capitalism is therefore not to be found in the immediate historical context, but in the preceding mode of production from which it emerged...the feudal economy.

The feudal economic system is characterized by individual, restricted labor with the intent of immediate consumption, either by the producer or his lord. Production is done

[1]For Marx, this is specifically an economic distinction.

on a minute scale, is slow, and normally executed by one individual. Only when there was produced a slight excess, which occurred seldom, was the product sold or exchanged as a commodity. During this period, the seeds of the capitalist bourgeois are beginning to lay roots. A small handful of Medieval serfs who had prospered and accumulated enough wealth became chartered burghers of small towns. In the later stages of the feudal system, guilds were formed wherein a guild-master would oversee the entire process of a specific product. Here then is found the beginnings of modern divisions of labor.

The collapse of the aging feudal system and the rise of capitalism were ushered in by the expansion of markets. Exploration opened new trade routes to the Near East and the Orient, while nations rushed to stake claim in the newly discovered Americas. Individual production and guilds were not efficient enough to meet the demands of the new markets, nor were the co-operative guilds designed to increase productivity. In response, the wealthier burghers bought up the co-ops and created manufactures that utilized division of labor and centralized the productive force. Marx notes that it is at this stage that the infant bourgeoisie is born; they are the owners and controllers of these manufactures, not laborers, i.e. employers versus employees. The economic growth feeds the rising bourgeoisie. The transformation is almost complete, for production, once an individual act for immediate consumption, has now become an organized social act, not for the laborer's subsistence, but for exchange on the new markets. Furthermore, the market has been expanded from the individual to the village, to surrounding regions, and finally to the entire nation. The final step in the formation of capitalism occurs as an historical inevitability following the law of supply and demand. The manufactures are still too inefficient to accommodate the increasing demands, causing the bourgeoisie to invest in revolutionizing the forces of production. Technology explodes and soon heavy machinery is introduced into the manufactures creating the first modern capitalistic factories. The last element of capitalism is realized, that is, the mass production of goods by a class of laborers to be exchanged on the *world* market as commodities. The

domination of the wealthy bourgeoisie destroys the last vestiges of the feudal economic system, funneling all non-owners of capital into one massive, equalized labor force, the proletariat.

As the bourgeoisie climbed to supremacy due to its growing economic power, it gained a corresponding political standing, until, as Marx writes, "The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie" (475). Bourgeois capitalism had transformed all of society: amassing the masses in industrial urban centers; centralizing the means of productions into factories; creating a commodity-based world market, concentrating property; polarizing society into the bourgeoisie itself and all those it exploited, the proletariat; and infiltrating the seat of government. "In one word, it [the bourgeoisie] creates a world after its own image" (475).

The birth and growth of capitalism, according to Marx, is no more than the revolution in the feudal society's modes, means, and forces of production and of exchange due to certain historical circumstances. The nature of Marx's response, that is, its philosophical context will be addressed below.

Twenty years after the death of Karl Marx, Max Weber attempted also to understand the origins of capitalism. However, Weber, aware of the extent and variety of forms of capitalism throughout history and the world, wished to focus on the modern, Occidental species of capitalism, as exemplified by what he calls the "spirit of capitalism." Weber's first insight is that western capitalism, like western art, religion, science, history, law, etc., is characterized by its *rationalization*, and to which all of these institutions owe their being particularly well developed. Wanting to avoid any misinterpretation, Weber states clearly that capitalism is not synonymous with greed, for unlike capitalism, greed has existed in all societies in all times. Capitalism, most generally speaking, is "the pursuit of profit, and forever *renewed* profit, by means of a continual, rational, capitalistic enterprise" (17).

But, unique to the modern Occident there have emerged certain characteristics that define a new "spirit of capitalism." Unlike previous forms of capitalism, this breed developed a separation of the household and the business as two distinct realms of social activity. Secondly, a system of rational bookkeeping was adopted to calculate profit in order that money could be quickly re-invested into the business. Thirdly, there evolved a "rational, capitalistic organization of (formally) free labor" (21). In addition, the emphasis of economic activity slowly shifts from mere subsistence and consumption to a continual search for profit. The "spirit of capitalism" transforms the profession from a *mean* to an *end* in itself, that is, as will be discussed, a calling. Lastly, the most powerful feature of this new breed of capitalism is that it elevated an economic attitude to the status of an *ethos*, an ethical obligation. These characteristics, Weber maintains, prove modern, western capitalism to be qualitatively distinct from other species of capitalism. Whereas Marx did not perhaps recognize alternate species of capitalism, Weber specifically seeks the origin of this unique, rational, "sober bourgeois capitalism."

Weber has thus narrowed his inquiry to the origin of the spirit of rational capitalism. What are possible sources of or influences on the rise of this species of capitalism? Perhaps the development of technology and its systematic utilization produced a systematic and rationalistic economy. True, but the development of technology was itself dependent upon the rational studies of mathematics and the natural sciences. Although Weber recognizes the influence of the sciences, he does not conclude that they are the sole or primary source of rational capitalism. Enlarging his scope, Weber believes that a "rational structure of law and of administration" (25) that allows for the technical utilization of scientific knowledge could suffice to create a new species of capitalism. Immediately, though, the question must be asked, "From whence came this rational structure of law that ignited the spirit of capitalism?" At this point, the schism between Marx and Weber becomes evident. Marx would argue that the "juridical and political institutions" are themselves only products of the capitalist mode of production

manifested in civil society. Attempting to show the insufficiency (not necessarily the fallacy) of this approach, Weber argues that if Marx's "law" is indeed correct, then one would expect to find rational societal institutions supporting the spirit of capitalism wherever the capitalist mode of production has gained access to lawmaking. Weber contests that this is not the case, citing the example of India. Therefore, Weber concludes that "Quite different forces were at work in this development" (25).

The search for the origin of capitalism has already led Weber into opposition with Marx. Weber believes that the western rationalistic spirit incubated and nurtured to maturity this species of capitalism, while Marx contends that it is the rationalism that is the child of the capitalist economy. It is important to note that Weber does not deny the influence of economics on ideology, but he does not believe, as Marx does, that it is solely responsible for the dominant spirit of capitalism in the form of an *ethos*. Having developed some new insights, Weber's thesis begins to take shape:

> the development of economic rationalism is partly dependent on rational technique and law, it is at the same time determined by the ability and disposition of men to adopt certain types of practical rational conduct. When these types have been obstructed by spiritual obstacles, the development of rational economic conduct has also met serious inner resistance. (27)

Weber has now touched upon the core of his thesis, that the rise of rationalism, and therefore capitalism, is dependent upon and even determined by man's religious ideologies.

Weber, convinced that religious practices have influenced the growth of capitalism, investigates and discovers some interesting correlations that support his hypothesis. Statistically speaking, business leaders, owners of capital, highly-skilled craftsmen, and trained professionals are overwhelmingly Protestant. Secondly, Weber, in reviewing German school records, found that Catholics favor an education in the humanistic gymnasium, whereas Protestants dominate the technical gymnasium, which lead directly to professions in middle-class, capitalistic business life. In addition, the majority of craftsmen leaving the guild to assume "the upper ranks of skilled labor and administrative positions"

(35) are also Protestant. Fourthly, Weber learned that the Pietist women (another branch of Protestant asceticism) of southern German textile factories were, empirically speaking, more efficient and productive workers than their Catholic counterparts. These evidences, along with the simple observation that the rise of western, rational capitalism and the emergence of Protestantism coincide during the 16th and 17th centuries, persuades Weber to conclude that:

> the Protestants both as ruling classes and as ruled, both as majority and as minority, have shown a special tendency to develop economic rationalism which cannot be observed to the same extent among Catholics. (40)

The rise and dominance of the spirit of capitalism is, according to Weber, dependent upon the rise and dominance of the Protestant faith. This could not be further removed from Marx, for whom the history of civil society was explicable only in terms of its political economy.

The origin of that "sober bourgeois capitalism" then must be found in the religious doctrines of Protestantism. To validate his claim, Weber proceeds to study the doctrines of Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Calvinism in order to find any possible correlation between an attitude toward economic conduct and salvation. Only in Calvinism (representing all ascetic Protestant sects) is there an appreciable connection. Work, in Calvinist doctrines and exegeses, is important for three fundamental reasons. Firstly, as a creature of inherent original sin, man is damned and impotent to achieve salvation. Therefore, the only thing he can occupy himself with is *working* to build the kingdom of God on Earth according to his commandments. Secondly, Calvinism includes a strict belief in God's providence and predestination. The result is that if an individual works diligently and prospers, he is successful because God determined it should be so. In addition, since God would not allow an evil man to prosper, the good, diligent worker reasons that he is successful, it must be a sign that he is among God's Elect. In this manner, work gains symbolic significance as a sign of salvation and a means of relieving

one's anxiety in this life. Thirdly, if everything is pre-ordained by God's eternal design, then the profession that an individual practices was, in a sense, assigned to him by God. Work, for the ascetic Protestant, is elevated to the role of a *calling*, to which we are ethically and religiously bound.

The above three principles of Calvinist belief elevate the role of work and establish a certain attitude toward one's economic conduct. In delving deeper into Calvinist theology, Weber discovers several other characteristics that would contribute to the development of the spirit of capitalism. Why does Calvinism reinforce rationalism? Weber writes, "The God of Calvinism demanded of his believers not single good works, but a life of good works combined into a unified system" (113). The spontaneous enjoyment of life studded with occasional confessions and penitence was cast aside. The Calvinist, in the desire to lead an entire life of piety, was required to look to the future, plan, develop long-term habits. No doubt such a life demanded forethought and diligence, two key characteristics of modern, rational capitalism. One might object "Isn't money evil?" Weber, attempting to understand the Calvinist perspective, writes:

> Wealth is bad ethically in so far as it is a temptation to idleness and sinful enjoyment of life, and its acquisition is bad only when it is with the purpose of later living merrily and without care. But as a performance of duty in calling it is not only morally permissible, but actually enjoined. (163)

Thus wealth is only good in so far as it is a representation of an individual's duty to God. Lastly, if Calvinists do not seek money as an end, what do they do with it? Since spontaneous enjoyment of money is morally reprehensible, the Calvinist is taught to practice limited consumption. Limited consumption in turn amounts to accumulated capital. That money is then *invested* into the community in order glorify God and realize his kingdom on Earth. Accumulated capital and the belief in investment are two further key components without which capitalism would have collapsed.

Weber would agree with Marx that once capitalism has established itself as a "cosmos" into which one is born and to which one must adapt in order to survive, it

shapes and forces men to adopt a certain disposition. But, Weber feels he has sufficiently proven that in order for capitalism to be have taken root in the first place, it must have been preceded by a certain ideological foundation that would accept and support it.

Given the responses of Marx and Weber concerning the origin of capitalism, what do they reveal about their perspectives on the history and development of society? Attacking Hegel's "dialectical idealism," Marx maintained that history progressed, not on account of dominant ideologies, but as a response to changes in man's material existence. For this reason, Marx is known as an historical materialist. In reference to Weber's challenge, Marx would answer (oversimplified) that an ideology is the result of the underlying economy. Marx's perspective is summed up by Friedrich Engels as follows:

> Then it was seen that all past history...was the history of class struggles; that these warring classes of society are always the products of the modes of production and exchange, in a word, of the economic conditions of their time; that the economic structure of society always furnishes the real basis, starting from which we can alone work out the ultimate explanation of the whole superstructure of juridical and political institutions as well as of the religious, philosophical, and other ideas of a given historical period. Hegel had freed history from metaphysics- he had made it dialectic; but his conception of history was essentially idealistic. But now idealism was driven from its last refuge, the philosophy of history; now a materialistic treatment of history was propounded, and a method found of explaining man's "knowing" by his "being," instead of, as heretofore, his "being" by his "knowing." (699)

Ironically, it is just this latter case that Weber is trying to uphold. In his conception of history, the economic factor is relevant, but not dominant. In his explanation of the birth of capitalism, Weber argues with great conviction that, at least in this case, it is an underlying ideology, or more specifically, a dominant religious and moral *ethos*, that produced modern, western capitalism.

Animal Farm:

A Political Barnyard

By. Jimmy Schryver

In this, the first semester of the Social Science division of the Core Curriculum, various works by different authors have been read which expressed many different opinions concerning society and the causes for certain societal events throughout history. However, we do not read any work which ties two or more of these writers/writings together. One work which accomplishes this is George Orwell's Animal Farm. Into this book, the author has integrated ideas from Hobbes, Rousseau, Hume, de Tocqueville and Marx.

The Rebellion which occurs in this book is born out of the Hobbesian thoughts of an old pig. Shortly before his death, he proclaims to his fellow animals,

> 'Now, comrades, what is the nature of this life of ours? Let us face it: our lives are miserable, laborious and short....No animal in England knows the meaning of happiness or leisure after he is a year old. No animal in England is free. The life of an animal is misery and slavery: that is the plain truth' (p.8).

Hobbes' own words are similar: "Life is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short." He claimed that all men are indeed equal: they are equally base. Old Major, the pig expressing these thoughts, urges the animals to work together to change this. He tells them they must work for a rebellion that will result in the overthrow of Man, who has become the equivalent of Marx's bourgeoisie for the animals. Man is the sole reason that the animals do not have any connection with the products that they produce. The animals have become the equivalent of Marx's wage laborers. They work solely to produce, and the only profits they see are those which they ultimately consume in the form of food. The Rebellion may not occur in their lifetimes, but they must nonetheless work tirelessly towards its completion.

Major then goes on to supply the ideological basis for the social contract which the animals later draw up. Their own Leviathan, it will contain ideas and

maxims which include, above all, the equality of all animals. Their motivation in this cause takes the form of a song entitled "Beasts of England." This is sung later in the book as part of a Mass-like procession, occurring on Sundays, which has the opposite effect as Marx's *Opium des Volkes*. In fact, it has an effect much like that caused by religions in Weber's view, it inspires and motivates the animals to work for something. This is effected by phrases such as "Hearken to my joyful tidings of the future time," and "Soon or late the day is coming, tyrant Man shall be o'erthrown," (p.13).

As part of a final warning about their state and also as a foreshadowing device, Orwell includes elements of Alexis de Tocqueville's ideas in the boar's speech. Alexis de Tocqueville claimed that, as a result of the French masses' lack of practical experience in governing themselves and their blindness to all other consequences of the Revolution, outside of the fact that they were now equal, they ended up creating a system similar (albeit more tyrannical) to that which they had sought to overthrow.

de Tocqueville, or Major rather, warns the animals against this.

> 'And remember that also in fighting against Man, we must not come to resemble him. Even when you have conquered him, do not adopt his vices. No animal must ever live in a house, or sleep in a bed, or wear clothes, or drink alcohol, or smoke tobacco, or touch money, or engage in trade. All the habits of Man are evil. And above all, no animal must ever tyrannize over his own kind' (p.12).

The reasons behind this are obvious. To perform such acts would be to become more like Man. And since Man represents the system that they are trying to overthrow, to become like him would be to repeat what happened during the French Revolution. Major's advice is heeded, and the prohibitions become part of

the social contract which the animals draw up for themselves after the Rebellion has taken place.

Another warning present in Major's speech is based on Rousseau's logic. Just as the latter claims those with the most property will convince those with less to join together with them for their mutual benefit, Major states that Man too will claim that his actions are of mutual benefit to all. The truth, however, that the contract makers hide, is that they are the only ones who are going to benefit. This is seen later in the book, as the pigs continuously manipulate the contract for their own purposes.

The Rebellion, when it does occur, happens as a result of some of the same reasons that de Tocqueville claims made the privileges of the nobility unbearable to the French masses. Mr. Jones, the owner of the farm became incompetent in his abilities.

> For whole days at a time he would lounge in his Windsor chair in the kitchen, reading the newspapers, drinking, and occasionally feeding Moses on crusts of bread soaked in beer. His men were idle and dishonest, the fields were full of weeds, the buildings wanted roofing, the hedges were neglected, and the animals were underfed (p. 18).

As with the French Revolution, for which the final catalyst was famine, the Rebellion on the Manor Farm ultimately occurs when Jones attacks the unfed animals who have broken into the food shed to eat.

Although the Rebellion takes its inspiration from Hobbesian logic and establishes a social contract, the problems which Rousseau claims come with society begin to appear before long. For example, the pigs begin to distinguish themselves from everyone else almost immediately. Rousseau's view of society as corrupting is based on the notion that "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts

absolutely." He claims that this results in greed, and that those who feel greed then seek to increase their power. One of the ways in which they do this is through the use of social distinctions. These distinctions take on four different forms: wealth, nobility or rank, power, and personal merit. Throughout the novel, the power which the pigs possess as the recognized leaders of the farm grows. Rousseau would predict that, as this happens, their greed and corruption would increase. This is, in fact, exactly what occurs.

The distinctions start off small, the pigs receive milk and apples in their food when the other animals do not. In addition, they do not participate in the actual physical labor which must be done. Instead, they supervise. As the novel progresses, they move into the house, begin sleeping in beds, and even eat in the kitchen. Later on, they begin to wear clothes, drink beer, and walk upright. Meanwhile, one of the pigs, named **Napoleon**, takes total control of the farm and keeps order and destroys dissension by means of an army of dogs totally loyal to him alone.

At this point, one might ask, how the other animals could allow all of this to happen. To understand this, one must look at how Orwell made use of the ideas of de Tocqueville, Marx, and Hume. Once this is done, the fact that the animals do not rebel against the pigs can be explained and understood.

First, just as the French were so engrossed in the notion of equality that they became blind to the fact that they were all equally oppressed, the animals also fail to see what is going on. They are so obsessed with the idea of freedom and so opposed to anything that could possibly result in the return of Jones to the farm, that they become blind to everything else. Thus, anytime anything that is shocking to the animals occurs, they are reassured by the belief that they are still better off then when Jones ran the farm. And many a time an explanation beginning with the

words "Now you don't want Jones to come back do you..." is enough to assuage any doubt as to the righteousness of the actions taken by the pigs.

Second, the pigs are clever enough to combine this sort of manipulation with that provided by religion. There are many points in the story where Marx's opinion about religion being the *Opium des Volkes* can be observed. For instance, when the song "Beasts of England" becomes abhorrent to the, at this point in the story, very human pigs, they replace it with another song praising the farm itself. "Animal Farm, Animal Farm, Never through me shalt thou come to harm" (p.77). And when that song no longer fits the needs of the now tyrannical Napoleon, a new one is written praising him. Also, the contract painted on the side of the barn (ideology) is continually changed to support the increasing destinctions of the pigs from the others. The best example of an opium-like ideology that pacifies the proletariat of animals, is that which is spread by Moses, the tame raven. He continually tells the animals tales of Sugarcandy Mountain where there is all the sugar and clover they could ever want. The animals themselves do not understand why he is allowed to stay on the farm without working, "A thing that was difficult to determine was the attitude of the pigs towards Moses. They all declared contemptuously that his stories allowed him to remain on the farm, not working, with an allowance of a gill of beer a day" (p.100), but Marx would have no trouble explaining this.

Lastly, Hume claims that man allows himself to be repressed simply because he has become habituated to his servitude. This is the case with the animals, too. Once a new religion is installed, and the old one forgotten, the animals can never seem to clearly remember the way things were before. Later on, after many of those originally present during the Rebellion have died, no one knows that it had ever been any different. Those that try to remember can only vainly attempt to grasp image after cloudy image in their foggy memories.

The end result of all this comes right out of de Tocqueville. The pigs create so many distinctions and privileges for themselves, that the animals have trouble knowing who to fear more, Man or pig. Especially since the latter are now walking upright and carrying whips, just like those they overthrew. The result of all this is expressed best by Orwell himself.

> Twelve voices were shouting in anger, and they were all alike. No question, now, what had happened to the faces of the pigs. The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which (p.120).

As one can see, Orwell has integrated the ideas and theories of many of the thinkers we have studied this semester into his work. Animal Farm contains elements of Hobbes, Rousseau, and Marx, to name a few. All of these different writers are brought together and indirectly compared and contrasted in one work. And it is done in a way that makes them easier to understand in relation to one another. Thus, Animal Farm can truly be considered a Core book.

Author Biographies

A Biology major, **Yu-Ming Chang** immigrated from Taiwan when he was seven.

Joanne Dolan is currently studying Advertising in the College of Communications and English in the College of Liberal Arts. She plans to pursue a career in publishing.

Jason Florack is currently an English major a Philosophy minor. Besides the recommended ten hours a day he spends studying (hee hee), Jason spends his time hanging with friends, listening to Stone Temple Pilots and Pearl Jam, watching *Star Trek*, and singing with the Dear Abbeys, the all-male a cappella group at BU. After his undergraduate career, Jason plans to go on to law school to pursue corporate law.

Timothy M. Freiermuth is a member of CLA'97 majoring in Philosophy and French Language and Literature.

When **Erin Green** was eleven-years-old, she adopted the philosophy of Chapter 56 of the Tao te Ching. I had never heard of Lao-Tzu. I achieved my peaceful non-action through watching and listening. Ever since, I have been filing and synthesizing my observations of you. Don't think that an absence of speech is an absence of thought.

After a failed stint as an Astrophysics major, **Ryan Hawkins** has chosen to pursue a higher calling in English. Not wishing to make life too easy for himself though, Mr. Hawkins will also be announcing himself as a Journalism major at the School of Communication through BUCOP next year, in addition to his second concentration in Russian Studies over in the College of Liberal Arts. Much to his chagrin, Ryan opted not to remain in the Core Curriculum long enough to read Doestoevsky's *Crime and Punishment.*

Jimmy Schryver is a European Medieval Archeology and Art History major in the College of Liberal Arts. Driven by Faustian desires, he is a sophomore in the Core and has weathered all eight semesters. Among his other interests, Jimmy is fascinated with languages and plans to study in Padova Italy next year. When not being harassed by political parties to run for the Presidency, he enjoys traveling, exploring new places, and trying new things. If curiosity killed the cat, all this Core student has to say is "meow".

Kyle Kaufman currently dreams of a summer where he is paid for each hour of reading and writing. He would have liked to seduce Samuel Beckett, and would enjoy grafting T.S. Eliot and Jacques Derrida together. None of this, however, prevents him from enjoying a life of small pleasures, Stanley "2001" Kubrick films, and an ever-shifting array of good music. Since he is

alien to permanence, if he ever sheds his 'slackitude' he will no doubt realize all of humanity's dreams and attain Godhead. And, someday he might try to learn French so he'll know *exactly what is going on over there* : in short, he is perhaps the most pleasant hypocrite you'll ever meet, and undoubtedly all-too-human.

Peter Kovas hails from the Bay Area Peninsula in California. All things considered, he'd rather sit on the floor. Praise be to the source of creativity, Campbell's "Mythosphere" and my inspiration; my teachers, instructors, and fellows on my Way. Ever and always striving in the wrong direction...

Andy Kwong, who is a Junior in CLA and the resident lunatic of Core, majors in Statistics and minors in Latin. He hopes to form ever-more wondrous models of the world with math, be forever laughing with friends in his journeys and celebrate their latest adventures singing "Hero of Heroes". And he always seeks the love of a brilliant, beautiful woman. For he wants life to be as J.R.R. Tolkien said: "You must be careful each time you step out of your door, because the front walk is really a road, and the road leads ever onward".

Leslie L. McGrann belongs to the College of Liberal Arts class of 1997. Leslie is majoring in European History, with a minor in Russian and East European Studies. Most importantly, Leslie is fond of a piece of pie and a good cup of coffee.

Shannon Parrott is a first-year student studying Political science and Philosophy in the College of Liberal arts. She is from Corvallis Oregon, and this is her first time on the East Coast (though not her first time away from home). She claims: "I am the most neurotic person I've ever met in terms of writing papers", a statement which her roommates were swift to verify. None-the-less, writing is a hobby she enjoys and pursues in her spare time (whenever that may be). Thanks to Karelia for the late night advice and coffee table talk, her roommates for their understanding (or at least their patience), and, of course, Mom, because no dedication would be complete without at least a mention.