
READING BY STARLIGHT
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READING BY STARLIGHT
CORE TEXTS FROM CONFUCIUS TO ZADIE SMITH

Selected Papers from the Twenty-Fourth & Twenty-Fifth Annual Conferences of the Association for Core Texts and Courses
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Acknowledgments

(Chen)
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Contents

Introduction

Thus far in the twenty-first century, higher education, like much else, could be periodized into three eras: pre-pandemic, pandemic, and post-pandemic. The lines between the pandemic era and post-pandemic era remain a matter of dispute. Much easier to pinpoint was the timeline that forced isolation and foisted Zoom instruction upon faculty and students in all institutions of higher learning. COVID-19 and its after-effects further put academic organizations such as the Association for Core Texts and Courses (ACTC) on a difficult path in maintaining their regular activities. As academics keep on learning more about the effects of the pandemic and discerning ways to thrive in the post-pandemic era, it is worth looking back at some of their achievements before the disruptive global event occurred.

This modest collection represents some of the thoughtful and searching scholarship found at the two annual conferences prior to the pandemic era. They took place in Framingham, Massachusetts in April 2018 and, a year later, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Conference participants gave some 400 panel papers and keynote addresses in all—and dozens submitted theirs for review and consideration of inclusion in this volume. We wish to thank all of them.

Long after those events, we remain most appreciative for sponsoring institutions of the conferences because they made possible the first steps (and most important) that led to this collection. For the 2018 conference, Assumption College was the main sponsor, and the co-sponsors included Villanova University, Boston University, and the Alliance for Liberal Learning. In the following year, St. John's College, Santa Fe served as the main sponsor and co-sponsorship came from Dharma Realm Buddhist University, Shimer Great Books School at North Central College, and the School of Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership at Arizona State University.

Except for two bookending pieces in this volume—one on engineering and the liberal arts; the other on the fine arts and the liberal arts—the essays are arranged according to a chronological order of authorial lives and texts under discussion. These chapters discuss and analyze a mix of texts. Some of them are widely taught in undergraduate programs: e.g., the *Iliad*, *Hamlet*, and *Persuasion.* Others, including the eighth- and ninth-century texts, are less familiar, even obscure. The essays on more familiar texts seek to offer fresh ways to understand and teach them. The essays on less familiar texts introduce them partially by drawing comparisons to more familiar texts. I have learned a lot from reading these essays, and I hope that you too will read and benefit from them.

Tuan Hoang, Pepperdine University

OPENING

ENGINEERING AND THE LIBERAL ARTS

What to Make of the Liberal Arts

Louis Bucciarelli
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

In her email inviting me to speak at this event, the executive director reported that the Association for Core Texts and Courses was considering organizing a Bridging the Gap 2.0 project that would focus on the study of core texts and applied science, specifically, engineering. Like the *Bridging the Gap Between Humanities and Science* workshops launched in 2003, this second edition would bring together humanities scholars and engineering scholars interested in developing and implementing general liberal education courses based in the humanities.

Liberal Studies in Engineering: A Proposal

The idea is very much in line with the purpose of a project which I, and my colleague, Professor David Drew of the Claremont Graduate University, have been engaged over the past three years—a collaborative NSF funded project intended to research and explore opportunities to establish a new kind of undergraduate degree program, a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies in Engineering.[1] The program would bring exemplary content of engineering education into play with study in the liberal arts in courses based in the humanities. For students interested in pursuing a career in engineering, it would provide a smoother, broader pathway into the profession. For students interested in the liberal arts per se, it would provide an education enriched with study of engineering from the perspective of the humanities and social sciences. I emphasize that courses would be rooted in the liberal arts:

[1] Bucciarelli, L.L. and Drew, D.E., "Liberal studies in engineering—a design plan", *Engineering Studies*, 2015. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10. 1080/19378629.2015.1077253.

We want to make the liberal arts the foundation for this new undergraduate, pre-professional degree program.

The Gap

To establish a *Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies in Engineering* will not be easy. Our research on the feasibility of implementing a program of this sort at various universities and colleges reveals the difficulty of the task. There truly is a gap to be bridged in attempting to bring study in engineering and in the liberal arts into meaningful engagement, a gap evident in fundamental differences in the aims of education, in their perceptions one another, as well as in what students do in the classroom. Students of engineering solve problems in electronics, mechanics, thermodynamics, etc. in accord with contemporary theories and methods of these engineering sciences—problems having but a single correct answer usually expressed in numbers. In engineering design, students put this knowledge to use in making new products and systems, in hardware, and in software. Instrumental methods are powerful, seemingly unbounded in their potential use. The ends are given, only the means are lacking.

While students in the liberal arts may use quantitative instrumental methods, they rarely confront a question admitting of but a single acceptable response. Their studies are more open-ended, require consideration of different perspectives, reflection on methods, a close reading of texts—some of which were written ages ago in a language unfamiliar. (History rarely figures into an engineer's studies.) The problems they are assigned generally have many meaningful responses. The task is more about the evaluation of ends, not application of means. How then to bridge the gap? I turn to illustrate how we propose to accomplish this in a *Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies in Engineering* degree program.

Modules as a Way toward Bridging

Colleagues and I have developed four "modules," each of which is designed for use in four different kinds of liberal arts courses. Such courses might be part of a spine of a liberal studies (in engineering) major, or a set that satisfies a general studies requirement. (I am not going to say anything more about possible curriculum structures.) The modules, two of which I describe in detail, illustrate how one might bridge the gap by redefining what's taken as fundamental engineering knowledge and by expanding the scope of what's considered appropriate for reflection and study in the liberal arts. With respect to the former, the effect is achieved by introducing and taking seriously contextual, cultural features of engineering thought and practice normally shunned, abstracted away in problem solving.

With respect to the liberal arts, the effect is achieved by introducing exemplary concepts, principles and methods used in engineering problem solving but cast in a way which invites critical reflection from the perspective of the humanities and social sciences. It will become clear that this bridging will require real collaboration of faculty from both domains.

Galileo and the Resistance of Beams to Fracture

My first module, *Galileo and the Resistance of Beams,* is meant for use in a course in the History and/or Philosophy of Science. It focuses on Galileo's analysis of the failure of a common structural element—the cantilever beam as found in his *Dialogue Concerning Two New Sciences*. While Galileo is best known for his defense of the Copernican hypothesis (his *Dialogue on Two Chief World Systems*) his *Two New Sciences* is more relevant to the development of engineering thought and practice. The most oft cited chapter of this, his final work, is the third dialogue where Galileo presents his analysis of the "local motion" of falling objects. Our interest is in the first chapter, the first day of dialogue, where he addresses the resistance which solid bodies offer to fracture.

As prelude to his analysis of the conditions for fracture of a cantilever beam, he displays his ingenuity in presenting a thought experiment meant to counter an observation of Simplicio, one of three interlocutors engaged in dialogue, that a very long rope is less able to support a large weight than a short one. As seen from a short section of an exchange, his argument goes as follows.

Simplicio: Before proceeding further I should like to have one of my difficulties removed.… that in the case of a rope we observe that a very long one is less able to support a large weight than a short one.

Salviati: I fear, Simplicio, if I correctly catch your meaning, that in this particular you are making the same mistake as many others; that is if you mean to say that a long rope, one of perhaps 40 cubits, cannot hold up so great a weight as a shorter length, say one or two cubits, of the same rope.

Simplicio: That is what I meant, and as far as I see the proposition is highly probable.

Salviati: On the contrary, I consider it not merely improbable but false; and I think I can easily convince you of your error. Let AB represent the rope, fastened at the upper end A: at the lower end attach a weight C whose force is just sufficient to [122] break the rope. Now, Simplicio, point out the exact place where you think the break ought to occur.

Simplicio: Let us say D.

Salviati: And why at D?

Simplicio: Because at this point the rope is not strong enough to support, say, 100 pounds, made up of the portion of the rope DB and the stone C.

Salviati: Accordingly whenever the rope is stretched with the weight of 100 pounds at D it will break there.

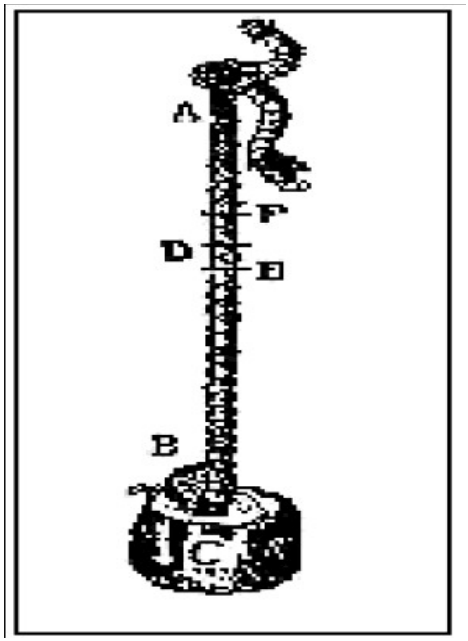
Simplicio: I think so.

Salviati: But tell me, if instead of attaching the weight at the end of the rope, B, one fastens it at a point nearer D, say, at E: or if, instead

of fixing the upper end of the rope at A, one fastens it at some point F, just above D, will not the rope, at the point D, be subject to the same pull of 100 pounds?

Simplicio: It would, provided you include with the stone C the portion of rope EB.

Salviati: Let us therefore suppose that the rope is stretched at the point D with a weight of 100 pounds, then according to your own admission it will break; but FE is only a small portion of AB; how can you therefore maintain that the long rope is weaker than the short one? Give up then this erroneous view which you share with many very intelligent people, and let us proceed.[2]



[2] Galileo Galilei, *Two New Sciences*, trans: Crew and de Salvio, Macmillan, 1914, Dover Edition, pp 121–123.

Leaving aside any discussion of the literary merits of the text, we ask—sensing an opportunity to bridge the gap twixt the humanities and engineering: did Galileo actually do the experiment?

One way to answer this question is to try to do this "thought experiment." That is, with the materials and their arrangement Galileo (Salviati) describes solely in words (and a single figure), subject a rope of the kind shown in the figure and of 40 cubits long to a force of some 100 pounds and record where it fails. Then attach the same weight to a point higher up, gathering up the displaced rope and, fixing it to the weight, and observe if and where the rope fails. If they fail at the same point along the rope, we can claim that Salviati's argument is convincing.

Now, any good experimentalist has a good idea of what the results of their tests will be before stepping into the lab. Otherwise, left completely in the dark, one has no idea of what ingredients to purchase, assemble and put to the test. In this case we need to know, or guess first, what the rope was made of, and second, make an estimate of what weight it will take to break the rope. An estimate of the rope diameter, based on the figure, is required to figure the weight at break. This, we, conjecture to be one inch.

Students are encouraged to use the web. There they learn today's equivalent length of a cubit and that in the 17th century, hemp would have been material of choice for a rope of the sort shown in the figure.

With the material and the diameter, students can again from the web, find a ballpark figure for the weight that will break a rope of the girth shown in the figure. They discover that a rope of one inch diameter would require thousands of pounds to break, not 100. Their design of the experiment will most likely lead them to conclude that Galileo did not actually do the experiment.

This prompts the following questions. What difference does it make to the force of Galileo's argument if he did not actually do the experiment? Is it necessary that a thought experiment be realized for its

results to be trusted, for the argument to have meaning?[3] The module then turns to Galileo's analysis of conditions for fracture of a cantilever beam subject to a large weight at its free end, his Proposition I: "the magnitude of the force applied at C bears to the magnitude of the (absolute) resistance, found in the thickness of the prism, i.e., in the attachment of the base BA to its contiguous parts, the same ratio which the length CB bears to half the length BA."

He relates the weight applied at the end of the beam that will cause fracture to the force that will break the same beam when that force, the absolute resistance, is applied longitudinally. Today we would call this absolute resistance the tensile strength of the prism. Once you have that value in hand, you can, then predict, using Proposition I, the weight hung at the end of the beam *of any dimensions* that will cause the beam to fail.

Unfortunately, Galileo's Proposition I is wrong according to today's treatment. His model is attractive but off. However, his *scaling laws are correct.* That is, if we know the weight which will fracture a cantilever beam of certain dimensions, we can correctly predict the weight which will fracture a beam of different dimensions.

Students are asked to consider how an engineering theory can be both wrong and right. To relieve students' anxiety, a unit of the module explains how today's engineers analyze a cantilever beam. Students, in an engineering problem set, are asked to compare Galileo's result with the result they find using today's engineering beam theory.

As a further brush with philosophy, the module presents an excerpt from a letter of Descartes, what we would call a book review, of Galileo's *Dialogue concerning Two New Sciences*, prompts reflection on the differences in thought and practice of scientists and engineers today.

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[3] Was Galileo the experimentalist some historians describe? The claim has been challenged by philosophers: Sture, A., and Nobelstiftelsen. *Possible Worlds in Humanities, Arts and Sciences: Proceedings of Nobel Symposium 65*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010, pp. 82ff.

My Reverend Father,

> I begin this letter with my observations on the book of Galilee. In general, I find that he philosophizes much better than is commonly the case in that he, for the most part, avoids the errors of The School and tries to examine physical matters with mathematical reasoning. I am entirely in accord with him in this; I hold there is no other means to find the truth. But it seems to me that he lacks a lot in the way he continually makes digressions and never stops to completely explain matters; this which shows that he has not examined them in order and that, without having considered the first causes in nature, he has only sought reasons for particular effects, and thus he has built without foundation. Now as his method of philosophy more closely approaches the truth, one can more easily recognize his faults, just as one can better say when those who sometimes follow the right path go astray compared to when those who never take the right path go wrong.[4]

Consider the claim that "he lacks a lot in the way he continually makes digressions and never stops to completely explain matters; this which shows that he has not examined them in order and that, without having considered the first causes in nature." Perhaps Descartes was put off by the failure of Galileo to base his analysis of the resistance the beam offers to fracture on Galileo's analysis of the causes of cohesion—an analysis which takes up a whole other chapter in the *Two New Sciences*. Evidently, Descartes did not accept modeling of the beam, seeing it as a lever.

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[4] Descartes to Mersenne, 11 October, 1638, Œuvres Complètes de René Descartes. Electronic Edition. http://library.nlx.com.libproxy.mit.edu/xtf/view?docId=descartes_fr/ descartes_fr.01.xml;chunk.id=div.descartes.Correspondence.1619.151;toc.depth=1;toc.id=div.descartes. Correspondence.1619.151;brand=default.

Ad hoc modeling, so essential to engineering, challenges the belief that one's analysis of phenomena must be rooted in a minimum number of indisputable fundamentals. Is the law of the lever bedrock in itself, or need it be proved? (We note that Galileo at another place presents a proof while Ernst Mach, a few centuries later, denied that Galileo had proved anything.) Certainly, engineering models must be consistent with the principles of science; that's why study of the sciences (and mathematics) is prerequisite to study of the engineering, e.g., Engineering Beam Theory. But need there be a direct line back to the fundamentals?

The question is: What qualifies as fundamental? To posit a beam as a lever or as a collection of fibers—as Galileo does elsewhere—how is that fundamental?

Engineering Narrative, Gender, and a Computer Science Exercise: A Module

The module *Engineering Narrative, Gender, and a Computer Science Exercise,* is meant for use in a course in *Gender and Science* and/or a course in *Computer Science*. The module's objective is to lead students to reflect on engineering narrative as encountered in their textbooks, lectures, and projects and how narrative embodies particular values and ways of seeing. Our interest is in studying the way exercises are stated and how narrative both constrains and shapes student thinking about the real-world context of an assigned exercise (if there pretends to be one). Part of this is reflecting on what the engineering student is schooled not to see, to ignore, for this is an indication of values as much as any explicit statement of what is good, what is right, what is just and equitable. In particular, we look for bias in text that would work against attracting and retaining women in engineering.

For most of the exercises a student encounters in an engineering course the narrative is carefully constructed to lead the student on without revealing too much about how to solve the problem. Most problem statements are sparsely written, providing only that information essential to framing a solution. Including excessive information that may lead the student astray is considered bad form. But infrequently, one encounters an exercise whose narrative is more interesting in its own right. The Computer Science exercise we treat is of this nature.

Whatever the form of a narrative clothing the instrumental ingredients of a problem, the student's job is to see through the problem's presentation and draw out the mathematical structure that will enable a solution. This underlying structure is fixed relative to the freedom authors have in constructing a narrative. The end of a chapter in an engineering textbook will include a good number of problems, each a different story, but the logic that applies for doing the exercise is one and the same if one digs deep enough. The power of, the scope of applicability of the engineering sciences is displayed in this way.

Narrative, when prevailing unquestioned and apparently needing no articulation (everyone is in on it), can blind ourselves to the possibility that things can be different, that different stories are possible, that presumptions can be called into question. David Foster Wallace's now famous little story about fish makes the point:

> There are these two young fish swimming along, and they happen to meet an older fish swimming the other way, who nods at them and says, `Morning, boys, how's the water?' And the two young fish swim on for a bit, and then eventually one of them looks over at the other and goes, `What the hell is water?'[5]

This module is intended to move students' thinking off its 'default setting'; to become sensitive to the water they swim in—without drowning. Creativity requires this kind of awareness, this kind of openness to a bigger world—the water we all swim in—and that things might be different.

In addition to a critique of the narrative the module leads students on to solve the exercise using the Python computer language. Here is the exercise.

"In this exercise you implement a solver for a reducing ordered selection problem. As an IT engineer in a small company, Mary has just found early that the company plans to lay off one member of her department containing N people every week until only the best is left. In order to find the best logician they are letting everyone choose a position on a list numbered from 1 to N. They will be removing every Kth person, until only one remains. Mary knows she can come up with the best solution to this problem quickly and keep her job, your job is to do likewise.

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[5] David Foster Wallace, who according to The Guardian, was `the most brilliant writer of his generation' began his commencement address to graduates of Kenyon College in May, 2005 with this story. https://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/sep/20/fiction.

For example, if N=7 and K=2, then the firing order is 2 4 6 1 5 3 7, so Mary should choose position 7. Or if N=6 and K=3, then the firing order is 3 6 4 2 5 1, and Mary should stand at position 1."

Now consider the following. "Mary has just found…" indicates a sensitivity to the lack of women majoring in computer science. All well and good. Now jump to the last sentence, "Mary knows she can come up with the best solution to this problem quickly and keep her job, your job is to do likewise."

Think about this. The firm is going to retain but one person. Only one will remain. Now you do the problem, and you too come up with the one best solution (there is only one). Now what happens when you go to put your name in the best place on the list and Mary is already there?

Leave that question aside. More important to our purpose is the question: What would happen if a student in class pointed out this inconsistency, this contradiction? To the best of my knowledge, in the actual computer science class where the problem was assigned, the issue was ignored, not noted. I conjecture that, if it ever were to be voiced, there would be snickers, the rolling of eyes. Students know that the narrative of an exercise is there to be read, seen through, then cast aside. (What's water?)

There is more. What can we say about norms encoded in this little story about life within the firm? It's not a very confidence building picture: the company plans to lay off one member of her department containing N people every week until only the best is left.

Imagine each week one of your colleagues is called into headquarters and told he or she is no longer needed. This goes on and on for N-1 weeks. But you ought not be concerned because you have figured out where to position yourself in the line of fire to avoid the slaughter. Can you imagine the feelings, the emotions of those remaining, none the less those fired the previous weeks? What kind of work environment is this? Is this what it is like to work in computer science—or, for that

matter, in any high-tech firm in the US? Again, these are not the kinds of questions likely to be raised by students enrolled in a computer science class. Would students, reading through the exercise, ever pause to think about the social implications of the narrative; the reactions of employees? Most will—again we conjecture—go right on undistracted, to the instrumental advice about how to solve the problem which follows immediately after the statement of the exercise. It's like students put on a special pair of glasses when they enrolled in the course that block out any suggestion of human experience and exchange. (Or they use the pair distributed last semester.)

But some students might very well see the exercise as a picture of workplace life they cannot imagine themselves being a part of. These are the students who will think twice about persisting in the pursuit of a degree in computer science or engineering even if they are confident that they can do (and do solve) the problem. These are precisely the ones who need reaching out to if one's aim is to expand the diversity of the engineering population.

Conclusion

There are four modules posted online. I have talked about the first and the third. The second, *Techno-Anthro Two Pumps*, and the last, *Science and the Courts,* are meant to be made integral parts of courses in the liberal arts. *Techno-Anthro Two Pumps* is meant for a course in Cultural Anthropology; *Science and the Courts* for a course in Government, or Constitutional Law. The four modules might also find use in engineering. *Galileo and the Resistance of Beams* in a course in Strength of Materials*; Engineering Narrative*; in a course in *Computer Science; Techno-Anthro Two Pumps* in a course in Fluid Mechanics; *Science and the Courts* in a Chemical Engineering Laboratory. (In fact, Galileo has been used that way; so too *Techno-Anthro Two Pumps*.) I must admit that my main motivation for creating the four modules is to provoke students of engineering to take seriously features of context of thought and practice that ought not be ignored and to prompt them to question and

reflect on their "default settings"—as David Wallace put it in his graduation speech at Kenyon College—as they pursue a major in engineering.

Certainly, youth interested in, if not intent upon, pursuing an engineering degree would benefit from an exposure to the ideological, the social, the political—and moral—realities of work on a design team, in the laboratory, in software development, in facing the public. They need to recognize that prevailing technical dogma can be legitimately called into question—that promoting "disruption" may not always prove beneficial to society; that the path of technological innovation is not preordained; that good intention, e.g., "to do no harm", will not suffice if your field of view is truncated, myopic.

I close with remarks about the feasibility of establishing a *Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies in Engineering* by anyone at a university, a liberal arts college, or at a community college. From our research to date, the future does not look promising. We appear to be running against the tide. Youth are to go to college to obtain a marketable skill—at great expense. In engineering we see a move toward further specialization and an increased flexibility in the requirements for a degree leading to further dissipation of any sense of a core learning experience. And now "certificates" in even more narrowly defined fields are offered, some wholly online. Entrepreneurial enthusiasm is at a fever pitch. At the same time, an epidemic of innovation in computer science and information technology has occasioned a dramatic surge in numbers of students seeking to major in those fields. In this environment, the probability of convincing a dean of engineering and her faculty to develop and install a *Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies in Engineering* strikes me as very low indeed.

Hence, I appeal to you, to faculty of the liberal arts—to you to move to bridge the gap. It will require interest and commitment on your part as well as a willingness, hopefully an eagerness, on the part of your engineering faculty colleagues at the other end of campus to collaborate—none the less, the support of deans and the administration.

Without such an initiative on your part, I see little hope for realizing a program in *Liberal Studies in Engineering* or the like.

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TEACHING THE ANCIENTS

The Play's The Thing: Teaching Confucian Ritual

Catherine Klancer
Boston University

I'll begin with the obvious: the *Analects* doesn't always come across as the most exciting or engaging text. In the Core Curriculum at Boston University students encounter Confucius after having read about Gilgamesh and his outsized powers and appetites, about the almighty and often testy God of Genesis and Exodus, and about Odysseus, who not only gets to battle monsters but also, in his down time, gets to be romanced by beautiful ladies. To say the least, Confucius's fervent quest to become a bureaucrat can be a letdown in comparison: to the extent that the *Analects* tells a story, it is one of constant failure to get a government job. Moreover, even aside from questions of character motivation or narrative, the values that Confucius espouses—conformity and obedience among them—are neither intellectually nor morally appealing to many of the students who come through my classroom.

Hence, my job as their teacher and as a Confucian scholar is to help them to come to terms with Confucius' ordinariness on the one hand and his fundamentally conservative message on the other. Focusing on his understanding of ritual (*li,* 禮), which combines both of these characteristics, is a good way of working towards both of these goals, as ritual is a major theme in Confucius' thought and one that tends to jump out at people on the first reading of the *Analects.* Once the students more fully understand what Confucius is up to, they can begin to more effectively question not only his project but also, perhaps even more importantly, their own presuppositions.

We begin with a discussion of what ritual is. This term, along with all the other key terms in the *Analects* and Confucian thought in general, is difficult to define precisely. As my professor, the late Wm. Theodore de Bary, put it, Confucians, unlike Aristotle (another author in

our curriculum), want "not so much to analyze and define concepts precisely as to expand them, make them suggestive of the widest range possible of meaning" (v).

This having been said, of course the students need to have some idea of how the term has been used. The wide definition that I give to them for *li* is *socially and morally appropriate behavior; behavior that is in accordance with existing norms; the best practices for human and cosmic flourishing*. I include the reference to the cosmic to draw their attention to the possibly religious aspects of this term: ritual is not only good for humans, but also for the universe as a whole—an important point to bring up in a text so concerned with human character development and social organization. To use Tu Weiming's coinage, Confucius has not an anthropocentric but an *anthropocosmic* worldview in which we find "communication between self and community, harmony between human species and nature, and mutuality between human beings and Heaven" (302).

Nonetheless, even when students find this kind of vision attractive, they still tend to bring up 12:1 as particularly problematic. In this passage the Master (Confucius) says, "If it is contrary to ritual, don't look at it. If it is contrary to ritual, don't listen to it. If it is contrary to ritual, don't utter it. If it is contrary to ritual, don't do it" (12:1). (All citations of the *Analects* are from Burton Watson's 2009 translation). Students often react against this teaching on the grounds that that living in such strict accordance with rules of behavior not set by oneself (the *givenness* of ritual bothers a great many of them) would be personally stifling, even suffocating. However, while the absoluteness of this passage is striking—which is why it strikes them—it is also a little misleading, as Confucian teachings on ritual do in fact allow for a substantial amount of moderation.

First of all, Confucius admits that different times may call for different practices, as is made clear by 9:3, where he says, "Ritual calls for caps of hemp, though nowadays silk is used, because it is more economical. I go along with others in this." Ritual can and does change.

In fact, one of the traditional tasks of a Confucian *junzi*, or gentleman, is to make sure that the ritual codes of the day remain relevant in context; that they still promote the virtues of humaneness, righteousness, and filial piety they were originally meant to promote.[1] However, from Confucius's point of view, all such work, while important, is going to be mere tweaking, because humans will always be humans, and hence will always need the wisdom of the sages, and of the rituals they developed at the dawn of history.

Second, although it's not in the text of the *Analects* itself, the statement of Mencius, Confucius's great disciple, is also relevant here: In a famous conversation in the *Mencius*, "Shun Yu Kuang asked, 'Is it not ritual propriety that men and women may not touch each other when giving and receiving things?' Mencius replied, 'This is ritual propriety.' 'If a man's sister-in-law is drowning, may he pull her out with his hand?' Mencius replied, 'He who does not rescue his drowning sister-in-law is a wolf. That men and women should not touch one another while giving and receiving things is [the general rule of] ritual propriety. But when a sister-in-law is drowning, to rescue her by the hand is a particular exigency" (Mencius 4A:17, adapted from Chan, 75).[2]

As Mencius makes clear, there are in fact exceptions to the rule of following ritually sanctioned behavior, many of which can be identified with the barest reference to common sense. One way for students from

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[1] For example, the great medieval Confucian philosopher Zhu Xi (1130–1200) noted that "during the Three Dynasties, the ritual texts were adequate. However, in the texts that exist today, the regulations on homes, utensils and clothing, and the instructions on coming and going, rising and sitting, are no longer appropriate for this era" (3626–3627). The pressing need for contemporary guides to proper behavior led Zhu to "presume to adhere to [the example of] Confucius through promoting ideas which were [once] lost," and to write his medieval manual on the rituals to be performed in the home.

[2] Good selections of passages from this canonical Confucian work can be found in Wing-tsit Chan's *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (1963) and Wm. Theodore de Bary & Irene Bloom's *Sources of Chinese Tradition* (1999).

less traditionalist backgrounds to come to more of a balanced understanding of the text is to realize that they tend more or less instinctively to focus on the exceptions to social rules, while Confucians tend to focus on the rules themselves. To put it another way, while they might be primarily concerned about stifling personal expression, Confucians are generally more concerned with the problems that can arise when social mores are not understood or misapplied. Something very important to note here methodologically is that it's not a question of either/or, but rather of emphasis: a distinction I try to help students make by encouraging them to think about how ritual appears in their own lives.

My students have all had the experience of feeling genuine care and concern for someone who is suffering, whether that someone is having a terrible crisis or simply a bad day. They want to help that person, to offer comfort. However, such comfort will be ill-expressed and unsuccessful by behavior inappropriate to the occasion and relationship. For example, making off-color jokes accompanied by hard slaps on the back may work to cheer up a college football player, but will most likely not work so well with that football player's frail and ailing great-grandmother unless she's a very special kind of grandma.

While students from more conservative families tend to already grasp the importance of ritual practice in an intuitive way—some of the most insightful commentators I've had on Confucius have been from Latin American and/or conservative Roman Catholic backgrounds—an example like this can help all the students to see that they themselves use an at least rudimentary sense of a ritual code of behavior appropriate to different social situations, and that, far from disallowing genuine expression or communication of concern, the ritual *enables* the expression or communication of that concern.

Turning back to the *Analects* here is helpful. Confucius, to put it mildly, is not a fan of simply going through the motions of ritual practice. In his mind, ritual is supposed to be there as the *expression* of one's love for others—especially, as we see throughout the *Analects*, for one's

parents—not as a *substitute* for that love, as he says rather pointedly in 2:7: "Ziyou asked about filial devotion. The Master said, Nowadays it's taken to mean just seeing that one's parents get enough to eat. But we do that much for dogs or horses as well. If there is no reverence, how is it any different?" One of the assumptions that I ask students to question concerns whether following ritual codes, which tell people what to say and what to do, is always a restrictive or binding thing to do. And I ask them to consider whether following ritual practice might, to the contrary, be profoundly freeing and empowering: ritual gives the practitioner channels for expressing the thoughts in her mind, the sympathy in her heart, the pain or joy of her soul—as well as some confidence that her companion will understand what she means.

Even when students come on board with this general principle, many remain both fascinated and repelled by the three-year mourning period that Confucius requires his followers to observe after the death of their parents, spelled out particularly clearly in 1:11, in which Confucius says, "After his father is dead, observe his actions. If after three years he hasn't changed his father's way of doing things, then you can call him filial." I get a lot of indignation in response to this passage: many students think that Confucius wants to shackle them to their parents; intriguingly, to date, no student has ever brought up the question of whether her parents might feel shackled to *her*.

The discussion generally takes a turn when I ask them how much bereavement leave would they think people generally receive in corporate America. So far, I have not had a student give a correct answer to this question: all of them think they will get substantially more than the three days which is the standard allowance. It serves as a marvelous example of how a text can help us to see our own society and ourselves from a different and perhaps destabilizing perspective: while the majority of students are not ready at the end of our discussion of the *Analects* to sign on for a three-year mourning period, being exposed to Confucius' ideas concerning death and its aftermath raises some complicated questions about the wisdom of allowing only three days to

grieve the loss of a close family member. These questions, in turn, make the students a bit less confident about their own positions vis-à-vis the values Confucius espouses: a result that is often intellectually rewarding.

Students often tend to read Core texts from an unconsciously assumed perspective of intellectual and moral superiority. And, to a certain extent, I tell them they are right to do so. They *do* have access to scientific knowledge that Aristotle did not have, and I would agree that it *is* a great thing that women can now, for example, lead discussions of Confucius in a seminar made up at least halfway by other women. But is it *always* the case that they're in the superior position with regard to our course authors? I argue that basic common sense will tell them no: it's got to be the case that sometimes, the really smart people who wrote these texts a long time ago know something that they don't. Maybe it is even more often than sometimes. Maybe these texts are valuable not only in the way that they reinforce what the students already think (for the most part, they agree with Confucius that it is a good idea to have trustworthy people in positions of power, for example), but also by the ways in which they challenge students' notions of the way things are or should be. I often ask them to consider whether their default position shouldn't be moral superiority, but rather moral inferiority. Confucius in particular gives us a thought-provoking model of someone who humbly—and truly—*learns from* texts. This doesn't mean, of course, that students are going to jump completely on board with him—a point I'll return to in the conclusion—but it does mean that maybe due to his words they will reflect that, while three years might be too long a period to mourn a loved one, three days is far too short.

And perhaps that reflection might lead to a more sustained meditation on the desirability or even the possibility of a life lived free of ritual restraint. Many of my students are, again, almost unconsciously living with the assumption that all forms of social constraint are bad. They are still living in the time that the Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist and essayist Marilynne Robinson once described as "a time when

people felt as if structure in most forms were a constraint and they attacked it, which in a culture is like an autoimmune problem: the organism is not allowing itself the conditions of its own existence. We're cultural creatures and meaning doesn't simply generate itself out of thin air; it's sustained by a cultural framework. It's like deciding how much more interesting it would be if you had no skeleton: you could just slide under the door" (Robinson). This image is helpful in making our reliance on ritual more vivid, as is the question the social theorist Adam Seligman and his colleagues ask: "how can we express true sincerity except by filtering it through [social conventions]" (106)? One of the great Confucian insights is that, with very few exceptions, all behavior is ritualized. Confucius reminds us of this more than any of the other poets, philosophers, or visionaries we read in our curriculum.

Nonetheless, it's important to grant the many valid reasons in favor of pushing back against the kind of old-fashioned propriety embodied in Confucian ritual practice, which can be both stultifying and disempowering to the already powerless. I think we all can understand where ritual practice can go wrong: my students certainly do.

However, Confucius can help us to think about the positive importance of ritual going *right*, and, more bleakly, about the negative effects on the quality of our everyday life when we let ritual propriety fall by the wayside. And—more ominously still— Confucius can prod us to consider what can happen to the great institutions under whose shadow and protection we live our lives when we let ritual and its notions of propriety go.

As our first-year humanities students read in Plato, and as they hopefully know from their own experience, democracies are composed of individuals who are free to think and speak as they choose: it is a commonplace of human rights discourse and theory that no individual or group should be forced to take on the views of another. The long and short of democracy is that we don't want to have to agree with everyone that we have to live with. While we can get angry at Confucius for not proclaiming egalitarianism, or a more robust idea of

individual agency vis-à-vis the community—and maybe, even, we should; in my classes, students certainly do—he nonetheless gives us something to consider in his focus on the role that ritual, with its attendant virtues of politeness and stability, can play in *harmonizing* a society (1:12). Important here is the fact that the *Analects* is not calling for one voice or one vision; rather, it is arguing for a system in which people, through playing their own part to the fullest, simultaneously enrich their own lives and the life of the community at large. As the sinologist Randall Peerenboom puts it, "ideally, a harmonious social order will allow for individual self-realization… Rather than all voices singing the same note, each distinct voice sings a different note that taken collectively comprise a chord" (244). This society does impose certain restrictions as, after all, for harmony to emerge, as Peerenboom goes on to note, "everyone must still sing from the same songbook." Nonetheless, it also enables individuals to "maintain a degree of autonomy and uniqueness," as "the goal is not oneness in the sense of identity of the parts." Moreover, when it works, ritual *enables* autonomy and uniqueness by establishing a framework that can sustain both. In fact, the most tantalizing idea I've found myself meditating on with my students is the possibility that we might have something to learn from such a profoundly undemocratic thinker in a democratic society that requires a great deal of compromise, co-existence and above all *cooperation,* not just for its flourishing, but for its very survival.

I'd like to close by dwelling on the words "consider" and "possibility." The week after we read the *Analects* is the week we read the *Daodejing*, which calls a lot of Confucian claims regarding the value of ritual into question. We then move on to the Christian Gospels and the *Bhagavad Gita*, neither of which do much to support Confucius' (and Laozi's) belief that humans, on their own and without divine assistance, can figure things out for themselves. For the most part, our curriculum is a destabilizing one: once students have gotten comfortable with one perspective, we introduce them to another, in the face of which they will need to question what they've just learned and consider

new possibilities. I encourage this kind of destabilization by asking them to read critically, certainly, but also in good faith, to take each author and piece of work seriously on its own terms, to see things from the point of view that's being shared before beginning to take it apart. (I also try to put forward the contingencies, incompleteness and provisions of anything we can say in Core courses, where we go through great works of the human mind, each of which people could—and do—spend entire lifetimes studying, in just one or two weeks.) What I would most like, with each work that we read, is that it gives students something to *consider*, and new *possibilities* to ponder.

So, at the end of our section on the *Analects*, yes: Confucius is still almost aggressively ordinary, but Core Curriculum students at Boston University have hopefully begun to consider the importance of the everyday values and gestures that often dictate the quality of life, in our homes, our cities, our nation, the world at large and finally even the cosmos. And they will have hopefully asked themselves some questions about the role of convention and tradition even in the most forward-looking of societies.

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"In Shining Daylight Destroy Us": Definition as the Hero's Reward in Homer's *Iliad*

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In Books XVI and XVII, home to some of the most important battle scenes of Homer's *Iliad*, Zeus covers part of the battlefield in darkness and in mist. These details could go unnoticed, except that it occasions the only prayer spoken in the poem by Aias the son of Telamon, a man known as much for his distaste for rhetoric as Odysseus is known for his love of it. These mists are described as a darkness, a night, but the warriors fighting within them do not act as if they literally cannot see. We will explore these phenomena and suggest that the mists emphasize the lack of individual definition in the face of mortality and the honor given by the gods to a hero through proper funeral rites.

The first mist descends in connection with the death of Sarpedon, the son of Zeus. Zeus and Hera have discussed saving Sarpedon from his fated death, but after Hera draws Zeus's attention to the consequences of making an exception for one man, Zeus chooses to allow Patroklos to kill Sarpedon.[1] Once Sarpedon has died, Glaukos[2] and

[1] Samuel Butler, trans., *The Iliad of Homer*, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1898). Unless they are indicated otherwise, all quotations come from this edition.

[2] Just after the death, Glaukos prays to Apollo for healing from the pain of a battle wound. In contrast to Zeus in one respect but similar in another, Apollo heals the pain of Glaukos's wound. Unlike Zeus, Apollo takes away the sting of mortality from Glaukos. He heals the hero for the purposes of greater glory and vengeance. Zeus did not do this for his son Sarpedon; instead, he wept tears of blood over his death. [*N.B.*: tears of *blood*, not the ichor one sees from wounded Aphrodite in V.339–40] This situation is

Patroklos each rally his troops and come together in battle over the body: "Zeus shed a thick darkness over the fight, to increase the ordeal [ponos] of the battle over the body of his son" (XVI.563–5, 567–8). Though this seems to be a literal action, nothing changes in the way the warriors do battle. There is no discernable difference in the methods of fighting or the visibility of the battlefield for the warriors engaged, and men fight and die in the usual ways. Epeigeus is killed by a rock from Hektor, Sthenelaos by a stone from Patroklos, Bathykles is stabbed by a spear, and Laogonos is struck down by Meriones (XVI.606). The Trojans circle around the fallen body of Bathykles, so they obviously see this man whom Glaukos struck down. Similarly, Patroklos "sped through the front ranks as swiftly as a hawk that swoops down on a flock of daws or starlings" (XVI.582–3).

He can see the lay of this particular encounter and maneuver through it.

Still, something is different. Immediately following the descent of "night," four men die in quick succession, from alternating lines of the battle, beginning with a Myrmidon. Eventually, Sarpedon's body is lost under a pile of dead men who had tried to secure it. Two similes are used to describe the scene. The first compares the noise of weapons clashing to the sound of "woodcutters in some forest glade upon the mountains" (XVI.633–6). We are meant to imagine a forest with particular but indistinguishable trees being felled, and this is exactly the way of the battle. They are being felled to honor Sarpedon's body, as a sort of human burial mound.[3] The second simile draws out a similarly

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similar, though, in that both Zeus and Apollo create a space for glory for the mortal. Sarpedon's body is taken to his home country and buried with honor. Glaukos is healed by Apollo so Glaukos can continue to marshal his troops effectively. Apollo does not heal the wound, the representation of mortality. He heals the *pain* of the wound and puts strength into Glaukos's body.

[3] One is reminded of the coming scene in which twelve Trojans are added to the funeral pyre of Patroklos by Achilles. There, too, the deadly work of war is increased as if it is a sacrifice to honor the dead.

hectic feature of the scene: "Men swarmed about the body, as flies that buzz round the full milk-pails in the season [hôra] of spring when they are brimming with milk—even so did they gather round Sarpedon" (XVI.639–41). Again, the image is of a group so thick that the individual is lost within it. This must be the "night" Zeus sent down: one that blurs distinction after death by reducing so many great men to so many corpses. The warriors are packed in so closely and die so quickly that they obscure one another's appearance on the stage of battle. The defining feature of this portion of the battle is the divine conversation about fate and Sarpedon and demigods.

If Zeus wants to honor Sarpedon, burying him in a pile of bodies is not the most apparent way to do so. However, Sarpedon is not left there uncelebrated. Though it was his fate to fall in battle at that time, Zeus did not have to leave him where he fell. When Hera consoles Zeus regarding the death of his son, she says:

> as soon as the life [psukhê] is gone out of him, send Death and sweet Sleep to bear him off the field and take him to the broad district [dêmos] of Lycia, where his brothers and his kinsmen will bury him with mound and pillar, in due honor to the dead (XVI.450–7).[4]

This is precisely what Zeus does. Once the battle has reached a fever pitch over the body of Sarpedon, Zeus ponders whether or not to move forward with the overall structure of the war. It is as if he wonders whether a sufficient number of men have gone down in the fighting to make the honor of Sarpedon's special burial poignant.[5] When he

[4] Ibid., XVI.450–7, Richard Lattimore renders the last phrase, "Such is the privilege of those who have perished." Richard Lattimore, trans., *The Iliad of Homer*, Chicago: University Press, 1961.

[5] A future direction of investigation along the lines of this argument may be the seeming unification of Achilles' Myrmidons into a solid block. They are always referred to together as a unit, and their uniform and routine obedience is in striking contrast to the rest of the gathered Achaeans. After the

decides that the death of Patroklos would be fitting at this time (and this would be going forward as fated with the overall movement of the war), Zeus sends Apollo to rescue the body of Sarpedon from the human burial mound where he lies.

One might ask whether Zeus extends this honor to Sarpedon because Sarpedon is his son or because Sarpedon is such a preeminent warrior. We can gain some insight into this question by considering the different responses by the father of the gods. To honor his son, Sarpedon, Zeus blurs everyone else into a haze in order to define Sarpedon's death more poignantly. When Aias prays, it is for the honor of dying in the light, like Sarpedon had. He is not satisfied to be a part of a tribute to another warrior's honor. He asks, with characteristic humility, for the honor due to every great warrior—to live and die in clear view. It is the right, or at least the justified expectation, of every warrior who came from all over what would become Greece to fight and die in full view of his peers and of the gods. Zeus exaggerated the honor due to Sarpedon as a warrior by increasing the contrast between Sarpedon's glorious story and the chaotic, clouded deaths of the other warriors under the mist. In this act Zeus shows that while fate will spare neither Trojan nor Lykian nor Achaian nor Myrmidon from the grave, the gods will honor the great with a proper burial and their great actions with a proper fame. As we continue, we will see that definition is the gift of the gods, and though proper burial is a right, honor is a gift. It is not unlike host gifts or spoils of war, both given freely but both expected. It can be specially heaped up, as Zeus does for Sarpedon, or it can be

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catalogue of warriors and of ships, we do not notice groups of warriors in liege to a particular prince again. Everyone seems to assume a kind of vague equality, with the Atrides *primi inter pares*. The Myrmidons, however, retain their formican routines. Whether this is conscious or not, in this way Achilles is made more prominent and his personal actions (or inaction) are emphasized by the contrast of the Myrmidon unity and are compounded by the aggregated mass of those under his command.

given only as an opportunity that must be grasped, as Zeus provides for Aias, but however it comes, it comes as a gift.

This should bring to mind Book XXIV and the situation between Achilles, Priam, and Hektor. Here too, a body is rescued from a night of obscurity. Achilles has tried to erase Hektor by defiling his body again and again, and Apollo is right in his indignation over the treatment of this great hero (XVI.790 Book XXIV). Apollo removed Sarpedon's body from the overgrown and swarming battlefield, washed the warrior's wounds, and gave him to Sleep and Death to be taken home to Lykia, calls for the body of Hektor to be treated the same way, theft and all. Zeus, however, will not allow the body of Hektor to be taken out from under Achilles; he instead offers to Achilles the same choice he offered to Apollo in Book XVI. He sends Thetis to *ask* her son to return the body of a fallen hero to his homeland. In doing so, Zeus extends to Achilles the divine capacity to honor. Why Achilles acquiesces would move the conversation from the scope of this paper, but the fact that he does completes a parallel between Achilles and Apollo regarding the honoring of the dead. Achilles operates in a divine capacity when he lifts the body of Hektor into Priam's cart with his own two arms, as Apollo washed the wounds of Sarpedon and handed his body over to Sleep and Death. Finally, in Book XXIV, Achilles gives Hektor over to sleep and death in Troy, and in doing so, Achilles takes on and enriches divinity.

However, we should not move too far afield from the mists of our conversation. Once Apollo has removed the body, there may be a lift in the "night." Lines 776–780 speak of the sun: "So long as the sun was still high in mid-heaven the weapons of either side were alike deadly, and the people fell; but when he went down towards the time when men loose their oxen, the Achaeans proved to be beyond all forecast stronger." One imagines that the scene has returned to something like a normal battle, but moments later, "shrouded in a deep mist," Apollo strikes Patroklos in the back, removing the armor of Achilles with the blow (XVI.790 Book XXIV). Apollo is shrouded so as to be unseen,

and in this state, he removes from Patroklos the armor which signified the hero's relationship to Achilles. Yet again, a mist removes distinction. The second mist comes not long after Patroklos' death.[6] Menelaos has noticed the fall of Patroklos and brought Telamonian Aias into the fight to claim the body. The reader sees the Trojan alliance with the Lykians falter as Glaukos rebukes Hektor for abandoning the body of Sarpedon, the king of the Lykians. Hektor is nonplussed and trades his own armor for that of Achilles, taken from the body of Patroklos.[7] Zeus nods his head in assent to this beginning of Hektor's death (XVII.209–10). Aias, too, realizes that something has changed in the battle and says to Menelaos: "I am less concerned for the body of Patroklos, who will shortly become meat for the dogs and vultures of Troy, than for the safety of my own head and yours. Hektor has wrapped us round in a storm of battle from every quarter, and our destruction seems now certain" (XVII.240–4). Though he has been bestriding the body of Patroklos and holding off the Trojan forces with all his might, he realizes that something has changed. Menelaos calls out to the surrounding Achaians, willing them to distinguish themselves in the fight to save themselves, each other, and the body of the fallen Patroklos:

> 'My friends,' he cried, 'princes and counselors of the Argives, all you who with Agamemnon and Menelaos drink at the public cost, and give orders each to his own people as Zeus grants him power and honor [timê], the fight is so thick about me that I cannot distinguish you severally; come on,

[6] Whether it is a mist, a night, a cloud, etc., the principal feature is its obscuring and blurring effect.

[7] Further consideration should be given to the attempts at self-definition in the poem. Hector and Patroclus both assume an identity that is not theirs. Both attempt to define *themselves* by taking on the figure given to Achilles by the gods. Patroclus does so under the authority of Achilles and as a second-self-friend, and Hector does so as the assumed owner of war spoils and as Achilles' Trojan counterpart. This theme could smoothly carry the conversation into Homer's *Odyssey* as well.

> therefore, every man unbidden, and think it shame that Patroklos should become meat and morsel for Trojan hounds' (XVII.248–55).

In the face of the "storm of battle" that is Hektor, Menelaos calls for the Achaians to come not because of the compulsion of rank but because of the compulsion of honor. Hektor has been "entered" by the god of war himself, and he leads the pack of Trojans down against the Achaians over Patroklos' body. The second mist can be seen on one level as Zeus cooperating with this call from Menelaos and empowering the Achaians to protect the body of Patroklos and one another, despite Aias's doubts. Homer tells us that the Achaians "in singleness of heart stood firm about the son of Menoitios and fenced him with their bronze shields. Zeus, moreover, hid the brightness of their helmets in a [deepening mist]" because he had no animosity towards Patroklos and hated that he would be mistreated (XVII.267–70).[8] Zeus "urged [Patroklos'] comrades on to defend him" (XVII.273).

After this, we see the Achaians acting all as one under the command of Aias. He becomes something like a general in the following battle. He rallied the Achaians and led the charge into the Trojan shields standing around Patroklos (XVII.279–80). Further, Homer tells us that Aias gave the Achaians "strict orders that no man was either to give ground, or to stand out before the others, but all were to hold well together about the body and fight hand to hand" and that "the earth ran red with blood as the corpses fell thick on one another alike on the side of the Trojans and allies, and on that of the Danaans; for these last, too, fought no bloodless fight though many fewer of them perished, through the care they took to defend and stand by one

[8] The "deepening mist" comes from the Lattimore translation and is a more fitting rendering of the Greek "ἠέρα πολλὴν". Ἀήρ is the same word for the mist that covered Apollo, and though Homer uses νύξ for the darkness Zeus pours over the encounter after the death of Sarpedon, the obscuring effect is much the same.

another" (XVII.356–9, 364–5). The Achaians have congealed into one fence around the body of their fallen comrade. The mist that Zeus drifted across their eyes caused them to be able to fight without thought of individual glory or distinction, and this unification was necessary for any chance of success in the face of an Ares-fueled, Achilles-armored Hektor.

The second mist unites in life what the first highlighted in death. It makes the scene timeless and sets it apart from the rest of the battlefield, as there is no sun or moon under its cover (XVII.366–9). Here in the middle of the fighting, time is suspended and space compacted. It is as if the battle scene is a single whole, something like the moments captured on the shield Achilles will later receive from Hephaistos. It erases meaningful distinction in life as the earlier one did in death because here death and life are the same thing: the lot of dismal man.[9] A few passages will draw this out more clearly:

> Thus through the livelong day did they wage fierce war, and the sweat of their toil rained ever on their legs under them, and on their hands and eyes, as they fought over [Patroklos]. It was as when a man gives a great ox-hide all drenched in fat to his men, and bids them stretch it; whereon they stand round it in a ring and tug till the moisture leaves it, and the fat soaks in for the many that pull at it, and it is well stretched—even so did the two sides tug the dead body hither and thither within the compass of but a little space (XVII.385–95).

The Trojans and Achaians who have fought long and hard throughout the day run wet with sweat and tears. One can imagine their bodies—knees, legs, feet—turning into liquid and sloshing against one another. The simile further reveals the relationship between Patroklos and the men fighting: his body is the hide being stretched on

[9] This chapter (and this section in particular) owes much to the conversation of Mr. Adam Cooper.

all sides, and under this confusing mist, the battle lines blur into a circle stretching a bull's hide.

All are united in this death, and the horses of Achilles stand by "as a pillar set over the tomb of some dead man or woman, and bowed their heads to the ground" (XVII.434–5). Zeus pities the horses' sad lot, and in doing so mourns for humanity as well:

> Poor things, why did we give you to King Peleus who is a mortal, while you are yourselves ageless and immortal? Was it that you might share the sorrows that befall humankind? for of all creatures that live and move upon the earth there is none so pitiable as he (XVII.443–7).

Under this mist it is as if all of humanity is represented—indistinct, merely instrumental, strained and straining—and is mourned. Zeus could just as easily be speaking to Thetis in the above lines, married by the gods to a mortal and made to suffer the death of her only son. The misery of the mortal lot is felt poignantly, particularly in the obscurity that the mist exaggerates. Telamonian Aias is not satisfied with obscurity. He is not satisfied with dying among the Achaians congealed in the mist over the body of Patroklos, whom he loves, nor does it seem that Zeus insists that Aias fight gloriously but unseen.

Aias does not seem to be a favorite of the gods, but his prayer in Book XVII demonstrates that he is attuned to the spiritual dimensions of the battle and that he is, after all, honored by Zeus. Though the battle is continuing to be fought in the normal modes of war, Homer tells us that there is a new dimension added by Zeus through these mists, and Aias recognizes it by the time the battle has turned back and forth between the Trojans and Achaians more times than one can count. He says to Menelaos: "even a fool may see that father Zeus is helping the Trojans. All their weapons strike home; no matter whether it be a brave man or a coward that hurls them, Zeus speeds all alike, whereas ours fall each one of them without effect" (XVII.629–632). He goes on to try, again, to formulate a plan in which the Achaians can

retreat with their lives and still bring back the body of Patroklos.[10] This time, unlike his concerned speech in lines 438–445, he suggests sending a message to Achilles. Aias is truly desperate at this point, grasping at whatever he can manage. He cries:

> I wish that some one would go and tell the son of Peleus at once, for I do not think he can have yet heard the sad news that the dearest of his friends has fallen. But I can see not a man among the Achaeans to send, for they and their chariots are alike hidden in darkness.
>
> O father Zeus, lift this cloud from over the sons of the Achaeans; make heaven serene, and let us see; if you will that we perish, let us fall at any rate by daylight (XVII.643647).[11]

In his desperation, when the unified Achaians have been beaten back by the will of Zeus himself, Aias remembers to call to Achilles and to Zeus for rescue. One can see from the defeated tone of "If you will that we perish, let us fall at any rate by daylight" that Aias does not know if he will live or die in this battle. In either case, he wants to do it with the honor and glory due to his particular character, skill, and nobility of soul. He calls out to Zeus that he not end as he has seen Sarpedon end, indistinguishable under a pile of dead bodies, and Zeus answers Aias's prayer. He "heard him and had compassion upon his tears. Forthwith he chased away the cloud of darkness, so that the sun shone out and all the fighting was revealed" (XVII.649–50). Aias cries out that

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[10] Aias recognizes that even Zeus is against them at that moment. His prayer, then, is a real request. It is a real supplication. He does not want to be carried off out of the war, but merely to have that which is owed to the great. In this way, his prayer is not dissimilar to the prayer of Achilles to Zeus through Thetis: "Since you bore me [since I am mortal and not the son of a god, as I could have been]. . ." (Ibid., I.352–4).

[11] We cannot fail to include Lattimore poetic translation, from which we draw the title of this paper, "make bright the air, and give sight back to our eyes; in shining / daylight destroy us, if to destroy us be now your pleasure."

the gods give to him that which the mist denied: definition, appearance on the plane of human affairs.

A pile of bodies for Sarpedon, the swirling river Xanthos for Achilles, and the murky sea for Odysseus cannot delineate for mankind what these heroes merit in death. In a similar way, the mist and darkness are not appropriate to the glory deserved by quiet, unostentatious Aias.

Zeus, in honoring Aias's prayer, is acknowledging that which is due to the hero: the chance to fight and die in the light with the definition that it offers. The draw of the Trojan War for many, Achilles included, is just this chance. Auxiliary countries join in the war because of this chance to show themselves on the most public and prominent stage possible—a war begun and continued with direct interactions between the gods and men and a war that draws up battle lines between the most renowned warriors of their day—and be honored by the gods. When Hektor reminds the allies of the Trojans why so many of them have come to fight, he calls to mind two goals: first, that they may have the opportunity to display goodwill towards the women and children of Troy and second, that they may engage "the game of war," which is to "turn, and charge at the foe, to stand or fall" (XVII.221–4, 227–8). They stay on the battlefield for ten years because they recognize that this war is a chance for glory that justifies death. This sentiment is conveyed further in two quick speeches from an imagined Trojan and Achaian (XVII.415–22).[12]

The singular nature of the Trojan war can be explained in a variety of ways from the short time-span of a warrior (he could not expect to see many great wars in his life) to the honor due to Achilles as the

[12] The two mini-speeches read, "Then would one say, 'My friends, we can never again show our faces at the ships—better, and greatly better, that earth should open and swallow us here in this place, than that we should let the Trojans have the triumph of bearing off Patroklos to their city.' The Trojans also on their part spoke to one another saying, 'Friends, though we fall to a man beside this body, let none shrink from fighting.' With such words did they exhort each other."

sacrifice of the gods (as the son of mortal Peleus and not the god he could have been, Achilles is deprived of immortality)[13] to the needed separation between gods and men (which Hesiod discusses and attributes to the dalliances of the gods and goddesses),[14] some more compelling than others. Regardless of the explanation as to why or if it is of a singular nature, this particular war, without doubt, is a chance for men to fight alongside the best of men and gods and to earn the sort of definition that can only come from that sort of testing. Aias insists on that distinction, the one given in the burial of Sarpedon. Though the two mists of Books XVI and XVII were necessary—the first to increase the honor of Sarpedon and the second to protect the body of Patroklos—they confused the truth of the battle for a time.

I have been intentionally opaque on the use of the word "definition" in this paper. When I say the mists obscure the definition of the warriors beneath them, and that definition is the divinely-given honor due to the hero in the Trojan War, I mean both definition in the sense of delineation or distinction and in the sense of explanatory power. In the might of his actions that live on in the stories of his friends and foes as well as in the care of his body and armor after death and in his funeral rites, the hero is given a solid place of honor within the community. We see this in the rapture of Sarpedon's body and the mighty care for Patroklos' after his fall in battle. This is the first sense of "definition," drawn out by its absence under the mist. The second sense is that of an explanation. A hero's life is given an explanation, a definition, an account and is not left to the darkness of a forgotten past. This, too, is extended to the great by the divine. The gods are not always clearly seen, but their power extends through what is remembered and what is left obscure. The prayer of Aias is the prayer of any man or woman

[13] See Pindar's "Isthmian 8"

[14] See Hesiod's "Catalog of Women" and John Alvis, *Divine Purpose and Heroic Response in Homer and Virgil: The Political Plan of Zeus*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995), 3–84.

who has fought on through the mist and who calls out for definition. Homer tells us that Zeus's answer is to honor the heroic.

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Scaffolding *The Anabasis*: Teaching Xenophon's Classic with Popular Works

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The central story of Xenophon's *Anabasis* is easily related, as is its importance to a liberal arts and sciences education. *The Anabasis* tells the tale of how in the fifth century BCE Xenophon, and the 10,000 Greek mercenaries with whom he served, follow the hopeful usurper Cyrus into Persia, how the Greeks defeat the opposing army fielded by Cyrus's brother, Artaxerxes, how they stand on the verge of victory, and then experience the unavoidable collapse of their mission when Cyrus dies on the battlefield, leaving the Greek army stranded in Persia. After Cyrus's death, the Greek generals in charge of the expedition, Clearchus of Sparta, Socrates of Achaea, and others, are invited to the tent of Tissaphernes, the Persian force's leader, ostensibly to negotiate a safe passage back to Greece. Instead, Tissaphernes has all the generals killed, leaving the Greek force leaderless. The rest of the narrative relates how, under the direction of Xenophon and some others, the Greeks fight their way home.

Were this the extent of the story, and for many students on their first reading it is, it would be a great tale of adventure. This reading, though, only scratches the narrative's surface. Buried in Xenophon's memoir are a series of crucial philosophical and social questions and issues. Among these are the importance (or lack thereof) of honesty, the meaning of masculinity to ancient Greeks, the brutality of war, the question of social cohesion, and the relationship of wealth to violence, all issues that can help form the crux of a liberal education. Yet the laconic style of *The Anabasis* might prevent students from seeing, let alone addressing, them. *The Anabasis*, seemingly a coolly-told adventure tale from a long-past world asks and answers questions important

to all educated people. This is where scaffolding comes into play. Scaffolding is the process by which difficult readings can be clarified by teaching them in the presence of other, more approachable, texts. Scaffolding *The Anabasis* with more accessible modern texts will make these questions and answers more apparent to contemporary students.

In the aftermath of the slaughter of the Greek generals, the remaining officers face the decision of how to lead and how to proceed, especially acute problems as poor decisions could lead to their mass slaughter. The issues, simply put, of whom the Greeks were, what they ought to be, and how they should organize, appear in many studies of *The Anabasis*. A quick tour of the secondary literature underlines this. Kenneth Aupperle, with an argument that might appeal to many students, sees it as a study of 'spontaneous organizational reconfiguration.' In short, Aupperle uses it to ask a question that would fascinate students studying business. Similarly, Andrew Dalby investigates how the officer class uses traditional decision-making strategies that ignored the wishes of simple soldiers. Jacob Howland, also interested in the Greeks' organization, approaches *The Anabasis* as an experiment in the building of a just community—in effect reading it as a counterpoint to Plato's *Republic*, but one founded in history rather than in theory. In short, all approach social structure, although from quite different perspectives. Among many other questions emerging from the secondary work are the nature of Hoplite warfare and the value of the respective merits of individual leaders.

These and more should interest contemporary students. None, however, are immediately obvious and, in the absence of scaffolding, would need to be set up either by the assignment of dense secondary literature or through a series of lectures. It is to the scaffolding that we turn, focusing most of our attention on Andre Norton's *Star Guard*, with brief excurses to the novel and later film, *The Warriors*.

In 1955 Andre Norton published *Star Guard*, a novel set in the distant future that tracked a 'horde' of human mercenaries from Earth to the planet Fronn where they were hired to help a Llor prince seize

his brother's throne. Our scaffolding begins with Norton, as her work addresses questions of leadership, identity, encounters with cultural others, proper behavior in war, and much else that makes *The Anabasis* a classic. When—much like Cyrus—the Llor prince is killed, the humans have to fight their way across the planet to a port from which they could escape for home. Many of the novel's plot points and twists and turns differ from *The Anabasis*. One key change is that *Star Guard*'s central character is Kana Karr, a very junior fighter on his first mission. *The Anabasis's* character of Xenophon (always referred to in the third person), although also very young, is nevertheless much more sophisticated, and quickly rises to a leading role among the Greeks. Also central among the differences is that in *Star Guard* humans can only reach the stars as mercenaries, as their lords—from more powerful interstellar species—consider them to be too violent to be allowed free passage. In addition, these same controlling forces conspire to have the hordes fail and be destroyed, thus keeping humanity down. Finally, the novel concludes with the unveiling of a human counterplot, which will allow them to colonize planets in secret, reaching the stars and ultimately taking on other, more powerful, sentient species. In the May 1957 number of *The Classical Outlook*, Frank F. Robbins noticed the novel's similarity to Xenophon's work, commenting on the quality of Norton *Anabasis* adaptation, a classic work that he always found to be 'a mighty good story' (Robbins, 88).

In Norton's novel's context, hordes are formations trained to fight with weapons that would be useful on 'less civilized' worlds, but not so sophisticated that they would overwhelm the local power structure. When introduced to *Star Guard*, students consider the galactic empire, humanity's position in it, and how humans organize. In discussions and short papers, students have the opportunity to demonstrate an understanding of the horde's nature, its structure, and discuss how the latter is both maintained and modified in the wake of the killing of their officers. Because the novel is told from the perspective of a junior soldier (one who is in no way a stand-in for Xenophon), students have the

luxury of observing without feeling the leader's or potential leader's perspective. Students also have the opportunity to discuss other issues central to Xenophon's narrative, including the possible working out of cultural conflicts as humans encounter intergalactic others, a conflict useful to a discussion of Greek-Persian contact in *The Anabasis*.

Numerous plot points in *Star Guard* illuminate key aspects of *The Anabasis*. The first chapter begins with a discussion of human resentment of the galactic overlords who have conquered them—a parallel and invitation to a discussion of Athenian soldiers in the post-Peloponnesian War world (Norton, 7–8). After experiencing the debacle and the killing of their military leadership, the horde, like Xenophon's Greeks, needs to cross a river, yet lacks a bridge (Norton, 93–95) and finds itself being followed by native marchers (Norton, 98–101). The horde also needs to travel light, abandoning much of its gear (Norton, 64–65). These moments prepare students for similar points in the plot of *The Anabasis* and will make useful notes and memories for when the class comes to consider the earlier work.

Other similarities and differences between the texts serve to illuminate *The Anabasis*. In *Star Guard*, a hidden assassin using a weapon (a flamer) only available to an off-worlder, kills Skura, the rebel chieftain (Norton, 54). Skura, like Cyrus, is a slippery character, knowing what to say to keep the mercenaries loyal, or at least on his side (705). On the other hand, unlike in *The Anabasis,* Skura is murdered rather than unluckily killed in battle. When the class turns to *The Anabasis*, it will return to this disparity, as students discuss the difference between accident and intention in history. This, in turn, will enable a broader exploration of the issue of causation. Students might fruitfully return to these questions to ponder Xenophon's honesty. Does Cyrus's convenient accidental death serve Xenophon's narrative needs perhaps too well? Students could consider the advantages and disadvantages of a story for which there is only one witness—the author.

Unlike in *The Anabasis*, *Star Guard's* horde has no 'camp followers,' so the soldiers need to carry their own rations and gear (Norton, 65).

This useful difference helps students think about how classical warfare worked, and how Greeks thought about those who did much of their manual labor. Finally, it is interesting to consider the characteristics of the horde's original "Blademaster" Fitch Yorke, as well as those of Trig Hansu, who takes over leadership after Yorke's murder. Yorke is a relative newcomer at the novel's beginning, having held command for about four years (Norton, 13). He is portrayed, though, as a smart go-getter who would develop into a major force in the years to come (Norton, 19). In short, Yorke is a Xenophon-like character. Hansu, on the other hand, is a much-admired, indeed famous, grizzled veteran of many assignments—like Clearchus (Norton, 18–20). When they encounter *The Anabasis,* students can discuss what is accomplished when the Clearchus and Xenophon roles are, in effect, reversed. To put it another way, in comparing the narratives, students analyze how Xenophon's self-portrayal in *The Anabasis* as a brash but wise young man inflects their reading.

Much like *Star Guard*, Sol Yurick's 1965 novel, *The Warriors*, maintains the broad outlines of *The Anabasis.* Its plot is both similar enough to, yet different enough from, Xenophon's story to maintain attention and generate discussion. This is valuable for scaffolding as it trains students to think about when differences are meaningful for a work's interpretation (for example, what is the significance of a replacement leader's experience when examining the question of community building?) and when less so (is extraterrestrial encounter different from encountering cultural others?). *The Warriors* begins by following a few gang members (members of the Dominators under the leadership of Hector) to a gang summit called by Ismael, a Cyrus stand-in. Well-known for being both a planner and fierce fighter, Ismael brags of his ability to turn his men into mercenaries and cites their experience and discipline. With this move, Yurick conflates the characters of Cyrus and Clearchus. As the gang summit progresses, Ismael passes out guns to the attending gangs as a sign of his power, a sign that could also be read as indicating overweening pride—hubris. Students will use this

moment to discuss loyalty and pride, virtues and failings, concepts that will re-emerge as they tackle *The Anabasis*. Indeed, like Cyrus and Skura, Ismael is also rather slippery, not fully trusted by the attending "warriors." After Ismael's assassination (the result of a disintegrated meeting and melee), his men beat down the Dominators' leader, Arnold, and the remaining Dominators electing Hector their new "father."

Yurick makes the *Anabasis/Warriors* comparison explicit. In the course of the Dominators' trek home, one gang member, "The Junior," takes a comic book from his pocket to read—a comic of *The Anabasis*. He looks up, "from a panel showing the grinning faces of the Greek heroes as they saw The Sea. The Sea," while other gang members played with a candy bar, all during a subway trip to Coney Island (Yurick). Yurick portrays the Dominators, much like Xenophon portrays the Greeks, with a sympathetic eye. Also, though, (like Xenophon), Yurick shows their moral failings and questionable actions without romanticizing them. They are not only boys who want to go home; they are also rapists and killers. Yurick makes explicit for students what is implicit in Xenophon. A large group of trained killers, wandering through strange territory, will often do horrifying things. Yurick lays this out. Students, having read Yurick, should be able to find similar themes in Xenophon.

Walter Hill's 1979 film of *The Warriors* also follows *The Anabasis*'s main outlines but differs in some intriguing ways that help students illuminate some of Xenophon's key ideas and values. The director's cut begins with an image from a comic strip depicting Fifth Century BCE Greek warriors, providing an explicit context within which students will approach the film. The film properly starts with Cyrus, leader of the Riffs, calling for a gangland summit. As the summit commences, Cyrus uses his charismatic personality to convince members of dozens of gangs that they can wrest control of the city from the police and other legitimate authority. Luther, leader of the Rogues shoots him fewer than fourteen minutes into the film, a shooting for which Luther

blames the Warriors. Before they can escape, Cleon, the Warriors' leader, is beaten down by the Riffs. The remaining Warriors under the leadership of Swan, a name that recalls Xenophon, try to return to Coney Island, their base. The film concludes with the Warriors arriving home, in Coney Island, Swan saying, "When we see the ocean we figure we're home. We're safe," yet again echoing the famous line from *The Anabasis*, "The Sea. The Sea" which comes at the end of *The Anabasis*, Book Four (Xenophon, 101). As is true for the Greeks in *The Anabasis*, the Warriors find that reaching the water does not mean automatic safety. Even as the Greeks still need to make their way back to Greece and maintain cohesion (an attempt that ultimately fails), the Warriors find that they need to face the Rogues one final time.

In the end, those Warriors who succeed in getting home prevail by forming a tight, disciplined cohort, avoiding some distractions on the way home, and escaping from others. In short, they learn the rules of a stable polity the hard way. The New York of the film is dark, distant, and strange. Viewers have no choice but to see it as a foreign land, much as Persia is to the 10,000. Having seen the film, students can discuss the advantages—and to whom these advantages belong—of Cyrus' called summit. What might a gang-controlled New York look like? How might this differ from the New York of the film? Would such a polity have any real legitimacy? This is a question they will return to when they encounter *The Anabasis*. Students see how the Warriors come to trust each other. This will contrast with much of the mistrust that runs through Xenophon's narrative. They also see the role of the sea and question both stories' endings.

In conclusion, by beginning with *Star Guard*, a very approachable but foreign science fiction novel, then proceeding to the novel and film of *The Warriors*, students gradually prepare for the peculiarities of Xenophon's narrative. When the time comes, they will be ready, both to see and discuss key issues in what might otherwise be an excursion into a distant world seemingly unconnected to their own. In other words, the march of the 10,000 is not just one damned village and fight after

another, but rather a journey into what it means to be a member of a community, and what it takes to keep such a community together.

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Herodotus and the Philosophy of Travel

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Traveling is like interpreting an oracle. An oracle can tempt us to think we know what it means, only to reveal that it was our own pride speaking; it can leave us confused and infuriated, and tempted to commit sacrilege. The same goes with travel: we can interpret the experience through our own simplistic theories and learn nothing but our own presuppositions—or what is worse, we can impose our values onto other people and places instead of understanding them as they understand themselves. Either way, travel can be a waste of time and money, dismissive and sometimes hurtful to faraway people, and harmful to the soul of the traveler.

But is it possible to avoid this? What is *good* travel, anyway? This is one of the great questions in Herodotus' work (484–425 BC), the fifth century Greek historian who recorded the events leading up to the Persian Wars in his *Histories*. Most of his work is devoted to simply preserving the memory of great deeds, but along with that comes a teaching on the kind of learning that can come from travel. For Herodotus, the meaning of "history" was far more than a series of recorded events: it was the most comprehensive kind of inquiry, one that cut across space as much as time. For Herodotus, there are great and wonderful things to learn from travelling—*if* we are wise enough to confront its intellectual pitfalls and avoid them.

The parable of Gyges illustrates this point. It is a story that might slip past most readers as just another strange historical tidbit, but a careful reading reveals that it might be taken as Herodotus' central teaching. Gyges, the trusted adviser to king Candaules of Lydia, was forced to sit through long, awkward speeches about how beautiful his

queen was. Doubting whether or not Gyges believed him, Candaules finally gave the bizarre proposition to that Gyges see the queen naked. Gyges protested: "of old time those fair sayings have been found out by men, from which we ought to learn wisdom; and of these one is this—that each man should look on his own," to do otherwise, to examine the ways of others, is to behave contrary to custom (I.8). Gyges consents to the king's demand and agrees to hide behind a curtain to view the queen as she disrobes in the evening. But for all his caution, the queen spots him and figures out the king's scheme. The next day, she calls for him and demands that he kill the king and marry her, which he does, and goes on to become the tyrant of Lydia, but not without gaining a family curse that would be passed down to his descendant King Croesus who lost the kingdom to the Persians.

So, it is for the student of foreign people and places: we go where we don't belong, and look on the sacred things of others. Each city has its own laws and customs and its own gods, meaning it is a cosmos unto itself, and no one would venture outside that intimate zone unless they were forced. Gyges was forced by a powerful king. But who or what compelled Herodotus to leave Greece in order to travel and inquire into the foreign customs of others? Or what compels any of us to do that but a sense of wonder about faraway people and places? Herodotus means to remind us that travel to faraway places is not natural or easy. It is daring, a great danger to the soul, requiring that the traveler be cleansed of all presumption in order to be worthy of the things he will see. It calls for the traveler to avoid the extremes of skeptical curiosity on one and arrogant conquest on the other, and aspire toward what is found at the mean: a sense of wonder.

Herodotus had this distinction in mind has he studied world events of his time, particularly the rise of the Persian Empire, which was founded on the principle of benevolent conquest. The world needed Persia, they insisted, because it could bring peace through total inclusion of all customs and religions, and what appeared to be a happy end to history. Along with this came the Persian sense of bold curiosity,

or what Herodotus saw as a hasty and reckless desire to examine the sacred things of others. King Darius showed great fascination with the various customs of people around his empire: when it came to respect for the dead, some buried them, some burned them, and others ate them (III.38). But this was meant to reveal the broad spiritual code of tolerance of Persia, since all customs were equal in the eyes of the king, and all were parts of the whole. The Persian's supreme god was the whole cosmos, encompassing all other gods and religious traditions into himself. Hence, Herodotus observed that no people were as ready to adopt foreign customs as the Persians, making them a truly cosmopolitan people: they mix

Median and Egyptian fashions, and they are quick to indulge in all foreign pleasures (I.135). Persian kings and nobility were all about "intercultural dialogue," as modern academia might put it. Yet they were not full of wonder they way Herodotus and other Greeks were. They were curious, perhaps, but they seemed more concerned with enforcing an imperial code of diversity, driven by respect for their own principle of inclusion more than honor for the various customs themselves.

But that diversity had its limits, as it turned out. After a successful invasion of Egypt, King Cambyses, who had inherited Cyrus' strict code of religious inclusion, was so overcome with ridicule of Egyptian ceremonies that he stormed into the festival of the god Apis, stabbed the sacred cow, and had the priests whipped—and then lost his mind. Or, rather, he had already lost his mind, which, according to Herodotus, was indicated by his inability to respect the supremacy of custom. Here, Herodotus gives his most famous reflection on how everyone believes his own custom to be the best, and if we could choose, we would choose our own again and again (III.38). We love our own because it is our own, and love of one's own customs has a peculiar way of mandating that we respect everyone else's. Losing reverence for our own customs was, of course, a mark of insanity, since only a madman would mock at such things.

This is an arrogant spirit of conquest. But there is also vulgar curiosity, which often features self-doubt and disregard for the value of custom, including one's own. Herodotus himself seemed to fall prey to this during his visit to Egypt, where he made a shocking discovery: "whence the several gods had their birth, or whether they all were from the beginning, and of what form they are, they did not learn till yesterday, as it were, or the day before." Homer and Hesiod codified the myths about the gods and made them palatable to the Greeks, but it was in fact the Egyptians who taught the Greeks their rituals and offerings to the gods (II.53).

Challenging the uniqueness and exclusivity of one's own sacred things can result in bewildered skepticism, and the crumbling of one's framework for life—a betrayal of one's own sacred things. But here is a critical point: Herodotus' sense of shame was intact—"Having said so much of these matters, we pray that we may have grace from both the gods and the heroes for our speech" (II.45).

Persian kings, by contrast, were shameless in the face of their own customs according to Herodotus. He notes the Persian reverence for the sanctity of rivers (I.138), yet Cyrus diverted the Euphrates River that flowed through Babylon in order to have his troops climb under the wall and take the city (I.191). Similarly, Xerxes ordered the Hellespont whipped after his bridge collapsed, declaring himself the true master of the water who would receive no more prayers (VII.35). It seemed a ridiculous violation of a ridiculous custom from our point of view—yet even the Greeks were horrified that Xerxes could disregard his *own* customs for the sake of power, making Xerxes "a man unholy and presumptuous, one who made no difference between things sacred and things profane," as Themistocles observed when the Persians crossed the Hellespont into Greece; the king was not only "burning and casting down the images of the gods, [but he] also scourged the Sea and let down into it fetters" (VIII.109)—i.e., hatred of someone else's custom comes with the same hatred for one's own, resulting in a despairing and miserable self-hatred in the traveler, which could

consume even the king of Persia. Indeed, as Xerxes surveyed his vast army and navy about to invade Greece, he both declared himself happy and then burst into tears, reflecting on the fact that there is no one "is made by nature so happy, that there will not come to him many times, and not once only, the desire to be dead rather than to live" (VII.46).

So, between hubristic imperialism, despairing self-hatred, or a toxic combination of the two, we are left asking: what is good travel? Can we learn *anything* from it? Or are we left with the extremes of arrogant superiority on one hand, or deconstructing curiosity on the other, both of which drive us into an abyss? Herodotus appears to have an answer, which he shared (sometimes in spite of himself) with all Greeks: we travel well when we are free.

Herodotus' work and others like it show that free people are qualitatively different from those who are not. Once Athens was liberated from the tyranny of Pisistratus, they became especially good at defending themselves. "[W]hen they were kept down they were wilfully slack, because they were working for a master," he observed. By contrast, "when they had been set free each one was eager to achieve something for himself" (V.78). This was the simple reason that the Greeks won: despite all their problems—constant warfare between cities, unstable governments, and civil wars, etc.—the Greeks still preferred their freedom, and when it was threatened, they were highly effective at fighting to defend it.

Later, as Xerxes marched his vast army into Greece, he sought the advice of Demaratus, a defected Spartan. How was it, Xerxes asked, that Greek cities were willing to stand up to Xerxes' vast army if they were not under a master, but free to live as they pleased? Don't men without masters simply run away in battle? They are free, Demaratus admits, but "they are not free in all things, for over them is set Law as a master, whom they fear much more even than thy people fear thee. It is certain at least that they do whatsoever that master commands; and he commands ever the same thing, that is to say, he bids them not flee out of battle from any multitude of men, but stay in their post and

win the victory or lose their life.'" (VII.103–104). Law, which is the same thing as custom, is the condition of Greek freedom: it orders their souls, making them able to govern themselves personally, which is itself the necessary condition of governing themselves politically.

Persian military might was always accompanied by benevolence: resist and face destruction, but surrender and be richly rewarded. (It was, in fact, the founding promise of the Persian empire. After offering a huge feast for his troops, Cyrus promised that if they obeyed his orders, they would not experience the glory of conquest or even do good deeds for the world: above all, they would enjoy such feasts again and again [I.126]). Persian freedom, it seemed, was not self-government, but licentiousness. Hence, when two Spartans were sent to Susa as compensation for the two Persians who had been thrown down a well, they report to the first official, the Satrap Hydarnes, who receives them with great kindness and generosity, and assures them that the king will not only forgive them but grant even greater rewards of wealth and pleasure, if they only submit. "Hydarnes, thy counsel with regard to us is not equally balanced," the Spartans respond, "thou knowest well what it is to be a slave, but thou hast never yet made trial of freedom, whether it is pleasant to the taste or no; for if thou shouldest make trial of it, thou wouldest then counsel us to fight for it not with spears only but also with axes" (VII.135). Herodotus is often dubious about freedom: Is it even real, or just one more custom among many? Is it rooted in our nature, or is it simply what modern scholars would call the "cultural norms" of the Greeks? Whatever the case, there could be no doubt about what his fellow countrymen thought: for them, freedom was a basic reality of human nature, and its discovery was a rare and precious thing. It might exist alongside toga-clad, wine-drinking people living in cities and worshiping a pantheon of gods; but, even if those things persisted under the umbrella of a foreign empire, freedom simply could not, and it would always depend on spears and axes, not to mention muskets and nuclear weapons for its defense.

But could freedom itself become a ground for imperial arrogance and conquest? This was most apparent with the rise of Athenian empire after the Battle of Salamis and the Persian retreat from Greece. Freedom at this point had ceased to be a custom attuned to human nature and had turned into a mere cultural preference—one that needed to be proven only by force. This was the unresolved question that Herodotus himself grappled with throughout his book: is freedom a true fulfillment of human nature, or is it simply a Greek custom that is fundamentally no better than a preference for despotism? Herodotus was never quite sure. His history does reveal how unusual freedom is in a world of autocrats, and it gives wonderful examples of the way free people think, live, and ultimately win defensive wars with deadly effectiveness. But those were only examples, not explanations of what freedom actually is, or why it is objectively better than slavery. Perhaps this is because the nature of freedom is beyond anything history alone can explain. It is instead a question for political philosophy, which looks beyond custom to the inner disposition of the human soul. Respecting all customs as embodiments of truth; approaching foreign values with both sensitivity and a critical eye; identifying the root of beauty in all its diverse expressions; cultivating a humble willingness to wonder—these are the marks of a well-ordered soul on the road. But such a condition only comes with preparation: far more than packing bags and planning tour routes, good travel requires liberal education.

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Liberal Education in Aristotle

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What is liberal education?

This question is now buried beneath several layers of received ideas, which have accumulated over the centuries and have hardened into a sclerotic crust of platitudes that resist all attempts at actual thinking. One especially resistant layer is said to derive from Aristotle. But while these ideas lay claim to Aristotle's authority, they actually distort his discourse and betray his thought. To retrieve his insights into liberal education, we have to break through this layer of received ideas and grasp what Aristotle actually said. The point is not to uncritically adopt his philosophy but, in dialogue with Aristotle, to think seriously about what liberal education could be.

These ideas center on a set of simple oppositions, which are laid out most clearly by John Henry Newman in *The Idea of a University*. Newman writes that the opposite of liberal education is education that is servile (80). While servile education approaches knowledge as a means to other ends, liberal education pursues knowledge as an end in itself (77). Servile education is practical, while liberal education is not. Servile education teaches one to *use* knowledge, while liberal education teaches one to *enjoy* it for its own sake (84). Liberal education is concerned not with character but with intellectual excellence (92). Intellectual excellence is not a matter of judgment, taste, or skill: "When we turn, indeed, to the particular kinds of intellectual perfection, words are forthcoming for our purpose, as, for instance, judgment, taste, and skill; yet even these belong, for the most part, to powers or habits bearing upon practice or upon art, and not to any perfect condition of the intellect, considered in itself" (94). Nor is intellectual excellence a matter of wisdom: "Wisdom, again, is certainly a more comprehensive

word than any other, but it has a direct relation to conduct, and to human life"

(94). Intellectual excellence is more properly called the "enlargement of the mind" (94, 98, 100, 101). While servile education offers specialized training in useful arts, liberal education shows how all fields fit into the order of knowledge as a whole: "That only is true enlargement of mind which is the power of viewing many things at once as a whole, of referring them severally to their true place in the universal system, of understanding their respective values, and determining their mutual dependence" (103).

These oppositions are shared by both defenders and critics of liberal education. Critics use them to attack what the ideas are supposed to defend. Liberal education, it is said, is useless, impractical, apolitical, and elitist. It is a luxury enjoyed by people with money and leisure, not an education useful to people who actually work for a living.

Newman claimed these oppositions derive from Aristotle: "While the world lasts, will Aristotle's doctrine on these matters last, for he is the oracle of nature and of truth…. He has told us the meaning of our own words and ideas, before we were born. In many subject matters, to think correctly is to think like Aristotle; and we are his disciples whether we will or no, though we may not know it" (82–83). But how do these ideas illuminate or obscure what Aristotle actually thought?

Aristotle laid out his thoughts on liberal education in Book Eight of the *Politics.* The more carefully one reads this book, the clearer it becomes that Aristotle did not actually think what he is supposed to have said.

Aristotle says that liberal education should be *useful*: "So it is not hard to see that of the useful arts [τῶν χρησίμων] one has to teach those that are necessary; but it is clear that they should not be taught all the useful arts, those pursuits that are liberal [ἐλευθέρων] being kept distinct from those that are servile [ἀνελευθέρων]" (636–637). Both liberal and servile education teach arts. Arts are practices. To learn an art is to master a practice. So, the difference between liberal and

servile education is not that the servile arts are used as (practical and useful) means to other ends, while the liberal arts are enjoyed as (impractical and useless) ends in themselves.

Both are practical. What matters is that they are practiced for the sake of different ends.

What then distinguishes liberal from servile arts? Aristotle gives two answers.

An education is liberal if it is conducive to virtue, and servile if it is ethically useless: "A task and also art or a science must be deemed servile [βάναυσον] if it renders the body or soul or mind of a freeman useless [ἄχρηστον] for the use and the practice of virtue [τὰς χρήσεις καὶ τὰς πράξεις τὰς τῆς ἀρετῆς]" (638–639). In this sense, education is servile if it consists only of job training; but it is also servile if it makes students erudite and intellectually sophisticated without strengthening the virtues essential to a good life. These include the virtues of theoretical thought: knowledge (ἐπιστήμη); intellect (νοῦς); and wisdom (σοφία). They include the virtues of thought proper to the practices involved in the search for truth: art (τέχνη); good deliberation (εὐβουλίας); comprehension (σύνεσις or εὐσυνεσία); judgment (γνώμη); political thought (ἡ πολιτική); and practical wisdom (φρόνησις). But a liberal education must also aim to cultivate the virtues of character as well, virtues such as justice (δικαιοσύνη), courage (ἀνδρεία), temperance (σωφροσύνη), gentleness (πραότης), friendliness (φιλία), wit (εὐτραπελία), tact (ἐπιδεξιότης), and truthfulness (ἀλήθεια).

An education is liberal if done for the good of the student and his community; it is servile if done for the sake of others. "It makes a big difference what object one has in view in a pursuit or a study; if one follows it for the sake of oneself or one's friends, or for the sake of virtue [δι᾽ ἀρετὴν], it is not servile, but the man who follows the same pursuit because of other people would often seem to be acting in a menial or servile way" (638–639). The study of rhetoric, for example, is liberal if done to enable the student to speak for himself in public life and to

work for the common good; it is servile if done to earn money by composing speeches for others.

The criterion that distinguishes liberal from servile approaches to the arts, in short, is whether they aim to form in students the virtues essential to the search for truth.

This conclusion baffles the oppositions that are said to derive from Aristotle—arts are servile if they are practiced as a means to an end, and liberal if they are practiced as ends in themselves. Instead of this simple opposition, Aristotle makes a threefold distinction: an art is servile if it is used as a means to an extrinsic end; but there are two ways an art can be practiced as an end in itself. It is servile to practice an art only to enjoy the pleasure it gives. It is liberal to practice an art for the sake of the virtues that can be formed in and through the practice of the art itself.

This threefold distinction is clear in the case of music. Aristotle says that it is servile to study music in order to perform it for others, whether or not one earns money for this performance: "we reject professional education in the instruments and in performance (and we count performance in competitions as professional, for the performer does not take part in it for his own improvement, but for his hearer's pleasure...)" (666–667). But he also says that it is servile to study music merely for the pleasure of hearing it, since that pleasure is also enjoyed by children, animals, slaves, and barbarians; the point of practicing music as a liberal art is not just to enjoy "merely the charm common to all music, which even some lower animals enjoy, as well as a multitude of slaves and children" (664–665).

Music is a liberal art, for Aristotle, when it is practiced as a way to form one's ethos: "music is capable of producing a certain quality of character [τὸ ἦθος ποιόν τι ποιεῖν], just as gymnastics are capable of producing a certain kind of body"; and that "it is able to make one's ethos better [δύναται τὰ ἤθη βελτίω ποιεῖν]" (650–651). Then later: "Music has the power of producing a certain effect on the character of the soul [δύναται ποιόν τι τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἦθος ἡ μουσικὴ

παρασκευάζειν]" (660–661). Music has an ethical dimension in the sense that it affects our ethos. On this point, Aristotle was very close to the pianist Glenn Gould, who argued that music is a way to alter and form our habits of feeling: "The purpose of art is not the release of a momentary ejection of adrenaline but is, rather, the gradual, life-long construction of a state of wonder and serenity" (246). In each of these three passages, Aristotle uses a striking phrase to describe the power of music: *ethos poiein* [τὸ ἦθος ποιόν τι ποιεῖν]—to make one's ethos or construct one's character. We practice music as a liberal art when we use it to alter and form our ethos. What is true of music is true of the other liberal arts. It is servile to study them in order to make money, but it is also servile to learn them simply for the pleasure of learning. Liberal education is a self-formative practice. Just as one can discipline and form one's body through the practice of gymnastics, so one can discipline and form one's soul through the practice of the liberal arts.

The weakness of servile education is that it tends to focus on a few of these forms of understanding at the expense of others—it assumes one can learn technical expertise devoid of theory, theory in the absence of practical know-how, judgment in the absence of multiple opinions, and wisdom in the absence of knowledge. It produces theorists without practical expertise, judges without broadmindedness, scientists without wisdom, technicians unaware of the theories that guide their work, and philosophers who know nothing except books of philosophy.

This weakness afflicts liberal arts when they are each studied for their own sake. This is why the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake was denounced by thinkers after Aristotle.

Seneca wrote: "This desire to know more than is sufficient is a sort of intemperance. Why? Because this unseemly pursuit of the liberal arts makes men troublesome, wordy, tactless, self-satisfied bores, who fail to learn the essentials just because they have learned the non-essentials" (240). The point of liberal education is not to pursue knowledge for its own sake, but to become able to live a good life. This requires more than "intellectual excellence" apart from skill, taste, judgment, and

wisdom. It requires the *integration* of both intellectual and ethical virtues. Liberal education is *ethopoetic*—it is a way for students to form and transform their ethos.

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EIGHTH- AND NINTH-CENTURY TEXTS

An(other) Epic: *Táin Bó Cuailnge* as a Case for Reading Anthropologically

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Reading *Táin Bó Cuailnge*, Ireland's eighth-century epic, *The Cattle Raid of Cooley,* is an adventure in its own right.[1] Part comic adventure, part warrior saga, the *Táin* provides its audience with an unfamiliar and disorienting experience. It opens with a lovers' quarrel that launches a war and details the heroics of the warrior Cú Chulainn as he single-handedly defends Ulster, a kingdom in the northeast of Ireland, against an invading army from the south. Often referred to as "The Irish Iliad," *The Táin* seems to contain all the key elements of the heroic genre—the preterhuman protagonist, the wartime setting in an epic, mythological landscape, and the elevated oral style. Nonetheless, as this brief comparison will show, situating the *Táin* within the epic genre did not render it fully comprehensible to students who read it in the context of my Irish studies course in 2017. Having tackled other ancient epics in their first-year courses, my students were prepared for the differences of syntax, long list-like passages, and the strange doings of gods and warriors, but the heroes of Troy had not, and could not, prepare them to understand the dazzling "otherness" of the *Táin*. Early Irish literature, though it only survives today through monastic manuscripts, was a fully formed oral tradition, "pre-Christian, preliterate, and

[1] *Táin bo Cuailnge* is the central saga of the Ulster Cycle, a collection of tales pertaining to the kings and heroes of the northern Irish province of Ulster, which have survived within various medieval monastic manuscripts. Kinsella's definitive translation (1969) draws from both the 12th century *Lebor na hUidre* (Book of the Dun Cow) and the 14th century *Yellow Book of Lacan* to reconstruct a complete narrative.

uninfluenced by the Greco-Roman world," before it began to be transcribed in written form (Calvert Watkins, cited in Ó Cathasaigh 2014, 48). What survives of this oral tradition, though doubtlessly shaped by its Christian compilers, is a survival of the unique civilization of the Irish Celts, and presents a valuable case for reading anthropologically. That is, with an eye for how cultural values and ideologies are expressed through narrative arts.

It is on three points that I will compare the *Iliad* and the *Táin:* female power, the hero's rage, and the relationships of the final battles. Each of these examples present puzzling divergences that demand to be explored not only on the level of narrative analysis, but through social and historical context in order to be fully understood.

Despite a wide array of powerful female characters in the *Iliad,* from Thetis, who mediates with Zeus on Achilles' behalf, to Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite, who orchestrate battles and back their favorites, the woman around whom the epic action revolves, Helen, is a singularly passive character. In Homer's telling, there is no doubt, at least on the Greek side, that she has been kidnapped; she is an unwilling captive of Paris and therefore not responsible for the war that follows for the sake of her rescue (Groten 1968). She denigrates herself almost every time she speaks, referring to herself as a "slut," and wishing she were dead (III.172, 180). Even when she asserts her own voice—refusing a command from Aphrodite (III.406) and chastising Paris (III.428), she swiftly submits to the threats of the goddess and persuasion of Paris' embrace.

Helen's mortal weakness betrays what even the goddesses cannot escape: for all their machinations, their participation in this saga is for and through male characters.

Yet in the *Táin* the action is driven entirely by the cunning and beguiling Queen Medb. Learning in a bedroom quibble that her husband, Ailill, is wealthier than she is by one noble bull, she instigates a raid to seize its brother—Donn Cuailnge—which is held by King Dáire of Ulster. She rallies three-quarters of the armies of Ireland to

support her efforts and leads them into battle herself. Medb, by her own account, is an intriguing and inscrutable character. She describes herself as "full of grace and giving" and in the same breath claims to "thrive…on all kinds of trouble" (Kinsella, 53). Indeed, over the course of the narrative she invites several men to her bed, including Ailill's close ally, Fergus. "Fair enough" says Ailill, when he discovers the liaison, "She is justified. She does it to keep his help with the táin [raid]" (Kinsella, 103).

Unlike Helen, Medb is not a prize that others can fight for, barter for, and win—nor is she someone over whom her husband can exert any control. The logic of sexual conquest as a measure of masculine power that drives the *Iliad*—both as the cause of Achilles' dispute with Agamemnon and the war itself—falls utterly flat in this context, where Ailill's calm acceptance implies that Medb's dalliance is unexceptional, even mundane. Throughout the text, Medb's actions defy expectations premised upon gender roles that have been constructed in Judeo-Christian contexts, and are reaffirmed by Helen's submissive self-effacement. Instead, Medb holds unchallenged power and authority, though it is her unregulated ambition that ultimately leads to her downfall (Künzler 2016).[2] With Medb as exemplar, a very different set of gender ideals can be inferred from the *Táin,* which are reaffirmed by surviving legal texts: Women enjoyed many of the same rights as men, including property ownership, irrespective of marital status (Ó Cathasaigh 2014). While Medb's unrestrained sexuality in the *Táin,* may indeed be transgressive for the average woman, it also reflects a cultural belief that associates fertility, land, and sovereignty with the rightful province of a queen (Künzler 2016).

Another puzzle involves the hero's expression of rage. In both Greek and Irish epics, the hero's rage is a dramatic device that marks the hero's demi divine nature and his moral justification as he enters

[2] Medb ultimately fails in her raid as her allies abandon her, but she returns in another tale of the Ulster Cycle to kill Cú Chulainn.

into heightened battle. Yet in comparing them, we see deeply different depictions of the figure of the warrior. Achilles' moment of rage is all the more intense because it occurs after a period of abstention from battle, during which his companion, Patroklos, was killed.

> Achilleus, beloved son of Zeus rose up, and Athene swept about his powerful shoulders the fluttering aegis; and she, the divine among goddesses about his head circled a golden cloud, and kindled it from a flame far-shining (XVIII.203–206).

Appearing naked on the Achaean ramparts (for Patroklos had been wearing his armor), Achilles is dressed by Athena in a literal blaze of glory. His battle cry, "high and clear" (221) routs the Trojans in fear, who fall in confusion upon their own weapons. In this scene, Achilles' fury shines through as beauty and light, a sign of divine blessing and righteous indignation. It makes sense, given our understanding of Greek moral virtue, which associates physical with moral perfection.

Consider, then, the "warp-spasm" of Cú Chulainn, who, having fought for four months without pause, is compelled to leave the battlefield to be healed by his divine father, Lug.

Awaking he finds that the Boy Troop of Ulster—child warriors with whom he trained (for Cú Chulainn is no more than seventeen himself)—had all been slaughtered when they came to his aid. Suddenly, he transforms into a "monstrous thing," his body creaking and distorting in *ríastrad*, or contortion, which Kinsella translates as "warp-spasm":

> His body made a furious twist inside his skin. … His mouth weirdly distorted: his cheek peeled back from his jaws until the gullet appeared, his lungs and liver flapped in his mouth and throat, his lower jaw struck the upper a lion killing blow, and fire flakes large as a ram's fleece reached his mouth from his throat (151).

In stark contrast to golden cloud surrounding Achilles' head, Cú Chulainn erupts in a frightful column of blood and smoke:

> Then, tall and thick, steady and strong, high as the mast of a noble ship, rose up from the dead centre of his skull a straight spout of black blood darkly and magically smoking like the smoke from a royal hostel when a king is coming to be cared for at the close of a winter day (Kinsella, 153).

Cú Chulainn's fury is grotesque, violent even to his own body. His prowess as a warrior is here represented through a paroxysm of clenched and throbbing muscles, and a hulking, twisted physique. Where in Achilles' rage we see a halo-like light emitted from his head, here we see a fountain of smoke and blood. Cú Chulainn's ugliness, far from being a sign of his low status or source of mockery, as Thersites was to Homer (II.216–219), is evidence of his outstanding qualities as a warrior, even his kingliness, as the "mast of a noble ship" or "smoke from a royal hostel". His inhuman transformation allows him to kill hundreds on the battlefield and, moreover, it fits better within the Irish mythological tradition, wherein battle rage overtakes warriors of all sorts (Puhvel 1968), and the war goddess—The Morrigan—is represented not by a wise owl but by a carrion crow. Celtic warrior culture is frightful and savage, characterized by confusion and frenzy on the battlefield (Kinsella, 141–142). Battle scenes in the *Táin*, far from being the source of glory and fame—for that is reward of poets—more often take the tone of the absurd and irrational. Enri (2013) writes that Cú Chulainn's grotesque bodily inversion reflects a suspicion apparent in early Irish literature that the violence of the warrior is also destabilizing to society. "Cú Chulainn," she writes, "not only presents a challenge to his society in terms of controlling him—and his body—he also challenges their way of thinking about various categories such as (self-aware) man, hero, villain, animal, monster and more" (61). Reading scenes such as this, it should become apparent that the value system

implicit in Homeric works provides an inappropriate framework within which to judge key moments in Irish epic.

This is all the more apparent in comparing the climactic battle scenes of each text. In the *Iliad,* of course, Achilles' pursuit of Hektor is an act of righteous vengeance after Patroklos' death, a key dramatic moment occurring when Achilles refuses both mercy and the promise of reward, claiming, "Hektor, argue me no arguments. I cannot forgive you. As there are no trustworthy oaths between men and lions…so there can be no love between you and me" (XXII.260–265). This act of distancing, the assertion of enmity between these two noble warriors, seals each man's fate, and heightens the tension of the narrative overall by calling up all of the broken promises and false oaths that led to this moment.

The *Táin* instead derives the tension of its final battle from an inversion of enmity. Cú Chulainn fights his foster brother, Ferdia. Here the honor of the warrior conflicts with the kinship and loyalty of fosterage. Neither Ferdia nor Cú Chulainn desire the fight, which Ferdia must be bribed to undertake. Upon hearing of the challenge, Cú Chulainn laments, "I swear I don't want this meeting, not because I fear him but because I love him so much," and yet he also swears to stand his ground (Kinsella, 173). In the prelude to the battle, both men reminisce about friendlier times training together under the same warrior queen Scáthach, but when they face each other, they break off their friendship in a series of taunts, boasts and earnest advice. They fight for three days, pausing the battle each evening with a kiss and embrace, and sending medicinal herbs and food to each other's camp (Kinsella, 188–189). In the final stage of battle, the two writhing bodies are indistinguishable from one another: "They fought together so closely that their heads touched at the top and their feet at the bottom and their hands in the middle around the edges and knobs of their shields" (Kinsella, 195).

The significance of this moment is hard to read without some understanding of the importance of fosterage in ancient Ireland. The

fostering of children, particularly among the high-ranking clans, was a central method of securing inter-familial allegiances and patronclient-ships common to Celtic society. A great deal of attention is devoted in ancient texts to detailing the legal rights and obligations associated with fosterage (Parkes 2006). These relationships, established from the earliest moments of childhood, were thought to be as strong as, if not stronger than blood-kinship. The depiction of their combat highlights not only the essential equality of two brothers raised together, but also the unnatural aberrance of their battle—their weapons screaming like "demons and devils and goblins" in a scene so frightful it scares away the armies' horses and their encampments disperse (Kinsella, 195). For Ferdia and Cú Chulainn to meet on the battlefield means not only fighting one another, but also engaging with the weight of their shared cultural beliefs and challenging their own sense of moral virtue.

When Ferdia ultimately dies by his hand, Cú Chulainn rushes to catch him and carry him away from the battlefield, "Cú Chulainn set Ferdia down on the ground and there, by Ferdia's head, fainted away in a cloudy trance" in mourning for his foster brother (Kinsella, 197). Unlike Achilles, whose anger seems to escalate and calcify even after Hektor is dead by brutalizing and desecrating his body, Cú Chulainn is moved by anger, sorrow, and shame, to cast blame on himself and on those who convinced Ferdia to challenge him.

Ferdia, dead by their deceit, our last meeting I lament You are dead and I must live To mourn my everlasting loss (Kinsella, 199).

Cú Chulainn's elegy for Ferdia continues over thirty-six stanzas, interrupted with prose as the body is stripped and cleaned. Reminiscing about their adventures as the wards of the legendary warrior queen, Scáthach, Cú Chulainn concludes:

Misery has befallen us
Two foster-sons of Scáthach

—you dead and I alive.
Bravery is battle-madness! (Kinsella, 204)

There is tremendous tension in Cú Chulainn's lament, which plays out as Medb's army encroaches. But from this moment, Cú Chulainn recedes from the center of the narrative, allowing the "battle-madness" to play out between what is left of Ireland's armies. The climax is not his encounter with Medb (he refuses to kill her because she is a woman), nor a moment of self-realization, such as Achilles experiences with Priam. The final battle is not even between two heroes but between two bulls—Ailill's Finnbennach and Dáire's Donn Cuailnge, whom Medb had initially set out to capture. In killing each other, they bring a close to the raid and set Medb and Ailill's wealth to match once again. In comparison to Homer's dramatic battle between Achilles and Hector and the touching scene between Achilles and King Priam, *The Táin*'s battle of the bulls seems emotionally inadequate. Rather, it speaks to the bull Donn Cuailnge's importance in this tale, and in Celtic Ireland in general, given the tremendous intimacy and interdependence that pastoral societies enjoy with their domesticated animals (Griffin-Kremer 2001).

But the confusion I have tried to capture here is a failure to recognize the social and moral frameworks that make this narrative make sense within its proper cultural context. The shock we experience as readers, when encountering a radically unfamiliar character, being unable to understand his choices or enter his internal world is a degree of the "culture shock" we experience when landing in a place and among people where we are foreigners. For anthropologists, culture shock is informative—our disorientation, our cultural incapacity in the first moments of exploring another world, are our first data points in beginning to understand it. Cú Chulainn and Medb might seem incomprehensible because they exist within a cultural framework that we as readers do not share, being more familiar with a "Western Canon" that is dominated by Greco-Roman and Christian influences. In fact, the

Táin's "otherness" in the face of American undergraduates' overfamiliarity with the Homeric tradition is evidence of the broad diversity of Western cultures, and presents a need to dive more deeply into what a text can actually tell us about the values and beliefs of the people that produced it.

Historical Anthropologists in fact do use texts such as the *Táin Bó Cuailnge,* and the Homeric epics as contextualizing sources for cultural practice (Friedrich 1997, Parkes 2006, Griffin-Kremer 2001). Fiction is all the more valuable because it expressly situates even the most mundane events within the larger master narratives and cosmological dramas that give meaning to human life (Ortner 1991).

To read anthropologically, then, is to recognize our moments of disorientation and unfamiliarity as readers, not as reasons to turn away from the text, but as a reason to dig deeper. These moments force us to realize that the cultural knowledge, narrative expectations, and moral frameworks from which we approach a text are not always adequate to understand it. We should ask instead, what cultural contexts make the scenes between Ferdia and Cú Chulainn high drama? What is the moral framework in which Cú Chulainn is a hero? What are the gender dynamics that explain Medb's marriage and her fearsome role as archgeneral? What social structures explain the arrangement of these armies? We are forced to answer these questions not with our own assumptions about what should be happening, but by opening our perception to the ways in which moments of high drama can reveal mundane realities of everyday life, and how seemingly absurd and irrational narrative choices reveal the larger cultural stories in which human life takes shape and significance. Given contemporary debates about the problems of the Western Canon, there is an implicit value in our disorientation as readers. When we are forced to de-center our own worldviews and enter into texts as strangers and visitors, we may explore how universal human desires and pathos are inscribed upon new and different landscapes, and expose ourselves to yet another example of the vast diversity of human experience.

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Developing Inherent Wisdom: An Educational Vision from *The Platform Sutra*

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What would a liberal arts college inspired by Buddhist teachings and dedicated to the reading of core texts across multiple classical traditions look like? What founding principles and core values would guide its educational vision? These were the questions we wrestled with as we first began envisioning a liberal education at Dharma Realm Buddhist University (DRBU).[1] In this paper, I will examine a concept that acts as the linchpin of DRBU's mission and pedagogy— the idea of a universal innate human capacity for wisdom, and that the goal of a liberal education first and foremost would be concerned with how we might activate and nurture that capacity within ourselves and in our students. This was and remains no easy task, but the rewards have more than made up for the challenges. I will start with DRBU's mission statement to illustrate the core values that underlie our educational model:

> Dharma Realm Buddhist University is a community dedicated to liberal education in the broad Buddhist tradition—a tradition characterized by knowledge in the arts and sciences, self–cultivation, and the pursuit of wisdom. Its pedagogical

[1] Dharma Realm Buddhist University (DRBU) is a small liberal arts college, located in the heart of Mendocino County, in Ukiah, California. In 2013, we launched two "great books"-inspired degree programs: a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts, which reads core texts from the Western, Indian, Chinese and Buddhist traditions, and an Master of Arts in Buddhist Classics. DRBU is accredited by the WASC Senior Commission of Universities and Colleges (WSCUC).

> aim is thus twofold: to convey knowledge and to activate an intrinsic wisdom possessed by all individuals. Developing this inherent capacity requires an orientation toward learning that is dialogical, interactive, probing, and deeply self-reflective. Such education makes one free in the deepest sense and opens the opportunity to pursue the highest goals of human existence.[2]

The idea of "developing an inherent wisdom" drives all activities of learning at DRBU— a kind of learning that aspires to integrate liberal arts knowledge with contemplative practice, a concept known as "self-cultivation" in eastern pedagogy. It entails a constant interplay between a dialogical and probing classroom experience with that of a deeply personal, self-reflective, and often existential, transformation. This dynamic "rubbing" between the external classroom dialogue and the inner personal reflection can make for a transformative learning experience. It is fluid, lively, often too unpredictable for a "lesson plan." It pushes us to shift from "what to think" to "how to think"; and from "what to read" to "how to read." We believe, and can see in the students, that it both activates and nurtures an inherent capacity for wisdom.

One of the foundational source texts that guides our vision is *The Sixth Patriarch's Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra*.[3] Referred to as *The Platform Sutra*, for short, it is a collection of instructional dharma talks given by the eighth-century Chinese Buddhist monk, Master Huineng (638–713), traditionally regarded as the sixth inheritor in the lineage of Bodhidharma. Central to *The Platform Sutra* is the idea of the

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[2] The mission statement and educational objectives can be found on the DRBU website: www.drbu.edu/about/mission-and-educational-objectives

[3] All quotes in this essay are taken from the English translation of the Chinese Zongbao version of *The Sixth Patriarch's Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra* (Taishō Volume 48, Number 2008), published by the Buddhist Text Translation Society, 2014.

inherent nature (Ch. *zì xìng* 自性). The text describes it as an innate human capacity for understanding and action that is whole and complete, inclusive and expansive, discerning and responsive, nimble and yet grounded in virtue. This capacity is said to be inborn and more importantly, for pedagogical reasons: it is immediately available in the here-and-now through the combined liberating activity of study and contemplative insight.

In describing this inherent potential, Huineng draws upon the analogy of "empty space":

> The capacity of the mind is vast and far-reaching; like empty space, it has no boundaries. It is neither square nor round, large nor small. Nor is it blue, yellow, red or white.… [it] has no shape or form; it is only the mind of wisdom (24).

The text suggests that, just like empty space, this capacity has no fixed shape or form, and therefore could not be essentialized as having particular characteristics. "Emptiness" here does not denote a nihilistic void or nothingness, but rather, the idea of "nothing standing in the way," as it implies a spacious boundlessness and creative openness that transcends any identifiable marker. From this perspective, one might suggest that the inherent nature transcends the marker of both time and space and is unconditioned by culture, language, socio-economic class, gender, or intellectual aptitude. Interestingly, neither does Huineng locate this capacity in religious identity or a faith-based authority. The text, although "Buddhist" in provenance, eschews, and even challenges, some of the most traditionally received Buddhist notions. This inherent nature is said to lack any fixed attributes that one may use to label or categorize; the text often portrays its essence and appearance with "just so; as it really is" (101). Interestingly, a close reading and discussion of the text conveys a sense of a deeper ground of being, rather than rootlessness and relativism.

Huineng contends that it is one's habitual tendency of grasping and attaching (Ch. *qǔ zhù* 取著) that limits and constricts the spacious

boundlessness of one's inherent nature. He cautions that "the mind that clings to dharmas ties itself up" (47). The term *dharmas* refers to what we normally experience as reality, which the text parses into an interactive interplay between the sense faculties, external events, and consciousness. However, the "out there/in here" dichotomy is rejected. Instead, the text presents us with a fluid interchange between subject, object, and cognitive experience. As the nature of this experience is impermanent, conditioned, and fleeting,

Huineng explains that if one clings to any phenomenal sense experience as a self-existing phenomenon independent from one's own perception, one becomes trapped or "tied up" in an anxiety-driven dualistic framework of me and mine, gain and loss, craving and aversion, and ultimately even of life and death itself.

> "Empty space" is a recurring metaphor employed to convey this idea of non-attaching: The capacity of the mind is great and far-reaching; it encompasses the Dharma Realm. When functioning, it is clear and distinct, discerning and responsive.… Things naturally come and go, but the essence of the mind is unimpeded. This is *prajna* [wisdom] (25).

Empty space is not empty, but rather is able to contain all things without grasping or rejecting. In the same way, the text argues, our natural capacity for wisdom embraces all possible modes of human experience and understanding, which the text refers to as the "Dharma Realm." When activated, it is seen in a dynamic functioning of the mind which can only be portrayed as "clear, discerning, and responsive." Huineng calls this the "prajna wisdom"—an awakened, unmediated, direct insight into reality as it truly is.

The text asks the reader to see things as they really are, a "seeing" that is both rational and contemplative. It states, "If one can contemplate and illuminate all dharmas, without grasping or rejecting them, just this is seeing one's essential nature and realizing Buddhahood" (27). The outcome, he maintains, is a freeing-up of the full functioning

of one's inherent nature where one is "everywhere engaged, but is nowhere attached" (32). The essence of this mind is said to be open and free-flowing, unimpeded and all-embracing. This freedom from clinging is the basis of much of Huineng's teaching in *The Platform Sutra*. All of this might seem like heavy sledding for today's undergraduate and graduate students, but in ways we never expected, it resonates closely with their contemporary experience and emerging views of reality. And this has confirmed one of our hypotheses in turning to core texts: that they are both timeless and timely.

When describing this inherent capacity, Huineng avoids language that may suggest one's true nature is something to be acquired or even discovered in striving. The text proposes that it is already whole and complete, needing only to be released from within, rather than reached for from outside. Hence, only terms like "awakening" and "untying" are used. Even when a term like "wisdom" is used, it refers not to some acquired knowledge, but to insightful, unimpeded knowing and action.

Huineng insists that this human potential is the same in all people. Sages do not have more of it than those who are not yet awakened. The only difference between the two is that this capacity lies dormant, covered over in an ordinary person, but becomes fully realized in an awakened being, such as a Buddha. We hear Huineng affirming this universal and non-dual capacity when he exhorts his students by saying, "The knowledge and vision of the Buddha is just your own mind; there is no other Buddha. Why don't you immediately see, right within your own mind, the true reality of your original nature?" (30). This idea is a radical assertion—that human nature and buddha-nature are not only of a piece, but that only the here-and-now use or misuse of the human mind determines which one prevails. For students, this possibility can be both liberating and a bit aggravating: "If I have this profound potential, how come I am not a

Buddha?!" This question, often sets in motion both a deeper reading of the text and a deeper self-reflection.

So, what might be preventing us from accessing this wonderful wisdom nature here-and-now? Huineng proposes that it is merely covered over and obscured, temporarily hidden from our immediate sight. He says this temporary obscuration "is like when thick clouds obscure the sun; if the wind doesn't blow, the sun cannot shine" (29). The text explains that "thick clouds" is an analogy for delusion and mental-emotional afflictions (Ch. *fán nǎo* 煩惱; Skt. *kleśa*)—that through neglect and habituation have eclipsed our originally pure and bright nature. Huineng refers to these afflictions as "living beings" within our minds: "Good and Wise Friends, the 'living beings' within your own mind are the deluded thoughts, deceitful and untrue thoughts, unwholesome thoughts, jealous thoughts, malicious thoughts—all mental states like these, are 'living beings.' Each must be liberated from within your own nature. This is true liberation" (56). According to Huineng, liberation is not a transcendent, mystical state that is apart from the ordinary human experience, but rather, it is the very facing and transforming of one's own afflictions that is the hallmark of ultimate freedom.

What might then be the primary purpose of teaching core texts in this tradition?

Following Huineng's definition of liberation, such texts are not for study only, but are designed as manuals for practice. They function as laboratory exercises to guide readers in "doing philosophy"; in this case, in liberating the "living beings" of their own minds and uncovering the original light of the sun. In fact, according to Huineng, all the writings in the Buddhist canon exist only to serve as pragmatic guides to lead practitioners to light up their minds and see their true nature. He states that, "All the sutras…were established because of people—and could only have been set up because of [their] wisdom nature. If there were no people in the world, all the myriad Dharma-teachings would not exist by themselves" (29–30). *The Platform Sutra*, in this regard, presents us with a decidedly human, not divine, narrative. It underscores the centrality of the human as both the origins and ends of the Buddhist experience. It goes so far as to say that if there were no people in

the world, none of the Buddhist teachings would exist by themselves. His statement implies that the texts in this tradition are best regarded not as transcendent and above or separate from human engagement, but as deeply conversant with human concerns and human potentials.

In fact, in one of the lively encounter stories, Master Huineng rejects the idea that he is teaching "Buddhism" or teaching anything at all. When asked by a visiting monk Zhicheng, "What teaching do you give?", he responds, "If I said I had a teaching to give others, I would be deceiving you. Depending on the situation, I merely use expedients to untie people's bonds, and provisionally call it 'samadhi' [or meditative concentration].… My teaching never departs from the essential nature" (91). Here, Huineng presents the teachings as expedient or skillful means

(Ch. *fāng biàn* 方便; Skt. *upāya*) that serve a pragmatic and liberative function to untie people's bonds or afflictions. In the context of the earlier cloud analogy, the texts when seriously engaged are like the wind that scatters the floating clouds and reveals the light of the sun. His warning not to worship the texts themselves, is not to deny or denigrate these sacred works, but to remind us of their original purpose: to initiate a self-reflective and transforming process that could lead one to realize one's own inherent wisdom potential.

In the educational vision of Dharma Realm Buddhist University, we apply this idea of teachings as pragmatic guides to activate one's inherent wisdom. We include not only Buddhist core texts, but the core texts from across classical traditions that might continue to speak to the human condition, and address our common hopes and concerns. We invite the students to dialogue with the Buddha in company with Plato and Confucius, and to follow the epic journeys of Prince Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*, alongside those of Odysseus in *The Odyssey* and Youth Sudhana in *The Avatamsaka Sutra*. Our hope is that such education prepares our students for a lifelong journey of self-discovery and the pursuit of wisdom.

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Po Chü-i on Friendship

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In *The Four Loves*, C. S. Lewis gave a prominent place to the love called friendship. He also observed that this would sound strange to modern ears. While the ancients celebrated friendship as the "happiest and most fully human of all loves," Lewis says, the modern world ignores it. "We admit," he writes, "of course that besides a wife and family a man needs a few "friends".… [but] It is something quite marginal; not a main course in life's banquet."[1] Gendered language aside, Lewis' point still seems true. We can imagine moving across the country or sacrificing a career for the sake of a romantic love—but not to follow or to reunite with a friend.

If this is a problem, I share Lewis' view that it must be laid in large part at the feet of our thoughtful literature. No doubt friendship, like erotic love, has much of its force by nature. But it is also the case that "our language of friendship and our conceptions of it affect the way in which we actually experience friendship: our expectations, our hopes, our fears, our satisfactions, and our disappointments."[2] The great texts of friendship that most of us are familiar with—the *Iliad*, the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*—hold up friendship in a robust way (notwithstanding that what the *Iliad* and *Gilgamesh* actually dramatize is its agonizing failure). But these texts depict really only one species of friendship—the heroic species, the kind of love whose glue or binding-action consists in the greatness made possible "when two go together." The problem with heroic friendships is that they make the

[1] Lewis, *Four Loves*, 57–8.
[2] Sharp, *Norton Book of Friendship,* 32–3.

phenomenon seem out of reach for us in our everyday, modern lives. If we are to rescue friendship from the margins, we need robust depictions of a friendship of the everyday, i.e., as an important part of serious but unheroic lives in which people have jobs, raise families, and grow old. For such depictions, the rich tradition of

T'ang dynasy Chinese friendship poetry can be a valuable resource, and especially the work of Po Chü-i (also known as Bai Juyi).

However, when we hopefully turn to Chinese friendship poetry we run into an immediate problem. To illustrate the problem, here is the beginning of Po's "Night Rain":

> There is one that I love in a far, far land;
> There is something that harrows me, tied in the depths of my heart.
> So far is the land that I cannot visit him;
> I can only gaze in longing, day on day….[3]

And here are not untypical lines from the middle of a poem called "The Letter":

> When dawn came, I dreamt I saw your face; It must have been that you were thinking of me.
> In my dream, I thought I held your hand
> And asked you to tell me what your thoughts were. And you said: "I miss you bitterly,
> But there's no one here to send to you with a letter."[4]

Both of these poems are addressed to Po's great friend Yüan Chên, who was also a famous poet.

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[3] Waley, *Life and Times of Po Chü-i*, 81.
[4] Waley, *A Hundred and Seventy*, 117–18.

Just to get an idea of the other side, here is a quick couplet from Yüan Chên for Po:

> It is not that you are dearer to me than many another flower,
> But only that when *you* have faded, there will be no more flowers.[5]

Our intuitions do quick work with lines like these: we suppose that the poet is erotically in love with his addressee. "Night Rain" in particular is basically indistinguishable, to our ears, from a 12th century Troubadour love song. Since we (in the West) still live in a Troubadour world, however attenuated, when we hear the lines of Po on friendship, or those of another T'ang dynasty poet, it sounds to us like erotic love, and even the specifically romantic form of this bequeathed to us by the Troubadours. Since friendship belongs to our margins, and since we know that the Chinese poet is experiencing an intense kind of love, we convert this to the kind of intense love we know most about. In doing so, we miss an opportunity to expand our own too limited concept of friendship or maybe even to correct a significant distortion. It's not easy to get around this problem. You can't say "try to read while suspending your intuitions," if what we're hoping for is for work to be done on these very intuitions through meaningful contact with the poems.

To complicate matters further, it is not crystal clear that our intuitions are completely mistaken. Of course, we know that the Chinese poets did not willfully seek separation from their friends, as the Troubadours willfully sought inaccessible objects of love. These poet-bureaucrats made their best friends "at school," in the grueling process of examinations, and then were assigned posts here or there across a vast nation. And then they often had to move great distances as they were promoted or sent into exile as the emperors changed or because of palace intrigues. So, their separations from each other just reflect the social

[5] Waley, *Life and Times of Po Chü-i*, 161.

facts. Nevertheless, the vision of friendship they hold up in art—of friendship consisting in heartfelt partings, longings across vast distances, and furtive, magical reunions[6]—is susceptible, I think, to a kind of troubadour problem. The problem I mean is that it can seem constitutive of the form of love itself that the beloved object be inaccessible. The love is prized as an emotional experience for the lover. And there is a degree of fervor or loftiness of sentiment in the emotion that is actually incompatible with, or unsustainable across, everyday life.

This incompatibility or unsustainability is true of the heroic species of friendship as well. To repeat: in the thoughtful literature most of us already know, friendship is an extraordinary thing for extraordinary people. It is analogous to Gottfried von Strassburg's vision of erotic love in *Tristan and Isolde*: an extraordinary emotion for the exquisite few, the "edelen herzen." Imagine what a problem it would be if all our love literature were like this, as opposed to what we somehow came to think: that falling in love is deep and real *and* commonly available experience. In both modern and ancient expression, we lack a richly expressed, thick concept of friendship for the everyday. (This is the kind of claim that invites the devastating counterexample. I'll just wait for it with humility—and meanwhile make my apologies to Ismael and Queequeg, Huck and Jim, and Andrei and Pierre.)

Among the T'ang poets, I selected Po because of his many friendship poems that both avoid the "Troubadour problem" and that cannot be confused with depictions of the heroic species. I will briefly discuss two of them.

"Invitation to Hsiao Chü-shih (written when Governor of Chung-chou)"

Within the Gorges there is no lack of men;
They are people one meets, not people one cares for.

[6] See, for example, Li Po's "Exiles' Letter" (translated by Ezra Pound).

At my front door guests also arrive;
They are people one sits with, not people one knows. When
I look up, there are only clouds and trees; When I look
down—only my wife and child.
I sleep, eat, get up or sit still;
Apart from that, nothing happens at all. But beyond the city
Hsiao the hermit dwells; And with *him* at least I find
myself at ease. For *he* can drink a full flagon of wine
And is good at reciting long-line poems.
Some afternoon, when the clerks have all gone home,
At a season when the path by the river bank is dry,
I beg you, take up your staff of bamboo-wood
And find your way to the parlour of the Government
House.[7]

In social position, the distance between Po the Governor and Hsiao the Hermit is vast. But from the point of view of friendship, they are equals—or, if anything, it is Po who must ask the Hermit for the pleasure of *his* company. There is something more than courtesy in the tone of Po's request; he has a need, even an ache. There isn't much time to satisfy this need. In this respect, Po's dilemma is not distant to us at all. The Hermit should visit, says Po, "some afternoon when the clerks have all gone home"—at that precious sliver of in-between time, after the computer gets shut down at work but before dinner needs to be made for the family. Like us, Po has a job and a family. He is not a Homeric warrior or an independently wealthy aristocrat. So we listen with special attention to whatever friendship can mean for him in his everyday life.

In addition to time, the poem is quite precise about locations. It is the Government building that the Hermit should visit rather than Po's own home. Probably this is more about the

[7] Waley, *More Translations*, 68.

Hermit's comfort around people than Po's shame in bringing a Hermit home to dinner. But more importantly, they need some privacy for the action of their friendship.

We feel that Po the Governor would like to find his way out to the Hermit, but he can't. He is trapped by his obligations. He is now too important even to enjoy freedom in his social relations. The guests who arrive at his front door, sat with but remaining unknown, are really just extensions of his work life. His everyday is reduced to a flat "nothing happens." Yet also—and I find refreshingly—there is no sense that the encounter with the Hermit should lead Po to abandon his family or work obligations. Friendship demands that room must be found in a busy life, even if that room is an inappropriate "parlour" of the Government house. *Du mußt dein Leben ändern*[8] is not the epiphany that this poem and its vision of friendship are heading towards.

Another precise location in this poem is "within the Gorges." The Hermit is a kind of treasure for Po, but this is in a qualified way. At the capital, probably, Po would have other resources, perhaps even better friends. But the Hermit is within reach. Although the Hermit is drawn with a little specificity, it's certainly not his irreducible particularly that is loved, as Montaigne loves La Boétie. Rather, the friendship is rooted in what you can do with him:

> For *he* can drink a full flagon of wine
> And is good at reciting long-line poems.

It is not just that you can recite poems with the Hermit; it is a little better, a little harder than that: "*long-line* poems." How well does the Hermit do this? The Hermit is *good* at it. Not great: good. Furthermore, he can do it even with a flagon of wine in him. So: good indeed—and he does it as something for pleasure. But nothing is going to happen here like a dazzling outburst of joint creativity, as when Po

[8] "You must change your life" (Rilke, "Archaic Torso of Apollo").

and his lifelong poet friend Yüan Chên once capped each other's improvised courtship-songs all the way back to the capital city from an excursion, and the rest of their friends "'had nowhere to put their mouths', that is to say, could not get a word in edgeways."[9] With the Hermit, the poet says, "I find myself at ease." "Find myself at ease" cannot be paraphrased as "relax," as one might relax with Netflix or a magazine. It is closer to: "be who I am." In the Western canon, it resembles the way Tolstoy shows Prince Andrei coming to life when Pierre appears. This means something like, "In his presence, you feel like who you are" and the key to this is that he does the thing you want to do well. These people are rare. In all "the Gorges" or wherever you and I live, there might be exactly one of them. But, again, it's less than La Boétie for Montaigne, the coming of Enkidu for Gilgamesh, or the friendship of virtue in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.

"Old Age (addressed to Liu Yü-hsi, who was born in the same year)"

> We are growing old together, you and I. Let us ask ourselves,
> what is age like? The dull eye is closed ere night comes; The
> idle head, still uncombed at noon. Propped on a staff, sometimes a walk abroad; Or all day sitting with closed doors.
> One dares not look in the mirror's polished face; One cannot
> read small-letter books.
> Deeper and deeper, one's love of old friends;
> Fewer and fewer, one's dealings with young men.
> One thing only, the pleasure of idle talk
> Is great as ever, when you and I meet.[10]

The binding-action or glue of friendship in this poem is named "idle talk." What is this? Is it pleasant chit-chat? Talk about the

[9] Waley, *Life and Times of Po Chü-i*, 93–4.

[10] Waley, *A Hundred and Seventy*, 88.

weather? In another poem, Po *does* complain that a friend's letter was so full of serious material—"sorrows and pains"—that there was "no room left to talk about the weather" ("The Letter"). Is "idle talk" the thing that helps the hours to slip by so that you can forget your pain? This poem *is* full of a kind of pain. Old age is seen as a folding inward, a loss of contact with the world. Not only is the eye "dull"; it also closes before night. The "uncombed head" at noon suggests not only a sad loss of natural power, but an even sadder acquiescence to the loss. The best one can do is not to look in the mirror.

Now we should see that, as a calm, clear-sighted description of old age, the poem is precisely a look in the mirror. What gives Po the strength to take this look? It is the thought of the poem as a conversation with his friend. And the meaning of "idle talk," what the friends do together, the source of their deep love, must be given by the example of the poem itself. "Idle talk" turns out not to mean "small talk" at all. It is more like "big talk"; that is, reflecting together about the changing experience of life.

A student of mine who had worked in a nursing home tells me that there is realism here.

While the old people she cared for wanted their families to visit (of course), their faces lit up like nothing else when an old friend visited. I would like to know what would then typically happen.

I imagine a serious temptation for the friends to spend the time reminiscing about younger days.

I think it's important that this is *not* what Po is doing with his friend in this poem. Rather, he keeps on doing with his friend what they always did.

The two poems I selected are illustrations from a life in which friendship plays a central role, without that friendship consisting in heroic deeds, or dramatic expressions of longing across distances…or philosophizing, if what that means is rational inquiry towards universal truths. Reciting poems together; talking about what old-age is "like"—these actions may be less than philosophy. But this "less" is more in two

important senses. It is much more than modernity envisions for friendship, and it is more possible for us to take on in everyday life.

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Reading the Garden: Why Walafrid Strabo and Columella Matter

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Humanity loves a garden. Whether it is the primordial and Edenic *locus amoenus* of the first humans in Abrahamic religious narratives or the cosmic telos of the saved in Islamic teaching, or the crafted sites of repose in ancient China and Pharaonic Egypt, or the abodes of enchantment in the ancient Persian realms, or the sculptured cultivation of European royalty, or the small household keep by the kitchen window, humanity has always been, it seems, entranced by the place and the space of growing things and flowering beauty.

The medieval world reveled in the garden as a site of multiple meanings: for one, as a place of salvation and sanctity gleaned from such narratives as Jesus in the "garden of Gethsemane" where he experienced his utter humanity and divinity in one stark, terrifying moment, or St. Augustine in the garden where he famously experienced his epiphanic conversion.[1] Another medieval understanding of the garden is that of an "earthly paradise," a deliberate locus that became increasingly mystical, perhaps even magical, and literary (as in the *Roman de la Rose*), in the later, more secularized Middle Ages (e.g., Stokstad and Jerry Stannard). Yet, throughout the medieval generations, one of the most common affiliations with the presence and importance of "the garden" was the monastery, that self-sustaining community of devout men (or women) who embraced the garden as the most suitable setting for prayer and contemplation, for the production of food and medicine, for public study and for occasional relaxation, and, as this paper

[1] See Matthew 26: 36–56 on Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane; and *Confessions*, Book 8, Chapters 8–12 on Augustine's conversion in the garden (and all that led to that moment).

will discuss, as a metaphor for the human condition and human salvation. This paper will explore one of the more unique and compelling monastic texts from the Carolingian era, something of an outlier amid all the social treatises, political capitularies and religious tomes of the time: the *Hortulus* by the ninth-century monk, teacher and poet Walafrid Strabo. The *Hortulus* remains one of the earliest surviving medieval documents about gardening, and while most scholarship to date has delighted in the small collection of verses by Walafrid "Strabo" (or "Strabus", meaning the "squint-eyed" or "crooked-eyed") monk, his poems about being a gardener, about gardening, and about the many plants and herbs that populated the gardens of monasteries (one assumes) and estates of the time, that same scholarship has also tended to dismiss the text as a charming triviality of little substance except as potential information about Carolingian culinary habits and medicinal lore.

Such a reading seems facile and, frankly, insufficient—if not a bit myopic—and so this paper will suggest that the original Latin text may also be read as an early medieval meditation on the garden as a metaphor for earthly existence and the condition of the human soul. Further, it will posit that Strabo's *Hortulus* presents the activity of gardening as a form of prayer in the action of tending to the creation of the Creator and in learning from (and about) creation itself, for the care and cultivation of the good earth—God created all things in goodness—acknowledges that every living thing has meaning and function, an inherent and essential value and integrity. In addition, this essay will also examine the potential connection between Strabo's *Hortulus* and its literary precursor from the late antique world, Book X of Columella's comprehensive treatise, *De Re Rustica*. The tenth book, titled *Rei Rusticae* is a study of and a meditation on gardening in hexameter verse, but it is deceptively transparent. At first glance, it seems to be simply a treatise of gardening lore and expertise; however, much like its precursor, the *Georgics* by the golden age poet Virgil, *Rei Rusticae* narrates details about gardening that could be applied to the human condition,

an extended metaphor of strategies for human flourishing amid the vicissitudes of daily living. Both *Hortulus* and *Rei Rusticae*, then, infuse the simple processes of caring for a garden, as well as the garden itself, with more significance and meaning than the literal exposition. In fact, the relationship between the two poems demonstrates one model of the "Carolingian synthesis," that is, a document embedded in early medieval Christian monastic culture that also articulates classical Latin topoi.

Monastic Gardens

Scholars of medieval monasticism have long assumed that the monastic garden was an integral part of the overall design of the medieval monastery from the time of the very first monastic foundation. The garden expert Mick Hales explains that "one of the foundations of

Christian monastic life… has been a close, spiritual relationship with gardens… from the beginning, gardening was part of Christian monasticism" (11–12). The Christian monastic ethos always included some dimension of gardening. The desert father St. Antony of Egypt (d. 356 CE), the founder and "father" of Christian monasticism, although mostly in seclusion in the desert as an eremitic monk, planted vines and trees in a constructed garden that he also irrigated with a small, central pool: as a result, in subsequent centuries, eastern and western Christian monasticism integrated gardens into the topographical landscapes of their monastic settlements as well as into the spiritual landscapes of their devotion (Hales, 12). However, as the noted medieval historian and philologist (and former Benedictine monk) Paul Meyvaert observed, there is actually little specific textual evidence from early monastic sources detailing the place and role of gardens and of gardening in the early monastic communities; however, such a lack of documentation, he argued, coupled with the omnipresence of gardens and gardening in monastic spaces and monastic ethos, suggests that gardens were inherently integral to the construction of monasteries (25–53). Meyvaert noted that since the first hermit monks lived

according to the culture of social separation and self-sufficiency, they naturally organized plots of ground and spaces of land to grow their own food. It was not until the cenobitic tradition of monasticism emerged that formal prescriptions about something like a garden began to emerge. Meyvaert explained that the founder of communal monasticism, the fourth-century Egyptian monk Pachomius, believed that the Christian ascetic ideal could best be achieved in a community that shared a common life… the monks were to support themselves and [cultivate] vegetables on which to subsist… an enclosure wall was to be built to create… a fortress of Christian protest against a militantly pagan environment… [the wall] resulted in placing the garden within an enclosure: a monastic walled garden…" (26–27).

Subsequent accounts of walled orchards, vineyards and sustenance gardens in the Egyptian monasteries seem to have inspired the founders of western monasticism. St. Benedict in his Rule wrote that the monastery "should be established with all *necessary* things, such as water, a mill, *a garden,* and various workshops" (Cap. LXVI, emphasis mine). The garden was then an explicit dimension of the physical infrastructure of the monastery as well as a familiar aspect of monastic life.

The official responsibility of gardening was given to a member of the community known as the *[h]ortulanus* who was expected to oversee the care of all the several gardens that were commonly incorporated into the organization of the monastic grounds, such as the cloister garden, the kitchen garden and the infirmary garden.[2] In addition, the

[2] Each monastic garden has its specific function and population: The physic or infirmary garden was planted with plants and herbs used for curing illnesses or preventing sickness and would be the direct responsibility of the monastic physician and his assistants. The kitchen garden would of course consist of plants and herbs used for cooking and eating. Herbs were also used for coloring and dying: woad for blue, weld for yellow, and madder for red, and some were even considered to have magic properties! The orchard and fruit garden would contain fruits and vegetables for the monastery meals, including apple, quince, pear, cherry, and chestnut trees, as well as strawberries,

hortulanus, along with the abbot, held authority over the monks who were tending to the gardens and could be penalized for not tending to the gardens properly.[3] It was not uncommon for residents of the surrounding community (such as the local village) to find work in the gardens of the larger monasteries. However, the monastic garden was not simply a functional place for flowers and vegetation: the garden and gardening suggested meanings beyond what it simply demonstrated. As the site of the life cycle of the plants, trees, and flowers and herbs, the garden presented a cycle of birth, growth, flowering, decay, death, and then renewal that was rich in spiritual symbolism. It was a sacred space (Bond, 174–175). The dynamic of gardening itself, the cultivation through hard, painful labor that results in beauty, sustenance, and peace, was similarly regarded as a metaphor for the cultivation of the human soul. Finally, the cloister garden could be regarded as a deliberate semiotic for the Edenic Paradise and the heavenly realms (Bond, 175–176; Helms, 435–453). As such, the cloister garden was expressly designed to offer monks a suitable place for prayer and contemplation, a retreat from the community and a site of reflection (Stokstad and Stannard, 56–57). It was usually designed as a square that had at its center a fountain or central water supply that was both practical—

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gooseberries, fig, almond and grape vines. Fruit trees were also often planted in the area of the monastic cemetery. Many of the larger monasteries would also build fish ponds within their gardens to keep a supply of fish (eels and carp, especially), and flowers were scattered throughout the different gardens, for their scent, their beauty, and their symbolism. On the different gardens see Stokstad and Stannard, 42–52. See also Sylvia Landsberg, *The Medieval Garden* (London: British Museum Press, 1995), 34–44.

[3] On correction of monks who do not attend to the garden properly, XLVI: *If anyone whilst engaged in any work, in the kitchen, in the cellar, in serving, in the bakery, in the garden, at any art or work in any place whatever, commits a fault, or breaks or loses anything, or transgresses in any way whatever, [he must] come before the Abbot and the community, and of his own accord confess his offense and make satisfaction.*

irrigation for the garden—and symbolic, reminiscent of the "living waters" of faith and in the Garden of Eden.

Walafrid Strabo

A creative and sympathetic mind like that of Walafrid Strabo would appreciate both the pragmatic intention in the creation of gardens as well as the inherent symbolism of such places.

He had arrived from Alemannia in southwest Germany at the Abbey of Reichenau in 816 CE when he was about eight years old, having likely been placed in the Benedictine abbey as an oblate (Duckett, 121–160). Over the next decade or so, Walafrid continued his studies and his monastic vocation at Reichenau and also at the abbey of Fulda where he enjoyed many opportunities to study the Latin poets of the golden and silver ages and to work on his own craft. In 829 CE, Walafrid was summoned to the imperial court in Aachen to assume the role of tutor to Charles (later Charles the Bald), the youngest son of the emperor Louis the Pious by his second wife, the redoubtable Judith. And for the next nine years, Walafrid remained at court with Charles and in devoted allegiance to the Empress and her imperial court. The death of Louis the Pious in 840 CE brought about an internecine struggle for power between his two older sons, Louis the German and Lothar, and as the disparate parties battled, brokered allegiances, sought truces and fell into hostilities again, those with uncertain or suspect loyalties, like Walafrid, were sent into exile. By 842 CE, however, he again settled in Reichenau, now as abbot, and sometime in late 848 or early 849 CE, he composed as a set piece twenty-seven poems about gardens, plants and gardening, which he titled *De cultura hortorum* but which would later be known simply as *Hortulus*. Sadly, it would prove to be his final composition for in August, 849 CE, while crossing the Loire River, Walafrid "Strabo" drowned. His body, when recovered, was laid to eternal rest in his beloved Reichenau. Hrabanus Maurus composed the epitaph for his tomb.

The Enigmatic and Familiar Carolingian Garden: the Hortus and the *Hortulus*

It must be said that the *Hortulus* is a peculiar little work, inexplicable in its creation.

None of Walafrid's previous compositions, including the *Visio Wettini, Vita Sancti Galli,* various theological and liturgical works, poems, hymns and edited texts, could have predicted that he would turn to the composition of a collection of verses ostensibly only about his experiences gardening and his knowledge about the lore of plants and herbs. He was not alone in his curiosity and understanding of horticulture and gardening, however, for it seems that the imperial Carolingian court, beginning with Charlemagne himself, had a recognized interest in plant, herbal, vegetable and flowering production. A polyptyque that dates from the late eighth or early ninth century, the Capitulary on Farms for example, describes in exacting detail the preferred bedding of gardens in the imperial estates: it reads in part that it is the wish of the emperor that in the gardens there will be, all kinds of plants: lily, roses, fenugreek, costmary, sage, rue, southernwood, cucumbers, pumpkins, gourds, kidney-bean, cumin, rosemary, caraway, chick-pea, squill, gladiolus, tarragon, anise, colocynth, chicory, ammi, sesili, lettuces, spider's foot, rocket salad, garden cress, burdock, penny-royal, hemlock, parsley, celery, lovage, juniper, dill, sweet fennel, endive, dittany, white mustard, summer savory, water mint, garden mint, wild mint, tansy, catnip, centaury, garden poppy, beets, hazelwort, marshmallows, mallows, carrots, parsnip, orach, spinach, kohlrabi, cabbages, onions, chives, leeks, radishes, shallots, cibols, garlic, madder, teazles, broad beans, peas, coriander, chervil, capers, clary. And the gardener shall have house-leeks growing on his house (*Capitulare*).[4]

[4] The Latin reads: *Volumus quod in horto omnes herbas habeant: id est lilium, rosas, fenigrecum, costum, salviam, rutam, abrotanum, cucumeres, pepones, cucurbitas, fasiloum, ciminum, ros marinum, careium, cicerum italicum, squillam, gladiolum, dragantea, anesum, coloquentidas, solsequiam, amcum,*

Scholars have determined that the extraordinary variety of plants listed suggest that the capitulary was referring to gardens in the imperial estates in Aquitaine (i.e., western France) which in the late eighth century or early ninth century was under the control of Charlemagne's son Louis, later the Emperor Louis the Pious—who would become, as has been described, Walafrid's benefactor. One could speculate that Walafrid found himself tutoring Louis's youngest son Charles amid the splendor and extravagance of an imperial garden while the imperial family was in residence and that such an encounter with so elaborate (at least for a Benedictine monk) a setting could have stimulated Walafrid to become (more) conversant with the craft of plant cultivation and the details of horticultural lore.

Walafrid's final retirement to Reichenau reacquainted him with the culture of a traditional Benedictine monastery and those years of tranquil devotion and spiritual rejuvenation seem also to have directed him back to his youthful study of classical Latin authors like Virgil and Columella. The imprint of those authors on *De cultura hortorum* is unmistakable. Written in calm classical hexameter, *Hortulus* resonates with a sympathetic orientation toward the land and human endeavor that can be found particularly in Columella's *De Re Rustica,* a text that

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silum, lactucas, git, eruca alba, nasturtium, parduna, puledium, olisatum, petresilinum, apium, levisticum, savinam, anetum, fenicolum, intubas, diptamnum, sinape, satureiam, sisimbrium, mentam, mentastrum, tanazitum, neptam, febrefugiam, papaver, betas, vulgigina, mismalvas, malvas, carvitas, pastenacas, adripias, blidas, ravacaulos, caulos, uniones, britlas, porros, radices, ascalonicas, cepas, alia, warentiam, cardones, fabas maiores, pisos Mauriscos, coriandrum, cerfolium, lacteridas, sclareiam. Et ille hortulanus habeat super domum suam Iovis barbam. The extant copy of the *Capitulare de Villis* survives in Wolfenbüttel, Cod. Guelf. 254 Helmst. (fols 12v–16r) which dates to c. 800. Intriguingly, the Capitulary is paired in this manuscript with the only extant copy of letters from Pope Leo III to Charlemagne (fols. 1r–9v). The format of the manuscript suggests that it was intended to be easily portable. Source: A. Boretius, ed. *Capitularia regum Francorum* I, *MGH Legum Sectio II* (Hanover 1883), no. 32, 82–91.

Walafrid would have known from his studies at Fulda.[5] Still, Walafrid did not follow in blind imitation of his classical models; rather, he wrote a set of poems that, although drawing inspiration and some motifs from classical sources, was also in sympathy with a monastic sensibility and offered the reader a construal of the fostering and the maintenance of a "garden" that became a discipline of the soul as well as cultivation of the land.

Similarities of Silver Age Latin and Carolingian Conversation about Gardening

1. Inception: There is always growth

Although little is known about the Iberian Columella (ca. 4–70 CE) or the actual inspiration of his expansive agricultural "epic" *De Re Rustica*, it does appear that he wrote the twelve-book corpus after having served in the Roman army and after an appointment as tribune in Syria in the 30s CE. During the time of his military service as an imperial representative in a somewhat contentious region of the empire, Columella would have been exposed to social and civil unrest in different corners of the Roman Empire, as well as to its increasingly pluralistic urbanization, and his composition about the steady work of gardening and agriculture demonstrates a perspective of gardening not only as a traditional economic enterprise but also as a means to establish order, self-sufficiency, and a kind of relief for the gardener (Henderson, 113).

Walafrid composed his *Hortulus*, as has been noted, after a period of political turmoil in the empire and in his own life, and after some cultural unrest. Both poets seem to have turned to the familiarity of the earth and personal labor as an antidote to the currents of instability

[5] On the availability of Virgil and Columella in the library of Fulda, see F. J. E. Raby, *A History of Secular Latin Poetry in the Middle Ages*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 233; L. D. Reynolds and N. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 88–89.

that had marked their personal and social circumstances. Yet, also as a deliberate recognition of garden blooms as amelioratory for people in general: as sources of food, as ingredients for enlivening the senses, and as materials for medicines and remedies. Thus, Columella explicitly prefaced his work with a denunciation of the careless excess of consumption he had observed in his society, an excess that was especially vexing because of the concomitant inattentiveness to the plight of the poor. He wrote that, in his own time, since society

> … has established extravagant prices for foods, and meals are valued
> not for basic needs but as displays of wealth, the poverty of the common people has deterred them from the more costly foods and compels them to more
> paltry fare (Lib. X).[6]

As Columella complains, it is not that the poor are without food at all but that they are experiencing a kind of food anxiety; a lack of access to a variety of nutritional foodstuffs because of prohibitive costs and excessive consumption of those foods by the wealthy. To remedy such an unreasonable situation, he explains, he is writing a treatise on the cultivation of gardens so that anyone, regardless of economic status, can produce their own healthy foods and enjoy a generous diet of assorted kinds of products.

Columella also insists, moreover, that as the social status of the gardener is not relevant, neither is the geographical placement of the garden as long as the soil itself is fertile:

> To begin, fertile soil should provide a place for a diverse garden of softened soil which
> bears loosened clods of earth, and, once dug out, imitates thin sands. As well, when

[6] All translations of this source are from the author of this chapter.

condition of the ground being suitable, it teems with plentiful
grass and, moistened,
brings forth the red berries of the elder tree… Then freely it may
produce leafy elm trees
and take delight in wild vines… (Lib. X, 6–10, 13–14).

Columella makes the claim that the success of the garden relies for the most part on the suitability, that is, the fecundity, of the land: as long as the appropriate conditions are present, like moisture and aerated earth, the garden will yield a cornucopia of crops, verdant plants and fruit-bearing trees. There is a natural vigor in nature that sustains growth.

Walafrid similarly introduces his gardening tome with a reference to the generosity of the proper soil in bringing forth an abundance of plants. There is an orderly progression of fertility and growth in nature as long as the gardener acknowledges familiar patterns of variation and adheres to the necessary adjustments that different soils and climates require:

> For whatever land you possess—whether crumbling where sand and gravel lies inert on a sandy tract, or producing fruits grow heavy with rich moisture; whether situated aloft on steep hillsides, or accessible on a sloping plain, or rough in the (ground) among sloping valleys—the land will not refuse to bring forth fruits of native plants… (44–9).[7]

There is a reliability in the land (it "will not refuse to bring forth fruits of native plants") that arouses a measure of quietude and contentment in its functions that can salve a mind (and soul) disturbed by the tumult of human activity. Walafrid also expresses in the lines a soothing optimism about the energy and fullness of the good earth, the creation of God. The description of the distinctive kinds of terrains for

[7] Translations by the author of this paper. For similar imagery in Columella, see l. 150–154.

growing plants—sandy, full of gravel, moist and fertile, along a hillside or a high plateau—unmistakably alludes to Jesus' parable of the sower (although Walafrid diverges from the Gospel parable in a significant way) and offers hope, even joy.[8] Seeds may fall on many different sorts of soil but they will flourish since the earth will not refuse to yield her bounty.

Both writers, then, turned from the capricious activities and unpredictable tribulations of their contemporary societies to the stable and steady process of the land. The texts may be interpreted as unpretentious appeals to care for the good earth as had long been the tradition in many previous societies. However, this essay argues that the texts may also be read through a metaphorical lens, that is, to tend to the "garden" of one's personal (and spiritual) condition with optimism and diligence and care for each detail (seed) of daily living. Each writer advances the solitary endeavor of cultivating the land as a virtuous and ennobling pursuit: Columella in exacting detail throughout the poem encourages the gardener to attend personally to the necessary tasks of sustaining a bountiful garden, and Walafrid reminds his reader with something of a monkish insistence that all such work *must* most properly be accomplished by the gardener himself, if he expects any satisfying results to his venture. Walafrid assures positive results from gardening

> … if only your attention becomes not constrained by lazy lethargy.
> nor become accustomed to scorn the many resources of the gardener with foolish acts, and if you do not refuse to darken calloused hands in the open air.…
> Popular opinion alone did not reveal this to me,
> nor the inquisitive reading in old books,
> but (personal) labor and exertion, by which

[8] For the parable of the sower, see Matthew 13:1–23.

I postponed the long rest of days… (10–13, 15–18)

It might seem somewhat incongruous for the exceptionally erudite and bookish Walafrid aver the value of personally toiling in the soil, even in consideration of his monastic convention, but it is likely that in his later years, having endured the challenges of civic involvement and having witnessed both the value as well as the futility of intellectual pursuits, he had come to appreciate in more authentic way the significance and, yes, joy, of the monastic mandate of labor and manual effort.

Columella also argued that one must be responsible for the cultivation of one's own garden: he fretted about the moral lassitude of his contemporary society and encouraged his readers not simply to act as landlords or overseers for their properties but to be active themselves in working the land. As he wrote in the preface of *De Re Rustica:*

> I observe that so many other renowned leaders of the Roman race had always flourished in this twofold pursuit, either of defending or of cultivating their inherited or acquired estates, and I realize that yesterday's morals and virile manner of living are contrary to our extravagance and distractions… Nor is it to be wondered at, since now the popular notion generally conceived and established is that working the land is base employment and that it is an activity that lacks any direction or guidance. But I, when I consider the magnitude of the entire matter…I fear that my last day may overtake me before I am able to understand fully the entire subject of (cultivating) the land.

Columella bemoans a moral inertia and indifferent indolence in his society that, he insists, were not present in previous generations: as such, he argues that cultivating the land and growing and attending to a garden can be curative activities most in keeping with the principled ideals and honorable customs of their Roman forefathers. Both

Columella and Walafrid champion the working of the land, even only gardening a small area, as an antidote to a prevalent lethargy of the body and of the spirit.

2. Setting in Spring

Both authors take spring as their starting point, the time of new growth, new beginnings and new possibilities: they welcome the coming of the West wind whose soft breezes soften the soil hardened by the frosts of winter and humidify the grounds where the gardener will tend to his plantings. However, there is a marked distinction between the kinds of horticultural activities that spring prompted for the Roman poet and what Walafrid perceived at the start of the season. Columella wrote about the first warm days of spring and the richness of the soil, the new light that welcomes the worker out of doors; however, he also insisted that the spring requires the gardener to cover the ground with moist dung, plough into the earth, and cut away the ground into the furrows. Columella writes that the gardener should claim again the surface of the earth, sodden with rain and

> hardened with frost, with the sharp edge of a hoe…
> ... crush the living soil into clods of turf…
> …let him also take the glittering hoe, polished by the soil
> and trace narrow rows from the opposite path (Lib. X, 86–89, 91– 92).

From this Roman poet, there is a sense of mastery, even dominion, over the land as the gardener cuts into the soil with a hoe, crushes the soil, and scrapes into the land: truly, the rhetoric of dominion over the earth. The work in the fields and gardens demonstrate the goodness and the worth of the natural environment, but that work could also become destructive of the natural forms and expressions of the various terrains. However, that is not always of concern to Columella since his focus on gardening does tend to the transactional: he suggests that

"when we have entrusted these seeds to the loosened earth, with continuous cultivation and care we tend to the pregnant land, so that the crops repay us with accrued interest" (Lib. X, 140–142). Columella identifies his cultivation of the garden in terms of promises but also rewards an enterprise to profit from time and labor invested in the task. He sows so that he may reap "with interest" by the harvesting of fruitful seeds and abundant produce. Of course, all gardeners wish their efforts to be satisfied by healthy and robust yields: Columella simply makes evident the negotiable dimension of the work.

Walafrid, on the other hand, presents a different perspective on the arrival of spring and on its meaning for his garden, which he regards with a slight variance from Columella. His *Hortulus* does welcome the end of winter (which consumes all vegetative growth "like a great belly," [19]) but regards the spring as primarily a time to wonder at the nurturance of life that the land itself has sustained has been sustained, even without the care of men. Walafrid describes spring as

> the first source of the world and glory of the year.
> A purer air begins to reveal a serene day, and plants
> and flowers, following the west wind, extend out
> the tender tips of the roots...
> ... the mountains with lush grass
> and the fields cheerful with bright glades flourish (26–28, 31–32).

The earth is fecund and flush with life, even before humans set hands to plow or dig furrows in the ground: the ground sends forth its tender shoots and the grass sways in the soft western wind. The literal meaning is clear, but Walafrid's words also express an awareness of the essential goodness of the earth, the verdant fertility and abundance of God's creation: gardening should subsist with and not roughly engineer the land and its vegetation.

Of course, the process of nature is not always amiable. Walafrid goes on to complain that when he went to his early spring garden, he

discovered "ranks" (41) of nettles growing all about the ground of his garden that were proving resistant to his attempts to remove them with his garden implements. Yet his tone is one of bemusement, not frustration. He describes the nettles, vexing as they were, as being similar to tough woven mats that a stable hand weaves and places under horses' hooves when moisture causes them to develop fungus (36–40). They are bothersome and worrisome and yet they are a natural aspect of the pattern of growth. Walafrid recounts the nettles "embracing" the ground over which they are growing (43) and although he struggles to eradicate them completely, yet he somehow delights in their vigor, as he does in all life in the garden. He explains that the garden

> has enclosed under its sluggish turf nothing which had long since been entrusted to it without hope of growth. Indeed, it has supported (plants that were) nearly dried out and had been moved to plowed furrows and restored them with renewed vigor, reviving the seeds with abundant growth. (68–72)

It is quite reasonable to read the brief verse simply as it is, a description about the first touch of warm spring weather on the beds of soil in a garden. However, "attending to gardens always had practical and symbolic overtones" (Bond, 170). The lines, then, may also read as a Christian commentary on the condition of the human soul, as well as a reflection on the monastic life and the life of the Church, at a moment of awakening or being mindful of itself. The "garden" of the soul (as well as the "garden" of the monastery or the Church) will not cease to nurture, will not cease to be hopeful for "all that was entrusted to it, howsoever "sluggish" the spirit might seem to be." When Walafrid explains how plants that were "nearly dried out" can be transplanted and revived, it is possible that he is also alluding to souls that had been stilled with quiescence or sloth yet were renewed with their translation back to the garden, back to the monastery, back to the rich soil of the Christian faith. There is then the promise of renewal and the rejection

of death within the garden (soul, church), the rejuvenation ("renewed vigor") of the spirit and the gift of redemption.

Difference: A Brief Example, Pennyroyal

A thorough exploration of Walafrid's commentary on the many plants and herbs in the gardens of his day is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, a brief look at his annotation about one plant will perhaps afford some appreciation for the spiritual and humanistic underpinning of his endeavor.

Pennyroyal (*puleium/ pulegium*) was a culinary herb in the mint family popular in ancient Greece and Rome as well as the Middle Ages and offered a slightly mint-like taste to dishes much like oregano. The oil from pennyroyal is extremely toxic; however, in dried form, pennyroyal leaves had both culinary as well as medicinal uses, including: inducing vomiting, easing abdominal cramps and reducing fever from influenza.[9] In addition, garlands of pennyroyal were considered appropriate décor for bedrooms since the scent of the flowers was said to relieve the effects of headaches.

Columella mentions pennyroyal quite functionally, as an ingredient in several culinary recipes: in the making of pennyroyal wine (XII, xxxv), as an element in vinegar dressing for salads (XII, lix. 1), and, in dried form, as a savory condiment to sprinkle over cheese (XII, lix. 4). Walafrid, however, transforms his description of pennyroyal into a more personal meditation on the wonders and purpose of God's bounty: he begins the section on pennyroyal not with function but with signification:

> …The brevity of my song does not allow me to express in a fleeting verse all the virtues of pennyroyal.

[9] See, for example, Pliny the Elder on medicinal pennyroyal in Lib. XX. 152 in *Natural History: A Selection* (Penguin Books, 1991), 226.

It is said that among the experts of India this is valued as much as
a sack of black Indian pepper is among the Gauls.
Who now can doubt that this herb can relieve many ailments,…
…O, the virtue and wisdom of the great Thunderer must be
praised, which plentiful gifts of His abundance he extends to
all lands.
Whatever you are accustomed rarely to see in this region,
in other parts such a great supply exists…
Again, certain things which you perhaps scorn, wealthy kingdoms
pay much, so that one country gains possession of the profit of the
other,
and the whole world, through its parts, may be one family (300–
305, 308–316).

It is only after these sixteen lines that Walafrid recounts briefly the medicinal uses of pennyroyal: in extract form to excite a "sluggish stomach" (317–318) or in fresh leaf form (as a sprig behind the ear) to prevent overheating (or sweating, 322–323). It seems that Walafrid had decided that the actual function of pennyroyal was not more significant than its more nuanced implications: the story of pennyroyal, so esteemed in one society, so negligible elsewhere, provides space for Walafrid to mediate on human agency and divine creation. He testifies that there is nothing in creation that does not have use or merit and that every aspect of creation has some value or importance, whether or not one is able to recognize such worth, for God, "the great Thunderer," has made all things wondrous. Walafrid's observation that the world, though riven into several (and sometimes contentious) parts, is yet a single household (*domus*) moves the seemingly artless narrative about plants and gardening (and even a nod to the market economy!) toward a spiritual reflection on gratitude, hospitality and humility. In this section it is the monk (not simply the poet or horticulturalist) Walafrid who shares with the reader his realization that the bounty of his garden represents the bounty with which God has filled the earth for all to

enjoy. Walafrid also recognizes that no one person is more deserving than another to receive such plenty: those things that are rare in his world are available as a "great supply" elsewhere, as God so wills. It is a modest lesson, to be sure, about the abundance of creation that humanity enjoys by the grace of God and about the humility that such grace-filled generosity should inspire, but it is a lesson that only his modest little garden, the *Hortulus*, could teach.

Conclusion

It would be easy to dismiss the *Hortulus* and even the gardening poem of Columella as little more than gentle diversions about pleasant avocations or trifling accounts of agricultural enterprises, and, in fact, it is true that both texts are historically important as well as informative in their literal and industrial dimensions: they share with the modern reader a great deal that is still useful about herbology and working the soil and reaping a good harvest of grapes and preparing furrows for worms. The texts are also delightful fodder for scholars and other academics toiling in the field of eco-studies and environmental history since they do present a degree of ecological sensitivity, particularly in the caution from both authors that gardening should be adaptive and attentive to the condition of the soil and the climate, advice to which readers today would do well to pay heed. *Hortulus* and *De Re Rustica* are not thick tomes of philosophical exploration, nor even clever works of literary play. Nonetheless, the writings provide a measure of guidance and reflection that is as poignant as it is accessible: in their simplicity and subtlety, the poems may also be read as works of moral guidance (Columella) and spiritual direction (Walafrid) that focus intrepidly on the theme of cultivation—of the land, yes, but also of one's character and of one's spirit.

Walafrid Strabo composed his *Hortulus* at a time in his life when he had removed himself largely from the anxiety and angst of a more public and profane (for a monk) life and had rediscovered his youthful delight in an abbey library and the unpretentious, pious life of a monk.

The simplicity of a garden charmed him, but his monastic learning transformed that swath of land before and around him into something more meaningful, a testimony to the sacramental essence of all existence as well as the locus for his own moral reflection and cultivation of virtues. A garden, replete with flowing plants and edible herbs, can exist as it is simply, a garden, or it can exist as the means to a more intimate understanding of the presence of the Divine and the agency of the Holy Spirit. Walafrid sought out old literary companions, Columella among them, and tarried awhile with them through their writings about beloved stretches of nature within the borders of imperial Rome. Walafrid's world, to be sure, was not the Stoic realms of the Roman Empire but the Christian expanses of the Carolingian Empire; yet, for both authors, their "worlds" were really the singular stretches of good earth and the many growing things on and around those verdant lands that offered "sacred spaces" of contemplation and guidance. Thus, *Hortulus*, as Walafrid himself admitted, may indeed have been "a thing of no weight" but the slim volume, reaching across time, cannot fail to remind its reader that it is perhaps in the humble, precious harvest of a garden that the magnificence of God's grace can best be realized.

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TEACHING THE MODERNS

To Bear or Not to Bear: Prophetic Pressure in *Hamlet*

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> Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
> The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
> Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
> And by opposing, end them. (3.1.65–68)

Suffering is the bearing, the enduring, the letting and not suppressing either by choice or subjection, a great pain that can bear or carry one under. It is present even in the bearing that delivers life in birth. Hamlet was born under pressure; he is melancholy, as he tells us, weighed down by the great humor of black anger and its attendant anxieties. While we're told in Act 1 that Hamlet has "lately lost [his] mirth," being pressed by ills is not new to him. There are images and thoughts of weight, pressure, and penance throughout the play. The question is one of whether it is better to accept the suffering that seeks us out, or actively to try and fight it. This lack of epistemological clarity is another pressure, a not knowing what is to come that causes hesitancy so that

> the dread of something after death,
> [....] makes us rather bear those ills we have
> Than fly to others that we know not of. (3.1.86, 89–90)

Hamlet is burdened by more than avenging his father's murder: he is also to be charged with saving Denmark from the murderer. Tragedies are always grave and weighty. But, *Hamlet* is a prophetic play written on the threshold of the 17th century where old and new meet. Hamlet himself is retrospective; yet he has something of a prophetic

vision that allows him to be creative under pressure, to form the coming spiritual, political shape of Denmark under Fortinbras and beyond, even as he dies.

In fact, Hamlet's tragic, "prophetic soul" (1.5.48) is precisely honed through his bearing of past and future pressures. The word "pressure" occurs only twice in Shakespeare—both times pronounced by Hamlet. To focus his mind on the ghost of his father and his tasks, to keep this "distracted globe" from going in too many directions, he says: "I'll wipe away all trivial fond records, / All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past" (1.5.105–106). The emphasis will be not on records and books, as representations of the past, but on their erasure for the sake of present and future action.

Hamlet's dismissal of pressures past is temporary and ironic of course, as these pressures and sufferings will continue throughout the play, even accounting for any success he has. By Act 3, he seems to begin to grasp this. In his directions to the players, he says that the "end" of playing" is to "hold the mirror up to nature" and to show "the very age and body of the time / his form and pressure" (3.2.25–26). The purpose of mimetic art is to present to the "age" his "time and pressure." That is, a play makes visible to its audience the relation between the imposition of form by the artist and the art itself. Hamlet connects pressure to" forms in the hope that such imposition, whether it be the curse of birth or the weight of sin, will provide form and mend a world that is badly "out of joint" (3.1.210).

And in order to frame such action, in order to know the shape that Hamlet must try to impose, he must know what is needed by the political and ultimately the spiritual structures being served. Having beheld the pained ghost and the revelations of his murder, Hamlet's response comes as a cry from his innermost being, "O my prophetic soul!" This address and inclusion of his soul, does several things. On the spiritual level, Hamlet perceives that he now bears most of all the burden of Denmark, whose prince finds himself in a tragedy and too must likely die. Though he may not know exactly what is to come for

him, or just what his father bears in his presumed purgatory, he does now know experientially and apart from his philosophy, however tinged with skepticism, that there is an afterlife. On the political level, Hamlet is told that Claudius is the proximate cause of the rot that has taken hold in the state. Indeed, Claudius himself sees his own poisonous and imposed form imitated in the art of the "play within the play." Hamlet becomes a kind of St. Patrick in his bid to rid Denmark of its snakes, as hinted at by his curse to Horatio at 1.5.152, "Yes, by Saint Patrick!" The ghost's appearance, as a pressured self, gives rounded form to Hamlet's pressured life.

The apostrophic roundness of the "O" speaks to Hamlet's "prophetic soul." While the subjective verifiability and unfolding in time of the action creates the play's duration, the fully rounded shape of the lyrical "O" as conjunctive to his prophetic soul suggests Hamlet's immediate grasping of the whole of the tragedy in the moment. He sees all of what he must do. It is as Jacques Maritain's "flash of reality," or insight, in which the entire form briefly is then to be played out, but is first intended, impressed, beheld in the mind's eye, the imagination, as a "creative intuition." Thus, the uncanny quality to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* lies in its temporal suffering unto birth and forms the vision—already seen by Hamlet and the audience—in the time of the play, and even in our own time.

Purgatory is itself still temporal, but its promise is everlasting life. Hamlet's father's suffering ghost is faithful; he is devilish only insofar as he is guilty of sin and perhaps somewhat disordered in his demands. Yet, King Hamlet in his purging is dedicated to his son's salvation and to rescuing Denmark from its civic corruption. Hamlet foresees in his prophetic moment that the general question of an afterlife may be confirmed but that of his own reward is not settled, and indeed may have a catastrophic end. And, it's not so much what he has done but what he might do that threatens his soul. One critic observes that Hamlet "fathoms the nature of the tragic abyss, not in retrospect but in prospect" (Shank, 189). Hamlet is seemingly caught in a dilemma in

which it is impossible for him not to sin, and therefore suffer going forward, in this world or the next.

The ghost's command that Hamlet not taint his mind is an injunction not to opt out of acting by succumbing to madness. More importantly, it is tasking him to save his soul, to somehow avenge without damning his soul, even though "being a man, there is no way he can escape guilt through his own actions" (Shank, 189). Redemption is in fact the primary task, as Hamlet rightly hits upon it with his "time is out of joint" insight; it is not about him only, the redemption is, like the tragedy itself, outward bound and communal. Hamlet is to redeem the time, free it from its false kings and prophets and give his own life in sacrifice as a form and pattern for the world. Hamlet's personal journey of tragic self-knowledge expands to engage the political reality of Denmark, and the hope that through its own purgatorial rituals—the play, the ship's journey, the burial of Ophelia and the simultaneous extraction of Yorick, and the final swordfight—it might be cleansed.

It falls to Hamlet not to sink in the abyss but rather to work to unearth the poisonous and plaguy sins, which both tragic and prophetic history tells him will mean a razing to the ground of Denmark that it might have a chance at resurrection. In the prophetic moment, he is able to get beneath the series of commands offering revenge tragedy to the spirit of the charge, which is nothing less than the task of ancient tragedy: knowing himself—as cursed, as having been born not in luxury and leisure in order to be king but, instead, to reset time. The silver lining is that his suffering is temporary and this too shall pass. Hamlet's prophetic soul responds to the possibilities of temporal suffering in this world or in purgatory, as distinct from and preferred to, the eternal suffering of damnation.

The pressures of suffering, tragedies tell us, afford expressions of the quintessence of death to the self that yet wants to be remembered. The whole of *Hamlet* is as *ubi sun*t poetry that mourns the loss of greatness, of heroes and saints, and even a of a God that seems to have abandoned Denmark. "Who's there?" the play begins is a question of being

akin to the "To be, or not to be" one: "is" belongs to the protean infinitive "to be." We see who Claudius really is; we watch him reject opportunities for reconciliation; we see him eclipse his brother and nephew and the grief due them, pressing the form of the time to his own Machiavellian will.

But, Hamlet says "yes" in time to the curse that is his gift, in the sense that in fulfilling his tasks he finds how they connect to who is there—who he is in relation to the divine personality only in the final analysis apprehended as providential. Hamlet is sent to sea and escapes death twice; he gets away from pirates and he thwarts Claudius' mandate to have him killed by England. Upon reflection, Hamlet is able to acknowledge the "divinity that shapes our ends, / Rough hew them how we will" (5.2.10–11). There is a divine hand in Hamlet's sea venture, a fluid moment of epic relief that gives him a more holistic perspective from the edge of his tragedy, and he sees anew that there is always a "rub" to any opting out of suffering. He sees again, in real time, how tragedy generically suits the situation of his life. It is as if in this tragedy, Hamlet finds an opportunity to affirm the necessity of, and then return to, his tragedy.

Once back on the *terra firma* of his tragedy, further affirmation that Hamlet was born to reset a dislocated time comes in his discussion with the First Clown. The grave-maker started his work on the same day that "King Hamlet overcame / Fortinbras" (5.1.148–149). Any fool knows, he says, that "It was that very day that young Hamlet / was born" (5.1.152–153). It seems that young Hamlet was born into this world in order to right some wrong from the start; he was born to his suffering, to bearing and enduring ills. While Claudius is the most relative and immediate of evils, he took his opportunity not only from the world outside of Denmark, but, I suggest, from some neglect of home brought about by king Hamlet's success against king Fortinbras of Norway. While the ghost of king Hamlet may be on his way to heaven, we do wonder at the "blossom" of his sin and its current flowering. A hint is given to us earlier by Horatio's description of why the

ghost appears in the armor he wore the day he defeated king Fortinbras, which we know now was also the day of his son's birth. Horatio says, that "our last king"

> Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,
> Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,
> Dared to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet
> (For so this side of our known world esteemed him) Did slay this Fortinbras, who by a seal'd compact, [...]
> Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands
> Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror. (1.1.94–101)

On this day, there was a need for a new grave-maker, one who is kept busy in this play. So, king Hamlet is loved by this side of the world and perhaps is not loved, or rather not even known as both flawed and great.

So, Hamlet confronts and redeems his father's reputation for the whole world. Something has been pressing down and overweighting Denmark. Something is awry with the old battle such that at the very least Denmark became too isolated, even if protected, from the world at large. Denmark lost its vigilance about the dangers that can arise from within a state—indicated, I think, by the king sleeping in its "unweeded" garden. Part of the reset is axial; it is a seeing that Prince Fortinbras has some "rights of memory" to Denmark and that his being its future king brings a balance back to the world (5.2.433). There is a global peace thrust to this drama, not set forth as some utopian, angelic wish, but as crucial to resetting a balance in time. Perhaps as in our 21st century, there is that progressive forgetting of the past that correctly rejects cyclical time, but wrongly throws out the roundness that lends the proper shape to the coil of history. For King Hamlet was great too. The prophetic may be about the future, but for Hamlet, as it was for Dante, it is also about the past. With Shakespeare's benefit of foresight and hindsight, Hamlet both anticipates Renaissance man and mines

ancient memory sites for archetypes of which both his father and he are examples.

Sensing his own threshold status as a prince but even as a man, Hamlet movingly says of his father, "He was a man. Take him for all in all, / I shall not look upon his like again" (1.2.195–196). Yet, King Hamlet was like a pre-Christian god, too. In his first soliloquy, Hamlet compares his father to his uncle "So excellent a king; that was to this, / Hyperion to a satyr" (1.2.143–144). This classical reference gets to the core of the weights Hamlet bears: Hyperion was the Titan father of heavenly light, an early sun divinity and father of Helios, the Greek sun god. So, when Hamlet is asked by his uncle—the same uncle who will later famously demand "light"—how it is "that the clouds still hang" on him (1.2.67), Hamlet utters his first words in the play: "Not so my lord; I am too much in the sun" (1.2.68). Hamlet suffers from enlightenment, past and future.

Hyperion was also a pillar Titan; he held up the easternmost corner of the world's sky, perhaps even so that Uranus could be castrated and ultimately, after the interim of Cronus, a time of order under Zeus be achieved. Now, he is gone, as is Christ. As are Yorick, Polonius, and Ophelia. As are Alexander and Caesar, Priam, and Vergil. As soon will be Gertrude, Claudius, Laertes and Hamlet—all the heroes and saints.

The meditations on death begin in the "Who's there?" and where are they? Where are the gods and heroes of bygone times? It takes Herculean effort on the part of Hamlet to avoid the darkest elements of the abyss, to remember greatness and even mark time in a world that wishes permanently to erase history. Hamlet is such a Hercules, despite some denial on his part. He bears the world for a time, having relieved his Titan father, as did Hercules in his 11th labor temporarily hold the world for that other great but flawed Titan, Atlas. There is a reference to this labor when Rosencrantz tells Hamlet that everything about the theater has changed in recent years, even for "Hercules / and his load too" (2.2.384–385). The reference appears to be an anachronistic allusion to the emblem of Hercules holding the earth on Shakespeare's

Globe Theatre theater, but it significantly touches on the temporality of Hamlet's burden as being timeless.

Perhaps King Hamlet's tactics were appropriate at the time; maybe when the earth is flat and the center of the universe, the rules of engagement differ from the more global, heliocentric one the prince perceives. The mytheme of Hercules operates in many ways in the play, where Hamlet also suffers for unwitting actions as well as his willingly bearing away sin and enduring of punishment. So, yes Hamlet is in part a Christian prince, but he resets time by circling back and picking up the archetypal thread of *katabasis*, of going deep into an abyss to get the truth, and in so doing shares with the other side of the known world, and all the generations to come, the glories of the once and maybe future Denmark.

Even in the mention of mounts Pelion and Ossa in *Hamlet*, as allusion to the gigantomachy, or failed coup of the giants against the Olympian gods, do we see that the divine order is threatened in this play. It was Hercules who saved the gods by choosing per a prophecy his mortal strength over his immortal one, though he did achieve immortality through apotheosis. If the immortality of the soul is first and last, it is maybe easier to suffer what "flesh is heir to" (3.1.71). As Hamlet sees the piling up of offenses against both the divine and natural orders, the end is near. The question of "To be, or not to be" is answered, as others have seen, with the subjunctive "Let be," which like the virgin Mary's *fiat* is a "yes" to the way divine will operates through the spoken word. The divinity that shapes our ends has had a plan; in providence nothing is fickle and human "readiness is all" and cooperatively incarnated in speech (5.2.237).

Hamlet has been carrying not just Denmark but a confluence of times and places that constitute a more expansive, archetypal, universal and global world. All of his efforts have gone towards keeping inflated a world that has become "weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable" that it might make it into a new time (1.2.137). His soliloquies are not essentially self-centered modernist monologues; they are spiritual exercises

in the sense that Augustine meant when he coined the term "soliloquy." They are in fact breathing exercises, filling the world with the old verities, the glories of Hera for who Hercules is named, or the air itself as her name also suggests, and as antidote to the encroaching poisonous discourse of Denmark. Hamlet speaks the household gods into being as they become quickly and sometimes roughly affirmed through the thinking subject, in the person of Hamlet, who is deserving of what even Claudius admits is the "great love the general gender bear him" (4.7.18).

Although we only have a blind hope that Fortinbras will be an adequate political ruler, it seems clear that this framing story is the intuited timeframe for Hamlet to achieve the *kairon*, or right moment of tragedy, and thereby in a sense "reset" time. Because Hamlet is willing to let go of Denmark, he is allowed just enough time to clean it and to prepare its future king to properly receive it. We know from his name that Fortinbras has the "strong arms" to hold the kingdom to which he has some right, but Hamlet's delays (that critics make so much of) can now be seen as a waiting for Fortinbras's return. Moreover, Hamlet has directed his energies toward staging the final scene in such a way as to disarm Fortinbras: to allow him to lay down his arms and rather embrace in sorrow his fortune. And we hear him recognize the greatness of Hamlet as he orders four captains to bear the dead prince away in honor.

Some of Hamlet's final words: "I do prophesy th' election lights / On Fortinbras; he has my dying voice" (5.2.393–394). By giving tragic assent to the *what is* of necessity, the cursed spite of battle becomes the gift of a lightened load for both Hamlet and Fortinbras—though even here, the verb "lights" means *falls on*, indicating the political weight Fortinbras will now bear. These words show us the shaping and speaking agency of the prophetic. By predicting Fortinbras, Hamlet provides through his "dying voice"—and then again through his story as to be re-told by Horatio—not only an afterword about a medieval way of life, but also a foreword or prologue for a new myth of the hero.

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Joachim Burmeister's *Musica Poetica* and Applications for Liberal Music Education

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In the historical liberal arts curriculum, musical study was located in the *quadrivium* alongside the mathematical disciplines of astronomy, arithmetic, and geometry. The grouping of these four subjects reflected the nature of musical inquiry in the classical and medieval world, in which theorists explained musical phenomena through ratio, proportion, and cycle. By contrast, in the modern liberal arts curriculum, music is often treated as a practical discipline. Students may learn to sing or to play an instrument, perform in an ensemble, and study music history, theory, and culture, but it is rare to see many connections drawn between these subjects and the classical liberal arts curriculum. Instead of treating music as a mathematical or practical discipline, what if music could be understood as a rhetorical discipline, aligned with the traditional *trivium* disciplines? What possibilities might this present for musical study in the present day?

A historical precedent for a rhetorical approach to music exists in *musica poetica*, a theoretical tradition that emerged in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Germany. Influenced by the intellectual traditions of the Reformation, *musica poetica* sought to reconcile music theory, composition, and performance with principles of classical rhetoric. This essay offers an introduction to a core text of this tradition: Joachim Burmeister's *Musica poetica* of 1606. In this book, Burmeister applied rhetorical techniques to musical composition and laid the foundation for the German Baroque musical tradition and the work of composers such as Johann Sebastian Bach. With Burmeister's work as a starting point, this essay advances the argument that a rhetorical approach—as

opposed to a mathematically- or practically-oriented conception—can enhance musical instruction in modern liberal education, and will propose specific ways in which our curriculum can be enriched by this practice.

During the Renaissance, engagement with core texts by Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, and other classical-era sources led to renewed interest in the art of rhetoric. Before long, music theorists began to apply rhetorical ideas to their own discipline. By the late sixteenth century, Nicolaus Listenius, Sebeld Heyden, and Heinrich Glarean had begun to articulate a system in which the principles of rhetorical logic, structure, and delivery were applied to musical performance and composition (Bartel 19). This practice became known as *musica poetica*, a term that served to differentiate this approach from the mathematically-oriented *musica theoretica* of the *quadrivium*.

The emerging tradition of *musica poetica* found its full expression in the work of the German theorist Joachim Burmeister (1564–1629). A native of Lüneburg, Burmeister pursued early studies in music performance before completing a master's degree at the university of Rostock, an early center of humanist education (Rivera and Ruhnke). Although he continued his musical work on a part-time basis after completing his university education, Burmeister's professional life centered on his work as a teacher of Latin, Greek, and classics at the Rostock town school. Throughout his life, he remained engaged with the rich intellectual life of Rostock, and his writings demonstrate a keen awareness of contemporary European musical practice. As an experienced musician with a formal education in the humanities, Burmeister was uniquely positioned to consider theoretical, rhetorical, and practical perspectives on music.

Burmeister's legacy as a musical theorist rests on two major works: *Musica autoschediastikē* (1601) and *Musica poetica* (1606); the second of these works is the focus of this essay. (To reduce the potential for ambiguity, the reader should note that Burmeister's *Musica poetic* shares

its name with the broader tradition of *musica poetica*. Burmeister's work will be clearly identified when it is the focus of my discussion.)

In *Musica poetica*, Burmeister pursued two goals. First, he sought to expand and codify the philosophical framework for *musica poetica* that had been established by previous generations of theorists. Burmeister's second goal, however, was loftier: he sought to articulate musical techniques, strategies, and even specific melodic and rhythmic figures (*figurenlehren*) that could be used by a composer to craft a rhetorically-persuasive piece of music—and, by extension, would allow an audience to receive and understand the inherent meaning of a particular work.

In addition to the theoretical works of his predecessors, Burmeister made use of another "core text" in *Musica poetica*: the musical works of Orlando de Lassus (1532?–94), a Franco-Flemish composer who ranked among the most esteemed musical figures of his day. A specialist in choral and vocal composition, Lassus' works were transmitted across Europe during the late sixteenth century and were widely admired and imitated by his contemporaries. For Burmeister's audience, Lassus occupied a position similar to that of Beethoven in the nineteenth-century classical tradition, exerting immense influence on musical practice, theory, and reception. The musical examples in *Musica poetica* are drawn almost exclusively from the works of Lassus, and Burmeister recommended that his readers study Lassus' works for themselves so that they could see effective musical rhetoric in action. By building on existing traditions of both practical and theoretical music, Burmeister grounded his core texts that were familiar to his readers. In turn, this provided a foundation for Burmeister's innovation in the use of rhetorical techniques as tools for musical composition.

Before proceeding to discussion of Burmeister's work, it is helpful to review a few basic principles of classical rhetoric. In classical practice, the rhetorical process consisted of five individual stages. In the first two steps, *inventio* and *dispositio*, the orator would identify a topic, gather relevant supporting information, and organize this material in a logical way. This was followed by *elocutio*, in which information and structure

are expressed as sentences, phrases, and figures of speech. The oration would then be committed to memory (*memoria*), and delivered aloud with appropriate vocal inflection and physical gestures (*pronuntiatio* or *actio*). Due to the parallels between the act of musical composition and *inventio*, *dispositio*, and *elocutio*—as well as the declining emphasis on *memoria* and *actio* in Lutheran educational traditions in the late sixteenth century (Bartel, 67)—Burmeister focuses almost exclusively on the first three stages of the rhetorical process.

Under Burmeister's system, composers would first deal with questions of *inventio*. This consisted of decisions about the intended meaning and mood (*Affekt*) that a piece of music would convey to its audience. For a texted piece (such as a vocal work in which words are set to music), the composer would consider the meaning of the text and identify strategies for communicating textual meaning through musical means. Once these parameters were established, the composer would translate their intentions into specific musical gestures. For example, they would first select a mode, and decide whether the melodic material would be primarily diatonic or chromatic. (It is important to note that Burmeister's use of these terms draws from earlier theoretical traditions, and their usage in this context does not align with the modern understanding of these terms.) The composer would then choose a type of polyphonic musical texture and an appropriate style of melodic writing. After these decisions were made, the composer would proceed to planning the structure of their composition.

The next stage (*dispositio*) was concerned with questions of organization. Following a typical model of rhetorical structure, Burmeister proposed that musical compositions should be understood as consisting of three basic parts: the *exordium*, or introduction; the *confirmatio*, or main body of the piece, in which the primary musical ideas or propositions are stated and confirmed; and the ending, or *epilogus* (Roche 5 and Burmeister, 203–4). Burmeister refrains from dictating the exact techniques or elements to be used in each of these sections, but suggests rhetorical strategies that could be used by the composer. Burmeister's

advocacy of a three-fold structure mirrors rhetorical practice in which an orator begins with a basic structure before making further decisions about tone, delivery, or the use of specific figures of speech.

Elocutio—that is, the stage in which the orator molds content and ideas into phrases, sentences, and verbal flourishes—is an area of special focus for Burmeister. Making connections to the rhetorical use of figures of speech, Burmeister recommended that the composer enliven a plain composition by adding figural ornamentation that shapes the character and meaning of a musical line or passage, a practice that is precisely analogous to verbal *elocutio* (Burmeister, 155–6). A full summary of Burmeister's discussion is beyond the scope of this essay, but an introduction to a single device will serve as a helpful introduction to this concept. Burmeister suggests that the composer use *palillogia* (repetition) to emphasize a particular phrase or idea (179). For a modern audience, Winston Churchill's "We Shall Fight on the Beaches" speech illustrates the effective use of this device. Speaking in the wake of the British retreat from the Battle of Dunkirk, Churchill repeatedly used the phrase "We shall fight" to exhort his audience to remain steadfast in their struggle against Nazi aggression (Churchill, 179). The repetition of this single phrase focuses the attention of the listener and communicates the importance of this culminating moment in the speech.

What does musical *palillogia* look like? For Burmeister, this consisted of direct repetition of a melodic phrase, with little or no modifications between repetitions. (For a familiar example, consider the repetition of the opening motive in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.) Like the oratorical device, the musical *palillogia* creates intensification that can be used to further the rhetorical goals of the composer and elicit an emotional response in an audience.

To summarize, Burmeister's work fused the *quadrivium* and *trivium*, the mathematical and the rhetorical. On one hand, Burmeister's work acknowledged and spoke to the historical theoretical tradition by engaging traditional topics such as intervallic construction, dissonance

and consonance, and harmonic structures, thus creating a bridge to older practices. However, Burmeister expanded on these previous models by incorporating rhetorical principles into his musical discussion with the same logic, intellectual rigor, and discipline seen in the existing theoretical tradition. Furthermore, Burmeister strengthened his argument through the use of examples from the works of Lassus. Rather than relying on personal assertion, Burmeister argued that his application of rhetorical principles codified practices that were already familiar to composers, performers, and audiences through their engagement with Lassus' music—the practical "core text" of Burmeister's *Musica poetica*.

The philosophy of *musica poetica* can be profitably applied to musical study in the modern liberal arts curriculum. In the same way that rhetoric seeks to foster critical thinking and discernment in the learner, *musica poetica* provides a framework for understanding and performing musical works. The second portion of this essay explores the position of musicrelated coursework in the modern liberal arts curriculum, and will identify several areas in which the use of Burmeister's ideas can lead to richer and more meaningful musical engagement for students.

Before proceeding, it is necessary to first consider the position of musical study in the modern liberal arts curriculum. Different types of music study can be divided into two broad categories: *practical* and *theoretical*. This categorization is a pragmatic attempt to describe the ways in which a student is likely to engage with music study within a liberal education. It is not intended to describe the experience of every student, or to capture the exact practices of a particular level of study, institution, or teaching paradigm. In practical music, students may study an instrument or learn to sing; as their skills develop, they might also have the opportunity to participate in a musical ensemble such as an orchestra or choir. In some rare situations, students may even have the opportunity to compose or arrange their own musical works. By contrast, theoretical study encompasses music theory, music history, culture, and related disciplines. Even within this simple categorization,

one can recognize areas in which historical liberal arts traditions inform modern practice. For example, the discipline of music theory covers the intervals, scales, and chords found in the musical study of the *quadrivium*, and the familiar college-level music appreciation class offers a variety of opportunities to create connections between theoretical, historical, and contextual modes of understanding. I would argue, however, that the musical disciplines described here are not *liberal* arts so much as *fine* arts—in other words, a practical discipline siloed away from the rest of the liberal curriculum.

The historical practice of *musica poetica* offers a different model for integrating music into the liberal arts. As an example, consider the study of sonata form, a standard component of the collegiate music theory curriculum. Sonata theory describes a type of formal organization commonly found in instrumental and symphonic works of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For a composer of this time period, sonata form served as a structural framework that could be used to present melodic and harmonic ideas in a rhetorical manner. For example, in a typical Beethoven sonata, contrasting musical ideas are introduced and the various differences, similarities, conflicts, and eventual resolution among them provide the impetus for musical development, and, ultimately, the narrative of the piece itself. Thus, as a sort of forum for the interplay of musical ideas, sonata form is readily interpreted through a rhetorical lens.

Unfortunately, sonata form is rarely presented in this manner in the music theory curriculum. Rather than focusing on the rhetorical play of musical ideas, students learn terminology and formal expectations, such as the theoretical names of various sections and subsections and the expected harmonic relationships between different themes, and apply these concepts to their own analyses. And yet, once the terms and expectations have been learned and the groundwork has been laid for a deeper consideration of how we can use rhetoric to listen to and understand a sonata, the typical collegiate theory curriculum stops and moves on to the next unit. As a music theory instructor, I love to

challenge my students to apply rhetorical modes of understanding to their study of sonata form. What does it mean when Beethoven repeats the same melodic figure over and over? What does it mean to hear a major-key chord progression immediately repeated in a minor key? What does it mean to hear dueling melodies presented simultaneously in the treble and the bass registers of a piano sonata? How does the three-part exposition-development-recapitulation structure of sonata form align with (or depart from) paradigms of public speech, essay writing, or dramatic form? In my experience, students are rarely challenged to understand music in this way—and yet, when presented with this rhetorical perspective, they quickly grasp the underlying concepts and delight in applying these ideas to other musical repertoire and styles.

Similar opportunities exist in the realm of practical music. Typically, students who study a solo instrument only engage with questions of musical interpretation once they have attained a high level of technical achievement. For younger or less-experienced musicians, interpretation is usually taught by rote (in other words, students imitate a recorded performance or their teacher's playing) or is conceived in terms of simply realizing the content of a musical score, such as a composer's indications of dynamic, tempo, articulation, and phrasing. While this is an important part of the musical learning process, it does not necessarily lead to engagement with the musical rhetoric that is communicated through these elements. Here, too, rhetorical thinking is valuable, and is accessible to players at all levels of experience. I will often ask students to start with a rhetorical question, such as analyzing the development of a motive or the shifting mood and character of adjacent passages, and then use their response to engage in a larger conversation about musical meaning, compositional intention, and interpretation. Even the youngest students are capable of understanding music rhetoric when it is presented in this fashion.

Although the language of music has changed drastically since Burmeister published *Musica poetica* in 1606, the basic thesis of his work

remains relevant in modern practice. Burmeister's work offers a useful model for music education practice of all eras, not just the German Baroque, and it provides a blueprint for connecting musical practice with the full spectrum of liberal arts philosophy and practice. When applied with integrity and creativity, musical rhetoric offers a path into the future while maintaining a connection to the past.

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Body and Soul in Locke's Letter Concerning Toleration

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"Toleration" is a verity of our age but wears many cloaks. There is the toleration that puts up with others, grudgingly giving them civic room.[1] At the other extreme is toleration as a synonym for approval, affirmation, and recognition (Taylor). There is the toleration that expects and invites civic evangelical engagement among those who disagree with one another—the peaceful but sometimes uncomfortable clash of opposing views concerning what is good for people and society (Bejan). Closely related to this is the toleration associated with human fallibility, the humble recognition that one may be wrong and that therefore one should hear and value other points of view for their potentially corrective value. This toleration has an affinity with the scientific method (Mill). Then there is the thinnest version of them all: the toleration that amounts to indifference—I tolerate you and your ideas because I do not care enough about either to engage, object, decry, or agree.

These various conceptions create the suspicion that the idea of toleration is a cover for some other agenda, that it is less a principle and more a political strategy. On this reading, toleration is not to be considered on its own terms. It must be understood in the larger context in which it is deployed. Sometime an argument for toleration is actually

[1] John Gray's concept of *modus vivendi* liberalism stems from an essentially tragic view of politics. For him, the good has priority over the right, but no one view of good has priority over others. Public policy is about making hard choices among incommensurate goods to achieve a modus vivendi. Toleration is an essentially practical art. See Gray.

an argument for something else. This is true, I argue, of one of liberalism's classic statements of the value of toleration, John

Locke's *Letter Concerning Toleration*, originally written in Latin in 1685 but introduced to English readers in 1689, is ostensibly an appeal for the reform of Christianity and the moral renewal of Christians. But Locke engages a bait-and-switch strategy with the *Letter*. Properly interpreted, the *Letter* is a program for a reconciliation of Christianity with an emerging liberal order in which matters of human good and virtue are to be rendered matters of private choice and comfortable self-preservation. Indeed, Locke's argument is to infuse liberalism with the moral capital of a reconfigured Christian Gospel.

Surprising to most contemporary readers is that Locke seems to make the case for religious toleration based on the truth of Scripture. He appears to confine his letter to the question of toleration among Christians, and suggests that "true Christians" are the champions of toleration. Toleration, he asserts, is "the chief distinguishing mark of the true church" (2). The true church holds that faith is an affair of the heart, not outward observance. Faith comes from the inside out, as it were, an inward movement of the person toward God:

> Neither the profession of any articles of faith, nor the conformity to any outward form of worship…can be available to the salvation of souls, unless the truth of the one and the acceptableness of the other unto God be thoroughly believed by those that so profess and practise. But penalties are no way capable to produce such belief. It is only light and evidence that can work a change in men's opinions; which light can in no manner proceed from corporal sufferings, or any other outward penalties (5).

While toleration is thus argued to be the mark of the church, three Christian virtues are the mark of toleration: charity, love, and good

will.[2] These, not resentment, jealousy, and the desire to use the rod to convert the infidel, are the principles that reconcile diversity and the need for social peace.

From this, Locke's account of the Church readily follows. The church is not so much the worldly presence of the body of Christ, but a free, voluntary, worldly society of men who come together for limited purposes of worship. A church's jurisdiction extends only to the maintenance of its internal forms and its membership. Any church can teach, reprove, and ultimately disfellowship its members, but its jurisdiction falls short of visiting any civil penalty on them (8). "Nobody is born a member of any church," writes Locke (6). However fated one may feel, having been "born" a Catholic or an Anglican, Locke insists one is nothing until one freely enters into fellowship with others; and this fellowship is merely a consequence of one's inward commitment to the Gospel and its Author. The doctrine of consent extends to one's spiritual life.

The division between body and soul, implicit in the above, conditions Locke's view of civil jurisdiction. In terms easily recognized by readers of his *Two Treatises of Government*, Locke argues that government is purely concerned with civil interests, these being "life, liberty, health, and freedom from pain; and the possession of outward things, such as money, land, furniture, and the like" (4). The magistrate touches the body, not the soul. The care of the latter is the concern of the individual and of the church he freely joins. The church is "absolutely separate and distinct from the Commonwealth" (11); they possess "neither any jurisdiction in worldly matters, nor are fire and sword any proper instruments wherewith to convince men's minds of error, and inform them of the truth" (10).

From where does this account of civil jurisdiction derive? Locke argues that this understanding of the limited state is the command of

[2] "Charity, meekness, and good will" are set out in the first paragraph of the *Letter*. Love appears in the third.

God. The care of souls is not committed to the magistrate by God because it does not appear "that God ever gave authority to one man as to compel anyone to his religion" (5). Just as "true Christianity" counsels toleration, God Himself endorses the limited secular state.

The line between magistrate and church is, of course, the practical sticking point for Locke and many others. Even Jesus, in response to a specific practical question about whether taxes shall be paid to the emperor, cryptically answered, "Give to the Emperor the things that are his, and to God what is His."[3] In a discussion that belies his original purpose in setting out a doctrine of toleration among Christians, Locke considers that one religion may require the slaughter of cows, while another may require the sacrifice of infants. The former practice is tolerable because there is no legitimate civil penalty against it. The sacrifice of infants however, violates the state's duty to protect life, and is properly enjoined. The believer may face a choice between obeying God and obeying the state. Locke sees no significant conflict in such cases: one may go ahead and obey God rather than the magistrate, but one must understand that he shall suffer the civil penalty. In another example, Locke considers the washing of infants with water. If done in the course of baptism, the civil authority shall say nothing. But if, for public health reasons, the government considers it necessary that infants be washed, it may legislate to that effect.[4] Locke's persuasiveness depends in large part on the body/soul dichotomy. Is the distinction as clear as he thinks? Are there not outward practices that in time, as a matter of habituation, shape the soul? Is this not how virtue is acquired? In some respects, Locke's argument, *prima facie*, tracks traditional Christian understanding of the soul's relation to the body. Given the Incarnation, the Church has not set the soul in Manichean opposition to the body. Christians hold to the promise of bodily resurrection. But the soul, the life-giving essence imparting reason and intelligence to a

[3] Mark 12:7.

[4] Locke, 16. Locke here forebears from pronouncing on the merits of infant baptism, a practice that ought to offend his voluntarist theology.

being thus made in God's image, is to derive its proper character from obedience to God, and thereby govern the body as a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Christian virtue is thus the material and spiritual outworking of the soul's communion with God. This is the work of sanctification, the gradual movement toward holiness. Inward direction and outward obedience combine in the pilgrim's progress. Christian life is neither licentious nor indulgent; it is a life of sober government of the passions. Christian doctrine posits a more subtle relation between soul and body than what Locke's strict separation allows.

Locke asserts that insight and evidence, not beatings and compulsion, produce a movement of the heart (5–6). He may be guilty of the false dichotomy. Example, authority, and the nudge in the direction of good conduct can inculcate virtues that align conduct, commitment, and character. Is he not naïve in thinking the soul is solely a matter of inward individual self-determination? Other thinkers, broadly sympathetic with Locke's purposes, such as Tocqueville and Mill, remark with great acuity the soul-shaping power of public opinion and the example of others.

How far do the three Christian virtues of love, charity, and good will take us? As the *Letter* unfolds, Locke takes his readers in a different direction, away from a Puritan's reading of Scripture to a more nonconfessional, worldly account of toleration. The early parts of the *Letter* insist on the Christian virtues of charity, love, and good will as the mainsprings of toleration. Near the end of the *Letter*, however, these virtues drop out and Locke instead emphasizes three new virtues: honesty, peace, and industry. He moves from Christian virtues to more utilitarian character traits befitting prosperous life in a commercial society.

Here is the passage in question:

> Those that are seditious, murderers, thieves, robbers, adulterers, slanderers, etc., of whatsoever Church, whether national or not, ought to be punished and suppressed. But those whose

> doctrine is peaceable and whose manners are pure and blameless ought to be upon equal terms with their fellow-subjects. Thus if solemn assemblies, observations of festivals, public worship be permitted to any one sort of professors, all these things ought to be permitted to the Presbyterians, Independents, Anabaptists, Arminians, Quakers, and others, with the same liberty. Nay, if we may openly speak the truth, and as becomes one man to another, neither Pagan nor Mahometan, nor Jew, ought to be excluded from the civil rights of the commonwealth because of his religion. The Gospel commands no such thing. The Church which "judgeth not those that are without" wants it not. And the commonwealth, which embraces indifferently all men that are *honest, peaceable, and industrious*, requires it not. Shall we suffer a Pagan to deal and trade with us, and shall we not suffer him to pray unto and worship God? If we allow the Jews to have private houses and dwellings amongst us, why should we not allow them to have synagogues? Is their doctrine more false, their worship more abominable, or is the civil peace more endangered by their meeting in public than in their private houses? But if these things may be granted to Jews and Pagans, surely the condition of any Christians ought not to be worse than theirs in a Christian commonwealth (28–29; emphasis added).

In this passage, Locke appears to play on the relative insignificance of doctrinal differences among Christians relative to those between Christians and pagans and Jews, signaling perhaps that fratricidal conflicts are often the most vicious and intense. But he asserts that pagans worship God. Whose God? Only one? He slyly suggests that there is little difference of concern to the commonwealth between public and private worship. Can this be true?

Perhaps most importantly, Locke shifts to a new catalogue of virtues: honesty, peace, and industry. This is the bait and switch. These new civic virtues are the basis for a society based on contract, consent,

and commerce. I suggest this is a secularization of the Christian virtues of charity, love, and good will, whose roots are grounded in Scripture as Locke understands it. The good person in Locke's tolerant society keeps his word, refrains from violence, and attends to the needs of the body by means of work and wealth creation. Whatever is Locke's account of the soul—and his well-known materialist account of human understanding suggests he is at best agnostic on the point—the *Letter* indicates that the body and its needs occupy higher pride of place than they do under the government of the soul in traditional theology,

The final evidence of Locke's agenda is a comment he offers about the effect of suppression of dissentient religious opinion. Imagine a policy of toleration of sects rather than suppression, Locke suggests. Let dissenters "enjoy but the same privileges in civils as his other subjects, and he will quickly find that these religious meetings will be no longer dangerous. For if men enter into seditious conspiracies, it is not religion inspires them to it in their meetings, but their sufferings and oppressions that make them willing to ease themselves. Just and moderate governments are everywhere quiet, everywhere safe; but oppression raises ferments and makes men struggle to cast off an uneasy and tyrannical yoke…. [T]here is only one thing which gathers people into seditious commotions, and that is oppression" (27). Now Locke's cards are on the table. Toleration is actually not about what the Gospel requires; it is about civil peace. Toleration's value is that it removes the cause of violence and acrimony which is suppression. Locke anticipates *Federalist Paper No. 10*. Let freedom multiply the number of sects and diminish the strength and danger of any one. Freedom will be the security of the regime. And freedom must mean freedom from the establishment of a church.

Locke's argument in the *Letter* begins as an exercise in biblical theology. It ends as a domestication of Christian sects for purposes of civil peace. In the course of the *Letter*, Locke reduces the Christian Church to a set of voluntary associations, the life of each depending on the freedom of the rest. The real business of Locke's commonwealth is not

the cultivation and application of virtue but the diversion of subjects from the preoccupation with the soul to the affairs of the body. Virtue ceases to be the end of life and becomes a means to a life that serves and preserves the body. What shall it profit a man to gain the world but lose his soul? For Locke, there is profit indeed.

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New Money, New Love, New Men: Naval Officers in *Persuasion*

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What kinds of new discoveries, especially for students in general education courses, could be found in Jane Austen's novel *Persuasion*? One answer is to spend one class on lecture or discussion about the naval officers in the story: Admiral Croft, Captain Benwick, Captain Harville, and, of course, Captain Wentworth. A focus on this quartet of characters offers a literary case study about the construction of masculinity in early nineteenth-century Britain.

Depending on the instructor's intentions, it may lead students to evaluate recent debates regarding masculinity and think about different types of masculinity in society today.

There are two other reasons behind this promotion of studying the naval officers. First, their significance would require some historical and biographical understanding. The scholarship about naval officers in *Persuasion*, some of which is referenced below, has highlighted their growing economic and cultural import. Because of screen adaptations from Hollywood and the BBC, students that have seen a version of *Persuasion* would be predisposed to view Austen's novels merely as romantic stories. Reorienting their gaze to naval officers should help students *de-emphasize* the romantic dimension and, instead, analyze the values and characteristics of the officers in their institutional, national, and gendered contexts. Second, this shift may at first take students away from romance, the typical appeal of Austen's novels, but they will return to romance but armed with a grasp of the connections between a new moneyed class on the one hand and, on the other, a shift from status-based to affection-based marriage. This chapter discusses the

economic well-being of the naval officers as well as the nationalist and masculine qualities attached to their rise. These qualities were desirable among marriageable women in Austen's time, and this chapter ends by reflecting on their new sensibility regarding marriage.

As early as the beginning of the third chapter, Austen leaves no doubt about the new economic stature of the naval officers. Due to years of fiscal irresponsibility, Sir Walter was forced to rent his estate Kellynch Hall and, unwittingly, provided a chance to showcase the economic rise of a seafaring career. Indeed, the very first suggestion of tenants from Mr. Shepherd, Sir Walter's lawyer, was about "all our rich Navy Officers" who had recently returned victoriously from the Napoleonic wars, including "a rich Admiral" as a desirable renter of Kellynch Hall (24).[1] Shepherd's description of affluent naval officers was especially striking against a background of aristocratic mismanagement and insolvency. Sir Walter might have sneered at the naval profession for "bringing persons of obscure birth into undue distinction," yet his own significant debt led him to accept, if grudgingly, an economic lifeline from those whom he fancied himself to be above (27). Admiral Croft, "having acquired a very handsome fortune," was in the perfect position to take the estate off Sir Walter's hands (29). The letting of Kellynch Hall to the Crofts was a small triumph of new money over the diminishing fortunes among the aristocracy. Likewise, Captain Wentworth was a story of financial success. Although he was of neither birth nor money when secretly engaged to Anne Elliot, his service in the navy made him "a handsome fortune" just as it did his brother-in-law Admiral Croft (40). Later in the story, readers would see that Wentworth's friend Benwick had come to a similar fortune when at sea. Even Harville, the poorest of the four officers due to an injury that left him with

[1] Unless indicated otherwise, the references with page numbers alone come Jane Austen, *Persuasion* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1906).
I wish to acknowledge the support of the Seaver Dean's Office, Pepperdine University, and the assistance of Rachel Simmons in the research and editing of an early draft.

half-pay, appeared to live comfortably with his wife and children in Lyme, if in smaller quarters than those of his fellow officers.

Equally significant are the ways and manners that the officers made their fortunes. This point should make for the beginning of a terrific "new discovery" among students in the undergraduate classroom. In particular, the acquisition of wealth was a result of prize-money: "Fortune came" to Captain Benwick, for example, "his prize-money as lieutenant being great" (126). Contemporary readers of the novel would have understood this reference on prize-money, hence the novel does not explain it. But students today will need some historical and biographical information to see its significance and connections to the themes of the novel. Jane Austen was close to her brother Charles, himself a young and energetic naval officer, and they had a fair amount of correspondence that helped to shape her views. As Sheila Johnson Kindred has explained, Charles was posted as commander to three different ships whose primary tasks were tedious: to protect trade routes, transport troops, and search for deserters on American ships that they came across. But Charles Austen and his fellow officers also saw "the chances of apprehending [enemy and enemy-friendly] vessels as naval prize" and they "regularly made chase and sometimes captured privateers, larger armed vessels belonging to France and her allies or neutral vessels carrying trade goods, munitions, or contraband to or from foreign ports" (Kindred, 116).

On top of salary, they benefited enormously from such engagements. Charles' experience became the basis for Austen's portrayal of Wentworth's rise in fortune. In fact, Charles accumulated a modest amount of £1200 in prize-money, but Austen ascribed to Wentworth some £25,000: a very large amount at the time (Kindred, 118).[2] The means of acquiring wealth among the naval officers was completely different from the tradition of inheritance among the aristocracy. They

[2] Kindred adds that Charles Austen's friend Captain Robert Simpson earned £30,000 of prize money between 18041808.

came to their money through adventurousness, daring, leadership, and teamwork.

The last quality is important because prize-money was the result of a collective enterprise among the men on a ship as much as the merit of a ship's leader. The collectivism of their naval undertakings in turn relates to a larger point: the emergence of the Royal Navy as a new and powerful symbol of the nation. Austen's early fiction, in the words of Anne Frey, links "community to blood or to location": a relationship that had elevated the role and status of the aristocracy as leaders and caretakers of local communities (Frey, 217). By the time of *Persuasion*, however, many aristocrats like Sir Walter were failing their communities. Military officers, as symbolized by Admiral and Mrs. Croft's move into Kellynch Hall, began stepping in to take their place. This change was not possible without the resounding successes in warfare and colonization that gave the navy a prominent and powerful standing in the nationalist imagination. Moreover, the navy was appealing to Austen because "the old aristocratic structures no longer instill[ed] a sense of social responsibility in the upper classes" while the Royal Navy was organized to "place individuals into relationships that define[d] their duties toward one another and toward the community as a whole" (Frey, 219). In other words, the navy was open to ambitious young men from the middle-class. Its administrative and bureaucratic structures encouraged and enabled individual merit among the officers through training and opportunities for promotion. At the same time, these structures demanded that every man demonstrate duty to shipmates *and* to the nation.[3] Along with the Battle of Trafalgar and other victories, organizational structures skillfully shaped officers into one of the nation's most appealing group of leaders and the navy into a most respected institution. Within this context of navy and nation, it is not an accident that Anne expressed appreciation to the navy when she spoke directly

[3] Frey notes that the army was too hierarchical in comparison to the navy, as the navy allowed its captains greater independence than army officers could have.

for the first time in the novel: "The navy [has] done so much for us." She further defended the navy apropos of her father's unfavorable disposition towards naval officers as potential renters of Kellynch Hall, stating that sailors "work hard enough for their comforts" (27).

Moreover, duty and responsibility to the nation did not end when the officers came ashore. With new wealth and status, they were positioned to participate in local communities as proven and responsible leaders. They sought not to overthrow traditional values among the aristocracy, but to serve as new gatekeepers. Given the vast difference in their experience, however, they also contributed to a new ideal of an upper-class man. As Jason Solinger among others have noted, the eighteenth century saw a rethinking about masculinity among the elite, one in which "the ideal of the well-born landed gentleman gradually gave way to a new figure of the gentleman, one who was defined by his urbane taste, experience and, above all, his literacy" (Solinger, 275). While the strongest illustration of literacy in *Persuasion* comes from Benwick's love of reading, Wentworth's letter to Anne also showed flashes of a refined and literary mind.

Even Harville, "no reader" that he was, demonstrated a respect to reading and literature when he "contrived excellent accommodations, and fashioned very pretty shelves, for a tolerable collection of well-bound volumes" that belonged to his friend and almost brother-in-law Benwick (128–129). As for urbane taste and experience, naval officers visited foreign ports, encountered people from different countries and nationalities, and lived among sailors from different backgrounds. One indication of their experience comes from the response that Mrs. Croft gave to Mrs. Musgrove about her fifteen years at sea with Admiral Croft. She "crossed the Atlantic four times," said Mrs. Croft, and went to the East Indies "once…and back again" and visited "Cork, and Lisbon, and Gibraltar," adding that "many women have done more" travelling than she did (91–92). Wide-ranging and cosmopolitan was the collective experience among a number of women married to naval officers. Theirs was an extension of the wide-ranging experiences among

the officers themselves.[4] These historical developments produced a most consequential outcome for the various romances and marriages in *Persuasion*. The shared experience at sea, between spouses or among shipmates, helped to hasten the transition from status-conscious marriage as valued by Lady Russell, Sir Walter, Elizabeth, Mrs. Clay, and Mr. Elliot; to a more affection-based and egalitarian ideal embraced by the Crofts, the Harvilles, Wentworth, and Anne, among others. While *Persuasion* featured a variety of couples, none underscored this point as effectively as did the Crofts. Their marriage coincided in large part with the prime of the Admiral's naval career, and still they were the picture of conjugal harmony. In the aforementioned response to Mrs. Musgrove, Mrs. Croft stated that her happiest time had been aboard with her husband, and that "as long as [they] could be together, nothing ever ailed [her]" (93). Indeed, her chief displeasure from those years were the occasional separation they had endured. Mrs. Croft did not elaborate about daily life at sea except to say, this time to her brother Wentworth, that "women may be as comfortable on board, as in the best house in England" (90). More to the point, the structures and conditions of life on a ship or a frigate made a strong demand for cooperation among sailors, officers, and officer's wives who went along. Although ranks and hierarchy still mattered a great deal, there was far more understanding and tolerance of one another among the people at sea than there was among aristocratic circles. The experience at sea led the Crofts to live simply and cooperatively when back on land. This unconventional couple, in Anne's words, showed a "most attractive picture of happiness" (217).

[4] This is beyond the scope of this chapter, but it is worth noting that Solinger makes a sophisticated argument that naval officers also functioned as a kind of merchants, thus helping to "gentrify" commerce. On Wentworth, for example, Solinger argues that "Austen places him close to the arena of global commerce" since the Captain's "quest is for profit as well as for glory, taking the maritime routes that linked the British economy with the West Indian colonies" (Solinger, 282).

Although the novel says little about the marriage of the Harvilles *per se*, circumstantial evidence indicates that they too were compatible and happy as husband and wife. Students might discern their happy state from their treatment of Benwick and their dealings with Wentworth and the visitors from Uppercross. The Harvilles were shown to be "kindly hospitable" as hosts of Wentworth and the latter's companions. Their obliging and sincere behavior created a comfortably "pleasant" environment in which new acquaintances soon felt like "friends." They displayed a genuine benevolence to everyone they encountered, compensating with "unaffected" warmth for what they might have lacked in refinement. Anne in particular noted that they possessed "a bewitching charm in a degree of hospitality so uncommon" (127). The hospitality continued in the immediate aftermath of Louisa's fall and injury, and it took only "a look between him and his wife [to decide] what was to be done": that is, they insisted that Louisa be taken to their home while waiting for the surgeon (145). The fact that Mrs. Harville, who is among the most minor of characters, was "a very experienced nurse" proved to be a major reason for Louisa's relatively speedy recovery (147). It is not clear whether Mrs. Harville had been at sea with her husband. Were it the case, it is not difficult to envision the employment of her helpful and cooperative nursing skills among sick and injured sailors. In a different fashion, Captain Harville remained generous to Benwick even when he was disappointed that his friend did not mourn the loss of his fiancé longer when he proposed to Louisa. Ironically, given the disappointment, Harville took the position that men were more faithful than women during the mini-debate with Anne on the subject of constancy. This episode suggests that Harville might have leaned on conventional gender biases to make the claim that men were more constant than women. Yet it also means that he made high ethical

demands on men regarding romance and marriage: another piece of evidence about the meanings of "new love" among men of new money.[5]

Given these positive portrayals of marriages among the officers, it is hardly a surprise that an unmarried officer like Wentworth was instantly and exceedingly popular when he arrived in Uppercross. The extended Musgrove family was very pleased with the successful bachelor in their midst, and Mr. Musgrove returned from their first meeting of Wentworth "warm in his praise" (69). The eligible daughters, Louisa and Henrietta, were similarly happy to meet the captain: it took merely a single encounter for them to declare him "infinitely more agreeable" than any other man they had met (70). Practically everything about Wentworth captivated them, and it was hardly a surprise that they were visibly charmed. All of the married Musgroves thought Wentworth an ideal suitor for either Louisa and Henrietta because he had "everything to elevate him" in proper society and was, therefore, "a capital match" (93 and 98). It did not take very long either for the eligible Hayter daughters, cousins of the Musgrove children, to have "admitted to the honor of being in love with him" (93). Even Anne, who understandably kept to herself while sorting through a host of emotions, was greatly touched by his swift removal of her little nephew climbing on her back.

In this particular episode, Wentworth's silent action provides a wonderful contrast to Charles Hayter, who failed to get the boy off Anne because he thought verbal orders should have sufficed. This episode suggests several qualities about Wentworth: consideration, decisiveness, and, again, experience in human interactions. If Admiral Croft had proven to be a terrific husband, Wentworth is shown to hold the promise of another wonderful one. In this regard, both men were even better than Lord Nelson, the most famous naval officer of the early nineteenth century. Jocelyn Harris has pointed out that Wentworth's

[5] Harville later argued that men were more faithful than women, but not necessarily that women were fickle or inconstant by nature. The debate would serve as assurance to Wentworth about Anne's constancy to him.

naval career very much paralleled the early career of Lord Nelson, who was virtually deified by the English public after his death. Wentworth was not involved in Trafalgar, but his accomplishments, which included commanding a much smaller ship to capture a French frigate, are justifiably heroic in the eyes of his admirers at Uppercross. Lord Nelson, however, deserted his wife for another woman and could not be held up as an ideal man for domestic life (Harris, 181–192). Austen's portrayal of Wentworth departs dramatically from the real-life Nelson. Wentworth is much smaller than Nelson as a hero figure, but he is heroic all the same—and even better than Nelson because he would be a virtuous husband in the domestic sphere.

Austen also shows the other two captains as eminently suitable for a happy domestic life.

Benwick, for instance, dealt with the loss of his fiancé in genuine pain and not with stoicism. Thanks to Anne, who perhaps shared with him a sensibility of loss, he became much better by the time she left Lyme: not yet cheerful but certainly far less morose. In some respects, it is remarkable that Benwick was "guided" by a woman—and an unmarried woman at that. His speedy engagement to Louisa surprised most people, yet the engagement made sense because he actively pitched a hand in Louisa's recovery. There is a logic to the sequence of Anne helping Benwick then Benwick helping Louisa. He possessed what a scholar has recently called a "flexible masculinity": one in which he was "both actively benevolent and patiently compassionate" (Duquette, 109). It is reasonable to expect him to exercise these qualities during his marriage with Louisa, whose liveliness might appear too much for Wentworth but was more complementary to Benwick. As for Captain Harville, he was *already* living a happy domestic life, enabled in part by his own variation of masculinity. Though mildly disabled, he drew from his "mind of usefulness and ingenuity" to keep himself domestically busy and helpful: "He drew, he varnished, he carpentered, he glued; he made toys for the children, he fashioned new netting-needles and pins with improvements; and…sat down to his large fishing-

net at the corner of the room" (129). His toy-making, if nothing else, bespeaks of shifting expectations about husbands and fathers among the English middle- and upper-classes. In this case, making house improvements for one's family was just as important and praiseworthy as taking part in military service for one's country. New money was not merely the emergence of a new group of men with means, but also new type of domesticity that reflected a new sensibility about masculinity.

In conclusion, *Persuasion* argues for a combination of new nationalist and masculine ideals that would be a new foundation for marriage and family life. Having successfully partook in Britain's imperial project, the officers actively participated in the domestic sphere with their wives, thanks to a new marital sensibility shaped by their experience in the naval institution. Seen in this light, students should interpret the major and minor characters and their relationships with more breadth and depth. They may or may not be drawn to the over-eager Louisa Musgrove. Yet given the context explained above, they would take seriously her assessment of naval officers. Shortly after arriving to Lyme, Louisa found herself to have

> burst forth into raptures of admiration and delight on the character of the navy,—their friendliness, their brotherliness, their openness, their uprightness; protesting that she was convinced of sailors having more worth and warmth than any other set of men in England; that they only knew how to live, and they only deserved to be respected and loved (129).

Isn't it fitting that this evaluation would come from a character who was attracted to one naval officer and eventually married another?

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"We Are Not Enemies, but Friends": Teaching Civil Discourse and American Political Thought

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Abraham Lincoln's First Inaugural Address in 1861 closes with the following appeal to the American people:

> I am loth to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle-field, and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearth-stone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature (Lincoln, 588).

These eloquent lines capture both a commitment to civic friendship and a hope in American democracy that are deeply inspiring, but Lincoln's appeal to Americans' "better angels" was unable to forestall the onset of the Civil War. Shortly after Lincoln's inauguration, the United States descended into the deadliest conflict in its history—evincing that civic friendship may be easier to support in principle than it is to maintain as a part of a nation's civic character, especially when that nation is strained by deep-seated moral and political disagreements. It is worth noting, further, that this final paragraph was added only at the suggestion of William Seward, who would become Lincoln's Secretary of State (White, 74–77). Lincoln made his own stylistic revisions to Seward's proposed paragraph, but he did not initially intend to conclude on such a unifying note. His first draft ended with the line, "With you and not with me is the solemn question, Shall it be peace,

or a sword?" (White, 77). Given the intense polarization leading up to the Civil War, Lincoln evidently found it challenging to balance a firm commitment to his political principles (e.g., that slavery should not be permitted to extend into new territories, that the Union is perpetual, that secession is unconstitutional, and that the President of the United States has a duty to enforce the laws throughout all of the states) with a dedication to civic friendship and charity toward Southerners.

Four years later, Lincoln famously concluded his Second Inaugural Address with a call for "malice toward none" and "charity for all" (793). He thereby announced his aspirations for reconstruction, aspirations that were, no doubt, easier to express than they would be to act upon in light of the civic fabric that had deteriorated over the course of the conflict.[1] As one symptom of that frayed civic fabric, Lincoln's assassination occurred a little more than a month after he delivered his Second Inaugural, and we will never know how reconstruction would have fared, for better or worse, under his supervision.

Lincoln's example and the conflict that culminated in the Civil War point us to two profound themes of constitutional democracy: first, the importance of cultivating civic friendship, civil discourse, and what we might call civic charity; and second, the difficulty of doing so, especially in particularly divisive times. Constitutional democracy may not be able to survive or flourish without these features of civic character. Yet democratic societies may not naturally incline towards them, and they may not have the resources to maintain them in times of intense polarization, when they are most needed. In both Lincoln's time and our own, we can even observe doubts about, and outright denials of, the proposition that pursuing civic friendship, civil discourse, and civic charity is the appropriate response to political and social strife.

I do not mean to suggest that our current moment is as grave as that of the Civil War, but the increasingly polarized political climate in

[1] For more on the rhetorical context and purpose of Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, see Zuckert 44–72, and German 20–57.

the United States is nonetheless cause for concern. While I do not have a simple solution for that problem, I want to suggest a few ways in which I think that institutions of higher learning might be a part of the remedy to what ails our civic life. More specifically, I want to suggest that a civic and liberal education that involves meaningful engagement with American political thought, principles, texts, and debates has the potential to promote a habit of civil discourse among university students.

Such a curricular approach has the capacity to show students that political, legal, and social questions are often far more complicated than we might like to think. When we acknowledge that an issue is complicated, we are less likely to be so heated or so quick to condemn when we encounter someone with a differing opinion. When something is complicated, that usually means there are reasonable grounds for disagreement. That does not mean that we should be ambivalent; it does not entail that we have to pretend that there is no right answer or that we have to deny that some answers are more plausible than others. But it does indicate that we should keep in check the emotional intensity of our opinions and the impulse to dismiss offhand those whose opinions differ from ours. In his 1854 Peoria Address, Lincoln called slavery a "monstrous injustice" that led some "into an open war with the very fundamental principles of civil liberty," yet somehow managed also to say, about his Southern counterparts, "They are just what we would be in their situation," and, "I surely will not blame them for not doing what I should not know how to do myself" (291). His moral opposition to slavery did not prevent him from acknowledging that solving the issue of slavery would be a complicated task.

To recognize the complexity of an issue requires one to acknowledge the limits of one's knowledge. But how can we encourage students—as Benjamin Franklin said in his closing speech at the Constitutional Convention—to "doubt a little of [their] own infallibility," or, in

James Madison's words from *Federalist* No. 37, "not to assume an infallibility in rejudging the fallible opinions of others" (Madison, *Debates*, 547; Madison, *The Federalist*, 180)? First, an emphasis on intellectual debates and disagreements compels students to face the strength of arguments on multiple sides of an issue. This is one of many reasons why it is fruitful to read and discuss the debates between the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists over the ratification of the Constitution. When you engage with the debates themselves, it is difficult, for instance, to dismiss every Anti-Federalist reservation outright. The Anti-Federalists raised questions and concerns that are still with us today, regarding such matters as the extent of national power and the scope for local and state governance, the possibility for meaningful representation on a national scale, the nature of judicial power, the risks of political innovations, and the prospects for sufficiently empowering the government while withholding, as much as possible, the capacity to encroach upon individuals' rights. As Herbert Storing, a scholar of American political thought and editor of *The Complete Anti-Federalist*, explains in his introduction to Anti-Federalist thought, the Anti-Federalists "doubted; they held back; they urged second thoughts. This was, however, not a mere failure of will or lack of courage. They had *reasons*, and the reasons have weight" (6).

With respect to the Federalists, it is just as difficult to come away from the ratification debates with a type of Beardian cynicism about their arguments.[2] When students, for example, work their way through *The Federalist's* accounts of and responses to the challenges of designing a good, free, republican government, the necessity of compromise, the requisites and complexities of a good separation of powers system, and the need for an empowered national government without abandoning a federal framework, they are prompted to appreciate the force of

[2] Charles Beard was an influential historian who argued that the framers of the Constitution were primarily driven by their own self-interested economic motives. His thesis has been the subject of frequent critiques in subsequent scholarship.

Federalist arguments about the best possible form of government under the circumstances.[3] Whether students are ultimately persuaded by the Federalists or the Anti-Federalists, the ratification debates elude easy, straightforward conclusions.

Regarding the study of Lincoln, it is useful for students to grapple with his approach to the institution of slavery in light of the alternative approaches prominent at the time. In his "Fragment: The Constitution and the Union," Lincoln succinctly outlined his understanding of the American experiment. He described the Declaration of Independence's principle of "Liberty to all" as an "apple of gold," with the Constitution and the Union being "the *picture* of *silver*, subsequently framed around it" (513). While Lincoln made clear that "[t]he *picture* was made *for* the apple," he viewed them as inseparably linked. Thus, he articulated his firm commitment to preserving both the apple and the picture.

Studying Lincoln leads students to inquire: Why did Lincoln care so much about the Union and the Constitution? Why did he allow concerns about the Constitution and the Union to guide and constrain his pursuit of the Declaration's principles? Throughout the 1850s and even during the early stages of the Civil War, why did he refuse to interfere with the institution of slavery in the states where it already existed? During that time, why did he put distance between his position and that of the abolitionists? Once the Civil War had begun, why did he wait so long to issue the Emancipation Proclamation, and why did that proclamation free slaves only in areas in rebellion?

Many students find more in common with the likes of the fiery abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison than they do with Lincoln. But would the United States have been better off with more people like Garrison and fewer like Lincoln? On the one hand, the policy that Lincoln long held of placing slavery on the "course of ultimate extinction"

[3] On good, free, republican government, see *Federalist* Nos. 37 and 39; on compromise, see *Federalist* No. 37; on the separation of powers, see *Federalist* Nos. 47-51; on the task of empowering the national government while maintaining a federal system, see, e.g., *Federalist* Nos. 15-23 and 39.

may seem to lack the moral urgency warranted by the injustice of the institution (Lincoln, 373). On the other hand, the complicated demands and limitations of democratic statesmanship call into question the prudence of Garrison's approach of moral fervor and intolerance of compromise.

In addition to a focus on intellectual debates and disagreements, it is helpful to emphasize the best, most formidable arguments that each side has to offer. As a contrast, I often discuss with students the destructive character of internet memes in the age of social media. Politically-oriented memes are designed to make political opponents appear as ridiculous, ignorant, wicked, or hypocritical as possible, and these memes typically portray those opponents in overly simplistic, opportunistic, unfair, and even self-defeating ways.[4] Partaking in caricatures of your political opposition in this way does not show intellectual or moral superiority, and such caricatures certainly do not conduce to an atmosphere fit for civil discourse. The search for the truth of the matter and the cultivation of civil discourse must proceed by way of engaging with the strongest versions of opposing positions, not the weakest. In this respect, while discussing various debates in American history, it is worthwhile to pay attention, as Storing put it with respect to the Federalists and Anti-Federalists, not to "what is *common* so much as [to] what is *fundamental*," to those thinkers who see "farther or better" and who "can *explain* more" (6).

A focus on debates and the intellectual high points in American political thought accustoms students to the general complexity of political and social issues. It encourages them to set aside assumptions that one person or group has a monopoly on the truth and that the truth will be indisputable. Students may thus realize that they might

[4] Due to the algorithmic functions of social media platforms, users see these memes while they rarely encounter the more thoughtful views of their political opponents. As Cass Sunstein explains, social media sites make it possible for each individual to create, in effect, a news outlet curated just for them—*The Daily Me* (Sunstein 1–31).

learn something from engaging with diverse viewpoints, and that those with whom they disagree may be arguing in good faith. Toward that end, we must encourage students to set up the same standard of evidence for both what they want to believe and what they would prefer to reject. The psychologist Jonathan Haidt explains that it is not our default inclination to adhere to such an impartial standard. Instead, we are inclined to think in terms of whether we "must" believe something that we would rather not believe, or whether we "can" believe something that we would like to believe in any case (Haidt, 97–99). In other words, our standards tend to shift from whether there are any defensible reasons available to *reject* a disfavored belief to whether there are any such reasons to *accept* an appealing one. In that way, biases and self-interested motivations, as Lincoln recognized in a fragment he wrote on slavery, detract from what he described as "that perfect impartiality, which has ever been considered most favorable to correct decisions" (Lincoln, 478). An education for constructive civil discourse must seek to overcome these tendencies and to press students to maintain one standard of judgment with consistency.

Finally, such an approach to civic and liberal education in the American political tradition has the potential to show students that meaningful common ground exists, even if not unanimously shared; it may even serve to foster that common ground when it would otherwise be absent or overlooked. It may consist of deeply held moral principles, like the principles of the Declaration of Independence, as well as foundational political commitments, like a commitment to constitutionalism. Lincoln, for his part, sought to highlight and support this common ground by referring to the Declaration as "our ancient faith," and by calling for a "political religion" of reverence for the Constitution (81, 303–4). He found it troubling that some were seeking to discard these shared commitments—by, for instance, calling the Declaration a "self-evident lie," arguing that slavery was a positive good rather than merely a necessary evil, or making the case for a policy of not caring "whether slavery be voted *down* or voted *up*" as Stephen Douglas did

(Lincoln, 314, 375). Lincoln was concerned about the consequences of this abandonment of what he considered to be the defining principles of the American experiment; this abandonment rendered civil discourse and compromise all the more challenging. He sought to reclaim that old common ground that, he argued, had characterized the nation from its conception, as a nation "dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal" (Lincoln, 734).

That common ground, to the extent that it persists today, does not eliminate the significance of our policy disagreements or our disagreements about how to interpret, apply, or remain faithful to our principles. However, it does open the door to the possibility that we can work together as fellow citizens in a joint project, bound together by "the electric cord in that Declaration that links the hearts of patriotic and liberty-loving men together, that will link those patriotic hearts as long as the love of freedom exists in the minds of men throughout the world" (Lincoln, 402). It does open the door to the possibility that we can truly be civic friends. It does open the door to a community defined by charity, not malice, where we can strive to "achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations" (Lincoln, 793).

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Tocqueville's *Ancien Regime* as a Regime

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This paper concerns a text and an idea. The text is Alexis de Tocqueville's *Old Regime and the French Revolution.* The idea examined is the *regime*. *The Old Regime* presents Tocqueville's mature reflections on political life and, in particular, the relationship between social and political organization, on the one hand, and political liberty, on the other. It is not as commonly read as is his *Democracy in America.* But similarly to *Democracy in America*, he presents *The Old Regime* explicitly as a teaching book (Tocqueville, *OR*, xii). In a relatively brief text, especially in comparison to *Democracy in America*, Tocqueville offers a compelling analysis of the fate of the old order in France and ultimately Europe which is rather foreign to many of the democratic assumptions of our age. Yet he is not nostalgic; he is, rather relentlessly, concerned for the existing and future place of liberty in France and Europe in a democratic age. Perhaps it is inevitable that *The Old Regime* does not satisfy everyone's image as a core text in the way *Democracy in America* might. But it is tightly argued and compactly presented without losing the force of his arguments, making it, in some ways, a more manageable text than *Democracy* yet equally as valuable an investigation of political life.

The second concern, the *regime,* was in important ways, the key phenomenon of the political investigations undertaken by the ancient Greeks and, particularly, Aristotle. This does not seem to be true in the same way for Tocqueville's political investigations. To see that his political analysis veers significantly from the Greek founders of political science, it may be sufficient just to note that he thought in terms of a civilization traversing through a democratic age, not just the highly particular life of an autonomous city. Yet, in most respects, his political

language overlaps and, in fact, originates with that of the Greeks. For Tocqueville and for us, to even speak of the political, of course, transplants an ancient Greek term (the *polis*) and applies it to great collections of people spanning, in some cases, entire continents. Moreover, he, and we, write of *democracy*, *oligarchy and aristocracy*, all of which are rooted in Greek life and thought.

The idea behind the use of *regime* in this discussion is also rooted in that life and thought.

However, *regime*, as word, is not so rooted. The word *regime* is a word borrowed from the French *regime* or *regimen,* meaning government, which, itself, is rooted in the Latin term, *regimen,* indicating rules. Along with *constitution*, the term *regime* is often used as an English translation for the Greek *politeia.* Whether Tocqueville has a view of the regime as constitution or *politeia* consistent with the ancient view (and, if not, how, and to what import) is the focus of the remainder of this essay.

The regime, or *politeia*, as viewed by ancient political science required comprehensiveness and authoritativeness. Martin Diamond's description of a regime a generation ago, in his essay "Ethics and Politics: the American Way," shows clearly its application in this respect. For Diamond, a regime arises from the condition that, in the Greek city or *polis*, "government" was inextricably linked with "society.'" Further, it was "the task of the laws to create a way of life or to nurture among citizens certain qualities of character." Given such a task, as Diamond notes, "the laws necessarily had to penetrate every aspect of a community's life" (45).

As Carnes Lord reminds us in his translation of the *Politics*, how a way of life got determined according to Aristotle depended on "the organization of offices in the city, particularly the most authoritative; the end pursued by the city as a whole and by those constituting its governing body." While, for Aristotle, *regime* might also suggest a "specifically constitutional or republican regime as distinct from personal monarchical rule" (Lord, 278), his typical use of the term *regime*, was tied

to a particular class, or particular classes, in a city (*polis*) and was defined by the place of those classes in the political order of the city (*polis*). As Aristotle asserted rather emphatically, "regime and governing body [class] signify the same thing" (Aristotle, 73). Rule by the many poor constituted a democratic regime while rule by the few wealthy constituted an oligarchic regime and so on. Aristotle's premise is that different regimes point to, and educate to, different principles and virtues and that the best regime, for purposes of human thriving, develops or educates the city to maximize the possession and exercise of the virtues among the citizenry. Given that regimes differ in quality and since even maintaining a given regime is difficult, Aristotle recommends efforts to improve, if possible, any given regime, without assuming a mandate to pursue the best regime.

Tocqueville certainly is alert to the class character of a community and its relation to the distribution of offices in a community. He fully understands as well that the laws arising from that relationship penetrate into the community. Moreover, he recognizes that politics is not one size fits all. Circumstances, in a very wide sense, matter. But Tocqueville seems intent on concentrating the attention of the citizen first on liberty as opposed to virtue. That is, for Tocqueville, virtue seems to be instrumental to liberty rather than the liberty of the *polis* serving as a theater for the display of virtue. But the relationship between liberty and virtue is highly, and inherently, complex. It is complex in its nature. From any normal republican point of view, each is necessary to the other. Thus, it need not be concluded that Tocqueville is indifferent to virtue, just as Aristotle is not indifferent to the free life. But it seems likely that, at minimum, the practical and the theoretical circumstances of modern politics obliged a new orientation.

The most obvious practical differences between the polis and modern political communities are related to size and degree of social integration. The city Aristotle had in view was a closely integrated community composed of different types of people coming together to share each other's company. How far that view remains a model for

Tocqueville is limited. The *polis* can be a model for modern politics only on the assumption that what applies in the confines of the *polis* can be validly applied to the nations and the civilization of modern Europe (and ultimately the world). Such an identification is problematic, at minimum, because Aristotle explicitly rejects the tribe and the empire as fully comparable to the *polis*. And as Hamilton indicates, via Montesquieu in *Federalist Papers No. 9*, most if not all of the states of the proposed American Union were larger than the "ancient republics" of the Greeks. Yet, Tocqueville uses that language of the *polis—democracy*, *oligarchy*, *aristocracy*, and so on—to describe social and political relations of Europe and in some ways they do correspond to their use in the *polis*. Thus, it might be said that Tocqueville, structurally, views the regime in a manner similar and derivative from the Greek view.

Whether and how the issue of magnitude explains, for Tocqueville, liberty as opposed to virtue as the primary consideration for citizens is not immediately apparent. But that he marks liberty as primary is clear. Moreover, it should be made clear that the liberty he has in mind is *not* in the first instance what we today often think as civil liberties. Such civil liberties connote privileges or rights which remove governmental constraints on specific actions, however politically relevant action is defined at the time. Tocqueville's use of "liberty," whether in *The Old Regime* or *Democracy*, is often connected to a discussion of specific rights or privileges. But at the same time Tocqueville usually points to the larger sense of the liberty of the community in its habits of and institutions for self-government as the justification for individual liberties. Those who substantively participate in their own governance have liberty. So a specific liberty or right is an indicator of general self-governance (and at minimum describes an area of permitted self or personal governance) but it remains instrumental to the broader principle that the community governs itself and is not simply administered, constrained to obedience to a superior power nor, for that matter, mired in absolute autonomy or individualism.

This emphasis on participation in decision is reflected in both *The Old Regime* and *Democracy in America*. In both texts, the path to despotism, for Tocqueville, is the willingness of people to surrender personal (and class and communal) deliberative and decision-making power to a central authority in return for security, stability and material or social benefits. But his liberalism is not reducible to individualism or an arbitrary private right altogether. For, Tocqueville, people show their qualities and liberty shows its benefits in the administration of common affairs. As he notes in his introduction, only liberty can lift "men's minds above mere mammon worship" by means of "a loftier more viral ideal" (Tocqueville, *OR*, xiv).

In *Democracy in America,* Tocqueville, while exploring the sources of political liberty, had argued that pride attaches to distinction and in doing so serves the cause of liberty (1126). Aristocratic societies, for example, by definition, create a clear, if artificial, distinction between people which, beginning with the lords themselves, permit classes of people to take pride in, and to protect, their place and their capacity in society. Democracies, in which all are formally equal, are, in his view, harder to protect from despotism than an aristocracy. They may permit but do not, in most cases, encourage the degree of distinction that inherently supports pride. But, the problem of liberty, ultimately, lies beyond the class basis of the polity for Tocqueville. As he shows in *The Old Regime*, even aristocracies can succumb to a central and bureaucratic despot. If, he suggests, one is to teach liberty to a democracy, it is vital that democrats come to see how political liberty slips away and, as vitally, the means by which a free democratic population can be defend itself. It follows from these tasks that, for Tocqueville, the issue may not be, not so much, as Aristotle suggested, "the governing body [class]" and long training in the virtues, but whether there is substantive support for pride in the political order. The class nature of the political order still matters as it continues to determine, in part, who can do what. Yet, in perhaps a not entirely un-Machiavellian manner, channeling or exciting the pride (as opposed to training to virtue) of the

citizen may be equally, if not more, important for the well-being of the community (Machiavelli, 98).

The Old Regime and the French Revolution, as a teaching document in support of liberty, then, becomes an exemplary and cautionary account of how an essentially free and notably decentralized system, can give way, gradually, in some cases almost imperceptibly, to a different form of government—a centralized despotic monarchy. By far the greatest portion of the *Old Regime* is dedicated to detailing the means by which the monarchy transformed itself into nearly the sole authority empowered to act, judicially, administratively, legislatively, in the country. To do this, Tocqueville examines in some detail the social foundation of the political order of the medieval system, giving attention to the functions of the aristocracy and the role of the estates in early French administration and deliberation. He then shows how the political place of each changed over the period from roughly the 14th through the 18th Centuries.

Tocqueville anchors his discussion by noting that, at the beginning of the Middle Ages, France was governed by her leading men with the King in first position. It was a true and not merely nominal aristocracy of sorts. Moreover, for an extended period of time during the Middle Ages, something of a classically mixed regime could also be discerned in the towns and villages of France where people often elected officers and ran their own local affairs (Tocqueville, *OR*, 47). Municipalities often had two assemblies. One was populated by the officials of the city, but, they, themselves were usually elected by a second assembly often composed of the town's population (Tocqueville, *OR*, 44). While he is clear as well that these were all arrangements over which the dominant power of the aristocracy held sway, he is insistent that self-government existed throughout the length and ranks of the nation.

This system, he suggests, began to unwind when the best men ceased to rule; that is, when the families of the aristocracy permanently took social precedence over individual talent. Ultimately, these families, tired of their mutual squabbling, began to exchange the exercise of

political power, which had, up to that point, protected their social place, for the simplicity of royal protection of their social position. This caste or class of families rooted in a military oligarchy, but transformed by choices made, remained a class apart for the entirely of the old regime in France (and also, he is at pains to note, in the broader civilization of Europe). Over time, Tocqueville argues, aristocracy gave way to a parasitic caste, which, itself, in turn, ultimately stood aside in favor of the central monarch. The monarchy, and its administrative agents proceeding from the Royal Council, established their domination gradually over the countryside, the villages, towns and cities, and ultimately the aristocratic caste itself.

The Revolution, when it came, therefore only effected a change in the social basis of the governing order in France since the political role of the classes in France had already been displaced by a centralized monarchy administered by a basically classless bureaucracy. By the time of the Revolution, the actual social conditions of the Old Regime no longer reflected the real ruling power of the country. Rather, the real ruling power was, as indicated, the King, and alongside the King, the Royal Council and its administrative dependencies throughout the kingdom (the comptroller-general, in the provinces the intendant, in the cantons the subdelegate) (Tocqueville, *OR*, 34–35). While socially, caste and class had solidified in France, exhibiting extensive levels of social separation, at the political level, it could be said, that, by 1789, all France stood in equal dependence on and in many cases in service to, the central government. The Revolution, Tocqueville says, did not actually change the workings of that system, but only the social system surrounding it. With the rise of Napoleon, the workings of that system returned full force within a decade. He notes that "under the old regime, as nowadays, there was in France no township, borough, village, or hamlet, however small, no hospital, factory, convent, or college which had a right to manage its own affairs as it thought fit or to administer its possessions without interference. Then, as today, the central power held all Frenchmen in tutelage" (Tocqueville, *OR*, 73). In

describing this transformation, Tocqueville demonstrates that society had become at least partially unmoored from government. As long as there was an active aristocracy, or even oligarchy, pride could be attached to political power. But once that aristocracy settled for social status, as opposed to political power, this class, for which pride or honor had been the central tenet of action, along with France itself, no longer led a free life.

The means by which the monarchy subdued the military oligarchy were multiple and insistent, according to Tocqueville. One crucial one may be noted here. It has to do with the revenue system. Tocqueville indicates that the French nobility, because it provided military service, was not required to pay the *taille* which was essentially a land tax assessed on non-noble households. The king in 1439 was permitted to use the proceeds of the *taille* to maintain a standing army (which itself also limited their obligations of military service). When, according to Tocqueville, the nobility of France let the king tax the people so long as it did not apply to them, the "seeds were sown of almost all the vices and abuses which led to the violent downfall of the old regime" (Tocqueville, *OR*, 98–99). Ultimately, for the nobility, but not the peasants, a host of taxes received a similar dispensation. Effective coordination among the States was undermined and the central authority, now empowered with unregulated taxing abilities, stepped in to fill the vacuum. Unlike Britain, says Tocqueville, where the lords maintained their power by supplying the financial means of the kingdom, in France the lords lost their ability to control the government through the power of the purse. They preserved their social position and actually enhanced it because it was a financially privileged position, but the net result was a substantial loss of political power (Tocqueville, *OR,* 98*).*

With the loss of political power came, as well, a lost sense of responsibility and fellow feeling. Thus, in the last centuries of the Old Regime, politics gradually succumbed to obedience and to despotism and lost the freedom which had characterized political life under the aristocracy and even the oligarchy. Ultimately, rather than

overthrowing an actual aristocracy or oligarchy, the Revolution was an enormous conflagration aimed at overthrowing a parasitic social caste,

and in that it succeeded. But, it did not, suggests Tocqueville, fully overthrow the government. That had occurred earlier. So little did the Revolution overthrow the government that, within a few years of the initial convulsion, bureaucratic despotism returned in strength under Napoleon. The revolution was a change socially but not really politically. The political change to despotism had already occurred. Tocqueville demonstrates that society had become at least partially unmoored from government. As long as there was an active aristocracy, or even oligarchy, pride could be attached to political power, but once it attached itself solely to social place, France no longer led a free life.

Tocqueville's contention that the old regime could be maintained for centuries with a veneer of aristocracy and a core of despotism indicates that he did not view the politics of France as ever representative of the strong and comprehensive sense that characterized the Greek city. The fact that regime transformation in France was a matter of centuries makes it evident that the politics of the nation is, minimally, subject to a different rhythm than that of the often volatile cities of Greece. But what is the source of this new rhythm? For an answer, Tocqueville turned not first to politics to religion. Tocqueville argues that, within the Roman Empire, society came to assume something of an independent status relative to government. The chief cause of this change appears, for Tocqueville, to have been the rise of Christianity (though how far this was divorced from the universal dominion of the Empire itself is not clear). The politically particularizing effects of the religions of the ancient *polis* died, according to Tocqueville, with the rise of Christianity as the first universal religion. Pre-Christian religion, Tocqueville observes, was always connected to and in part, determined by, the political and social order in which it arose. This meant that it was geographically and politically bound to that order (Tocqueville *OR,* 12). In contrast, Christianity succeeded because it was not directly connected to any particular political order, social order, century or

ethnicity (Tocqueville, *OR*, 12). While one might note that Christianity demanded the support of politics in enforcing its moral principles, those principles themselves were, as Tocqueville notes in *Democracy in America,* universal rules. They were, and are, not regime specific virtues. Christian morality, in fact, for Tocqueville, stands aside from the kind of pride that attaches itself to distinctions. It is universally valid and constitutes the core of human moral conduct. It performs the great service of keeping decency alive in the most corrupt of times. But, as Tocqueville indicates in his Preface, its freedom is not of this world (Tocqueville, *OR*, xiv). Rather than serving as the foundation of a specific regime, difference (under attack by universal Christian moral principles) was attenuated.

For Tocqueville, the end of the *Ancien Regime* bore a likeness to a change in regime in classical term; habits, customs, political institutions were overthrown and the polity was put on a new foundation. But, he seems to suggest, in both the *Old Regime* and in *Democracy in America*, that the Christian principle (and, by 1789, the Revolutionary transformation of that religious principle into a political/theoretical principle) of equality before God or equality simply, undermined the distinction and the pride which served as the basis of a regime of virtue in ancient Greece and in the aristocratic decentralization in medieval Europe. Tocqueville contends it will be extremely difficult to maintain liberty wherever equality is the dominant principle (and he seemed to think that this will eventually be everywhere). The cure he offers is to find or develop sources of distinction which promote pride and offer the direct exercise of political and administrative power in support of those distinctions. That France was free before power was passed into the central administrative hands of the King and his council echo's the argument Tocqueville makes in *Democracy in America*. In *Democracy* he praises the decentralized administration of the township, the decentralization of the New England states, and the decentralization inherent in the national constitution of separated competences between the states and the national government. Keeping administration decentralized,

insofar as it can be decentralized, in almost all cases, appears to be the primary means of preserving liberty and thereby the cure he spoke of in his introduction. This requires that people band together, hold together, and vigilantly act together to maintain their existing prerogatives.

Darcy Wudel has noted that Tocqueville's model for effective decentralization is found in the first appendix to *the Old Regime* which treats of the *pays d'etat* and particularly Languedoc and this seems correct (Wudel, 116). There, circumscribed by bureaucratic governance as they were, the King's subjects unstintingly hung on to what financial and legislative right as they possessed. They took pride in what they could, paying for what road building and maintenance as they could. They kept accounts with much greater care than the central government. And it paid returns. Few as the rights of *pays d'etat* were, the vigilance of the province made it ultimately better off and happier that much of France—even if administrative rights, not wealth, were the motive for Languedoc's vigilance (Tocqueville, *OR*, 212–221). In the same way one might glean from *Democracy in America* that the decentralized township, administration of the states and administration of the nation all depended on letting pride in competence prevail over the efficiency of scale. Nor need such active power be exclusive to government agency. Any association distinctive enough to inculcate pride is a potential source of free action. The *Old Regime* saw the gradual decay of political and social capacity (among the estates, within local governing institutions) until finally no political source of distinction and pride remained. The Revolution and its collapse into Bonaparte made that transformation complete. While some relevance remains for the Aristotelian dictum that the "ruling body is the regime" Tocqueville has moved away from education to particular virtues as the practical task of a regime to the lessons of self-governance taught through practiced decentralization of administrative and where possible, governance, tasks. People, for Tocqueville, are most impressive when they are free and that freedom, in a democratic age and an aristocratic age equally,

depends on pride in their individual and collective competence. Both scale of governance and a spiritual/theoretical transformation have thus weakened, though not ended, the *polis* a model. Whether specific classes are empowered or not will not be the key feature of future governance as no one will be in a position to dispute the formal equality of all. But, a key regime function, education (in this case to and by political experience), remains a central part of Tocqueville's political teaching.

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William James and the God of Classical Theism

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In Lecture XVIII of his classic *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, the American pragmatist philosopher William James has some harsh criticisms of the classical theistic conception of God. The context for James' critique of classical theism is his pragmatic theory of meaning. For James, "beliefs…are rules for action." James insists that "If there were any part of a thought that made no difference in the thought's practical consequences, then that part would be no proper element of the thought's significance." Therefore, James concludes, "To determine a thought's meaning we need…only determine what conduct it is fitted to produce; that conduct is for us its sole significance…" (436). Thus, for James, a thought or belief is literally meaningless if it makes no difference in the way a person acts.

James applies this pragmatic theory of meaning to "God's metaphysical attributes, strictly so called, as distinct from His moral attributes." He asserts that these metaphysical attributes "are destitute of all intelligible significance" (436–7). James mentions God's aseity, or His existing necessarily, from or of Himself; His simplicity or lack of any inner distinctions; His actualized infinity; His personality, apart from moral qualities; His self-sufficiency, self-love, and absolute felicity in Himself. James asks, "how do such qualities as these make any definite connection with our life?" He writes, "I must frankly confess that even though these attributes were faultlessly deduced, I cannot conceive of its being of the smallest consequence to us religiously that any one of them should be true" (437). The systematic theologians who generate such conclusions about the deity are engaged in a mere "shuffling and matching of pedantic dictionary adjectives, aloof from morals, aloof

from human needs…. They have the trail of the serpent over them.… Instead of bread we have a stone; instead of a fish, a serpent" (James 437–8). James wraps up his argument with this devastating peroration: "So much for the metaphysical attributes of God! From the point of view of practical religion, the metaphysical monster which they offer to our worship is an absolutely worthless invention of the scholarly mind" (438).

James is wrong about this. In fact, the metaphysical attributes of God as classically conceived by such thinkers as Saint Thomas Aquinas do have profound practical significance.

Demonstrating this, as the present paper attempts to do, is worthwhile, for three distinct reasons. First, there are pedagogical advantages to being able to show students the practical relevance of seemingly abstruse positions in the philosophy of religion and the history of philosophy. Secondly, ordinary religious believers often do not understand the practical value of deepening their own reflection on their faith. Thirdly, those who subscribe to James' pragmatic theory of meaning will benefit from realizing that James' attack on the classical theistic conception of God is in fact a misapplication of James' own pragmatism.

To begin, let us consider God's aseity, that is, God's existing necessarily, from or of Himself, not receiving His being from anyone or anything else. In his *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas asks whether God is in all things. He answers that God is present in all things, and in the most intimate manner. For God is very being by His own essence, and so created being must be His proper effect. God causes this effect in things not only when they first begin to be, but as long as they are preserved in being, just as light is caused in the air by the sun as long as the air remains illuminated. But being is the very actuality of a thing, which makes it the innermost and most fundamental aspect of a thing. Thus, God is present to each thing, in a way that penetrates every aspect of its being, for as long as it exists (Aquinas, I, 8, 1, Resp.).

Note how God's aseity, an attribute that James singles out for particular scorn, is central to Aquinas' reasoning here. God is *ipsum esse subsistens*, subsistent being itself (Aquinas, I, 3, 4). He does not receive His being from anything else; rather, all other things that exist receive their being from God at every moment of their existence, and this is exactly what makes God so close to each and every creature at every moment. God's aseity and independence are connected necessarily to the contingency or dependence of creatures.

One can think of any number of practical consequences for human life, most obviously, that we have reason to give thanks to God for the gift of existence. Indeed, our very existence is a sign of God's love for us, according to Aquinas. For God's will is the cause of all things (Aquinas, I, 19, 4), so a thing has existence only inasmuch as it is willed by God. The existence of a thing is itself a good, so to every existing thing, God wills some good. But to love a thing is precisely to will good to that thing. Thus, God loves all things (Aquinas, I, 20, 2). God's aseity is thus necessarily connected to His creation of all things; His conservation of all things in existence; and His love for all things, all of which ground the practical conclusion that we ought to give thanks to God.

A second practical implication of God's aseity is that we can call on God for help knowing that He is always immediately present to us. In the words of Psalm 145:18, "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him…" As very being itself, God is not one thing among others, such that he could be separated from us in space or time, in the way that other human beings can be. Eleonore Stump points out an important implication, using the prophet Jonah as an illustration. No human being can be constantly available and attentive to any one of us. "But eternal God is present at once to every time of Jonah's life. None of Jonah's life is ever absent or unavailable for God, and at once, in the eternal now, God is available for shared attention with Jonah at any time in Jonah's life" (Stump, 75).

This fact undergirds a key insight of Christian mysticism and spirituality, beautifully expressed by the seventeenth-century Carmelite Brother Lawrence in his classic work, *The Practice of the Presence of God.* Brother Lawrence writes: "All we have to do is to recognize God as being intimately present within us. Then we may speak directly to Him every time we need to ask for help, to know His will in moments of uncertainty, and to do whatever He wants us to do in a way that pleases Him" (Lawrence, 22). For Brother Lawrence, the practice of the presence of God is simply "the concentration of the soul's attention on God, remembering that he is always present" (Lawrence, 66). The practice of the presence of God might also be defined as "a quiet, familiar conversation with Him," or "conversing with God throughout each day" (Lawrence, 79, 81). "Brother Lawrence called the practice of the presence of God the easiest and shortest way to attain Christian perfection and to be protected from sin" (Lawrence, 82). As Eleonore Stump has written, "Aquinas's God [the God of classical theism] is highly responsive to human beings and engaged with them in personal and interactive ways. He is a God who is a particular and personal friend to every person of faith" (108). Stump takes pains to demonstrate that there is nothing in God's aseity, simplicity, immutability, or eternity that precludes such personal engagement and that these qualities are necessarily connected to God's unfailing and constant presence to each believer. Surely William James was wrong to dismiss the doctrine of God's aseity as having no practical significance for the believer, since that doctrine implies that God is intimately and continuously present in and to all of His creatures, and in a special way to the rational creatures who are made in His image and likeness for friendship with Him.

The nearness of God to the human person is important for a third practical reason according to Aquinas, namely, because human happiness consists in union with God. Aquinas writes, "Man's happiness consists essentially in his being united to the Uncreated Good" (I–II, 3, 3, Resp.). The ultimate object of man's will is the universal good, not some finite good, which always would leave something more to be desired.

The universal good is to be found in God alone, not in any creature, since God is goodness itself, while creatures have goodness by participation in divine goodness (Aquinas I–II, 2, 8, Resp.). God's goodness is in turn inseparably connected to His perfection, which is rooted in his simplicity and actuality, and so Aquinas would reject the sharp distinction that James draws between God's metaphysical and moral qualities. For Aquinas' demonstration of God's goodness in Part I of the *Summa Theologiae* (Q. 6) depends on God's perfection (Q. 4), which in turn depends on God's simplicity (Q. 3), which in turn depends on Aquinas' demonstration of God's existence as the first cause of all things (Q. 2).

God's aseity is thus of profound practical significance, for it is connected to God's absolute goodness, His love for His creatures, and His intimate closeness to his creatures, which in turn are all essentially connected to human happiness.

The Thomistic tradition contains another important source demonstrating a fourth reason for the practical importance of the classical theistic conception of God, namely, *The Ways of God* (Maritain and Sumner). This work is an extended meditation on the qualities of God and the ways in which we ought to strive to emulate those qualities. In reflecting on the immutability of God, for example, this work exhorts us "to acquire stability of spirit," bemoaning "how inconstant we are…in a right will." Too often we are only "constant in inconstancy, in infidelity, in ingratitude, in spiritual defects, in imperfection…" (Maritain and Sumner, 6–7)

Nonetheless, the work concludes, in imitation of God's immutability, we should strive to acquire "constancy of soul, so that we may conduct ourselves in all circumstances with the qualities of equanimity, maturity, and sweetness" (Maritain and Sumner, 8).

Another chapter is a meditation on the serenity or impassibility of God: "In God, there is another perfection: it is that nothing can disturb him.… He possesses in his own nature such felicity and such great joyfulness that no disturbance can ever touch him" (Maritain and Sumner,

61). In imitation of God, "We must, therefore, as much as possible, flee all that disturbs us, for grace cannot dwell in an agitated soul." Rather than being agitated by the evil deeds of others, "we should leave each one to his own conscience, to the judgment of his superiors, and to the ultimate justice of God…" (Maritain and Sumner, 62). Likewise, we should "avoid troubling others, lest they in turn trouble us, as often happens, and our conscience be tormented" (Maritain and Sumner, 63).

In conclusion, the classical theistic conception of God is not devoid of practical significance, as William James mistakenly asserts. Reflection on the metaphysical qualities of God such as His aseity, immutability, and impassibility yields four distinct modes in which human beings can respond practically: first, by expressing gratitude to God for the gift of existence; second, by calling upon God for help; third, by entering into a union of friendship with God, the key to happiness; and fourth, by imitating key divine qualities such as constancy and equanimity.

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Public and Private Space in *Howards End* and *White Teeth*

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In E. M. Forster's 1910 novel *Howards End*—a novel built on individual character studies that bridge the class system in England by way of accompanying plot twists—the author was constrained by his time and his sensibility to confine his discussion of the inner life, what he called the "secret life," of his characters to primarily intimate, private spaces: Wickham Place, the home of the Schlegel siblings, Margaret, Helen, and Tibby; and, the wealthy Wilcoxes' country home Howards End, for example (Forster 1985, 63). Even so, sometimes, Forster was able to plant the seeds of action in public spaces like Queen's Hall, London, during a Beethoven concert, where Leonard Bast—the threadbare working-class young man with turn of the century London big-city access to art and literature—first gets entangled with Margaret and Helen Schlegel after Helen accidentally leaves the venue with his umbrella.

But, for Forster, the ramifications for plot and character do not fully unfold until the action moves back into private space, as when Mr. Bast goes to the Schlegel's home to retrieve his umbrella (36–42) and this sets off a series of events that strain his social boundaries such that he, the dreamer, dies underneath the weight of a fallen bookcase at a different private house (339–340). Another type of public to private transition occurs when Margaret Schlegel runs into the newly widowed Henry Wilcox in public while walking on the Chelsea Embankment, and in spite of the public arena, Henry is reminded of his loss of companionship and intimacy, and his consequent desire to negate the loss, through Meg (136–139). Later, he offers her a proposal of

marriage, and relegates her to the private sphere, where she eventually is driven by her conscience to confront Henry's double standards about intimate behavior.

In these scenes, as in others within the novel, the interaction of public and private space becomes part of the landscape of a particular, and British, turn of the twentieth-century upheaval in life and letters. This upheaval lives on the pages of *Howards End,* in Forster's examination of public and private roles for women and men, in his depictions of the public invisibility conferred on the poor and marginalized, and through his plot twists, which are infused with ideas about private property matters and how those matters intersect with public life. When Ruth Wilcox bequeaths Howards End to Meg Schlegel, she repudiates her own social status and her family: by giving a gift to a stranger who is of a lower class, Ruth interrupts the flow of the private transfer of wealth in order to enfold and cherish the "secret life" of the Other by giving away her own home. When Mrs. Wilcox does this, she is a character who chooses to live outside of her plot— fiction, for Forster, was primarily a site of such acts of grace within individual character.

During his discussion of character creation in his craft book *Aspects of the Novel*, Forster describes a kind of morality in his sense of how a fictional character should be created, each person in a novel being made up of descriptions of life, but life which "is practically composed of two lives—the life in time and the life by values" (28). What Forster means here is that each character's life consists of, publicly, "what happens," but also consists of that other part, the "life by values," what Forster calls the "secret life." And, that secret life may not ever be conveyed by outwardly visible or knowable facts, because it exists inside that person's sphere of thought combined with experience: that person's private constellation. A novel's job, Forster says, is to do what real life cannot do: reveal that secret and hidden life of the character (Forster 1985, 45). A core text like *Howards End* opens a public space for

recognitions that mostly live unseen, akin to as-yet-undiscovered stars hovering over an established culture or tradition.

E. M. Forster, firmly established in British literature by 1910, died in 1970, just five years before Zadie Smith was born. *White Teeth*, Smith's first novel, was released at the cusp of the twenty-first century by a Cambridge-educated woman with a firm British identity rooted in the legacy of her multicultural heritage. The dissolution of public and private barriers is one of Smith's overriding concerns in *White Teeth*. In the postcolonial age in London, when matters of class, race, and gender might be seen to have evolved, Smith nonetheless explores them at street level with her characters, discovering with them that public concerns continue to intercede in private relationships and that private relationships can be distorted by the pressure of societal norms. In Smith's world, the public spaces of London, rather than the privately owned ones, are the places where she imagines her character's secret lives being transformed by grace. Smith therefore inverts Forster in a spatial sense but co-maintains his fidelity to character. As a result, in *White Teeth,* public and private spheres are more submerged into her London characters' lives overall, part of her more modern assumption that public and private spheres are equally problematic and uneasy for individual characters, both being places for the acting out of unconscious consumerism and control.

Smith tends to keep her focus on valuing how individual messy lives burst through private barriers and public walls. As immigrant characters from Jamaica and India move through space, mostly unwilling to hide who they are, their bodies and lives become commentary on the nature of public, the nature of private, in contemporary London. Samad, an East Indian waiter sure of his ongoing relationship with his country of origin, serves food, simmers in his drive for honor, and accidentally reveals an extramarital affair, in front of his kids, out on the public streets —his life is so richly lived there is no time to contemplate or partition which parts are appropriate or inappropriate for this or that venue. Samad's life, no matter where he is, "is a midnight

thing, always a hair's breadth from the witching hour; it is volatile, it is threadbare; it is carefree… it is light, losable like a key ring or a hair clip" (Smith, 173). In this string of images and comparisons, Samad's life is made precious by vulnerability intersected with beauty, rather than cheap, as Leonard's ultimately is, in *Howards End*.

Zadie Smith is mindful of her complicated forebear E. M. Forster in *White Teeth* and more explicitly in her subsequent book, *On Beauty*. She is a postcolonial writer, often comfortable with the multicultural nature of her British identity and that is what makes her original and, ultimately, if all is right with the world, canonical. Smith herself once wrote, early in her now almost 20-year career that: "My largest structural debt should be obvious to any E. M. Forster fan; suffice it to say he gave me a classy old frame, which I covered with new material as best I could" ("Love, Actually"). New material, in spite of Smith's self-deprecating tone, shows the frame off rather than merely covering it, artfully de-familiarizing us to both the old and the new.

Smith explicates and upholds Forster's particular moral vision for fiction in the essay referenced above, which was published for a general audience. Another of Smith's major points about the body of Forster's work is that what makes the secret life in fiction important is that it is "messy" and furtive; this is a vision of character that Forster had a role in bringing to the modern canon. Smith puts that role's importance in these words: "Forster's empathic instincts and enthusiasm rest always on those exiled from a societal network…" ("Love, Actually") Smith's ideas, growing out of Forster—about imperfection in character, about the role of the exile, and about the messages gleaned from the lives of underdogs—are her way of explaining what she calls the needed qualities for characters to obtain an "educated heart" no matter what type of narrative they inhabit. Smith also ties this idea of a character's educated heart not to characters who exhibit control, power, or dominance, but to characters who fumble. In this way, Smith, nearly one hundred years after Forster began to do so, continues to use the

sensitive instruments of character to reveal the fault-lines that riddle societal norms in Britain.

In *White Teeth,* Smith's characters, multi-cultural Londoners, play out their pivotal scenes in public spaces—the streets, the school yard, the science institute lecture hall. These spaces are forced, by Smith's narration, to contain the subjectivity of her characters in all their messy individual imperfections, all their secret lives laid bare. Gone are the days, Smith seems to say, when individual concerns are kept mum in public Britain, or kept under lock and key within a Howards End. For Smith, the rights of the individual characters to have their "secret lives" at a minimum acknowledged is swept into the public sectors of London where "attention must be paid" (in the famous phrase from Arthur Miller's core text *Death of a Salesman*) to those who have been rendered invisible due to race, country of origin, or socio-economic status. It is worth noting that, in Smith's work, characters are not exemplars of political correctness (what Forster would have termed "flat characters"), but rather just interesting people who should have been described, and therefore loved via literature, more often, starting long ago.

As Smith thus sides with dignity for individual characters' secret lives, she brings E. M. Forster's concerns forward to the current time, when previously colonized humanity has come to be counted in vital fiction as part of the treasure of modern life overall. If readers take the novel *White Teeth* as a fulcrum—published at the millennium, written by a proud British woman—then there is a way into considering *White Teeth* as a time machine, because it is British literature, compressed and unleashed by British history.

To look forward from E. M. Forster, and to see Zadie Smith coming over the horizon, it is important to name the qualities they share, especially that Forsterian quality of the character-by-character notion of how people, by their individual struggles, become the skeleton key for appropriately unlocking the Pandora's Box of social concerns of class, of race, and of difference. If individual story, the reason for the existence of modern fiction, is not that skeleton key, then certainly it is

at least a counternarrative to social power and the blindness and destructiveness unleashed by such power. After all, as Forster seemed to imply via his narrator voice near the end of *Howards End*, art that does not reach into the living educated hearts of all is no art at all, for "England still waits for the supreme moment of her literature, for the great poet who shall voice her, or, better still, for the thousand little poets whose voices shall pass into our common talk" (324). Such value continues to live on in secret lives, stored within the damage of society, like an inexhaustible golden ore. Forster and Smith are deeply concerned with the rending of each individual story between the public and the private realms, between the machine of society and the inner life, and both indeed show this rending to be of central concern to modern fiction's creation and treatment of narrative and character.

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CLOSING

FREEDOM IN THE LIBERAL ARTS

ACTC, Liberal Arts, and Invention: Botticelli's Uffizi *Adoration* (1475)

J. Scott Lee
Association for Core Texts and Courses

The Association for Core Texts and Courses, or ACTC, is "an international, professional, liberal arts organization dedicated to fostering the use of core texts (world classics and other texts of major cultural significance), in undergraduate education and the development of required or widely taken core programs steeped in such texts," says the Association's Mission Statement. Over 24 years as co-founder and Executive Director of ACTC, I worked to develop with colleagues the Mission and to fulfill its promise in conditions which varied widely by cultures and institutions. I gained many friends and colleagues, and I owe an unpayable debt to them. However, I do want to mention five people, specifically. I was fortunate to be a co-founder of ACTC with Steve Zelnick. He had the original idea for the Association and asked me if I wanted to join him in this nascent effort. I was similarly fortunate to work with four Presidents—Phil Sloan, Rick Kamber, Jane Rodeheffer, and Joshua Parens—all of whom shared a vision of a pluralistic, international association dedicated to the best in liberal arts core text education, and unfailingly provided cooperation and advice in the growth of ACTC and its various endeavors. In some sense, I do think I can pay a debt to ACTC by recognizing its unique character, identifying a current public and educational problem in undergraduate education that ACTC can address, and, then, by illustrative analyzing two core texts that suggest the possibilities that lie before us for curriculum and students. The word "text" to me means "work." In this case I want to look

at the possibilities of liberal arts education through the works of Leon Battista Alberti and a painting of Sandro Botticelli's.[1]

It is the intellectual life that binds us all together, particularly through something we call the "liberal education" of students. Unfortunately, we do not seem to be bound well to the public, for public support for liberal education and its institutions seems to be steeply waning. However, I think we could be far more effective in making a case for and re-invigorating liberal education. Much of that effectiveness rests re-focusing on the art of "liberal *arts* education."

The artful intellectual life I am speaking of shapes something as grand as the world's many histories, an exploration of learning what it is to know, and, finally, the links among the world's arts and sciences. Further, many of ACTC's programs and members describe their purpose as inquiry into Western or global civilization, as well into what it means to be human. That's quite a scope for the intelligence in this association to range over.

ACTC's mission statement carefully marks out what makes ACTC different as a professional association: "The Association for Core Texts

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[1] This plenary address was based on a chapter originally published in J. Scott Lee, *Invention: The Art of Liberal Arts*, (Santa Fe: Respondeo Books, 2020). The poetic but not rhetorical portions of the following discussion of Botticelli were published in "Art, Integrating Disciplines, and Liberal Education: Imagining the Possible with Botticelli," in *Core Texts, Community, and Culture: Working Together in Liberal Education*, eds., Ronald J. Weber et al. (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2010), 113-122. Also, the discussion was contextualized by an analysis of Joshua Reynolds' passages in *Discourses on Art* of painting as a liberal art. No discussion of Alberti or invention appeared in that chapter. Finally, the observations on conical projections were introduced, which expanded further reflections on Botticelli's development of freedom and equality through artistry, in November of 2020 through a paper delivered online to St. John's College, accompanied by a question and answer session that the time constraints of the 2018 conference could not allow: https://www.youtube.com/user/stjohnscollege/videos.

and Courses (ACTC) is an international, professional, liberal arts organization dedicated to fostering the use of core texts (world classics and other texts of major cultural significance), in undergraduate education and the development of required or widely taken core programs steeped in such texts." The words "liberal arts" mean something akin to the wide access to knowledge once achieved through the arts of the trivium and quadrivium. Moreover, the presence of core texts of the arts publications, faculty and curriculum development programs, and at our conferences echoes the ambitions of ancient education and is a potent ground for growth of the intellects of our students and ourselves. Yet, on the whole, we do not touch the public to the harm of undergraduate education.

Going forward, I'll set the cultural and academic scene for why such an attractive kind of education seems neglected. I'll trace what makes ACTC a different kind of professional organization and why the potential of invention within core texts of the liberal arts might address that neglect. Finally, I'll illustrate the intellectual freedom that comes through undergraduate programs like ours when emphasizing the arts and invention by centering the inquiry on one of Botticelli's *Adoration of the Magi,* contextualized by Renaissance and modern considerations of geometry and perspective. I have no silver bullet or new media initiative for our problems, but I think we can take positive steps in the right direction to make liberal arts matter.

Our Public and Academic Educational Problem

As a liberal arts association, we are inextricably bound to the arts. Unfortunately, we find ourselves in a world which has largely discarded liberal arts education in favor of technological and economic education, and that, often, in a contentious way. In a kind of fulfillment of Bacon's promise and in a conviction that old truths are still true, Stephen Pinker's recent *Enlightenment Now* vigorously defends science, data gathering, progress, and reason against mavens of C. P. Snow's "Second Culture, the worldview of many literary intellectuals and

cultural critics" who "express a disdain for science… Their methodology for seeking truth consists not in framing hypotheses and citing evidence but in issuing pronouncements that draw on their breadth of erudition and lifetime habits of reading."[2] Specifically, Pinker finds such mavens in general liberal education programs, organized religions, humanists, and prominent artists of the 20th and 21st Centuries.[3] What positive overall view of arts and religion he has might be reductively captured in the following passage: "Religious organizations can provide a sense of solidarity and mutual support, together with art, ritual, and architecture of great beauty and historical resonance, thanks to their millennia-long head start. I partake of these myself, with much enjoyment."[4] In short, these don't count for much. More illustratively damning of what it is to be tied to the arts are the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development "Regional Development Reports." OECD represents and connects the policymakers of foreign affairs and economic ministries of the first world nations with major university research arms. Its "Regional Development Reports" periodically measure the world's best locales for "well-being" through nine categories of compiled statistics. Given publicity through such media outlets as the *New York Times*, OECD's 2014 report does not measure arts, religion, and sports as components of well-being, though these three categories of human activities and products are nearly universal yet tend to rely on local or home-grown institutions around the world.[5]

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[2] Stephen Pinker, *Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress* (New York: Random House, 2018), 5 and 33-34.

[3] Ibid., 400-401, 420-441, 446-447.

[4] Ibid., 432.

[5] "How's Life in Your Region?: Measuring Regional and Local Well-being for Policy Making, OECD Regional Development Studies" (October 6, 2014). https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/urban-rural-and-regional-development/how-s-life-in-your-region/summary/english_9c12b155-en#page1 (Summary p. 1).

On the wrong side of a science-versus-the-world argument and with its concerns with arts and local institutions ignored by governments and policy researchers, core text liberal arts education has two major strikes against persuading the public and educational institutions that it matters. And to be honest, Bruce Kimball has shown, persuasively, that within academia there is a long tradition, extending at least as far back as the rise of the German University, of competing concepts of liberal education, including attacks on the *artes liberales*, which occasionally make their way into the media.[6] Today, perhaps the best we can say is core text liberal arts education is as much ignored as it is attacked.

Yet, I do not recall anyone in ACTC being against reason. Years of conference panels discussing fundamental core texts of the sciences indicates where ACTC stands. Our discussions of religious texts are probing and reasonable. True, we don't have many policymakers and few economists, but thoughtful political scientists abound in ACTC, and Adam Smith, Marx and, occasionally, even Milton Friedman make their appearances in our panels. Globally, international use and exchange of core texts has been an ACTC policy objective. Humanists in our ACTC Qualitative Narrative Assessment programs formulate hypotheses and gather data. While most of our programs are not fervidly revolutionary, skeptical, or nihilistic, they have diversified far beyond their historical progenitors. Our recent sponsorship of a special topic conference at Temple University on "Women in the Core" exemplifies this, as did our conference on "Global General Education and Asian Texts." Ancients and post-modernists, epics and film, discussions about social media and ancient texts all appear in our panels. Our conferences encourage a civil discourse, frequently aimed at promoting a

[6] Bruce Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers: A History of the Idea of Liberal Education*, Expanded edition (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1995). For an extensive discussion of Kimball's thought in relation to liberal arts/core text programs, see Chapter 7, "Enriching the Defense of Liberal Arts Education," in Lee, *Invention*.

democratic character. Why, data even suggests that given time, liberal education graduates, including our own students, fare well enough in the market of money and jobs.[7]

What's missing? What can we do to change this situation of neglect and attacks, while we remain local in programs, committed to core texts, dedicated as faculty and institutions to knowledge, including its advancement, and democratic in our intentions? What we can do starts from within, and what we might do can be approached through what we are.

What Makes ACTC Different: Addressing Neglect of Us

While ACTC mirrors the colleges and universities which are essential to its existence, there are very specific reasons for thinking it is not a conventional professional association, whatever its interests are in advancing careers of people dedicated to teaching core texts. In our first

[7] Repeatedly, from about 2014 on and even before, national reports have shown that humanities graduates do well enough in the job market, though initially they are behind the average for all graduate salaries by about $8000 per year and well behind engineering graduates by about $ 28,000 per year. Over time these disparities tend to convergence though without closing. Perhaps the initial marginal difference in salaries given the cost of a college education is enough to dissuade students from the humanities and liberal education. But the issue of recruitment is far broader than economic return and, in fact, we do ourselves great harm, not good, when we try to justify a liberal education through these personal financial arguments. See Andrew Hanson, et al., *The Real, Long-term Labor Market Outcomes of Liberal Arts Grads*, The Strada Institute for the Future of Work (January 15, 2019), https://www.strada.org/reports/the-real-long-term-outcomes-of-liberal-arts-graduates. Strong evidence suggests that retention is not exactly a money issue in the broad field of higher education. First, those who borrow more than other students are more likely to complete their degrees. Second, those who drop have been surveyed and it has been found that balancing work, family, and school has forced dropping out.

decade of existence, repeatedly, professors came to ACTC saying to me and to others, "I was so lonely, I didn't know you existed. What a relief." Or, "I've given up going to my disciplinary conferences; this is the only conference I go to now." At the origins of ACTC were faculty and administrators who had no associational, institutional, or collegial alternative—no community—to share their ideals, ambitions, hopes, and implementations of a classical liberal education.

During the early years of ACTC, I was the principal investigator in a very large-scale FIPSE/Federal DOE project which traced -- through thousands of data points and hundreds of campus interviews with faculty, administrators and students -- the causes of change in general liberal education. The more an institution sought, through its general education, to characterize itself through a structured liberal education which involved the historical and current affiliations of the institution, as well as its students' intellectual preparation, the more distinctive and unique an institution's education became. Such structuring usually happened when faculty members worked together across disciplines in general education and, especially, in programs commonly teaching core texts. Put otherwise, if you asked early attendees of ACTC what they wanted to do, the general answer was "I want to work with my campus colleagues to construct programs for students." In short, these attendees were educational inventors.

For 24 years, ACTC has worked with faculty in conferences and summer seminars to help bring into existence or improve programs dedicated to core texts, their teaching and curricula. Of those programs, about half have gone out of existence. This reflects a hard truth of institutional rejection, as well as acceptance, of our core text liberal arts programs.

That said, core text liberal education is an *institutional phenomenon* which—partly through the characteristics of different civilizational threads, partly through the history of institutions of higher learning, partly through the intellectual history of liberal arts and, most especially, through dedicated faculty and administrators—still has an

existence, however tentative, in the interstices of disciplines and curricula which structure our and student lives. Liberal education is not a disciplinary matter in the sense of professional organizations which form to regulate and judge the production of a particular body of knowledge. Further, considering the pluralism of programs and works of the arts and sciences within a curriculum of liberal education, no one discipline has an uncontested claim to it.[8] There is no discipline of liberal education. ACTC reflects all this, but to say that there is no single discipline of liberal education is a far cry from saying that such education has no coherence, modes of inquiry and research, structured history and development, or knowledge to teach. The peculiarity of this educational phenomenon has real consequences for ACTC, its members, and for institutions that strive to produce a liberal education.

Ask students or professors what degrees they took or offer and the answer comes back in terms of a specific disciplinary major: "I got a degree in physics; we offer a degree in English and in Secondary Education. My degree was in the history of art, not studio art." The federal government classifies degrees in this way. Yet, in the U.S., in a college or university we say that we offer a bachelor-of-science or a bachelor-of-arts degree and, depending on the institution, between 25% and 50% of the credits will not belong to a major. (In a few programs or institutions there are no majors, save liberal education itself.) In Europe or Asia, licentiates function in the same way to obscure nascent and growing liberal education programs.

[8] Certainly, long before co-founding ACTC or my FIPSE research, three majors at St. Olaf College, my time at and degrees from the University of Chicago, and teaching at Temple University's Intellectual Heritage where the commonly taught syllabus stretched from ancient to modern times across the sciences and humanities – all tended to build the sense that there is no single discipline of liberal education. Whether Education as a discipline makes a claim, other disciplines and the history of liberal arts education's construction at colleges and universities leave such claims in dispute.

This matter of degrees is important. Needless to say, the acronym, STEM, captures a two-fold situation. It would seem as if the acronym in so neatly summarizing such majors, like a digital billboard, draws attention to what it is advertising, leaving out what it is not -- a noticeable portion of the humanities degrees in institutions. No one doubts that if a student has acquired a bachelor-of-science that she or he is competently familiar with a science—with its subjects, its methods, and its techniques in the long run aimed at discovery. But, on the other hand, if I ask, "what arts does a student of a bachelor-of-arts possess?", I am very hard-pressed to say. I will say one thing: characterizing humanistic or liberal education as a possession of skills is a very weak answer to the question, "what arts does a bachelor of arts student possess?"

Both to address the question of coherence and to restore the importance of liberal education, many current defenses of humanistic liberal education tend to characterize it as intrinsically ethical, political, or, occasionally, religiously-metaphysical education. Kronman, Nussbaum, Delbanco, Deneen, and Hütter come to mind. Many of ACTC's programs argue such a defense and I do not wish to quarrel with it. But as a pluralist, I must comment that the defense is ecologically thin. First, it often leaves us in a secondary position. As in Aristotle's *Politics* or Plato's *Republic*, we are, then, directly or indirectly, in the service of other more important concerns.[9] Second, for those outside the academy, there are other institutions which compete with such liberal education claims: media, political organizations, church, and family all

[9] When, in related fashion, we argue our utility—we are good for business, for international relations, for civilizational intersections, for becoming a lawyer—we are again secondary. In Greek political treatises, laws (constitutions) or education serve human happiness or flourishing, in so far as a community can provide for those, with contemplation or learning as an activity in accord with virtue. But there are alternatives to political ends: one is to pursue knowledge for its own sake, or an artistic alternative is to pursue knowing the means of communication for the sake of empowering people with arts and sciences.

come to mind. Such defenses have truths within them, but they hardly exhaust the interests of students or parents whose intellectual and career interests extend well beyond ethical, political or religious considerations. As will be clear towards the end of this chapter, I am not saying we should abandon these appeals or that ethics, politics and religion are not central concerns of liberal education, but to enrich the ecology of our public defense, we might begin to focus on the question I raised a moment ago, "what arts do our bachelor of arts students possess?"

In thinking seriously about that question, I came to examine our own panels and programs. My interests were in the characteristic intersection of liberal education with disciplines, because conversations at ACTC so frequently replicate or involve the situation of educated people talking across disciplines to illuminate an idea which without a conversation could not be expressed or, often, thought. Characteristically, this involves great human achievements, texts or works of the arts and sciences so diverse yet core to educating ourselves in who we are or might be that were we to remove them, liberal education as we practice it would disappear. Because of their accessibility to the public, I focused upon the internal characteristics of imitative arts, widely conceived, that made our conversations possible and, yet, so unlike other professional conversations.

After a number of years, I came to see that a certain class of texts was missing from our conversations and our programs, which was curious, since we claim, usually, that we are liberal arts programs. I conducted a survey, based on our conference proposals from 2003 to 2014 of the core texts of the liberal arts which appeared in our panels. I refer, here, to works on grammar, rhetoric, dialectic and in other areas which stake a claim to the liberal arts or sciences. I found that works that actually formulate these arts from ancient to modern times were rarely

discussed at ACTC's conference.[10] In essence, we had liberal education without liberal arts texts.

Was there a consequence? Yes. In this situation we find ourselves on the horns of a dilemma. Either we fall back on our disparate disciplinary training to provide method, or we rely on patterned habitual modes of conversation which are successful in generating trans-disciplinary insights that we all keenly feel as the strengths of our programs. But neither explores common *techné* of the liberal arts for our students nor gives an account of one of the chief characteristics of our programs. We all say that our works are signs of the human spirit because they are significant human achievements. In short, they are profound inventions, but, too often, we don't include works that would account for and illuminate what invention is.[11] I readily admit almost any course of core works could be taught as exemplification of invention, but my experience in core programs indicates they usually are not. Also, in scattered courses, -- sometimes aligned to core curricula -- logic, rhetoric, and composition are encountered, and the diverse methods of the disciplines yield real insights to works of art. But, speaking generally, we neither programmatically read the core texts of the liberal arts, nor cultivate the *techné* of the liberal arts embedded in these texts. In terms

[10] A sample list of "missing" works and authors concerned with the liberal arts can be found in Chapter 1 of Lee, *Invention*. These works range from Plato to Sontag, McLuhan and K. Burke.

[11] For example, as a rough range for what invention is or entails, we can survey Cicero, Bacon, and Alberti, which correspond, roughly to "the discovery or devising of things, arguments or signs, to render a case probable or true. From *De Inventione*, I, vi, 9: "the invention of knowledge…[which] penetrate[s and] overcome[s] nature in action [and] seek[s]…certain and demonstrable knowledge" or "directions for new works" (Novum Organum, aphorisms 8 & 90) and, extrapolating from Alberti, the production of beautiful, varietal, abundant, and pleasurable works which, particularly, go beyond nature III, par. 53-60. This applies not only to painting and sculpture, but to poetry, as well. Alberti's account could be expanded to include the painful and ugly, as well.

of inculcating in our students a technical capacity to write and speak for the public, or for our programs to make a just claim that liberal arts education is and continues to be inventive, we are missing an opportunity here.

After having presented these considerations to colleagues of the ACTC Liberal Arts Institute and interested parties in the general membership, I am happy to say that ACTC was invited by the Bradley Foundation to submit a grant application for a summer 2019 and for a 2022 seminar of reading on core texts which invented and developed the liberal arts. Ben Desmidt of Carthage College and Joshua Parens of the University of Dallas led the first seminar, Parens and I, the second. The aim of each seminar was theoretically, practically, and productively to introduce core texts of the liberal arts into core text programs, and to cultivate the *techné* of these arts in ourselves and our students so that the public may, ultimately, understand the important application of the liberal arts in our communal life.[12]

Illustrating Intellectual Freedom: Botticelli's *Adoration of the Magi*

A focus on invention, works of significant achievement, and an examination of the explicit use of liberal arts might achieve for students and liberal education an intellectual freedom that will serve them academically and in the public's eye. So, let us explore a work of Leon Battista Alberti and a painting of Sandro Botticelli's as our illustration of this powerful pedagogical combination.

The picture in question was painted as an altarpiece. The arrangement of the entire painting and your eye's tracking of it are a direct consequence of Botticelli's use of perspective—an original invention born of the liberal arts and specifically designed for painters by Leon Battista Alberti in his 1435 work, *De Pictura* or *On Painting*.

In Giotto's *Adoration* of 1305, before Alberti, we see what perspective in painting looked like.

Two artists are credited with originally incorporating full perspective into Italian Renaissance painting: the architect Brunelleschi and Alberti, in that order.[12] But as Martin Kemp has noted,

> Brunelleschi's achievement [through a mirror system] did not provide a precise precedent for Alberti's system. Brunelleschi had accomplished… the perspectival projection of two of

[12] Masaccio, too, is credited, especially in regard to his 1427-1428 *Holy Trinity*. He is said to have understood the mathematical undergirding of Brunelleschi's achievement. However, he left no notes about his achievement in perspective.

> Florence's most prominent buildings… His procedures… worked from known structures rather than pre-establishing an abstract space into which forms could be placed.… Alberti's innovation was to extract from the most advanced pictorial practice… the underlying rules, the general case ["of the construction"]—so that its principles might be readily communicated.[13]

This is huge, since now an artist did not have to set up what amounts to a camera to build perspective. But to begin to gain a sense of perspective's importance as something using visual effect to greater ends, we first recur to Scott Buchanan's *Poetry and Mathematics.* For the sake of liberal arts education, Buchanan wanted to clarify the ideas of both math and poetry by tracing "aspects" shared by them back to their objects. One of those aspects is symbols – which he exemplified first by examining transformed geometrical figures. He writes: "A figure in geometry is the sort of thing that…retains certain properties such as proportionality of lines and angles throughout given transformations."[14] In *Through the Looking Glass* Alice is that sort of *narrative* figure and Buchanan's concern is with her projective geometry so to speak.

Buchanan quotes a passage as Alice learns from the Caterpillar that she may grow or shrink as she eats from one side or the other of a mushroom. He ends the passage at a point where, for the story to advance, Alice must learn to control the size she is. She *has to be the right magnitude* relative to her surroundings in order for the story to continue. That's an intersection of geometry, figure in both geometrical and narrative senses, and story-line magnitude. Getting the magnitude

[13] Martin Kemp, "Introduction," in Leon Batista Alberti, *On Painting*, translated by Cecil Grayson (Penguin Classics, 2004).

[14] Scott Buchanan, *Poetry and Mathematics* (Philadelphia and New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1962, 1929), 48 and 53.

right—of all three—is not an insignificant artistic challenge. One which Buchanan does not seem to have entirely appreciated in pictures:

> …a plane perpendicular to your line of vision…will cut all the rays from the object… As you move the plane nearer you, you have a smaller picture, and you move it toward the object, you have a larger picture… This shows the simple principle of painter's perspective.[15]

However, no one painted so simply until around 1415 and after. So in the question of magnitude shared by geometry, stories, and painting – we might ask what potentials might attract an artist to perspective, to magnitude? Enter Alberti.

Alberti's success in shaping the art of painting through the liberal arts begins in geometry: Let's pictorially summarize Alberti's singular achievement with four pictures interpolated in his work[16]:

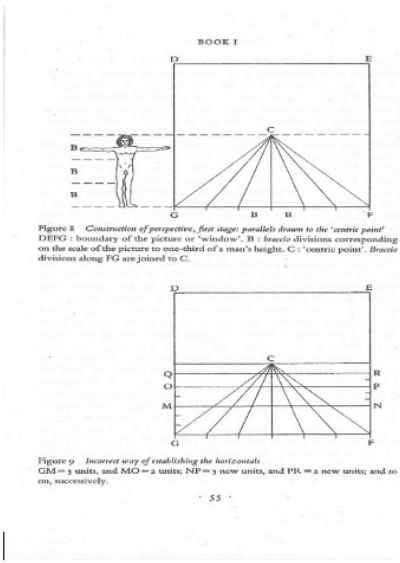


Figure 8 *Construction of perspective, first stage: parallels drawn to the 'centric point'* DEFG : boundary of the picture or "window". B : *braccia* divisions corresponding on the scale of the picture to one-third of a man's height. C : 'centric point'. *Braccia* divisions along FG are joined to C.

Figure 9 *Incorrect way of establishing the horizontals* GM = 3 units, and MO = 2 units; NP = 3 new units, and PR = 2 new units; and so on, successively.

55

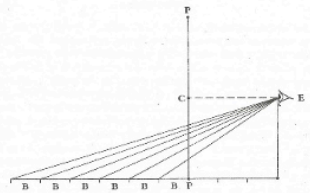


Figure 10 *Construction of perspective, second stage; determination of the horizontal divisions on the latteracion*
B : *braccia* divisions on the 'pavement'. PP : intersection or picture plane. C : 'centric point'. E : eye, three *braccia* from the intersection. The viewing distance, EC, is equivalent to half the width of the picture and the viewing angle is 90° (i.e. the shortest reasonable distance before serious distortions start to occur).

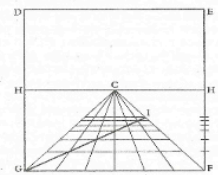


Figure 11 *Construction of perspective, third stage: completion of the squared 'pavement'* DEFG : picture. C : 'centric point'. HH : horizon. The intervals on the intersection PP in Fig. 10 are transferred to HF (or HG), and the successive horizontals of the 'pavement' are drawn at corresponding levels. GI : diagonal through the squares, drawn as proof of the accuracy of the construction.

57

[15] Ibid., 53.

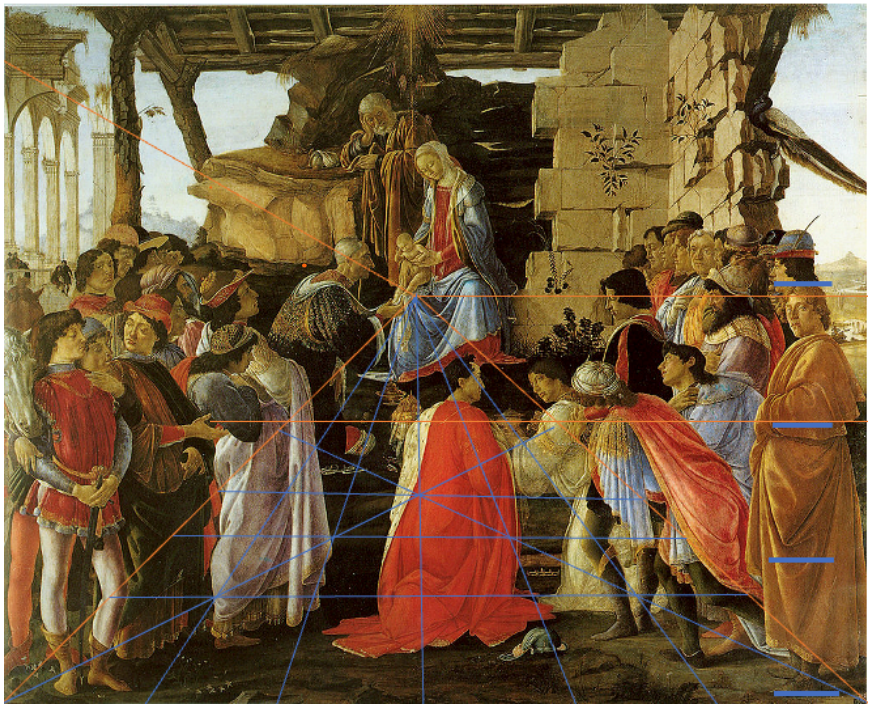
[16] Alberti, *On Painting*, 55 and 57.

Notice the height of the human figure. Alberti says, "I decide how large I wish the human figures in the painting to be."[17] This decision determines the proportional distance at the base of the picture of what become the receding lines headed towards one vanishing point, and we will recur to this decision quite often. The lower left picture is a then-current incorrect practice of creating perspective using 3:5 ratios. The upper right image, where P-C-P is the picture plane, indicates how an artist finds the proportional receding transversals or distances, and the final picture is the pictorial proof through the diagonal line that the magnitude of the pavement is correct. Alberti stresses that the lines and surfaces that you see are not abstractions but intended to represent real lines inscribed by artists on their canvases, fresco surfaces, or panels, upon which the painting is placed.[18] I've tried this; it is not easy.

In Botticelli's *Adoration*, (1475) you can see some of the chief features of perspective's deployment:

[17] Ibid., 54.

[18] Samuel Y. Edgerton, *Renaissance Discovery of Linear Perspective* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), 82.



The perspectival centric point of the painting is next to the Christ-child's foot. The star's ray marks what might be called an inverted centric line, cutting the painting into two equal parts on the left and right. The geometric height of the horizon is determined by the human figure on the far right, who, if you put his feet on the bottom of the painting would have the top of his head mark the beginning of a horizon line running across the top of the ferns on the wall to the place where the Christ's foot is held, through the centric point. Above that line things are made to seem above us, the spectators. So, to the left of Mary's elbow and shoulder (our right) the undersurface of the blocks shows. Below her elbow no undersurfaces of blocks can be seen. Conversely, on the far lower left, you look down on the top of the lining of boots. The figures that fan out to the right and left imply what would amount to a second, foreshortened tile pavement of geometric squares receding

toward the centric point, dependent for their angles on the *braccia*—or approximately one-third body proportion of the figure to the right—which would mark out geometric points at the foot of the painting and determine the proportions of figures. The foreshortened two angular blue lines meeting at a lower point on the 'centric' line represent the use of an intersecting vertical line sliding back and forth which determines the proportional parallel distances of transversals near and far. These lines not only place the human figures, but they are the foundation on which the outlines and surfaces of the painting appear.[19] However, remember, per Alberti *the human figures or scene one paints demand the lines, not the other way around*.

For Alberti, "the great work of the painter is the 'historia'," the scene of human movement, which is what we see in the Botticelli painting.[20] To achieve the "historia," Alberti "want(s) the painter… to be learned in the liberal arts." The first is geometry. The second are those of the poets and orators, for Alberti says that they "will be of great assistance in preparing the composition of the 'historia,' and the great virtue of this consists primarily in invention."[21] To illustrate invention, Alberti invokes the description in which verbals abound that Lucian gives of Calumny painted by Apelles: figures "approach," a face is "cunning," a hand is "holding," another hand is "dragging," a youth begs "with outstretched arms," a man is "leading," other figures are "attendant" or "arranging dress," a figure is "clad in mourning," "rending" her hair, and so forth. Botticelli's *Calumnia* alludes to the Apelles painting:

[19] The relevant passages and drawings for perspective appear in Alberti, *On Painting,* 54-58 and 68-70.

[20] Ibid., 67-68.

[21] Ibid. 88.

Despite Apelles' admirable variety, [22] Alberti argued that, "Everything the people in a painting do among themselves, or perform in relation to the spectators, must fit together to represent and explain the 'historia.'"[23] Alberti's argument focusses on what is going on in the painting, not on the mythological, historical, or Biblical background or aftermath of the 'historia.' 'Historia' are praised for invention in actions of that moment, not for their indications of past narratives from which the painter might draw though there can be little doubt that Alberti, as did Botticelli, knew those narratives. Alberti's focus on the present moment doesn't rid a painting of historical references, but it does select what counts most in painting.

[22] Ibid., 75 and 86. To quote, "Though variety is pleasing in any 'historia', a picture in which the attitudes and the movements of the bodies differ very much among themselves, is most pleasing of all." And he would "praise any great variety, provided it is appropriate to what is going on in the picture."

[23] Ibid., 78.

"Composition," Alberti's analogue to literary composition, brings together the painting of geometry, perspective, bodily proportion and the historia[24]:

> Now follows the composition of bodies, in which all the skill and merit of the painter lies… all the bodies in the 'historia' must conform in function and size… It would be a great fault if at the same distance some men were a great deal bigger than others, or dogs the same size as horses…[25]

Why does Alberti persistently link perspective or geometry to the *historia*? The simple answer lies in realistic, imitative likeness: "we do expect a painting that appears markedly in relief and similar to the objects presented," and as implied by these passages Alberti notes countless mistakes by painters in such efforts.[26] Yet a more complex answer arises from the fact that an historia in a painting cannot be the 'whole' story drawn from some source—in Botticelli's case the arrival of Magi—because painting is 'instantaneous'—this moment is selected for the historia. There are solutions, one of which is to string out the

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[24] Michael Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators: Humanist Observers of Painting in Italy and the Discovery of Pictorial Composition* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1971, 1988), 130-132, links painting to rhetorical grammar of Cicero and Quintilian, via Isadore of Saville, *Etymologiae* ii, 18. Baxandall carefully expounds the analogy. Briefly, composition united the parts of the painting -- surfaces or planes, members of body, and figures -- into the whole historia. Surfaces or planes stood in Alberti's mind as the word does in a sentence, and etc. for the other parts. Compounded through the plane, member, body, to the whole picture – that is, the 'statement' (Baxandall uses "narrative" and "period" for statement) of the picture. To extend the analogy further: it seems that if the composition of the parts are the painting's statement, then that statement's syntactical reference is to the historia; or the 'syntax' of the painting stands in relation to Homer's verses, as the historia stands in relation to the plot of the *Iliad.*

[25] Alberti, *On Painting*, 74-75.

[26] Op. cit.

action in the picture – like a procession. Another is to paint successive scenes. Botticelli used both in other paintings. But not in the *Adoration* we are considering.

So, if instantaneous, what has happened to the *magnitude* of the story? For Alberti, proper perspective introduced unity into the 'historia' by making the eye dwell on figures as part of an almost inexorable movement towards the focal point. Perspective used in historia arranges the parts of it and orders their appearance into a size to be taken in by the eye—that is, to be perceived. In sum, through perspective we are committed to dealing with potential magnitude of action through concerted alignment, proportion and gestures of the figures in an instantaneous moment.[27] We can trace Botticelli's use of magnitude by re-entering the painting's human movement, for, ultimately, the picture's ability to focus our attention calls forth from an audience its recognition of what is in the scene.

Ruined Roman columns stand off to the left, but Botticelli's scene is framed by a broken down squared-stone wall, now surrounded and covered by a crude "lean-to" of stakes and thatch. On a rise above the foreground, perhaps a "rock" which many would associate with the Church, this "parapet" frames Joseph and the Virgin Mary, whose gesture offers the baby Jesus. As the star of Bethlehem casts its rays through the framework of roof slats upon the Holy Family, the principals of the picture fan downward in an arrangement of all who attend the Savior. Within the frame of such ruins the eye descends to work its way through an "historical" scene with a strangely modern cast.

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[27] What we are calling 'magnitude' was to Alberti close to 'harmony': "I believe that all the bodies should move in accordance with the action," Ibid., 77. Edgerton argues that a Florentine world view of divine harmony and order was wrought through Alberti's perspective. However, both of these reasons tend to reduce the diversity of artful production wrought by an artist's art, though Edgerton is discriminating in his use of perspective and its actual invention.

One of the most prominent modern figures is the first Magi who, with his gift of gold in front of him, kneels to kiss the Savior's foot. The likeness is of Cosimo d'Medici, grandfather of a clan of Medici's, all present in this picture, and the founding patron of the school of painters of which Botticelli was one. Lower to the right, the two other Magi kneel looking to each other, as they await their turn with their gifts. These are Cosimo's sons. All three were deceased at the time this altar piece was painted. To the left, standing dressed in an extraordinary white toga is Cosimo's grandson, Lorenzo, "Il Magnifico." To the right across the picture and in front of a crowd, stands his younger brother, dressed in a black jerkin, Giovanni. "Up stage" against one part of the stone wall among many who are looking upon the scene is one figure who points to himself and looks out to the audience of the painting. This is Guasparre del Lama who, having had an entrepreneurial career ascending from the ranks of the laboring class to become a money changer—paralleling in some respects Botticelli's own rise in fortune—

commissioned this altarpiece and may have requested that Botticelli feature his patrons, the Medici, in its arrangement. To the lower right, mirroring the direction of the gaze if not the countenance of del Lama most critics believe is the young, 25-year old Botticelli, who would have had motive enough to include the Medici.[28]

The entire effect of the painted ensemble is precisely the same effect produced by any proper arrangement of figures on a raked, proscenium stage so that the audience may see the action. Cosimo's sons look at each other as if about to say "who is next after father?" Lorenzo gazes upward at his grandfather, Giovanni reflects with eyes cast down, and some witnesses of the scene direct their gaze and gestures toward the older and younger Medicis, as if wondering and learning how to kneel from masters. The three figures on the lower left seem to be remarking quietly on the postures of Cosimo's sons. Others on left and right contemplate or adore the Christ and Holy Family. In turn, the humble figures of the Holy Family, centered upon Mary's silent gesture with her child, sit atop a pyramid of representatives of the masculine modern social order amidst the ruins of an older culture, the heroic virtues clearly subordinate to the virtue of humility.

The painting's magnitude—its steady inexorable call to adoration—asks us whether art is changing the way people think, feel, and see. Modern figures entering historical scenes happened frequently enough in Renaissance painting so that we wish to make no claim that Botticelli was the first to make this sort of theatrical collapse of history and modernity.[29] That said, the action of the painting would be

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[28] Up to this point, the description of the figures and its Biblical scene is owed to Rose-Marie and Rainer Hagen, *What Great Paintings Say,* volume 2, Koln: Taschen, 2003, 76-81.

[29] For example, Jean Fouquet painted the mistress of Charles VII as the Virgin Mary. Fra Lippi, Botticelli's mentor, painted "the Coronation of the Virgin." A group of bystanders depicted is said to include a self-portrait of Filipino Lippi (disputed), together with his son Filippino and his helpers, Fra Diamante and Pier Matteo d'Amelia; and, later, Raphael painted Leonardo

historical, that is, accepted by the audience of this picture as true. And, of course, so would the Christian virtue it exhibits, at least in so far as it was aligned with the historical story of the three Magi. Yet, despite any Florentine familiarity with paintings replete with interpretations of Biblically historical events set into contemporaneous surroundings, there is no reason to think, when we are being asked, that the Florentines and we cannot perceive the collapse of the distinction between the past and the present, between history and art.

Still, one is tempted to say that through the painting the variety of contemporaneous figures are all "playing their parts" upon the stage and are "assuming their roles" for the sake of the honor of being observed by the public in association with the Epiphany. And, indeed, the Medici played an active role in the Compagnia de' Magi, the brotherhood which, a bit like krewes of the New Orleans Mardi Gras, met to plan and execute the Feast of the Epiphany.[30] At the very least, then, certain groups within the Florentine culture seem to "paint" the painting, long before Botticelli picks up his brush, co-opting a Biblical scene for their own aggrandizement. As has been observed by two critics, in a scene of "Christian piety" the picture "reflects the destinies and dependent relations of people in the Renaissance city where the ruling bankers [in an ostensibly republican city] were pleased to don the attire of the three kings." [31] Still such criticisms and even the presence of a detailed contract, which we have in other cases of Botticelli's work, cannot explain the power of the painting.[32]

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as Plato, Michelangelo as Heraclitus, and Bramante as Euclid in the *School of Athens*.

[30] Which, at one point in its history, decked out all of Florence to look like Jerusalem. See Rab Hatfield, *Botticelli's Uffizi Adoration: A Study in Pictorial Content* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 115.

[31] Hagen & Hagen, *What Great Paintings Say*, 81.

[32] Nor does the real piety of Florentine agents of government who processed to the Madonna of Impruneta under the duress of plagues seem explanatory, either. Per above, the processional is an artful supplication.

For when we ask, "is this what the Medici would have done were the Baby Jesus available to them?" we have entered the world of possibility. We now have a problem of credibility; simply painting figures into a Biblical scene does not make it so any more than enactment in a play or festival does. Moreover, the painting fixes the image in a way that a stage spectacle or festival, given their dependence on continuous yet ephemeral performance, cannot. We are now "permanently" asked by Botticelli's painting, could this be so?

Again, undeniably, the painting synthesizes elements of Biblical and Roman history and contemporary leadership through religious veneration, destroying the distinction between the past and the present. But so, in fact, would the Festival of the Epiphany—another artistic event. What difference does it make to the collapse of this distinction between past and present that these are works of art? [33] Certainly, whether we look at the production of the single artist or the collective production of the Campagnia, in order for the collapse to take place, to exist, these productions must be separated from their material, living authors. Put differently, they must be "completed." Botticelli laid upon his altarpiece his pigments, handed the altarpiece over to del Lama, and went on to paint different pictures in different homes of the well-heeled. The leaders of the city planned and executed their festival, handed it over to the public, and went on to concern themselves with the governing of cities, armies, and banks. And this means that the syntheses of past and present, made by festival or painting, are utterly dependent on art for their coming into being and, in the case of the painting, their continuation.

A painted "instantaneous moment," this synthesis of past and present, of banker, Christ, and observing artist, would not have existed except for the art. The moment of this painting never happened in this particularity and as such, to have re-presented "the Medici" in such an

[33] The collapse is reinforced even with the Roman ruins, for these would not have been ruins in the time of Jesus, any more than this scene took place in the time of the Medici.

a-historical setting is not only to honor them, but literally to place the figures of them before and beneath God. Without the separate production of such works, this bowing and adoration by the Medici before any person would not have been seen and few would have contemplated or felt the emotions attendant upon the scene in any activity of the living participants.[34] True, we might say that the Christian culture with its exaltation of humility prepared the way for this painting. Indeed, quite probably, without textual artifacts separated from the authors who wrote the early Christian gospels, preserving the notion that the kingly are worshipful in an act of adoration,[35] we would be unable to identify Christian culture in this aspect or with this content. Yet without art no one sees this inversion of humility and pride, and it is nearly unimaginable. Hence, only if the entire male society from artisan, to money-changer, to patriarch had had the opportunity and the

[34] Almost anyone in Florence could have seen this work. It was later removed from the church, passed into private collections of the Medici family, and emerged for public viewing in the Uffizi in 1796. Earlier, the Uffizi had been designated by the last surviving member of the Medici family as a home for the Medici collection and a shared public good. From the website of the Uffizi: "The Family Pact, signed by Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici, the last of the Medici dynasty, ensured that all the Medici's art and treasures collected over nearly three centuries of political ascendancy remained in Florence. She bequeathed most of it to the Tuscan State upon her death in 1743 so that "they would remain as decoration for the State, for the utility of the Public and to attract the curiosity of Foreigners", and it all had to stay in place and not leave Florence or Tuscany." In particular, she declared that the Uffizi Gallery was a "public and inalienable public good", paving the way for its great wealth of art to be shared with all (and we hope to contribute to this through this guide)." In addition, "Sixteen years after her death, the Uffizi, built by Cosimo the Great, the founder of the Grand Duchy, was made open to public viewing and still contains a large portion of works commissioned and collected by the Medici." (All emphasis in the original). http://www.uffizi.org/museum/history/.

[35] Or, following the idea that the original, not the Medici, magi are astrologers – the knowledgeable.

wisdom to adore the Christ, and only if his mother extended that opportunity to them, only then would it be so.

And only in art is it so. The consequence is that art—not religion, politics or, even, culture—is providing not only the expressive vehicle but the substantive invention by which we may finally join with the audience of the Medici, to whom the painter's image looks out, to see this scene for what it is. In this picture, through the magnitude provided by perspective, we see what it would take to make our leaders and society—in all their majesty, richness, vanity, enculturated clubiness, and dependent relations—bring themselves to the bar of humility. It would take something like Godhead, something that all could recognize as supremely more important than the state or power. It would take a divinely human innocence, grace, and blessedness, of mother and child, father and family. It would take a supreme leader. Even those who were in his family would have trouble bending their knees. To be truly at the bar, the politically connected would all have to be present; it would not do to have the "three kings" bow in a private meeting.[36] Among the ranks of those aspiring to be noticed and elevated, a leading act of humility would have to ripple through society. Though some witnesses might be so pre-occupied with themselves for having made such a scene possible that they might look out to see its effects on others, not only the connected of society would need to learn from their leaders, but so might any witnessing audience whose eyes are focused by the scene's arrangement, personages, and action. This is a conception of equality devoutly to be wished, an emotion moving away from envy or indignation toward benevolent hope, which arts in the widest sense of the term—as made things—have slowly worked into our culture over succeeding generations. It is an affective conception which is simply inconceivable without art. [37]

[36] As they seem to in the "historical" gospel (Matthew 2.11).

[37] Jan Van Eyck's portraits of historical bourgeois managers of the rising Burgundian state or church officials in piety before the figures of the Virgin Mary and Christ Child are innovative but in a different sense. Craig Harrison

I have tried to trace the parts of the image and their synthesis into a whole which leads us toward a recognition of freedom. In tracing the seven-hundred-year development of "equality of conditions" in America and Europe, before the institutional rise of democracy, de Tocqueville remarks, "little by little enlightenment spreads. One sees a taste for literature and the arts awaken; the mind becomes an element in success; science is a means of government; intelligence a social force;

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notes that despite the apparent realism (carried out by amazing technical proficiency in creating not only stone, cloth, and marble textures, reflections in mirrors and light through glass, but by assembling scenes which look as if they had been built by gothic masons and architects) of Van Eyck's paintings, the portraits neither imitate [copy] known physical scenes nor known historical biblical events. Here, known contemporary figures are placed (as they wish to be seen) in pious, reverential scenes. Like the Medici, the magnificence of their wealth or the dignity of their office is incorporated into the painting, but the collapse is not between history and modernity, but between modern office and godhead. These portraits, unlike Botticelli's Magi, are private scenes more-or-less privately shown for some time. Since they were privately shown, their function is less an imitation of what is devoutly to be wished about the august, than a private assurance, apparently insufficiently conveyed by church ritual, of the piety of the well-heeled. Art is making possible a private assurance -- through the manner of its techniques and staging -- that wealth, office, and religious cults may b received by Godhead through the proper piety of individuals. Again, these were not for public display, so it is entirely possible that in a nascent way, a way foreshadowing but not formulative of Protestant doctrine, the real figures were seeking to have an individual audience with God, sometimes unmediated by a priestly figure. Only in art, not in the Church, could this be so. Again, this is a foreshadowing of private communion with God, a loosening of a mental space about the relations between humans and God, made all the more likely both by the persuasive realism and by the obscure iconography of the paintings which cannot be readily identified with Church doctrine. See Craig Harrison, *Jan van Eyck: The Play of Realism,* second revised edition (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2012).

the lettered take a place in affairs."[38] Aristotle, long before de Tocqueville, remarks early on in the *Poetics* that what matters in artistic developments is less the formal intention artists take to a project, but the recognition of what they have achieved once they produce, say, a tragedy or a comedy. Here, these statements are two sides of the same coin. When artists view their own works with the end of contemplating what they have wrought, they are no different than any other audience of art.[39] Botticelli may well have had no intention when he began this work of insinuating what de Tocqueville called the leveling of conditions, but by the time he was finished he looked up and out from his painting to see those inside and out of the picture who gazed upon a sacred space that declared all humbly equal before God. Here, intellectual freedom and equality in image merge.

So far, I have indicated some technical tools – e.g., the discussion of magnitude and Alberti's use of liberal arts – and I have repressed the indication of others – e.g., an analytic of the emotion, hope. I did this to favor the perceivable artistry of the picture. Yet, through artful analytics, I can state the affective conception which at once holds the picture together and is the emotional function of the work: The possibility that the most august to the most humble, that all humans, may feel

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[38] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America.* Translator, George Lawrence. (New York: Harper Collins, 2000), 9-10.

[39] Aristotle, *Poetics*, 4. As a prefatory to an argument which distinguishes the historical differentiation of poets and poetry along formal lines of imitation, particularly of tragedy and comedy, epic and mock-epic, Aristotle remarks the spectators of imitations recognize that "this is that," i.e., that this art work is a tragedy, comedy and so forth. In *Learning to Look,* Joshua Taylor makes much the same comment at the onset of his analysis of differential treatments in paintings of 'the same' subject matter: "Perugino…has made us feel in a particular way about the Crucifixion, in a way we may not before have considered… the painting becomes, then, the basis for a new experience." Indeed, Perugino could conceivably belong to "we." See Joshua C. Taylor, *Learning to Look: A Handbook for the Visual Arts*, second edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 52.

and act out humility towards an assurance of innocence offered by the divinity of a human being is hope. Still, without the perceivable dynamics of the painting, without being moved by the picture itself, the statement is flat. The technical tools are required to account for and, perhaps transitively, to systematically reach, perceive, and feel that hope of equality, but they are at the service of the art, not the extraction of the affective concept. Happily though, the analytics are the available *techné* of a liberal arts education, there for all to learn. So, let's return to the picture, artist, arts, and audience because these have educational and cultural consequences for the future.

Artistic arguments about perspective tend to lead to the conclusion that it removed the artist from the painting, placing him or her outside whatever was depicted. For Marshall McLuhan, Renaissance painting as a medium used perspective to impose a cultural "point of view" that was partial, sequential, and specialized, one that created 'content' and could not, per force, offer an integrated, simultaneous view or world.[40] Yet as Brunelleschi showed, what could determine apparent visual spatial relations from one standpoint was a mirror. So, let us return to Buchanan's rotating projective geometry that has through the art of Botticelli been humanized. Botticelli placing himself inside the painting mirrors his stance outside and, thereby, reverses the field of vision and multiplies the magnitudes of the painting. The possibilities of art are infinite not because lines lead to a manipulable vanishing point, but because each spectator might command his or her own.[41] If

[40] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*: *the Extensions of Man* (New York: New American Library, 1964, 1966), 27-29. Alberti "like[d] there to be someone" in the picture to guide the thinking and emotions of the spectators, pp. 77-78. Baxandall, *Painting & Experience,* notes this common practice but finds that secular gestures were more difficult to pin down and changed with fashion, apparently including Botticelli (67-70).

[41] Later, Velázquez in *Las Menias* moved the act of painting into the picture as he looked out to paint the more-or-less unseen king and queen of

we need proof of this simply use the painting's participants. *Because we have the perspective we do, it is possible to imagine differently the perspective of every single figure of the painting*. Thus, the choric figure of Botticelli looking to the audience offers an integral, simultaneous perception of the magnitude of freedom that comes when one possesses arts. Through a medium that all might access, the figure of Botticelli and the entire painting challenge observers to become artists, precisely because of the possibilities arts possess.

I think Botticelli took the notion of invention across the arts to heart. Frank Zöllner, a sensitive scholarly critic, has argued that Botticelli was specifically familiar with Alberti's argument, quoted above, that a painter should be "learned in all the liberal arts… [which] will be of great assistance in preparing the composition of an 'historia', and the great virtue of this consists primarily in invention." [42] Interestingly

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Spain, and so we are brought into the picture. (Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, Edward Friedman introduction, p. 24).

[42] From Alberti, *On Painting*: "Indeed, *invention is such that even by itself and without pictorial representation it can give pleasure*" [italics mine]. Alberti offers "the description that Lucian gives of the *Calumny of Apelles*" by the Greek artist, Zeuxis, as evidence that the 'imagination' is seized "only by the description in words," Ibid. p. 89. Botticelli's placement of a relief of Centaurs in his own *Calumny* -- a reference to Zeuxis' ancient painting -- leads Zöllner to argue that Alberti's notion of invention is a "thoroughly modern notion of the primacy of the concept" which Botticelli would reject, that Botticelli would not have accepted "the theoretical primacy of *inventio*." Why not? Zöllner notes that Zeuxis' depiction of Centaurs were highly praised by many in ancient Greece, but Zeuxis rejected the praise because "'these gentlemen…place no value on the execution, to which any artist aspires…'" (167-168). Notwithstanding that Alberti cannot convey the invention of the Calumny without, at least using words, Zöllner's argument is that Botticelli paints his argument with Alberti against invention through a finished painting. Zöllner's chief concern is centered upon the intelligence with which Botticelli painted. Here, I offer an alternative about Botticelli's concerns with invention that shares Zöllner's conviction of the intelligence and artistry of Botticelli.

but, perhaps, not convincingly, Zöllner argues that Botticelli would have rejected invention as theoretically primary to his own painting, precisely because it seems invention, or conception, could be separated from technique or finished product. Yet, reflection on Botticelli's body of works perhaps leads to a different conclusion. Almost without fail, Botticelli produced only unique works when he produced his novel Greek, mythical paintings, e.g., the *Calumnia*. When he produced Biblically or religiously grounded paintings, the case was very different. There are 18 *Virgin and Childs*, 11 *Madonnas*, five *Annunciations*, four *St. Augustines*, two *Lamentations*, and there once were six or seven *Adorations* by Botticelli, five of which still exist. Botticelli kept producing his religious paintings across his career, which included along the way major style shifts and major shifts in his political surroundings. The *Adorations*, too, span his entire career from Lippi's workshop to near his retirement. The existing five differ markedly. Each is an invention in its own right.

Those knowing Aristotle, Cicero, or Quintilian will be familiar with the centrality and extensive elaboration of *topoi* (Greek) or *loci* (Latin) in dialectical and rhetorical arts. Topoi are commonplaces which a person employs to think. Topoi are like variables in math; they

can be adapted to almost any matter or situation. Through the use of topoi, a rhetorician invents arguments, while a dialectician discovers the principles for inquiries. Botticelli's situation is closest, perhaps, to Cicero, who treated the artistic products of Roman life as topoi for speeches.[43] I suggest that Botticelli, knowing what he did about the liberal arts and their intersections with painting, through conjuring up, time-and-again, the topoi of Christianity, created over his lifetime, along with his fellow painters, a painted "art of rhetoric." Whatever commissions Botticelli was offered, whatever influence he sought, his work is almost certainly systematic and developmental, since he not only returns to these topoi to incarnate his stylistic changes, but the Christian topoi might be arranged in narratives, themselves, of what he thought painting could embody in permanent moments. In other words, topoi of Christianity's intersection with its own past, the arts

[43] Cicero, *Cicero in Twenty Eight Volumes. IV. De Oratore,* Book II and III. Trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942, 1968), II, par. 166-169, 172, p. 317-321; III, par. 26-28, p. 21-23. Alberti signals a story in Cicero's De Inventione, II, 1-3 in which Zeuxis chooses five women from which to model his paintings, the point being that the overview of all women allowed a selection for composition. But Cicero employs the story to illustrate how he has constructed his inquiry into the art of rhetoric, by consulting many sources. It seems likely that Botticelli would know of the reference. Vasari is at pains to indicate that early in life Botticelli "found it easy to learn" but that he was not "contented with any form of learning, whether reading, writing or arithmetic," and so his father wearied of "the vagaries of his [son's] brain." This characteristic of Botticelli's mind structures Vasari's structure of Botticelli's whole life, which, after training in painting with Lippi, leads to an abundance of inventions and beauties in painting and drawing. Vasari depicts the mature Botticelli as "being a man of inquiring mind" and illustrates his wit through three passed-down stories of practical jokes on his students and a neighbor. See Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, vol. 1, translator, Gaston du C. de Vere (New York: Knopf: 1927, 1996), 535-542.

and sciences of his day, and the culture of his times indicate the centrality of invention to Botticelli's work.

The Future of Liberal Arts Education

If the past is any indication, the future of the kind of education we espouse may well rest on whether we more explicitly explore and develop those works that formulate and inculcate the *technē*, scope, freedom, and invention of the liberal arts. What's important for a core text, liberal arts education is that Alberti and Botticelli are only two instances—in more than a two-thousand-year history—of individuals acquiring, using, and extending the liberal arts as *technē*, while producing world-changing art in the meantime. Botticelli had no idea of the global future that he was painting for. Garnering reputation in Rome and Italy was about as much as he could hope for, though his life and art show he desired change in his time. In short, he was as local as could be. We need not rest with simply a liberal arts Renaissance, for the liberal arts are responsible for innovations found in Bacon's, Newton's, and Henry Adams' developments of disciplines. Grammars and rhetorics of ornament, assent, motive, and fiction have been written down to the 20th Century. Buchanan belongs here. Susan Sontag, well educated in liberal arts, once suggested we might need an "erotics" of art – a formation she never undertook.[44] Modern authors, such as Virginia Woolf in her "Letter to a Young Poet" and in *A Room of One's Own*, develop a *technē* of art, while explicitly imagining a future freedom, in this case, for women, men, and art, while the founders of the American republic and the emancipators of American history—Lincoln, Douglass, Stanton, Anthony, Julia Ward Howe,[45] Dubois, and King—all employed the liberal arts to invent freedoms we cherish.

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[44] It is the last line of the title essay in Susan Sontag. *Against Interpretation: Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (New York, Picador, 2001).

[45] Thanks to Mary Townsend for a paper on Julia Ward Howe's late 1880's address on behalf of suffrage which uses an explanation of Plato's

We can take a lesson from all this. A couple years ago David Brooks interviewed students at universities where core text programs happen to reside. What he found is that they don't trust national institutions:

> I asked the students what agents of change they had faith in. They almost always mentioned somebody local, decentralized and on the ground—teachers, community organizers…I came away from these conversations thinking that one big challenge for this generation is determining how to take the good things that are happening on the local level and translate them to the national level, where the problems are.[46]

Whatever our nationalities, liberal arts educations are local, unique, authentic and that's where we can step in if we begin to teach the liberal arts and their technical, affective, and conceptual capacity for invention. That's what can give hope. There's a battle going on in the younger generation, right now, between those who, in pain, want to silence speech and tradition, and those who want to speak about what and how to take what has been rendered and remake it for the future. Neither know it yet, but the arts, liberal and fine, are the path to that future. We can help them to imagine the possibilities.[47]

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treatment of women in the Republic to make the case for equality and the franchise.

[46] David Brooks, "A Generation Emerging from the Wreckage," *New York Times* (February 26, 2018), https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/26/opinion/millennials-college-hopeful.html.

[47] I am, of course, aware that many of our programs construct a variable narrative of Western civilization, often referred to as a conversation among texts. That Western narrative, as far as core texts of the sciences, philosophy and religion goes, has an important intersection with Islam. Some institutions are inventing global programs that take advantage of the relatively recent historical connections of Eastern and Western civilizations within general and liberal education. Indeed, this summer ACTC's Institute is holding a conference at Concordia University—Irvine to explore those developments --

And, in fact, such imagining of possibilities happens time and again at ACTC. ACTC is an on-going invention about inventions, and in speeches, papers, panels, and conversations, highly educated people work with avid attention to listen to and speak about the inventions they bring and the inventions that the world has created. We meet for the sake of the future, but it is a future practiced in the moment, an intellectual freedom or autonomy we try to give to our students and to each other. It has been my pleasure to work in and serve such a community of artists and scholars for twenty-four years. Again, I thank you with my whole soul.

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"Global General Education and Asian Texts: What shall our students read?" Since there is no ancient to modern historical narrative of Eastern and Western civilizational interaction to construct, in this last effort, what we see is the spontaneous use of core texts of multiple traditions as topoi – places where we go to think about questions such as "What is Nature?" or "What is Humanity?", perhaps even, "What is Art?" Systematically, habitually, or spontaneously, rhetoric's inventions and dialectic's questions occupy the ground they always have – the intersection of disciplines, civilizations, and, especially the sciences and arts.

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