# ENERGETA

**SPRING 2000**

## A Very Short Essay on Energeia

Anne C. McShane, Ed.

Traditionally, the Energeia has had, on its first page, a quotation from Aristotle's *Metaphysics* regarding the definition of ἐνέργεια (Aristotle invented the word). That quotation takes very different forms depending on its translator. I give Hippocrates G. Apostle's and Joe Sachs' here:
Apostle's:

> For performance is an end, and *actuality* [ἐνέργεια] is performance. And so even the name "*actuality*" is derived from the name "work" [ἔργον] and points to actuality [ἐντελέχεια]. (1050a 22-24)[1]

Sachs':

> For the end is work, and the work is a being-at-work [ἐνέργεια], and this is why the phrase being-at-work is meant by reference to work [ἔργον] and extends to being-at-work-staying-complete [ἐντελέχεια]. (1050a 22-24)[2]

Neither quotation serves well as a definition. Apostle's *actuality*, even combined with performance and end, leaves one unenlightened. But, if one closes one's eyes to *actuality* and latches onto Apostle's translation of ἔργον, "performance," it is possible to construe some idea of why a magazine filled with prize essays and art would be called Energeia. Closing the eyes to *actuality*, however, is hardly satisfying; *actuality* is ἐνέργεια! Sachs' translation, though at first more daunting, tells us more about what ἐνέργεια really is. For it to do so, however, we must read a little more:

> Since of the actions which have a limit none is an end but each is for the sake of an end, as in the process of losing weight, whose end is thinness, and since that which loses weight while in motion does not have that for which the sake of the motion exists, such an action is not an *action*, or else it is not complete, for it is not an end. But the end and *action* belong to that other kind. For example, we are seeing and at the same time we have seen . . . we live well and at the same time have lived well, and we are happy and have been happy. . . . Of these, the former should be called "motions," the latter "*actualities* [read, being-at-works]." (Apostle, 1048b 18-28)

It becomes more clear why Sachs chooses to translate ἐνέργεια as being-at-work. The being-at-work is a kind of work, the end of which is the *doing of the work*—there is no product, other than the work itself. One does not see in order to see in the future: one sees now, in order to see now. From here the step to ἐντελέχεια is easily taken: just as the ἐνέργεια of an eye is to see, the ἐνέργεια of a human is the being-at-work of the whole self. As Sachs says,

> . . . the human being that can experience [sight, knowledge, happiness] is similarly a being-at-work, constituted by metabolism. Since the end and completion of any genuine being is its being-at-work, the meaning of the word converges with . . . entelecheia. (244-245)[3]

The word ἐντελέχεια is composed of three parts: ἐντελές (from τέλος), meaning complete or full-grown, ἐχεῖν, meaning to be a certain way by the continuing effort of holding onto that condition, and a pun on the word ἐνδελέχεια, meaning persistence (Sachs' *Physics*, 245). ἐνέργεια extended is ἐντελέχεια. Through the persistence of a meaningful work, ἐνέργεια, humans fulfill themselves.

Unfortunately, there cannot be a magazine consisting of ἐνέργεια. ἐνέργεια, as an activity, a motion, extends through time and cannot be put on paper. The activity of painting a picture, like the activity of being happy, is not transferable (that is, without one taking part in the activity itself). What we can do, however, is give evidence that ἐνέργεια has taken place on our campus. That evidence can also serve as an opportunity for the reader to engage in knowlege; that is, in another kind of ἐνέργεια. That is what this magazine has tried to do.

As one can tell from my poor attempt to elucidate it, as well as from the apparent difficulty in its translation, the meaning of ἐνέργεια is difficult to get across. Indeed, Aristotle says this himself in reference to ἐνέργεια: "What we mean is clear by induction from individual cases, and we should not seek a definition of everything but should also perceive an object by means of an analogy" (Apostle, 1048a 36-1048b 7).

Let us then take his suggestion and, rather than trying to define ἐνέργεια, look at examples. Please turn the page.

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1 Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Trans. Hippocrates G. Apostle. Peripatetic press, Grinnell, IA; 1979.
2 Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Trans. Joe Sachs. Green Lion Press, Santa Fe, NM: 1999.
3 Sachs, Joe: *Aristotle's* Physics: *A Guided Study*. Masterworks of Discovery: Guided Studies of Great Texts in Science. Harvey Flaumenhaft, ed. Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ. 1995.

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**Sketch (man)**
*Melina Hoggard, A '00*

# Seeking by Means of Speech

*Blakely Phillips, '02*

One of Meno's sarcastic remarks, imperfectly understood as it may be by Meno himself, strikes at the heart of the philosophic enterprise: How can we seek what we do not already know? Answering this question means no less than discovering what "knowing" means for Socrates. Thus, Meno's question reverberates in the background of the *Theaetetus*, in which the title character and Socrates seek the nature of knowledge itself. The various images given in the *Theaetetus* imply that speech is the key to seeking what one does not know: knowledge, it seems, involves more than one level, and speech is the connection that allows us to move between those levels. By examining the images of knowledge and speech, then, disregarding their initial hasty rejections in the course of the dialogue, we may discern a coherent picture of what knowledge is and how speech enables us to seek it. This examination, in turn, also reveals some implications of the nature of knowledge.[1]

How is knowledge sought? We can say that if we are able to seek knowledge, we need two things: an idea of that for which we are searching and a way of attaining it. Concerning the first, if Meno's slave does indeed discover that the line on which the eight foot square is based is neither two nor three feet, if Socrates can seek the elusive forms of things, both must already possess a general notion of what they seek to know more explicitly. If seeking is to be successful, it must also be possible to move from vague knowledge of something to clear knowledge of it. Partial knowledge allows us to look up words we do not *quite* know how to spell, or to attempt to recall an image of someone or someplace which has undergone the contortions of memory. It *must* be possible, then, to know enough about X to ask the question "What is X?" without knowing precisely what it is about X that is sought. In other words, if we are able to seek knowledge, we need multiple levels of knowledge and a way of relating them—a theory that is significantly elaborated in the *Theaetetus* with the image of the dovecote.

Socrates and Theaetetus, indeed, distinguish between two levels of knowledge, *possessing* and *having*—a distinction Socrates explains thus: "if someone buys a cloak and becomes its owner but does not wear it, we would deny he has it but he still possesses it" (197b). The soul, Socrates continues, is a dovecote that "when we're children is empty" (197e2), but which one fills with various sciences, birds of knowledge, catching them and stowing them away. Once these birds are caught, however, the hunter/keeper does not actually *have* them unless he holds them up again in his hands. He possesses them, and, only possessing, he may even forget them. Seeking to know something, in this case, is seeking to have what one in some way possesses.

What does it mean, though, to possess knowledge that one yet does not have? Possession is the capacity for using; possessing knowledge, then, means retaining a thought in one's mind unconsciously, whereas having knowledge means holding that thought in one's mind consciously. It is possible, then, for something known to be in one's mind yet not at the front of it; to be stored unconsciously, not "ready at hand for thought" (198d). We possess notions that give us direction in the search for wisdom; having some acquaintance with "virtue," we can seek the nature of virtue. Although the original notion of virtue is very different from any definition one might contrive for its nature, it is on account of the former idea that the latter is possible. Socrates, Meno's slave and the rest of us can seek what we do not know if we somehow possess the knowledge of it already and only seek to have it more explicitly.

In order for knowledge to be seekable, though, we must somehow be able to move from possessing knowledge to having it, from a partly-conscious notion of a thing, to full awareness of its details. Thus, seeking is the movement from one level of knowledge to another, the relation between possessing and having. How, then, do we seek? How do we come to possess knowledge-birds in the first place, and how do we grab them again later? Socrates hints that the first and the second are different manners of "hunting": "we . . . will say that the hunting was twofold, one before the possession for the sake of possession, and one by the possessor for the sake of seizing and having in his hands what he has possessed for some time" (198d1-5).

The first hunting, since it is for the sake of possession, is akin to the acquisition of an art, the second to its practice. Precisely how we are able to seek an art before we know what we are looking for, however, is confusing and unclear. Acquiring any art, does not the apprentice always have a sense of the skill he is after? For most arts, from mathematics (a science) to chairmaking (a practical art), the one trying to learn the art already has a notion of the knowledge encompassed by it. It seems, too, that this will be the case so long as one seeks an art consciously, with intention. Seeking, by definition, is looking *for* something, after all. Thus, even if acquisition of an art is what enables us to seek further knowledge, we need knowledge in order to acquire most arts. The trail of the knowledge needed for seeking does not end here. There may, perhaps, be "arts" that one learns inadvertently, however, which enable one to seek not only all other arts, but also the active knowledge yielded by those arts when seized in the hand of the mind. (Language may be just such an unconscious art.)



The other half of the analogy, that between practicing an art and seeking to have what one already possesses, is more completely accurate: "it is precisely by [the arithmetical] art," that is, practicing the art, "that [the arithmetician] has the knowledges of the numbers" (198a11-b1). Therefore, practicing something already known is the path from possessing to having knowledge. Practicing the arithmetical art involves applying what the arithmetician possesses knowledge of—numbers, which he possesses from his original acquisition of the art—to the world through numbering things, asking always "How many?" The path from possessing to having, then, involves looking at the world, asking about it, and applying to it the knowledge one possesses: practicing an art.

The pursuit of philosophical knowledge, in the same manner, involves looking at things that affect us and inquiring about their natures. Whatever the philosophical art is, one *has* knowledge through it by practicing it, applying it to the things in the world. Thus, seeking knowledge, generally, for any art, means practice of an art one already knows: one has chairmaking knowledge through actually making chairs out of materials from the world.

Of course, the way one applies previous knowledge to the world, in order to keep having that knowledge, does depend both upon the sort of knowledge one begins with and the sort one ultimately seeks. Although one must always have a prior notion of what one is looking for, both the prior notion and the method of getting more elaborate knowledge differ in different situations. Philosophical knowledge, for instance—that is, knowledge of the natures of things—will be sought differently than mathematical knowledge or chairmaking knowledge. For chairmaking knowledge, one applies the plan for a chair (prior notion) to the world by actually making chairs. For mathematical and philosophical knowledge, on the other hand, the knowledges one starts from are number and what things are. These knowledges are applied by asking questions, comparing the world with what one knows, asking "How many?" or "What is this?"

Since philosophical knowledge, knowledge about the natures of things, is what we are concerned with (as this is what Socrates and Theaetetus are concerned with), we will ask: what prior knowledge or art is necessary to seek the natures of things, to ask what something is? First, the philosopher must have some acquaintance with that something. To ask of virtue "What is virtue?" the philosopher needs only know the word "virtue," the name of what he wants to know better. Thus, the philosopher needs words, language. Does the philosopher train in language, with a view to the natures of things, as if it were an art and he an apprentice who knew what he was after? Surely not, if the philosopher claims with Socrates not to know the natures of things . . . . He knows only words, and we all learn our first language without much thought about precisely what we are doing. Thus, language seems not to be an art; but it is, at least for philosophical knowledge, the root of what allows us to seek. From language we have all the knowledge required to seek the natures of the things we name.

How does the philosopher, then, use words to seek what things are? How does he apply what he knows to the world around him? He asks questions of the form "what is X?" and attempts to answer them. This much is evidenced by the method of Socrates in the *Theaetetus*, asking "What ever is knowledge? Can we really say it?" (146a3). The answer will be an account (λόγος). Asking what things are and giving accounts of them, then, is how the philosopher seeks, starting always from words and the meanings they imply. The way knowledge must work if we are able to seek it, then, has been shown: the philosopher needs words, questions and accounts—words to give an idea of what he is looking for, questions and accounts to convey him from that hazy understanding to a clearer, more articulated one. It remains to be considered, however, why philosophical knowledge is sought this way, why words, questions and accounts are necessary, and how they work.

## LANGUAGE

Theodorus says in the *Theaetetus*, following Socrates, that the difference between philosophers and lawyers is that philosophers "are not subservient to speeches, but the speeches are as it were our domestics," whereas lawyers are slaves to speeches (173c3-4). Mastering speech is crucial to practicing philosophy, and thereby to seeking what we do not know about the natures of things. We have said already that language provides both the prior knowledge of things (names) needed to seek them, and the way to seek them, to move from unconsciously possessed knowledge to clear knowledge (questions and accounts). What about language makes this possible, and what makes language necessary for philosophic knowledge? How does language provide both the basic notions necessary to seeking what we do not know and the means of attaining it?

The words philosophers must possess if they are to formulate questions have a peculiar faculty: they name things, physical or intangible, and at the same time reach beyond those things. The words we use, while pointing to individual things, do so by putting those things into classes. (Every single tree, for instance, does not have its own name, Bob or Martha, as people do: each tree is one in the class "tree.") The word tree, then, signifies both an individual tree to which one might point, and the entire class "tree," the mysterious qualities of the category that cause one to call that particular object a tree. Language points to things

in the world and beyond, to the commonness that, though not explicitly stated, guides and lies behind the grouping of various objects together under one name. Words serve as names for what many different things have in common.

What many different things have in common, in turn, gives us insights into what those things *are*. These elusive standards, by which we give names, are the forms, since it is precisely the guiding principle of naming that Socrates is after when he seeks what knowledge or virtue is, wanting to know what it means to call anything "knowledge" or "virtue." Phaedo, too, says that Socrates and company "agreed that . . . . Forms existed, and that other things acquired their names by having a share in them" (*Phaedo* 102b). The same principles are what we try to state when defining words, as in a dictionary. Thus, speech links the each (individual object) and the all (category), as the Stranger of the *Sophist* warns: "To detach each from all is the final and utter eclipse of all speech" (259e3). When we possess words, then, we implicitly possess knowledge of why things are grouped under certain names, and this is the knowledge sought by the philosopher. Words, it seems, are very helpful things for the philosopher to know, since, as categories into which we group particular things, they imply truths about what things are to us.

How, then, does the philosopher use the words he possesses to seek knowledge of what things are? How do accounts use words to arrive at what one did not know before? The philosopher begins by asking "What is X?" and calling the identity of the thing he names, X, into question. He then uses other words to rename X. This renaming constitutes the account. Having called the name of the thing into question, the philosopher seeks to discover what that name means by thinking about the thing itself and its relationships to other things. (Whether he is seeking the thing itself, as separate from its name, or just what is meant by the name, or whether a difference even exists between the two, is unclear. It is possible that the philosopher thinks he is seeking the thing itself while only toying with names.) He seeks to give a definition of a word, and therefore can only use other words to define it. The object of the philosopher's quest—what something is—becomes an articulation of how that thing compares with others.

That accounts articulate the relationships between things is reinforced by thinking of accounts (via λόγος) as ratios. Just as Euclid's ratio shows the relations between magnitudes, an account does the same with what things are. Further, just as the mathematical ratio requires at least two terms, an account does also. An account of anything needs both a subject to describe and terms in which to describe it. Therefore, with at least two things named, the philosopher can make a ratio between them that, hopefully, reveals something about the one in question. With tree:bird or tree:bush one discovers the difference between what is meant by tree and bird or bush. These differences are embedded in the words, and arise when one thinks of what one word means in comparison to another. One might say, simply, a tree is not a bird or a bush. Introducing other terms, other words, one could say, more specifically, a tree is a larger plant than a bush. Including ratio, then, the peculiarity of λόγος is, starting with words, to state relationships between their meanings.

Implicit in the use and knowledge of words is the ability to relate those words to one another in speech, since words themselves signify relationships between the things they name by grouping each object into a category (which will include some objects and exclude others). Thus, the philosopher, in possessing words, possesses the ability to draw from those words the categories they imply by calling a name into question ("Whatever is knowledge?") and trying to give accounts of what it names (that by which we call various things "knowledge") in terms of other words, other names of things. Starting with words as his prior knowledge, the philosopher seeks an account that will explain what it means to call something what we call it.

If we are able to seek what we do not know through accounts, what kind of account will yield success? Socrates and Theaetetus consider the same question. Having decided that the knowledge sought by a philosopher must be some sort of account ("true opinion with speech [is] knowledge, but true opinion without speech [is] outside of knowledge, and of whatever there is not a speech, these things are not knowable . . . and whatever admit of speech are knowable"), they continue to give accounts of speech (202d1-5). These accounts they give in order to determine how the "knowable," (speakable) and "unknowable" (unspeakable) things are divided—to determine what is knowable and thereby what kind of account will succeed. Discovering what sort of account is successful will clarify how language, as accounts, enables the philosopher to seek what he does not know.

In the first account given by Socrates and Theaetetus, a syllable is explained and accounted for by the list of its letters, in order. The other terms used to define what the syllable is, then, are its parts, letters. The letter, not consisting of multiple parts, cannot be expressed through a similar account. What syllables are, though, does not consist only in their letters, Socrates points out, and philosophical accounts must express the natures of things. Defining a wagon in terms of its parts is likewise rejected, since such an account, though a faithful and accurate list, does not state, for instance, the use and purpose of the wagon. Foremost, however, is the objection that anyone can correctly list the parts of something, through guessing or mindless recitation, without necessarily understanding and knowing that of which he is listing parts (208b4-6). Accounts-as-parts, then, do not approach the knowledge of the natures of things sought by philosophers, and therefore are of no use in seeking such knowledge.



The last account given of language is more accurate. The sort of account necessary for the philosopher's seeking is, Socrates discloses, "some sign to say by means of which that which is asked about differs from all things" (208c11). The example Socrates gives is that the sun is "the most brilliant of the things that go around the earth across the sky" (208d3). This sort of account will reveal precisely what is sought: the peculiar nature of something—that is, that by which we call it what it is—through showing its relation to other things. While all accounts define a term by means of its relationships to other terms, the account-as-difference gives specifically how the thing sought is different from (and similar to) other things.

What is striking about speeches of difference is that they are also accounts of similarity. We think first of how the object is similar to those things and secondarily how, in relation to what all have in common, the object nevertheless stands out and refuses to be fully commensurable with them. Words already imply these relationships in the two aspects of naming, mentioned earlier: specifying a particular thing and, at the same time, classifying it among other things. Thus, the account-as-difference is the way to *have* the knowledge only implied in the words we know. Too, if words themselves hold any weight in determining the nature of language, the definition of λέγειν as given on page 37 of Mollin and Williamson's *An Introduction to Ancient Greek* ("to gather things together into a whole within which the gathered parts retain their distinct identities") confirms the importance of accounts-as-difference.

That is very well, one might say, but—how does the philosopher seeking knowledge go about giving such an account? What enables him to give it? Socrates makes this objection, fearing that, in order to properly articulate the distinctive nature of something, one nevertheless needs to somehow already possess an understanding of that which one seeks, the distinctiveness of that thing. How do we come to know the distinct natures of things (for example: that it is part of a coat to be worn)? How else than through our possession of language, of names for things? We saw above that words both point to individual things, physical or not, and reach beyond them by classifying them among other things, according to an invisible principle (the relation between it and other things) that is articulated in a word's definition. All this is embedded in ordinary use of words. If, then, the philosopher listens to the way words are used and *masters* speech instead of letting shifty usages master him, he will be able to discover the knowledge he seeks.

Language, then, provides the basis and means of seeking philosophic knowledge. Possession of words is capable of abstracting our thought from things in the world that words name to the mysterious source of those names. In words, we possess implicitly what we seek because words contain, in their uses and definitions, the manifold ways they compare with other words; the relationships between things that lie in words are the natures of things the philosopher seeks. The accounts the philosopher gives, then, only make explicit what he already has in his use of language. The probing questions of Socrates are attempts to bring people to that decisive point at which they realize the elusive categories behind words, hoping that they will recognize then the nature of what they do not know and accordingly seek to know it by means of speech. It is only through mastering the usage of words, however, that the hopeful philosopher will be able to give a true account.

## IMPLICATIONS

What, though, does it mean that philosophic knowledge is tied up in language? Several possible implications fall out of these considerations: What does mastery of the usages of words entail? What is the standard for true knowledge, and should philosophers agree? First, if philosophic knowledge begins with what is implicit in words as we use them and explicates this, the forms (excuse the severity of the phrase) are not eternal. Uses of words change over time, after all. Although there will always be hidden definitions behind the words we use showing why we call things what we call them, these will be at least somewhat modified along with the words' uses in speech. "Nice" once meant "stupid and harmless," but now means "kind and friendly," with no derogatory undertones; the form of the "nice" has changed. The knowledge the philosopher seeks, being knowledge of what words mean, is subject to the same alterations and erosions.

The standard by which the philosopher's accounts are judged, then, is that of contemporary linguistic usage, and it is this the philosopher must master to attain knowledge. It is possible, of course, that the standard could be the philosopher's own ideas about what words mean, that meanings are subjective—in which case no one philosopher could ever be called incorrect. If words are used for communication, though, no one's definitions will be terribly different from another's.

If that is so and there is a standard for truth in the practical use of words, why do not all philosophers agree? Simply, some are more aware of their language and more skilled at articulating accounts than others. Thus, the dependency of philosophic knowledge on language ties it to the language of the time—and possibly also to the particular language in question, though this is an immense question for which no clear suggestion comes from the previous arguments.

In any case, possessing one level of knowledge about things in words, the philosopher seeks to have the knowledge words imply by articulating their meanings, catching and holding account-birds. Language enables philosophers to seek knowledge by providing them with words that reach

beyond individual things to the relationships of those things to all other things, as named by words. Because these relationships are the knowledge philosophers seek, they ask questions and give accounts, hoping to articulate the peculiar nature of one thing, like knowledge, by showing how it differs from others. To master speeches is to become aware of what words mean, and articulating those meanings is to find knowledge of what things are to us. Learning to master speeches, if it is possible, seems to involve listening to and using one's native words, the words one was endowed with. Simply, though, language allows the philosopher to seek because what he seeks is part of language.

## ENDNOTES

[1]References are to the *Theaetetus* unless otherwise indicated.

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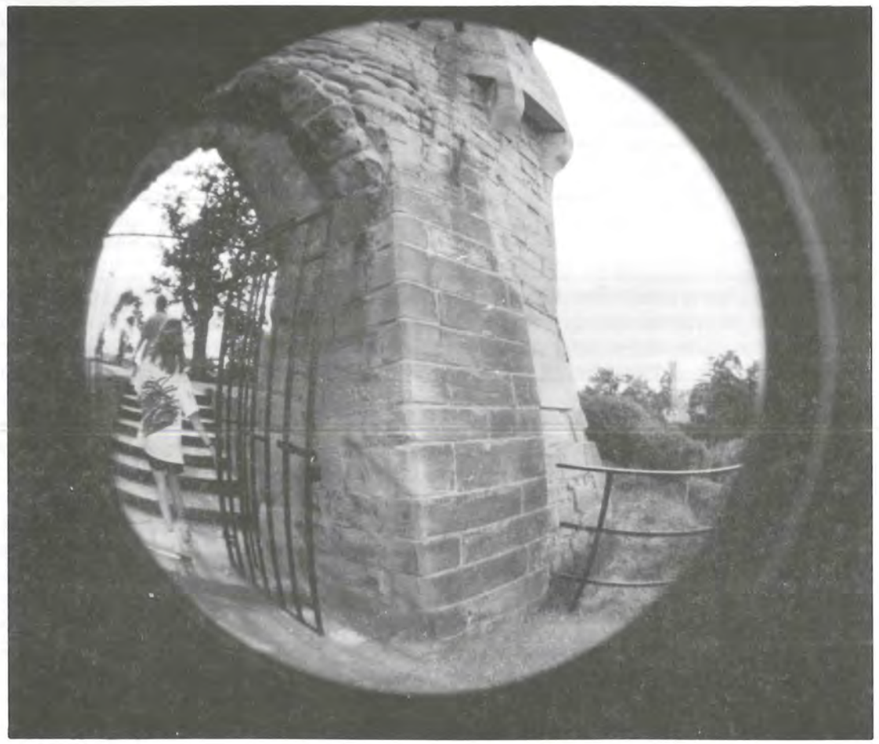
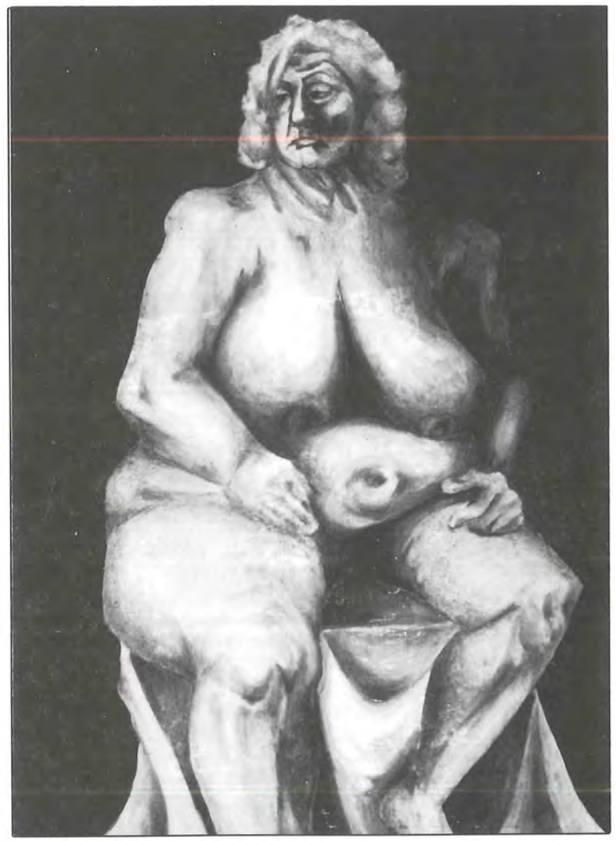
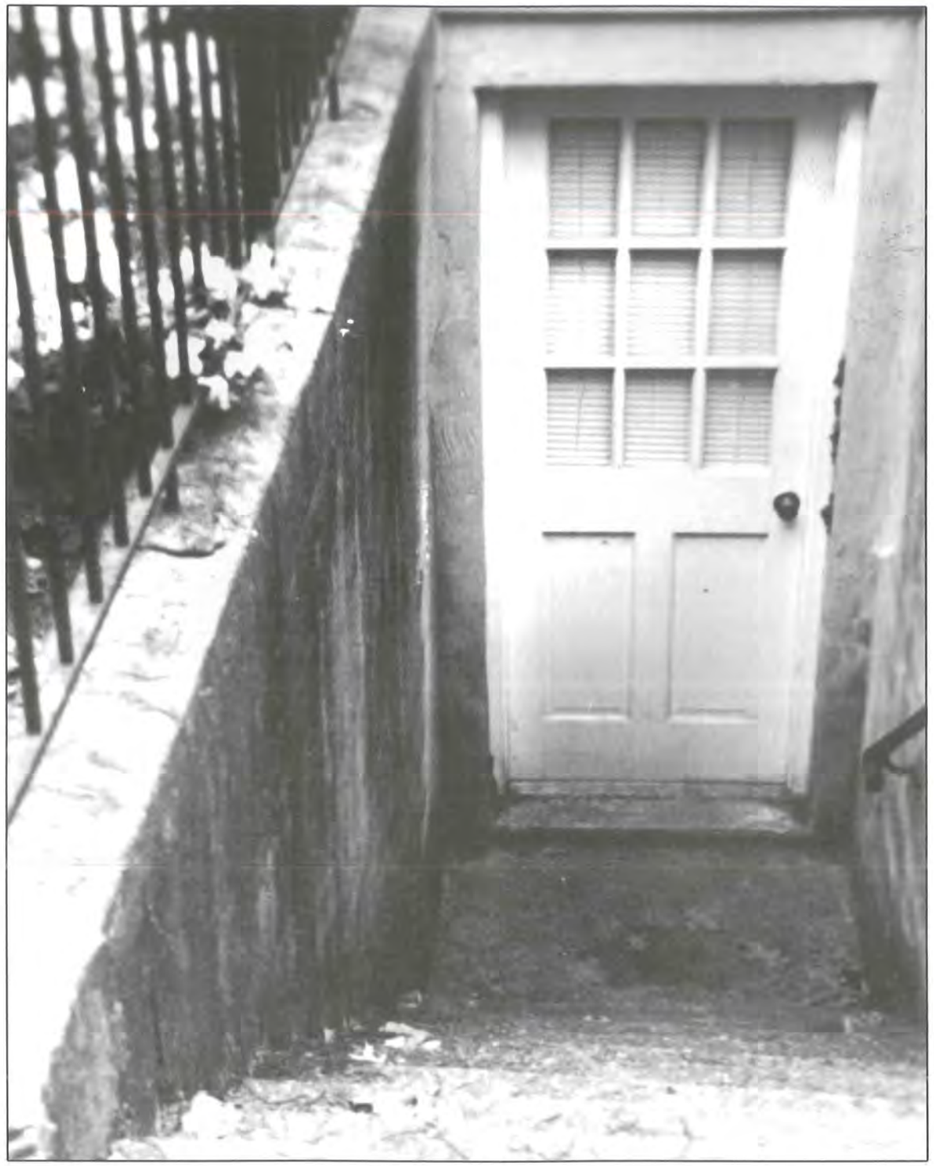


**Warwick Castle**
*Isabel Clark, '02*



**Lucy**
*Caroline Picard, '02*



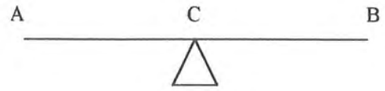
**Basement Door**
*Isabel Clark '02*

# Confessions Involving Balance and Equilibrium Lab Experiments

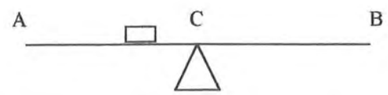
*Bryan Thorpe, '01*

I'm presenting two experiments. The first experiment became the impetus for the second experiment—the two are closely related. Bear with me and I'll make myself clear.

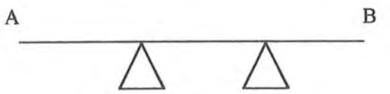
First, consider the following diagram:




Let us suppose that this is a fulcrum point with a meter stick resting on it in a state of equilibrium. Consider how the meter stick is balanced: for every point on side AC there is a corresponding point on side CB having the same weight and distance from point C. The meter stick balances because each side—representing a sum of points—exerts the same amount of stress as the other side. It might be more clearly put this way: side AC is a lever pressing down, having as much lifting power as side CB, which is also pressing down. Their combined forces cancel so that each side is lifted with as much force as it presses down. The result is what we call equilibrium—a balance of forces, of stresses. These stresses do not have to be uniform and exactly symmetrical for equilibrium to exist:




To compensate for the block added to side AC in the above diagram, I must add an equal stress to the other side. As Archimedes well demonstrates, that equal stress can take any number of forms involving widely disparate combinations of mass and distance. The meter stick by itself is a particularly uniform example of a system in equilibrium, but otherwise no different from a similar system having objects resting upon it. My point is this: no matter what the system, we intuitively recognize the fulcrum point as the determining agent of equilibrium. Put another way, we might say that the fulcrum point is the unity that gives rise to the possibility of equilibrium. But what happens if the meter stick is resting on two or more fulcrum points, as in this diagram:



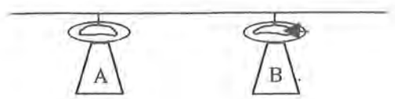
We must say that, yes, this system too is resting in a kind of equilibrium—not a useful kind, for certain, but a kind nonetheless. What are the stresses in this system? What forces are exerted on each fulcrum point? This is what my first experiment examines: the stresses created by a system with two fulcrum points.

## The First Experiment

### *A. Setup*

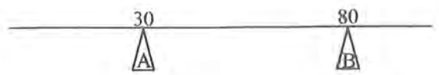
Equipment needed: two scales, two balls of putty, two razor blades, one meter stick, one baros circular weight (32g.)

To determine what stresses were being felt on which fulcrum point, I put a scale under each fulcrum point. The fulcrum point itself is a razor blade held in place by a ball of putty, which in turn is resting on a tray attached to a scale. The scales were set to zero after the putty and razorblade were placed on them. I won't be able to draw this exactly, but the following diagram should illustrate the general setup:

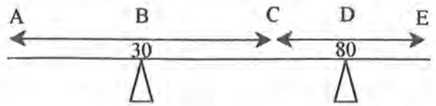



### *B. Case One*

To begin, I arranged the fulcrum points so that fulcrum point A was at the 30cm mark of the meter stick, and fulcrum point B was at the 80cm mark:




Scale A registered 60 percent of the total weight of the meter stick, and scale B registered 40 percent. This makes sense. The 30cm mark on the meter stick is the equilibrium point for the first 60cm of the meter stick, and 80cm mark is the equilibrium point of the last 40cm of the meter stick. Thus, the whole system rests in equilibrium, and the stresses on each fulcrum point are also in equilibrium. The following diagram, I hope, makes this clearer.




**The line on top represents the meter stick, the globular shape is the putty, and the two labeled trapezoids are scales.**



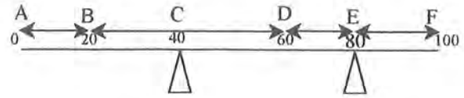
There are no conflicting stresses in this setup: line AB, as a lever, is only exerting force on line BC, and line CD is only exerting force on line DC. Thus, for every point we pick, there is only one other point on the meter stick that is exerting an equal force across a common fulcrum point. Also note that an object placed on the meter stick at the 30cm mark doesn't have any effect on the weight felt at the 80cm mark, and vice versa. Of course, I could achieve the same results with any number of setups—e.g. fulcrum points at the 10cm mark and the 60cm mark, etc.—so long as the fulcrum points divide the meter stick into balanced sections that don't overlap.

### *C. Case Two*

Next, I arranged the fulcrum points beneath the meter stick so that fulcrum point A was at the 40cm mark, and fulcrum point B was at (remained at) the 80cm mark:


With this setup, scale A registered 75 percent of the total weight of the meter stick, and scale B registered 25 percent. Now the question is why is the weight of the meter stick divided between the two fulcrum points in this way? What forces are at play here?

After much experimentation I discovered a hard rule for answering this question, not just with this setup, but with any setup having conflicting stresses: determine which sections of the meter stick are in equilibrium and which are in conflict. I'll try to illustrate. In this case we find that only one portion of the whole system is in equilibrium. In the following diagram that section is line BD:




Line BD is in equilibrium because its two component parts, lines BC and CD, exert equal stress on each other. In contrast, line AB is in conflict because the section that would normally counter its force, line DE, must also counter the force of line EF. In other words, lines AB and EF are competing to lift the same section. And, at first, it looks as if they are exerting an equal lifting force—after all, both lines are 20cm in length. However, line AB has substantially more lifting power because it's farther from its fulcrum point than line EF, which is butted up against its fulcrum point.

There is a difficulty here in calculating the lifting force of these lines. The problem is that we're not talking about weights placed on the line, as if the line were in equilibrium, but the line itself. Each point of the line is a different distance from its fulcrum point, so we need a measurement of force that equals the sum of the forces exerted by all the points individually. Taking a hint from Archimedes, I've found that this collective force is perfectly expressed by multiplying the length of the line (which represents the line's total weight) by the distance from the fulcrum point to its center of weight. (The center of weight of a line is found by bisecting it.) In the above diagram, the length of line AB is 20cm, and its center of weight is 30cm from fulcrum point C. The length of line EF is 20cm, and its center of weight is 10cm from fulcrum point E.

*Line AB has 600 units of lifting force.*
*Line EF has 200 units of lifting force.*

We can better express this by saying that line AB will exert three times as much lifting force as line EF. Thus, in the common section DE, which both lines are competing to lift, line AB lifts 15cm—three times as much as line EF, which is lifting only 5cm. And from this it follows why one scale is registering 75 percent of the weight of meter stick, and the other scale 25 percent:

Weight on first scale: *20 (line AB) + 40 (line BD) + 15 (the lifted portion of line DE) = 75*
Weight on second scale: *20 (line EF) + 5 (the lifted portion of line DE) = 25*

Similar calculations can be made for any combination of fulcrum point positions. No matter where the fulcrum points are located, the system as a whole can be broken down into sections resting in equilibrium—and thus constant—and conflicting sections that are exerting unrequited lifting force. These sections can then be used to predict how much stress is being felt at each fulcrum point. Is this an accurate representation of real life physics, or just a useful mathematical treatment of such phenomena? I don't know—but I lean heavily toward the latter.

This first experiment, working with two fulcrum points, inspired me to think about plane figures in similar manner. That is, I wondered if a plane figure, balanced on a single point, could also be conceptualized as a collection of balanced sections. I was amazed at what I discovered.

### The Second Experiment

*Equipment Needed: cardboard to cut into plane figures, scissors, one ball of putty, one ruler, one needle*

In the freshman lab manual, we learn that a cardboard cutout plane figure, no matter how hung, will always orient itself with its center of weight directly underneath the hanging point. After doing this a few times, we conclude that, somehow, the center of weight appears to be heavier than all the other points. But the center of weight has another characteristic, equally interesting, that is not presented in the manual: the center of weight is also the only point upon which the plane figure can be balanced. By balanced, I mean that the cardboard plane figure, oriented parallel to (co-planar with) the earth, can be rested upon a single point (a needlepoint, for example). Figure 1 is the experiment described in the lab manual. Figure 2 is the same cardboard cutout balanced on a needlepoint:

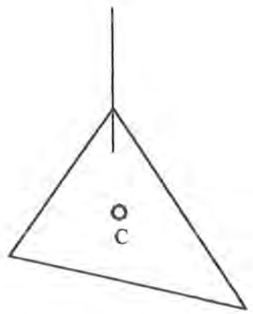



**Figure 1: cardboard cutout triangle hung so that point C [center of weight] rests directly beneath the hanging point.**

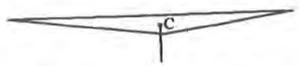


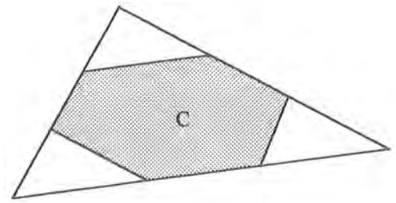

**Figure 2: the same triangle being balanced on a needle at the center of its weight**



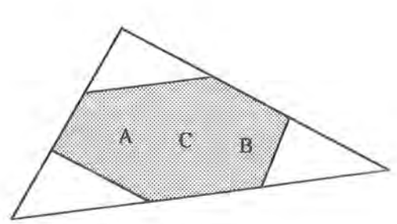
How does a plane figure, resting on a pin, balance? And why does it only balance on the center of weight? I performed the following experiments hoping to answer these questions.

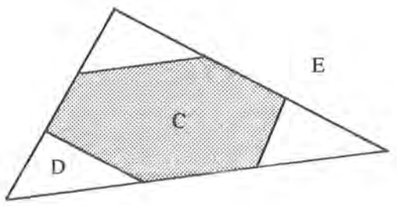
A couple of notes before I begin: for the sake of precision and ease, I've worked largely with triangles. Their areas can be exactly calculated, and their center of weight is easily found (using Archimedes' method). I have performed the exact same experiments on completely irregular plane figures, and the results are the same, though with a larger degree of error. Also, from here forward the diagrams will be from a bird's eye perspective.

To begin, I divided a triangle into different sections. The first section, and the largest, was the section most clearly resting in equilibrium. In the following diagram I've shaded this section gray:



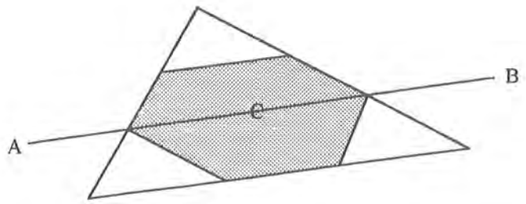

This section is in equilibrium because for any point taken on it, there is another point, directly opposite it, on the other side of the center, that counteracts its downward force. Points outside of this section have no corresponding point to balance them. I'll elaborate. Consider points A and D in the following diagrams:



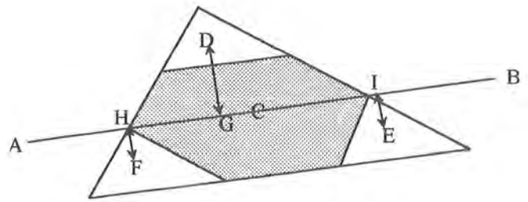




Point A is balanced by its correlative, point B. Point D, on the other hand, should be balanced by point E—but point E doesn't exist. In fact, none of the points in the remaining sections—the three triangles outside the gray shaded polygon—have correlative balance points. How do these sections keep each other in check? How are they in equilibrium?

To answer this question I simplified the problem. In the diagrams above, the triangles are balanced on infinite axes passing through the center, point C. In my experiments I worked with a single axis of balance. I took a metal ruler and mounted it in putty so that the edge of the ruler was perpendicular to my desk. The putty was stuck to the desk itself. I then balanced my cardboard cutout triangle on this single axis. (Note that this axis, and every axis that allows the triangle to balance, passes through point C, the center of weight.) Line AB represents the ruler:




Next, I found the centers of weight for the sections in question (I've labeled these D, E, and F in the following diagram). Then I weighed the sections, which, in plane figures, is a matter of determining the area of each section. Following this, I measured the distance of the sections, from their respective centers of weight, to the axis of balance. This measurement supposes that the force exerted by the sections is perpendicular to the axis of balance. The lines with arrows represent the distances between these centers and the axis of balance:




*Let the weight of the top section, with center of weight D = WD.*

*Let the weight of the first bottom section, with center of weight F = WF.*

*Let the weight of the second bottom section, with center of weight E = WE.*

Here's what I discovered:

*WD x Distance DG = (WF x Distance FH) + (WE x Distance EI)*

It is better rendered in prose: the force exerted by the top section is equal to the combined forces exerted by the bottom sections. By this account, the whole system, with respect to fulcrum AB, is in equilibrium. But that's just the beginning. No matter how you orient the fulcrum line, the forces on one side, by this means of calculation, always equal the forces on the other side. For example:



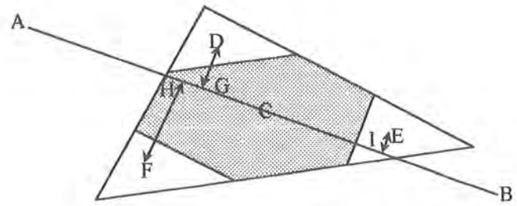



**Figure 1:**
***($W_D$x DG) + ($W_E$x EI)=($W_F$x FH)***

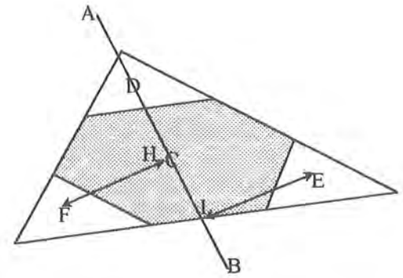



**Figure 2:**
***($W_E$x EI)=($W_F$x FH)***
**Note that the center of weight for section $W_D$ is on the fulcrum point, and, therefore, the whole section $W_D$ is already in equilibrium.**

This seems to be a reasonable explanation of how a plane figure balances on a single point: equal forces balance every possible axis, and, therefore, the whole figure balances. I might have guessed this. If the figure were unbalanced on any one axis, then it would fall to the side of that axis having the lesser force.

But this theory is not complete. There's a complication. I've divided my plane figures in a very particular way—I'm referring to the gray and non-gray sections. It turns out (after many experiments!) that this particular division of sections is not necessary. Plane figures can be divided into any number of randomly shaped sections, and the rules of balance, as I've been using them, still apply. Consider the figure below:

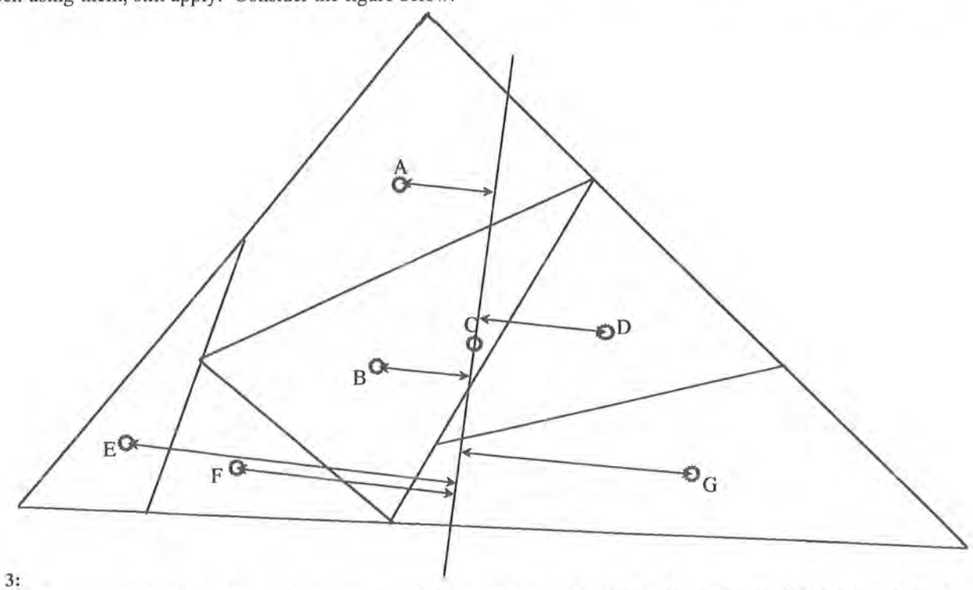


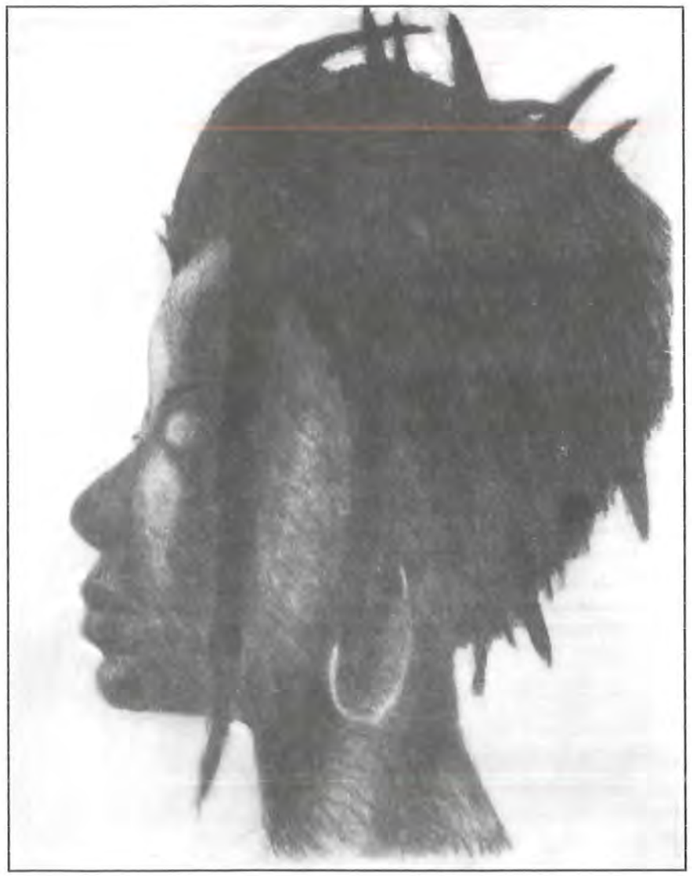

**Figure 3:**
**There are six sections. Each section exerts a force equal to its weight multiplied by the perpendicular distance from the section's center of weight to the axis of balance. Let the force of section E be expressed as $F_E$. Let the forces exerted by the other sections be expressed in a similar manner. We find this:**
***($F_E + F_F + F_B + F_A$) = ($F_D + F_G$)***

This complication, the infinite number of ways in which a plane figure's balance can be mathematically portrayed, at first, clouded my understanding of what was really, physically happening in the figure—but I've had time to ponder it. I think the following two axioms generally explain what's happening: First, as I've already stated, a plane figure is balanced on a given axis because the collective force of the points on one side of the axis balance out the collective force of the points on the other side of the axis.

Second, a single point can collectively represent any set of adjacent points on the plane figure—if that single point is their center of weight. This works because the center of weight is really just a fulcrum point and nothing else. With lines, the center of weight is a fulcrum point having only one axis of balance. With plane figures, it's a fulcrum point having infinite axes. Thus, in dividing Figure 3, above, into six different sections, I've reconceptualized the whole triangle into six different, unconnected systems, each resting in equilibrium on top of a single fulcrum point. To restate that: if the whole triangle can be thought of as balance beam with a single fulcrum point, then I've just divided it into six smaller balance beams and measured their respective forces across the original, now meta-level, fulcrum point. Either as a whole, or subdivided, I'm still weighing the same triangle having the same number of points.

Without these axioms I don't know how to describe the physical reality of a plane figure balancing. I'm convinced that the problem is one of points. But the only way I can account for every point is to compound them into sections: the sections make the infinite points of plane figures finite and manageable. This works, in a way, but it leaves me with more questions than it answers. For example, does a point exert force only on those points it is in direct contact with—or does every point exert force on every other point? In one case the points form an infinite collection of mutually cancelling levers, and in the other case the points form a web of energy waves . . . a web of gravity? My experiments only take into account leveraging force. I ignore the force that makes this force possible—gravity—because I wouldn't know where to begin. I can only examine its byproducts, ideas like balance and equilibrium. I look forward to Junior year and resolving some of these questions.

**Sailboats**
*Karin Ekholm, A '00*



**Backlit**
*Karina Hean, A '00*

# Profit of Wisdom
## Ecclesiastes, Solomon, and the Loathing of Life

*Derek Alexander, A '99*

In our thickest moments we feel our uselessness and know the world is bent. We know the futility of our work; we see the world stand fixed beneath our actions. We afflict the innocent or, innocent, are afflicted. We crave unmerited praise, or flippantly praise others. At moments we are happy and look on our works. But look away! For if you stare, a word will turn to letters, and a life will turn to dust. Fixity and time eat vigor, and death will pierce through any profit a man has made.

When Ecclesiastes cries *all is vanity!* it is both a beginning and an end. And when we read those words we feel our relationship to them swell and recede with the choler in our hearts. We sometimes cry 'but life is good!'—and sometimes cry for the absurdity of it all. The crookedness of our lives now hides, now reveals the futility, the vanity, the absurdity of our toil. And enjoyment gives relief, but flees.

Solomon—so we will call our guide and writer in this wrenching book—is a searcher. And while he can give us only words—and while that is all we will give—he can use those words to point to life and living. And we live. *It is better to go to a house of mourning than to a house of feasting; for that is the end of every man, and a living one should take it to heart.* (7:2)[1] Is it so? Let us go instead to Ecclesiastes itself, and take it to heart. Let us try its bitterness, and see if it stays on the tongue of consideration. What is behind its loathing of life?

We will look for the nature of wisdom, and the value of wisdom, both in Solomon's life (I Kings 1-11 or II Chronicles 1-9) and in the book of Ecclesiastes. Solomon's life is inconsistent, and Ecclesiastes is a wandering book; yet one who follows both will glimpse behind the despair a dark and splendid queen—wisdom.

### Solomon the King

It is not to our point to consider *whether* Solomon penned Ecclesiastes; the book claims to be his, and it draws on his unique place in our minds. At 1:16, Ecclesiastes reads, "Here I have grown richer and wiser than any that ruled before me over Jerusalem, and my mind has zealously absorbed wisdom and learning." Here and throughout, no question of origin will exempt the reader from considering Solomon. Either Ecclesiastes was written by Solomon, and draws on his life, or it was not written by Solomon, and draws on his life. This paper, like the book, is interested in him.

No one is less afflicted from without than he—Solomon controls himself and those about him. His God gives, indeed asks to give. Found at the beginnings of I Kings and II Chronicles is a famous story: Solomon, having just married the daughter of Pharaoh, and before building the great Temple, sacrifices magnificently to the Lord. Then, in divine munificence, the Lord comes to Solomon (II Chronicles 1:7-13):

> That night, the Lord appeared to Solomon and said to him, "Ask, what shall I grant you?" Solomon said to God, "You dealt most graciously with my father David, and now You have made me king in his stead. Now, O Lord God, let Your promise to my father David be fulfilled; for You have made me king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth. Grant me then the wisdom and the knowledge to lead this people, for who can govern Your great people?" God said to Solomon, "Because you want this, and have not asked for wealth, property, and glory, nor have you asked for the life of your enemy, or long life for yourself, but you have asked for the wisdom and knowledge to be able to govern My people over whom I have made you king, wisdom and knowledge are granted to you, and I grant you also wealth, property, and glory, the like of which no king before you has had, nor shall any after you have." From the shrine at Gibeon, from the Tent of Meeting, Solomon went to Jerusalem and reigned over Israel.

And true to this singular grant, Solomon's reign over Israel was blessed. He built the Temple. He judged aright. He administered with genius. He prospered like no other before him.

But he would splinter Israel by dividing his heart between the Lord of David and the gods of his many forbidden wives (I Kings 11). In all external matters—administration, diplomacy, exhortation—Solomon was excellent and severe. His dedication prayer for the Temple was magnificent. It was his heart that wandered.

This was fatal, for it was Solomon's heart that God wanted, and He had conditioned Israel's unity on the singleness of Solomon's devotion. He is, indeed, a jealous God. The account makes it wholly clear that Solomon is without excuse in his polytheism, for the Lord visits again, and warns him precisely, vividly (I Kings 9:2-9):

> The Lord appeared a second time, as He had appeared to him at Gibeon. The Lord said to him, "I have heard the prayer and the supplication which you have offered Me. I consecrate this House which you have built and I set My name there forever. My eyes and My heart shall ever be there. As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked before Me, wholeheartedly and with uprightness, doing all that I have commanded you and keeping My laws and My rules, then I will establish your throne of kingship over Israel forever, as I promised your father David, saying, 'Your line on the throne of Israel shall never end.' But if you and your descendants turn away from Me and do not keep the commandments and the laws which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will sweep Israel off the land which I gave them; I will reject the House which I have consecrated to My name; and Israel shall become a proverb and a byword among all peoples. And as for this House, once so exalted, everyone passing by it shall be appalled and shall hiss. And when they ask 'Why did the Lord do thus to the land and to this House?' They shall be told, 'It is because they forsook the Lord their God who freed them from the land of Egypt, and they embraced other gods and worshipped them and served them; therefore the Lord has brought all this calamity upon them.'"

These words are thorough, stark, clear, and from the mouth of God; Solomon must have understood their seriousness. They present so clear a reward for devotion, so stark a punishment for sin, that they could not be mistaken by Solomon. The fate of Israel rode on the wholehearted obedience of people and king. King Solomon, who in the first visitation of the Lord sought the good of his kingdom in asking for wisdom, must feel the weight of the state upon his fealty towards God.

Yet he turns away. Just as God had forbidden, Solomon lets his heart wander to the gods of his foreign wives. The God of Israel finds the builder of His temple building again, not for Him, but for Molech, for Chemosh and for other gods (I Kings 11:6-8).

This jealous Lord loved David, peculiarly, especially—but in breaking loyalty with the Lord, Solomon makes the transition from being good David's son to being evil Rehoboam's father. It is only the tenacity of the Lord's love for David that allows Solomon to cling to his control of united Israel: "but for the sake of your father David, I will not [tear away your kingdom] in your lifetime." (I Kings 11:12) Even Solomon's son Rehoboam is blessed by the Lord's love for his grandfather—he will be permitted to rule a solitary but mighty tribe of Israel: Judah.

To Solomon the Lord gave, and from Israel the Lord took away. Solomon, for all his wealth and wisdom, though a king of peace, lost Israel with his heart.

Solomon's life and words recounted in Kings and Chronicles will not untangle Ecclesiastes, nor will that knot unfold his life. But they fill one another. In the accounts of Solomon's life we learn of his deeds and words, not of his thoughts. Thoughtful Ecclesiastes, however, is introverted, ruminative. Though said in public, being a book, Ecclesiastes remains in feeling private—but is about things done and said in the world. Bold and strongly felt, it expresses much that sits deep in a great man's heart.

It is a dark book—and yet there is some hope. It befits Solomon's unified Israel: lost, but with promise of restoration.[2] Ecclesiastes is the heart of gain and loss—economic and ultimate.

### Man: Engulfed by Nature

The opening exclamation of Ecclesiastes is famous, and the opening question is key. Here are both (1:2-3; Seow translation):

> Vanity of vanities, says Qohelet, vanity of vanities! All is vanity! What advantage does one have in all the toil, at which one toils under the sun?

This question is the heart of the book; it sparks the inquiry into human toil, and its finding of emptiness is expressed as the verdict *Vanity!*

*What advantage?* One does best to ask in return 'Advantage with respect to what?' Solomon sets the criterion high. The lines which follow this question are no diversion: When Solomon turns to the stability of nature, he sees a context into which a human or two simply disappear—and all their advantages with them (1:3-5, 7):

> What real value is there for a man In all the gains he makes beneath the sun? One generation goes, another comes, But the earth remains the same forever. The sun rises, and the sun sets — And glides back to where it rises. . . All streams flow into the sea, Yet the sea is never full . . .

It can seem unfair—the bar is set high. Ecclesiastes asks what advantage a single man has, and gives not just a global context, but a global *natural* context. It is what a solitary hiker finds awesome about the earth—its stately stability and seeming indifference toward man. But Solomon is not a hiker, and Ecclesiastes is not a hymn to nature—in the context of man and his toil, the stability of nature is not so much awesome as overwhelming. It is hard to feel at ease, to be at home in the world.

Nature's stability does not, alas, extend to predictability. Crops may flourish or fail, and the farmer must plant in the face of this uncertainty. This is asking much of the farmer: overwhelming, indifferent, fickle nature is intimidating to toil. It is fearsome, paralyzing. And while Ecclesiastes will spend relatively little time observing this face of nature, it will fight the paralysis its observation can

induce. Near the end of the book, roughly opposite the passage above, we find this (11:4-6):

> If one watches the wind, he will never sow; and if one observes the clouds, he will never reap. Just as you do not know how the lifebreath passes into the limbs within the womb of the pregnant woman, so you cannot foresee the actions of God, who causes all things to happen. Sow your seed in the morning, and don't hold back your hand in the evening, since you don't know which is going to succeed, the one or the other, or if both are equally good.

It is characteristic and central to Ecclesiastes to make this compound movement. First, the fearsome and unmovable face of the way of things (in this case, of nature) is seen, and profit of toil (wealth or fortune) collapses as uncertain against it. The overweening and self-assured search for advantage fails. Second, however, there emerges for the innocent and persistent a strand of hope, not for the profit of the man, but for the good of his toil or work. What that good is must be seen.

Solomon can demolish hopes for advantage because he can manipulate the scale of comparison; as has been noted, one may wonder if it is fair to assess the value of a man's labor against the immensity of the earth's stability. Wisdom will lead one to see how many shapes toil, for example, can take in the face of nature, children, enjoyment, death. To wonder about the fairness of thinking about a man's toil up against nature's stability is to see much of the point already: that the juxtaposition is possible and dangerous. These comparisons must either be warned against, or be done wisely—and even then with the real danger of despair and loathing. So the wise will ask: where does the danger lie—in the nature of nature, or in the nature of advantage?

This question is well answered by placing advantage in contexts other than nature (for example, time), and observing whether the danger persists. There are many other contexts available—some parochial and some grand. Solomon will combine the two in considering human forgetfulness over divine eternity.

### Man: Swallowed by Eternity

Time outstretched—*One generation goes, another comes*—and the sameness of the earth swallows streaming hoards of men: the small with their wretchedness, the great with their advantages.

Time is the context of the assertion of *recurrence* (1:9): "Only that shall happen which has happened, only that occur which has occurred; there is nothing new under the sun!" Ecclesiastes would thus deny men the consolation of thinking that if, indeed, no one person can find real advantage, then many people over time might accumulate some profit.

The wise will call recurrence to mind in the context of the sameness of the earth and expect to see motion-in-place—even cycles. This recurrence of sameness contributes much to the worth of wisdom. Obvious as it is, proverbs and wisdom would be impossible in a world ever-new or amorphous.

On the other hand, wisdom would be cheap in a world where these patterns were always seen and heeded—what use for a proverb were the world's ways clear? But the assertion of recurrence, in the context of people, is sister to *forgetfulness*. Ecclesiastes says that men do not remember who or what came before, that they do not even remember their deeds, and so it will continue (1:11). This is a difficult assertion to accept, especially coming from an old and remembered book. But forgetfulness is the human complement to a world made bent, a world whose people need wisdom.

Forgetfulness gives wisdom part of its worth by robbing simple observation of its completeness. But then forgetfulness turns around and empties wisdom of its advantage over foolishness in death: neither the wise nor the fool are necessarily remembered (2:16). The wise man may become embittered at this turn. Human forgetfulness adds much to that scarcity of understanding which makes a proverb valuable, a wise man needful. But the proverb and the wise man are themselves forgotten. Here, as elsewhere in Ecclesiastes, the valuable and needful are unprofitable. Here, as elsewhere, value and vanity share a common root. (In this case, wisdom both gained value from and was emptied by forgetfulness.)

The wise find no lasting remembrance, no sure fame. For a wise man fixed on making a profit, like Solomon, this is bitter (2:15-16 Seow):

> So I said in my heart: "If the fate of the fool befalls even me, why then have I been acting excessively wise?" I said in my heart that this too is vanity, for there is no remembrance of the wise forever—as is the case with the fool—because all too soon everything is forgotten. O how the wise dies just like the fool!

We saw the farmer deprived of the profit of his toil by the very earth which made the work possible and good. And now the human forgetfulness that gives the wise their use and place denies them any lasting profit or advantage. Wisdom, insofar as it is work, is not more lasting than the work of the hands. Time swallows wisdom.

That statement, like Ecclesiastes, will appear too dark and too universal—for it is itself wisdom.

### Wisdom: Everything Hidden

*Wisdom* here and throughout does not mean that which philosophy loves. We here search for the nature of the wisdom Solomon receives, the wisdom Ecclesiastes finds vain, the wisdom Proverbs express.



Solomon gives us a vivid demonstration of wisdom while sitting in judgment over two women. Found in I Kings (3:16-28), the story is this: a baby, born to a prostitute, is also claimed by a second prostitute of the same house, whose baby is dead. The two women come to Solomon for justice. He hears the case and says, "Cut the live child in two, and give half to one and half to the other." The true mother, hearing this, seeks to save her son and cries, "give her [the other] the live child, only don't kill it!" But the mother of the dead baby envies the life of the other and says, "It shall be neither yours nor mine; cut it in two!" King Solomon gives the child to the life-loving mother, sure that the child is hers. Israel was awed by their new king, the account tells us, "for they saw that he possessed divine wisdom to execute justice." (3:28)

The ruthless resourcefulness of the trick Solomon played is indeed a marvel. It is cruel and, happily, effective. He clearly sees the situation; he knows the opposing testimony gives insufficient ground for judgment. Indeed, just before ordering the child halved, he acutely summarizes the testimony, and implies the need for a test: he says, "One says 'This is my son, the live one, and the dead one is yours'; and the other says, 'No, the dead boy is yours; mine is the live one.'" Interestingly, Solomon does not seek to question the account the women gave further—yet since one gave an account of *how* the other baby died (3:19), he might have tried to catch a contradiction in the account of the lying woman.

Solomon instead takes a risk. The reader does not know whether the child is actually in danger of being halved, but knows that Solomon cannot know how the prostitutes will react. He cannot be sure that his trick will uncover the truth. Nonetheless, he brutally simplifies the discovery of the truth, in the effort to gain it. In the realm of an active wise man, risks abound (and this alone accounts for part of the connection of wisdom and wealth). Wisdom has no assurance of finding the truth or success it seeks, but resourcefully acts, having perceived clearly. A good specimen of wise statement, like Solomon's, will not *recount* what is seen clearly, but *simplify* it, usually drastically. A wise action, whether it be a severe test, like Solomon's above, or the giving of a proverb, is not so much *factual* as *acute*.

It is essential to the safe use of proverbial or Solomonic wisdom to understand that it will *not* be true in the same way that honest testimony is true. The (very common) error is to turn an acute proverb into a false universal, or a trivial conditional. Proverbs 11.16 says, for example, "A graceful woman obtains honor; ruthless men obtain wealth." This statement becomes false when universalized: "*All* graceful women obtain honor; *all* ruthless men obtain wealth." A similar problem occurs with the insertion of *only*. To insert *some* turns wisdom into timid conditional testimony, and dulls the hortatory prick of the proverb (12:11). The wise proverb points and directs by its acuity; the universalized distortion obscures and falsifies by its narrowness.

Wisdom is exemplified in map-making—a most useful and acute labor of simplification. The vivid revelation of political boundaries will on a map generally obscure the presentation of environmental features, or preempt them altogether. It is unwise to try to represent everything on one map. It is foolish, and certain to fail. To make maps is to distort, yes, but with an eye toward the truth of the matter. To insist on the complete and undistorted fidelity of a map to the land is to lose the truths revealed by cutting away other truths.

The land does not bare itself to the mere observer. One cannot *see* that a plot of land lies in the center of an island; nonetheless it does, and a map will reveal that fact. But this map, in order to portray the island, has ignored innumerable distinctions, introduced the distortion of scale, and, importantly, made certain facts more obvious than they are when encountered directly. A wise map-maker will know the distortions of maps, and will not be led astray. He will know that the loftiest aim of the map maker—absolute fidelity—is a useful and worthy ideal, but unattainable. At moments he may even be frustrated that the desire for fidelity cannot be satisfied but instead results at best in a high *degree* of fidelity—which is so much as to say, an excellent distortion.

How much greater is the frustration of one who seeks to represent, not land, but humankind and God! The stakes are higher for one who exercises wisdom in the service of his nation and his Lord.

Both King Solomon's capacity and his responsibility to inquire with wisdom into cases of justice are God-given. His specifically divine grant of wisdom encouraged, no doubt, the boldness of Solomon's manipulation of the prostitutes' case.

The Solomon of Ecclesiastes also considers as God-given the burdensome work of inquiring with wisdom—especially when inquiring with wisdom into wisdom itself. And while he is bold in his search, he is vexed in his heart (1:16-18):

> I said to myself: "Here I have grown richer and wiser than any that ruled before me over Jerusalem, and my mind has zealously absorbed wisdom and learning." And so I set my mind to appraise wisdom and to appraise madness and folly. And I learned that this too was pursuit of wind: For as wisdom grows, vexation grows; To increase learning is to increase heartache.

Wisdom, one would think, is a good thing and brings happiness. It often does. Ecclesiastes will say as much in places yet to be discussed. But throughout, Ecclesiastes refuses to

make a wand out of wisdom—it does not turn good everything it touches.

Wisdom is not its own reward, nor is wisdom necessarily virtuous. It is generally rewarding, and it is the prime accomplice of virtue.[3] Wisdom is clear seeing of what is to be done, or of what underlies. It gives no surety; it does not change the world whole: it does not replace truth itself. Wisdom, that is, must be interpreted: a good proverb will indeed lay flat some bend of the world, but in turn requires the reader to stretch his mind to see the flattening. Again, wise sayings are like maps—one must *learn* to see them. This, of course, is the focus of Proverbs itself, which opens with great and teaching purpose (1:1-1.6):

> The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:
> For learning wisdom and discipline;
> For understanding words of discernment;
> For acquiring the discipline for success,
> Righteousness, justice, and equity;
> For endowing the simple with shrewdness,
> The young with knowledge and foresight.
> — The wise man, hearing them, will gain more wisdom;
> The discerning man will learn to be adroit;
> For understanding proverb and epigram,
> The words of the wise and their riddles.
> The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
> Fools despise wisdom and discipline.

*To make the simple shrewd, the discerning adroit—learning, understanding, acquiring*—the work of wisdom is noble, finding its root in fear of the Lord. Its opposite is foolishness, over which it surely triumphs.

Or does it? Ecclesiastes, being afflicted with the task of searching out wisdom, says that though wisdom can see clearly, giving it advantage over folly (1:13), there is nonetheless a problem with wisdom's superiority. That problem is death. Solomon muses aloud (2:15-16):

> "If the fate of the fool befalls even me, why then have I been acting excessively wise?" I said in my heart that this, too, is vanity, for there is no remembrance of the wise forever—as is the case with the fool—because all too soon everything is forgotten. O how the wise dies just like the fool!

Ecclesiastes here places wisdom as it placed toil—in the context of advantage. Again, the bar is set high. Recall that toil was found useless in the context of the stability of nature (Chapter 2: Man Engulfed by Nature). Here, wisdom is found vain in the context of mortality—specifically, wisdom does not preserve one from death. In this context, the distinction collapses between wisdom and its opposite, foolishness—for foolishness, too, of course, does not preserve one from death. This sort of observation, a sort of productive flattening, is a core work of wisdom. One might well ask, incredulous, *"Productive—what was produced?"* A partial appraisal of wisdom and folly was produced—specifically that they make no difference in the face of death.

Nothing prevents death—not even wisdom herself. Solomon despairs (2:17): "So I loathed life. For I was distressed by all that goes on under the sun, because everything is futile and pursuit of wind." One hopes in vain that wisdom, if it will not save life, will at least perpetuate memory (2:16, 4:16). One hopes in vain even that wisdom will persist in a single wise man during the short span of his life (7:7, Seow translation), "for oppression turns the wise into fools, and a payment perverts the mind." The wise are mortal, their wisdom, eradicable. They are not worse than the foolish, but neither are the wise in every respect better.

Nor can wisdom see completely. In Ecclesiastes, as has been said, wisdom is a gift of God. But it is the same God who has made the world bent, like a road curving out of sight before and behind the traveler. The God-given gift meets the God-given limitations, and gives way. Or, as Solomon will recount it (7:23-24 Seow): "I said, 'I will be wise,' but that is beyond me. All that happens is inaccessible and utterly unfathomable; who can discover it?" And while one might try to search out a wiser man to try to discover what Solomon could not find, one will more likely despair of finding anyone better qualified. Who, we ask with Ecclesiastes in 7:13, will be able to unravel what God has knotted?

Wisdom is not a project, and gives no sense of completion in its examination of the ways of the world. It must strain, always. It is indeed productive, but gives no sure advantage. Like toil, it is good without being certain. There is much reason to want wisdom; after all, Ecclesiastes 2:26 reads (Seow translation): "For to the one who is favored, [God] has given wisdom, knowledge, and pleasure." But, importantly, this casts wisdom as a reward, not a means, to Godliness. Ecclesiastes understands the distinction between searching by wisdom and effusive piety. And it will, in the end, see Godliness in the face of the Lord's judgment, not wisdom, as the heart of the matter.

I Kings 3 suggests that Solomon received his wisdom as a result of his love of the Lord and his magnificent sacrifices. Proverbs in turn has memorably said that the fear of the Lord is the starting-point of wisdom. Ecclesiastes, too, sees God as the source not only of wisdom, but of its righteous opposite: simplicity, or uprightness (7:29).[4]

*For to the one who is favored, God has given wisdom, knowledge, and pleasure.* Solomon is upper-class in the extreme: favored, privileged, born to the house of David, chosen. Having found wealth—like his toil, like his wisdom, like his life—to be vain, Solomon is speaking of pleasure, but also of his superiority, when he says (2:24-26):

> There is nothing worthwhile for a man but to eat and drink and afford himself enjoyment with his means. And even that, I noted, comes from God. For who eats and who enjoys but myself? To the man, namely, who pleases him he has given the wisdom and shrewdness to enjoy himself; and to him who displeases, He has given the urge to gather and amass only for handing on to one who is pleasing to God. That too is futile and a pursuit of wind.



This God-given pleasure, in all its futility, is an important companion to wisdom, knowledge, and toil—and should be examined.

### MAN: DROWNED IN PLEASURE

Ecclesiastes finds human toil and wisdom to be empty of advantage when considered against the stability of nature and the sameness of death. And when, immediately after the first discussion of the vanity of wisdom, Solomon approaches pleasure or mirth, one feels sure that it, too, will fall. Indeed (2:1-2):

> I said to myself, "Come, I will treat you to merriment. Taste mirth!" That too, I found, was futile. Of revelry I said, "It's mad!" Of merriment, "What good is that?"

*What good is that?* This question eats merriment by appraising that quality by the degree to which it is its opposite. That is, the rhetorical force of the question *What good is that?* comes from taking *what good* to mean *what use*. Since *that* refers to *merriment*, we have *What use is merriment?* This is tellingly close to asking *What work does not working do?*

The futility of merriment is established on the grounds of its not being something it never meant to be—useful. This maneuver is often what makes it so easy for Ecclesiastes to depreciate a subject like wisdom, toil, or pleasure: it need only find something the subject is not and ask *why* not. Uncareful defenders of the attacked subject (in this case, *pleasure*) will often find themselves bamboozled into defending it against the charge of not being what it never was (in this case, *useful*). Even if pleasure *is* in cases useful, insisting that it always be useful is absurd, and a path to despair. To resist someone who says pleasure is not practical by denying such an obvious statement is just such a path.

So, when Solomon finds mirth futile, one wonders why he expected more. The answer lies in the problem of *recompense* within wisdom. There are many paths that lead to an understanding of enjoyment and pleasure in Ecclesiastes—a consideration of toil or a consideration of mortality among them. But the present excursion—a consideration of recompense—is best, for it will remove a consideration of pleasure from the slippery and onerous context of advantage, and defend it on more solid ground.

To receive proportionate good for good, proportionate evil for evil—this is recompense. Especially when mediated by God, recompense may be considered a matter of cause and effect, or as a special kind of recurrence: recurrence in the service of justice. It is characteristic of wisdom, in fact, to express itself in causal or judicial terms: for example (7:12, JPS emendation), "For the possessor of wisdom becomes a possessor of money." This is an acute and useful proverb. The distinction between wisdom and true testimony is indispensable here—one who confuses the two will choke on the juxtaposition of that and this proverb (9:16): "A poor man's wisdom is scorned, and his words are not heeded." As proverbs, they are not contradictory (one is about wisdom, the other about poverty), but if universalized and considered testimony, the two will contradict. One must understand that when compounding proverbs, a world-view, and not a world, is being produced.

In any case, *both* proverbs above suggest that the appropriate recompense of wisdom includes wealth. But the world is not always compensatory; there are problems with cause and effect when thus imagined. Innocent men *are* afflicted. And Solomon, despite his sins, was not himself afflicted. His nation and son were. The wise look around, and see recompense achieved, and recompense frustrated.

Wisdom *must* hold on to both. Justice is real. Injustice is real. In the world they are not negations but enemies. The defeat of one by the other is not annihilation, but victory. Wisdom shows her worth when she discerns one in the thicket of the other. Even dark Ecclesiastes, full of bewilderment and despair, frustration and injustice, draws out from the depths of its own confusion a surprising certainty in its conclusion (12:13-14 Seow):

> End of the matter; everything has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for every human it is to be so. Surely God will bring every deed to judgment for everything hidden, whether good or evil.

*For everything hidden*—God will give justice. Wisdom sees final justice beneath all the injustice and delay, some of which was itself found hidden—where there should have been human justice in the first place (3:16):

> And, indeed, I have observed under the sun: Alongside justice there is wickedness, Alongside righteousness there is wickedness.

Matters are dark, thick, deep; even if there is ultimate recompense and comfort (if but for the righteous), one will yearn for comfort at the place and time where the frustration occurs (8:14-15):

> Here is a frustration that occurs in the world: sometimes an upright man is requited according to the conduct of the scoundrel; and sometimes the scoundrel is requited according to the conduct of the upright. I say all that is frustration. I therefore praised enjoyment. For the only

> good a man can have under the sun is to eat and drink and enjoy himself. That much can accompany him, in exchange for his wealth, through the days of life that God has granted him under the sun.

Here, enjoyment returns again, and this time, with the expectation of immediate recompense removed, it can be differently approached. No vain attempt to evaluate the advantageousness of enjoyment is found here. Instead, enjoyment becomes the comfort of the frustrated seeker of justice. Wealth is unsure, toil is transient, wisdom is limited—only after this is seen does pleasure seem to be a proper member of that group. For pleasure, assuredly, is unsure, is transient, is limited—but it is also good. Moreover, simple pleasures—eating, drinking, sleeping, and such—may be seen as enough, seeking no further advantage, seeking no special variety of uncharted stimulation. Pleasure, without strain, is good. The alternative—not seeing simple pleasures as enough—leads to self-defeat in appetitive seeking, which is not enjoyment, but toil.

Worse, straining or working for enjoyment inflames the inner impression that the special pleasure, having been sought out with toil, is deserved. That reintroduces the problem of recompense, and expectation of good-in-kind. Still worse, some searches for pleasure will occur on a scale larger and grander than *any* available pleasure; in those cases, recompense is impossible, and the toil is vain. In intense straining for pleasure, there is no hope for reward-in-kind, only despair.

Early in Ecclesiastes, Solomon so overreaches for pleasure, and with such grand intent, that the pleasure is entirely overwhelmed by hate. That loathing comes from the frustrated sense of recompense, of which the account is this: Solomon decides to hold onto his wisdom, while releasing his body to temptation and folly (2:3). He envisions this as an ambitious experiment which will teach whether a pleasure-directed life or a wisdom-directed life is better for man on earth. He multiplies his holdings, slaves, buildings, gardens—all beyond measure. He acquires all his eyes want, every enjoyment—and he enjoys himself for a time. In Solomon's despairing words (2:10): "I got enjoyment out of all my wealth. And that was all I got out of my wealth."

Without the strain of acquisition encouraging Solomon, would he ever have desired more out of enjoyable things than enjoyment? Probably not—the despair came from overexpectation.

It can be thus with wisdom, too: wisdom is indeed fine and good, and so it will seem until expected to enlighten every depth, explain every bend. It is not surprising that Solomon makes this connection between expecting too much of pleasure and expecting too much of wisdom. His thoughts above turn from the disposition of his monstrous estate after his death—it would be given to a man whose qualities were unknown, unknowable—from this to the emptiness of wisdom in the face of death. Solomon's desires reach beyond the capacities of any human means, and what can come but loathing and despair? The loathsome world, every loathsome thing, the loathsome appetite that turns every available good grey for its inability to be more than it is—Solomon hates, hates his life's indifference in death to his wisdom, and hates his wealth's indifference in falling into the hand of any heir, however undeserving. No recompense, pleasure gone, Solomon "loathed life . . . distressed by all that goes on under the sun, because everything is futile and a pursuit of wind" (2:17). He loathes his wealth because it will endure beyond his presumably wealth-deserving life, obdurately willing to be spent by a fool. Wealth and death, of so much interest to wise Solomon, do not return interest: they care not a mite for him.

Unstrained pleasure, exemplified by eating and drinking, and youthful marriage, are commended. Such immediate pleasure, pretending to no advantage, searching for no permanence, is good and real. Ecclesiastes' Solomon hopes the wise will take this to heart. The pious may be accustomed to seeking that which endures, but they should not be trapped by that mode. Unstrained pleasures are the good of life under the sun—no riches will make life more worthwhile than do they (see, for example, 6:3).

### Man: Swamped by Men

Solomon is surrounded in space not only by accumulated wealth, and by his pleasure-seeking acquisitions, but also by his multitude: Israel. He is bracketed in time by his son and his father. Solomon's disgust at the thought of an undeserving heir inheriting his wealth, mentioned above, occupies a surprisingly large fraction of Ecclesiastes. This prospect threatens Solomon's esteem for himself; his fear of some mishandling of his wealth in the future by an heir is difficult for him to ignore. As it happens, this threat is also connected to his past, for Solomon both was and has an heir.

Solomon believes his wealth to be a God-given accessory to his God-given wisdom and knowledge and shrewdness. But why should his heir, if a fool, be so well equipped? This question galls Solomon, for he wants his wealth to reassure him; he wants his riches to prove to him, above all, that God loves him. He would, with all his heart, that he could believe it so; he would, with all his heart, that unique wealth were evidence of unique divine favor. For all Solomon's splendor and wisdom, God loved his father more. Solomon may have built the temple, but David was after God's own heart. Solomon, for all his splendor, for all God's gifts, must know his heart's inferiority. King Solomon, recall, knows from the mouth of God that his *heart* was what the Lord wants—and He wants it whole (I Kings 9:4). Solomon knows that his kingship, his realm, his wisdom, his wealth, his enjoyment—every aspect of his superiority



comes from God, who, therefore, will not be impressed to find him thus bedecked. He knows himself a freeloader, heir to God's love for his father. *His* heir would inherit material wealth, which is so much less. And if his heir is an ungodly fool—and who could know—why, then Solomon cannot pretend his gold is proof of God's tenderness toward him. Gold will guild foreign idols as readily as temple walls. When Solomon laments again and again in Ecclesiastes that wealth falls to the unworthy as well as the worthy heir, we hear the lamentation of a man encrusted with wealth, three thousand proverbs, one thousand women, unrivaled grandeur, and every other asset which, taken together in stupendous sum, is outweighed in God's eyes by *one faithful heart*—like the heart of Solomon's father. King David feasted on the love of the Lord; everything Solomon has falls from that table.

When Solomon remembers his father, he sometimes thinks of his son, Rehoboam. Will he be wise, or a fool? And while the words *my son* at the end of Ecclesiastes or in Proverbs hardly represent Rehoboam, it is well to call him to mind now and then. What, after all, would Solomon want his child to have—his wealth? Yes, but also his wisdom. This is the work of Proverbs: the teaching of wisdom. Proverbs, incidentally, are not wisdom coined; a parent can give a child a proverb, but no parent can simply give a child wisdom. Proverbs and human knowledge are *contained* in books, but wisdom and understanding are at best *conveyed* by books. Besides, there is no end to the making of books (Ecclesiastes 12:12), and Solomon would not have his son forever rummaging in books for the good things like wisdom that books cannot contain. A reader of Ecclesiastes, whether a son or not, is shown a great deal of emptiness—and if attentive can learn where not to look for fullness of life. That is a generous gift—to rummage less is to decrease despair. But if one seeks to *eliminate* rummaging and despair, Ecclesiastes will seem useless and futile itself Solomon cannot assist one who so completely misses his point.

The book is, importantly, not splendidly engaging or even terribly clear. Ecclesiastes is a knotty book because it is a book about knots. Much of its beauty lies in its refusal to shine, in its way of being suddenly gorgeous and then just moving on. However maddening for the reader, it is hard to see how a book could reflect the crookedness of the world and its gifts onto a straight line. Wisdom, the great flattener, is not flat; a discussion of wisdom, though it will straighten some things out, will not itself be straightforward. Ecclesiastes is a singular inheritance—few would value it. It must anguish Solomon to have glimmering wealth and dark wisdom and an heir. Which will Rehoboam value, having both? Whether Solomon looks back to his father, or forward to his son, there is anguish.

Anguished Solomon seeks solace of just the wrong sort. Surely he knew of husbands and wives who comfort one another, who enjoy one another, who have happiness. Solomon should know that many of the finest and most companionable things about people get smothered in crowds. A thousand friends at once can give, at best, admiration—but not friendship. A thousand wives are less than one in matters of comfort and fulfillment. It is the paradox of the baron's gut: always full, never filled. It is a fool thing to have a thousand women: always caressed, never comforted. Not a husband so much as a connoisseur, he likes his wives foreign. Surely frustrated, and altogether unable to soothe his heart, this mass of wives deflect it to their gods, to Israel's enormous loss.

Wisdom, comfort—these things cannot be gotten from a crowd. And if one crowds people together, and calls them wives, why, one will still get no wisdom and no comfort. When put in a crowd, the way to get is to grab, trap, snare. Watch a crowd try to touch a great man, and see hands become claws. Solomon surely lives in a miserable home, and that is his fault. How sad to think that Solomon likely got more happiness from the visit of Sheba than from all his wives. Solomon's understanding of women as people is, at best, skewed.[5]

He engaged many women, but Ecclesiastes' Solomon says he never found the woman he sought (7:28), but found instead that "God made men plain, but they have engaged in too much reasoning." (7:29) It is a telling transition from women to reason, for Solomon marginalized both in the same way: by excess.

Solomon finds himself surrounded in time and in home by people who, in different ways, make him miserable. Solomon lives awash. In wealth, wisdom, women, works—in these and more he sinks his heart. They are not bad things, but rather excess of good and goods. In this heaving sea of a home, Solomon looses his grasp on wholeheartedness, a loss that turns all that he has, every seeming gain or profit, grey.

Solomon's relationship to his father, his son, and his wives is controlled by his relationship to his God. He could have been his father's peer, even King David's superior, but he turns from the Lord, and guarantees himself a second place, despite wealth and wisdom, beneath David's great heart. He could have been Rehoboam's great benefactor, giving his son riches, wisdom, a united kingdom, and an unbroken connection to that special love of the Lord that was their intended boon—but Solomon turns from the Lord (I Kings 11:4), and his son's fortunes are splintered (I Kings 11:32). He could have been a great and happy husband, but he crowds his wives, cheating them of the distinction that should have come from sharing a home with so splendid a man. Instead, they are shamed indeed, remembered for the ages as temptresses, as the catalyst of Solomon's turn from the Lord. He could have been remembered as a pacific and munificent king—but gives the people, in the end, not only less than they had, but also his embittered son, who would

oppress them (I Kings 12:11). But Solomon's relation to every one of them occurs in the context of his relation to the jealous God, and would have been entirely different without His activity. He is the main character in King Solomon's life, and the chief actor in the world portrayed by Ecclesiastes. He is a most active and supreme Lord, who pulls and twines every cord.

### God: Lord of the Hidden

God brings times and seasons just as He pleases, and this is the point of a most repetitive, and oft repeated, set of verses. Their familiarity obscures neither their dogged sameness nor their rhythmic beauty (3:1-11):

> A season is set for everything, a time for every experience under heaven. A time for being born and a time for dying, A time for planting and a time for uprooting the planted; A time for slaying and a time for healing, A time for tearing down and a time for building up; A time for weeping and a time for laughing, A time for wailing and a time for dancing; A time for throwing stones and a time for gathering stones, A time for embracing and a time for shunning embraces; A time for seeking and a time for losing, A time for keeping and a time for discarding; A time for ripping and a time for sewing, A time for silence and a time for speaking; A time for loving and a time for hating; A time for war and a time for peace. What value, then, can the man of affairs get from what he earns? I have observed the business that God gave man to be concerned with: He brings everything to pass precisely at its time; He also puts eternity in their mind, but without man ever guessing, from first to last, all the things that God brings to pass.

*A time for sewing*. Ecclesiastes sees God bringing *everything* to pass precisely at its time. These verses are not primarily interested in soothing the listener. Rather, one feels the utter pervasiveness of God's arrangement of time and event. God here sets a time for sewing.

God of the large, God of the small—all the things God brings to pass—war and laughing, silence and peace. Humankind will never guess it—God has given them the notion of eternity, but not its content. Death comes, timed by God, unknown to man.

This God is strong, and a man will not escape his time: "man cannot contend with what is stronger than he." (6:10) And, since God gives the good time and the bad, one does well to react well to both (7:13-14):

> Consider God's doing! Who can straighten out what He has twisted? So in a time of good fortune enjoy the good fortune; and in a time of misfortune, reflect: The one no less than the other was God's doing; consequently, man may find no fault with Him.

God twists lives, and the wise will see the bends. The natural world, lasting longer than do men, curls its bends all the way around into cycles, and it is in that way ever same (Chapter 1); such a world calls for systematic accounting. But the human world was God-bent *and* truncated by death: there will be no systematic view from beginning to end (3:10). This human world calls for wisdom, acuity, shrewdness. Solomon knew to ask for wisdom and knowledge, for he was ruler not of the elements, but of Israel. God made man simple, yes, but he remade Solomon wise. Solomon's God is, fittingly, a giving God. Ecclesiastes, too, finds God ever giving—giving times to human works, wisdom and wealth to His favored, eternity to their thoughts, and death to all.

If the world were straight, it would be less frustrating. But this frustration is the work of God (8:10b-15a; note that *frustration* is here translating הבל *hebel*, or vanity):

> And here is another frustration [vanity]: the fact that the sentence imposed for evil deeds is not executed swiftly, which is why men are emboldened to do evil the fact that a sinner may do evil a hundred times and his punishment still be delayed. For although I am aware that "It will be well with those who revere God since they revere Him, and it will not be well with the scoundrel, and he will not live long, because he does not revere God" here is a frustration [vanity] that occurs in the world: sometimes an upright man is requited according to the conduct of the scoundrel; and sometimes the scoundrel is requited according to the conduct of the upright. I say that all this is frustration [vanity]. I therefore praised enjoyment.

The identification of frustration leads to the praise of enjoyment—a primary movement in Ecclesiastes. That God-given frustration often, as here, consists of a fact and a proverb in opposition. Every element of this is God's doing.

The frustration is extraordinary, but results from the contact of two most typical elements. The above proverb is of the very most familiar type: *righteous rewarded and wicked punished*. The above observation—*justice delayed and inverted on earth*—is the most common counter-observation in wisdom literature. The frustration of combining observation and proverb in the reactive manner above is the very fuel of wisdom literature. There are numerous iterations. Though taken from the passage above, our present example is also the mainspring of the Book of Job*: the God-arranged frustration of static wisdom by temporary inversion of justice*. There is very much more to so mighty a book, but *that* is the mainspring.

God-given frustration is the great stimulant of wisdom: without the strange gift of frustration, wisdom would be absurd. Imagine again the uselessness of wisdom were human affairs straightforward, and again the uselessness of wisdom were human affairs utterly scattered. God bends human affairs, but He does not shatter them. This twisted (but not snapped) middle way is God's underlying gift—and the environment where wisdom flourishes.



Wisdom isolated from frustration will wither into foolishness. Self-satisfied wisdom will be malign. So it is, for example, with Job's comforters, who refuse to confront their wisdom with the twist of Job's innocent suffering—if they had, their dusty wisdom would have shivered, gasped, and come to life. But more: they would have held to the mighty promise of *restoration*.

Consider: God keeps wisdom alive by allowing it to make connections, but not of such permanence or universality that it ossifies. This is the work of what we have called *stimulation* and *frustration*. It is this divine agitation that engenders the resilience and tenacity characteristic of the wisest people. But, if this were the end of the matter, wisdom being kept alive by nothing more than a divine agitation, wisdom would also be entirely cynical. But there is a second element: the promise of restoration. This is what keeps wisdom right-side-up.

One may already have noticed that the bent character of the world, were it isolated, would often produce wisdom on its head—deviled proverbs like this: "It will *not* be well with those who revere God since they revere Him, and it *will* be well with the scoundrel, and he *will* live long, because he does not revere God." (a corruption of 8:12f) It is the promise of restoration which prevents this: *frustration* stimulates wisdom, keeping it alive, and then the promise of *restoration* keeps it facing in one direction (the righteous direction, of course). Now, restoration marks the endpoint of frustration, and the endpoint of frustration is the endpoint of wisdom's liveliness. Restoration is also the endpoint of Ecclesiastes (12:14). Restoration must occur, to keep wisdom upright, but must occur *last*, so as not to cut off wisdom from the frustration which keeps it lively. Restoration marks the end of an excursion into wisdom.

### Man and Wisdom

It is, of course, difficult for people when the hope of restoration is put at the end. It seems so far off. Yet, for the sake of wisdom's liveliness, the end is the only place restoration can go. Happily there is, as we have seen, the intermediate comfort of simple enjoyment: it is pleasure that makes lively upright wisdom livable on earth. Affliction is very good for wisdom, but not very good for people. A wise people will be best served by bad *and* good times, enjoyment *and* affliction. Both must be ultimately empty, so that there is, ultimately, a need to look to a hope of restoration—keeping a wise people right-side-up, that is, upright. It is a good God that, yes, twists human affairs, but then provides the promise of restoration and recompense and judgment to help men regain the uprightness with which He created them (7:29).

This is the work of God portrayed in Ecclesiastes, the very difficult gift of wisdom, a gift lacking in the sort of profit that would undo itself. The wise have no profit in respect to their being alive—the fool is alive just the same. And death comes for all.

The wise in the face of nature and time on earth will discover no impossible advantage, no real value, and they will have pain and enjoyment like the fool. But the words of Ecclesiastes will lodge in the hearts of a few, and irritate. These are Solomon's true heirs, holders of a dark and fertile gift.

*Every human spirit is alive, but the wise spirit is liveliest.*

### Endnotes

1. The new Jewish Publication Society translation is used throughout, and occasionally the Seow translation from the Anchor Bible series; passages taken from the latter are noted. Often a passage will be involved in one of the many textual difficulties of Ecclesiastes. These difficulties are important, scholarly, and technical, and they are ignored throughout the paper.

2. Loss and restoration for Israel occupies the interest of much of the Scriptures. A reading of Lamentations fits well with Ecclesiastes when considering that subject, and much could be said (elsewhere) about them together.

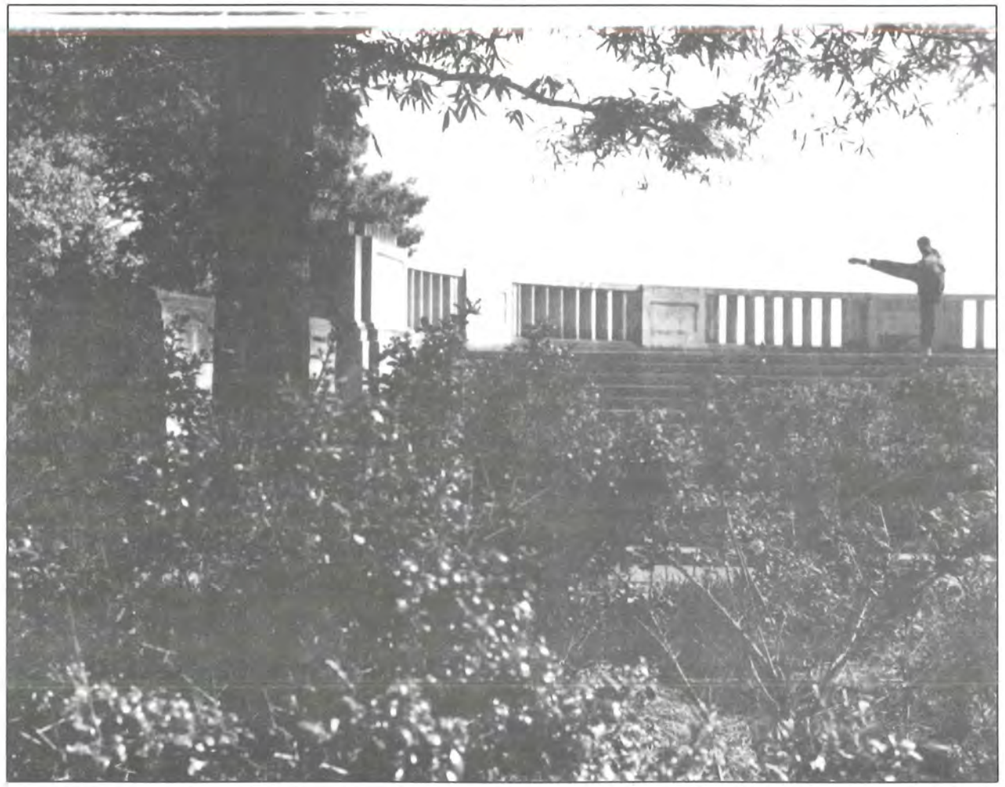
3. *Accomplice* connotes it well. The same surprising connotation is found in Matthew 10:16, a most memorable Christian command: "be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

4. The word translated here as *simple*, or *upright* is the one used by God to describe Job to the Satan ( ישר , *yâshar*). Seow renders it *just right*. It is also, as L. Kern recalls, the root for the command given to Israeli taxicab drivers who need to go *straight* at intersections.

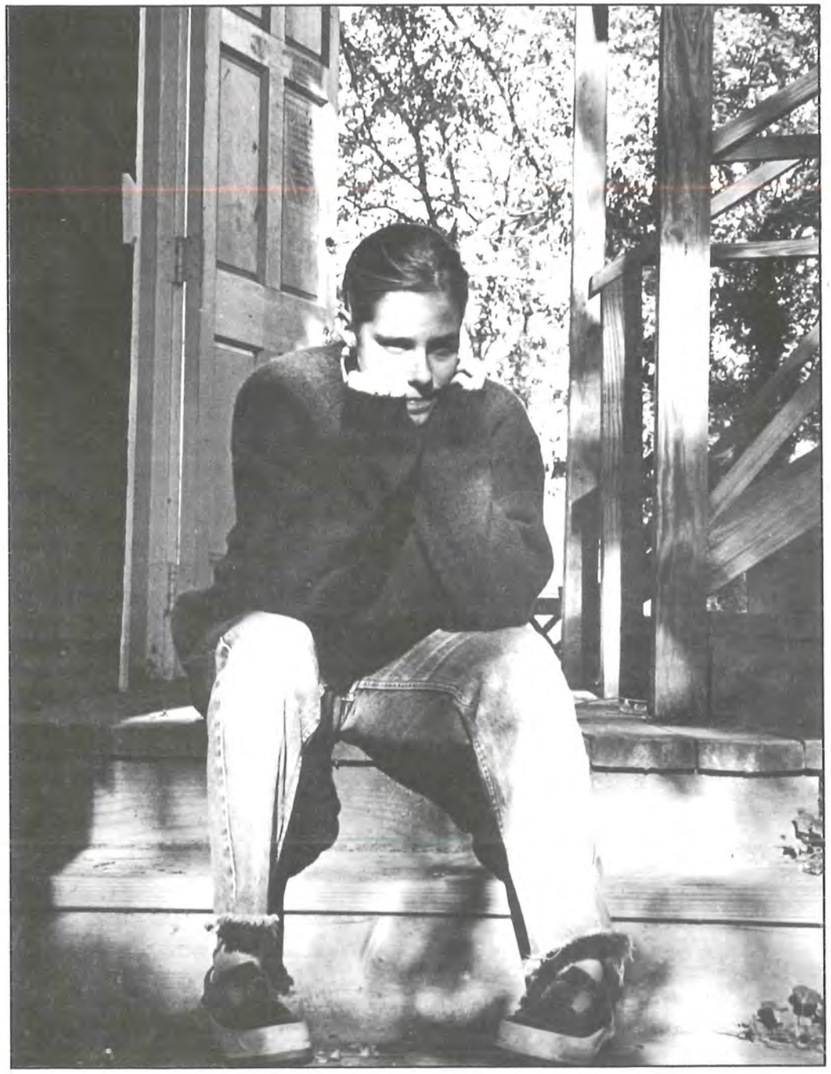
5. Two comments about Solomon and women are appropriate here: First, the famous concluding acrostic of Proverbs, on the virtuous woman (31:10-31), is explicitly *not* from Solomon, but from King Lemuel of Massa's mother. The more than twenty references to women in the Solomonic sections Proverbs are, with one small exception, about *strange* women, *odious* women, *whorish* women, and so on. Both Solomon and the Solomonic proverbs are lopsided when it comes to women.

Second, we can reread the dark and deeply strange story of Solomon's judgment over the two women and their baby. This paper's main reading is focused on the wisdom displayed, not the people involved. The story emphasizes, as does this paper, that these women are prostitutes. Solomon's threat to halve the baby seems to assume that the only way to get the truth out of these whores is to provoke a maternal

preservation instinct: an animal reaction. It certainly assumes that the lying prostitute will have, not human compassion, but brutish indifference to the child, at best. And Solomon may genuinely have been ready to halve a baby that is, after all, illegitimate. That is, Solomon may see all three as effectively subhuman or animal. While we may tend to see two grieved mothers and a baby, Solomon likely sees two whores and a bastard. Solomon is just the sort of person one can imagine handing a woman a writhing half of what was her baby.



**Scenic Overlook (secret spy picture)**
*Isabel Clark, A '02*



**Tiffany Joly**
*Andrew Baisch, A '00*

# A Decent Burial

*Christopher Colby, SJC Community*

I love a good funeral, especially an in-law's. I'm just that way. Blood relatives' are even better. A chance to share one last lie about their useless lives before they're planted six feet under. But when Brownie died, I must say I was touched.

Poor Brownie.

I had just gotten home from happy hour. Not too sober, not too tight; enough to chase away the gloom of another grey work-week. There, under his ratty plaid blanket, he lay.

Two-hundred pounds of dead mutt.

Well, not really a mutt. The Woman's St. Bernard, you understand. I was not overwrought, like The Woman and #1 Daughter were, at Brownie's demise, however.

I had long tired of Brownie's thunderclap farts that withered flowers a block away. I found it a great relief that I wouldn't have to cart away any more of his wheel-barrel-sized turds that daily littered the patio. A mine-field of poop. How is it that a dog's stomach can do that to Alpo Crunchies?

Brownie had his own room. Big enough to house any number of the homeless.

Brownie had health insurance. More than most Americans.

Brownie had birthday parties, toys under the Christmas tree.

Brownie ate more grams of protein than entire third-world nations do each day.

And, oh yes, how could I forget? When Brownie was feeling a little low, The Woman had a psychiatrist for him.

"Can I have some of his Prozac?" I asked once, feeling a bit low myself. But The Woman's eyes shot fire-darts at me.

Brownie was dead. I knew this wasn't going to be as much fun as Uncle Bertie's funeral last month. Brownie was a gift from me on the anniversary of one of our weddings. #1 Daughter had not yet been born, and Brownie helped to break up the intensity of our empty life together. Pets and children can do that sometimes.

"How ya gonna bury him?" the #1 asked me.

"I'm not. We'll have him butchered and donate the meat to a soup kitchen." That sent The Woman to our bedroom in tears. She's never had much of a funny-bone.

"Da-ad, you're such a pig." Will no one teach our children it's only one syllable? Now that the onslaught of puberty has left its scars on her, the #1 D has few illusions left. Like the rest of us. Claire always said there was a mean streak in every Thule she'd ever known. I, her son, was the only exception to the rule I knew of in all my family. But the #1 seemed to fit the pattern quite well.

"See? She can't help it: it's in the genes," I always tell The Woman.

But what was I to do with Brownie? Our rowhouse backyard in St. Paul was a small cement patio. No cemetery there. I considered the dumpster at the supermarket across the street. Or maybe, in the middle of the night, chucked off the Mendota Bridge into the Mississippi? This needed some thought. I'm good at planning things, though. It's my job.

"I'm off to The Democratic Club," I tell the locked bedroom door. Hat in hand, and out the door.

"You're such a pig, Da-ad."

* * *

Now, you might think the Democratic Club is named after the political organization. It isn't. That would give it a kind of high-mindedness it certainly doesn't deserve. One might think it's *democratic*, you know, open and equal to all. That its membership is a social and cultural cross-section of the Twin Cities. It's not, and the roster is suspiciously fair-skinned. The name has the advantage, though, of hiding any number of sins.

No members ever brought their wives.

No, I really think it's named 'The Democratic Club' because, after a few gallons of beer or liters of gin, members sit at their table or the mahogany bar and talk about all the things they hate in the world. We're not racists, or anti-political, or chauvinists, you see. We hate everyone equally, democratic-like.

Mark, my brother-in-law, my sister's husband, that is, introduced me to the D.C. years ago. I am quite fond of Mark. We don't talk about our wives or our family. We are islands of mutual comfort at dinners, reunions, and weddings. Baptisms and funerals, Thanksgiving and Christmas. At these occasions, Mark and I drink away the tedium family life indentures us to. I had long surmised by the amount of time he spent at the D.C. that he was like the rest of the unhappy husbands that crossed its doorsteps daily. Poor bastard—I grew up with his wife, after all.

When I entered that Friday night, he was resting his buns on a tall stool, one foot propped against a decorative spittoon. He pitched salty peanuts into his mouth.

"Hey."



"How're you?" he slurs at me. Um, he's had a six-pack at least, and not even on seven o'clock. I can catch up though—I've had more experience, you see.

Before I settled in, a very dry martini slid before my nose.

"Thanks. Yeah, start a tab."

I'm partial to gin, you see. Martinis especially. Dry, with ice the only mixer. Just a squeeze of lemon. It's a delicious way to eat olives, and my doctor says I need more fiber in my diet anyway.

Ten minutes later, after the third, I told him about Brownie.

"Christ, that's a pain in the ass. Wadya gonna do with him?"

Somewhere between gin #10 and gin #11 I figure out what to do with Brownie.

"We'll hold a drawing for him," I said. Gawd, when I get on a roll, I'm good.

"But he's dead," Mark objected. Mark can be so annoying at times.

"Of course he's dead, but we won't tell anyone."

"You'll piss a lot of people off," said Sam. The bartender had gotten pretty interested by now.

"No we won't, only the winner, and we'll give *his* money back."

Sam nods his head in thoughtful approval, even allowing as how I could keep Brownie in the beer cooler until the raffle was over. He lent me the two-wheel dolly to haul Brownie's one-tenth of a ton over. Now, I've always liked Sam. I don't hold the opinion, shared by others, that he short-changes everyone after they've tipped a few. There now, people can be so nasty, even members of the Democratic Club.

I left Mark at the D.C. with his promise to help me move Brownie the next day. Home, over-ginned as usual, but content with my world: we had a plan. I didn't try to go to the bedroom where The Woman was sleeping. I am used to the sofa in the study.

Next to a half-eaten and petrified hot dog, I laid my wallet on the desk. It did seem a little lighter than usual . ..

I eased my rump onto the sofa, seeking the slight depression it had worn after so many years. Life was getting back to normal.

* * *

"Da-ad, Mum says ya gotta take Brownie to the SPCA."

My foggy head was in the refrigerator, looking for something cold to pour over my shoe-leather tongue.

"She took the steamer trunk from the attic, and ya gotta take Brownie in it to the SPCA. She says they'll bury Brownie for us."

Dreams of paying off several weeks worth of gin at the D.C. with raffle money vanished in my pulsating head.

"She left a note on the table, and won't be back from Grammy's until tomorrow afternoon."

#1 left, head wrapped in a towel. This week's color was purple. Last week was "manic red."

"And call Uncle Markie."

Her bare feet plop-plopped on the kitchen floor as she left.

The Woman's note gave instructions and the address where I was to take Brownie.

* * *

"Maybe you should have put him in the trunk before rigor mortis set in," Mark said.

It had been difficult bending Brownie's legs so the lid would shut and latch properly. Brownie could be such an ornery cuss when he wanted. Mark told me then that Paula had the car, at Claire's, for the weekend. Gawd, what would we be without our mothers-in-law?

"We'll havta take a taxi."

* * *

"No way," the cabby said when he got there. When I began to argue and threaten, he drove off, waving good-bye to me with his middle finger.

"Hell, we'll have to take an MTC bus."

* * *

We huffed and pulled the trunk into the bus, where, covering the "Handicapped Seating Only" sign, we propped Brownie. On Hennepin Ave., a grey-haired lady limped aboard, led by a small child. Looking for somewhere near to sit, she tapped at the trunk with her cane.

"Please, could you sir?"

"Sit somewhere else," I snarled at her. What the hell. People these days have no sense of proportion. It's The Woman's dog, for gawd's sake.

"No sensitivity to others."

"Oh ya, do whatever they want," Mark says.

Someone behind us asks what that smell is.

"Some kinda cheese?"

"Um, what kind ya s'pose?"

"Puts me in mind of Asiago." A little girl starts to cry.

"No, more like a ripe Brie."

"Camembert?" someone suggests.

"Maybe it's Fontina," Mark pipes up. My elbow in his ribs shuts him up quickly. We drag Brownie out to transfer at Nicollet Ave., just before the mob got too dangerous.

"Hey, there's Charlie's D&D Tavern," Mark says.

I love that about Mark.

"Let's have a brew until the bus comes."

* * *

Two hours later I remember Brownie, left outside. We drink a couple more, then head out the door to gather Brownie for his last constitutional.

The trunk is gone.

* * *

At the Democratic Club, an hour later, Mark asked what I was going to tell The Woman.

I grabbed him by the throat and I shake his head back and forth.

"We gave him a decent burial."

I could hear his brains swish in beer at every jerk I gave him. He can be so annoying at times.

Next afternoon I was still napping off Saturday's memories. Downstairs I could hear The Woman and #1 Daughter talking in the kitchen. The #1 D taps at my door and peeks her head in. I was wrong. More like cranberry than purple.

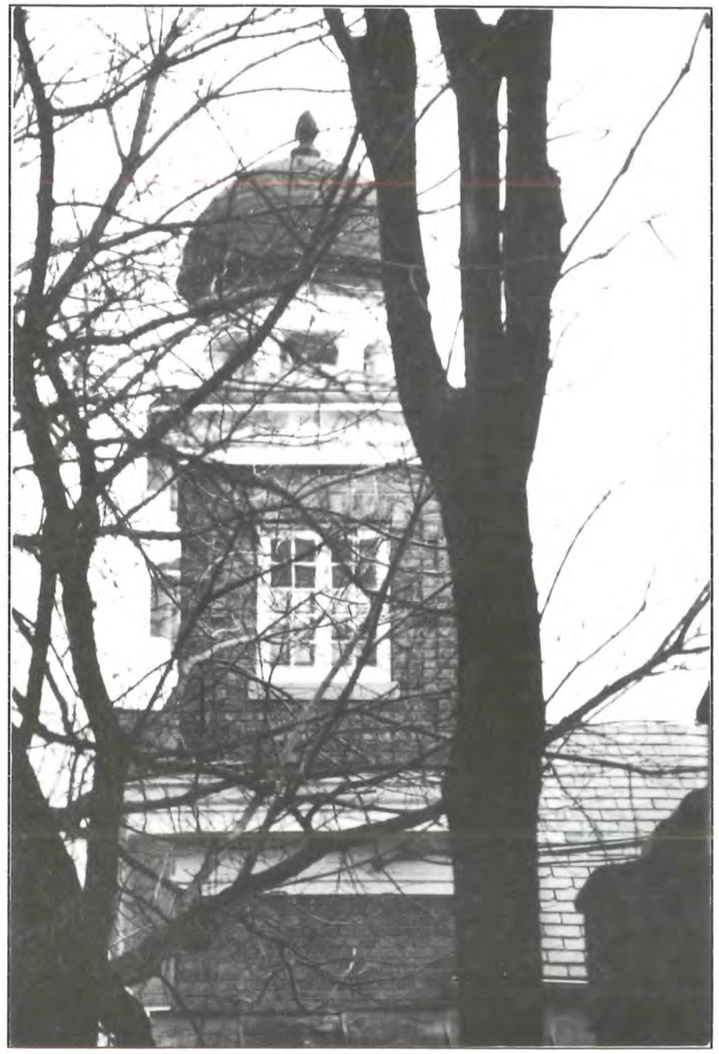
"Yo, dude, Mum and I are going to the pet store to get a puppy."

"Get a chihuahua."

"Da-ad, you're such a pig." #1's tongue can clip a hedge: God help the poor son-of-a-bitch that marries her. Maybe I'll see him at the D.C. someday, too.

I roll over and snuggle my rump into its favorite spot.

**Untitled**
*Caroline Picard, '02*



**Waterwitch**
*Cara Gormally, A'02*

# Les Poètes des Sept Ans: Arthur Rimbaud French Translation

*Matthew Holtzman, A'00*

**Les Poètes des Sept Ans**

Et la Mère, fermant le livre du devoir,
S'en allait satisfaite et très fière sans voir,
Dans les yeux bleus et sous le front plein d'éminences,
L'âme de son enfant livrée aux répugnances.

Tout le jour il suait d'obéissance; très
Intelligent; pourtant des tics noirs, quelque traits
Semblaient prouver en lui d'âcres hypocrisies.
Dans l'ombre des couloirs aux tentures moisies,
En passant il tirait la langue, les deux poings
Àl'aine, et dans ses yeux fermés voyait des points.
Une porte s'ouvrait sur le soir: à la lampe
On le voyait, l'a-haut, qui râlait sur la rampe,
Sous un golfe de jour pendant du toit. L'été
Surtout, vaincu, stupide, il était entêté
Á se renfermer dans la fraîcheur des latrines:
Il pensait là, tranquille et livrant ses narines

Quand, lavé des odeurs du jour le jardinet
Derrière la maison, en hiver, s'illunait,
Gisant au pied d'un mur, enterré dans la marne
Et pur des vision ecrasant son œil darne,
Il écoutait grouiller les galeux espaliers.
Pitié, ses enfant seuls etait ses familiers
Qui, chetifs, front nus, œil détaignant sur la joue,
Cachant de maigres doigts jaunes et noires de boue
Sous des habits puant la foire et tout viellots,
Conversaient avec la douceur des idiots!
Et si, l'ayant supris à des pitiés immondes,
Sa mère s'effrayait; les tendresses, profondes,
De l'enfant se jetaient sur cet étonnement.
C'était bon. Elle avait le bleu regard, - qui ment!

Á sept ans, il faisait des romans, sur la vie
Du grand désert, où luit la Liberté ravie,
Fôrets, soleils, rives, savanes! – Il s'aidait
De Journaux illustres où, rouge, il regardait
Dés Espagnoles rire et des Italiennes.
Quand venait, l'œil brun, folle, en robes d'indiennes,
-Huit ans- la fille des ouvriers d'à côté,

**Seven-Year-Old Poets**

And the mother closed the workbook with an air
Of pride, went away, satisfied yet unaware
That beneath his furrowed brow and behind his sweet blue eyes,
The spirit of her child was given to despise.

All day long he toiled in diligence, and though of great
Intelligence, certain dark suspicious traits
Spoke of a mind embittered with hypocrisies.
And when, in dark halls, he passed the musty tapestries,
He stuck out his tongue, jammed his fist in his pants,
And shut his eyes tight to make motes of light dance.
A door swung wide on the night, by lamplight
He could be seen, high up, blind, drowning on a flight
Of stairs, beneath the sun flooding from the ceiling.
In the summer, undone, amazed, he found it most appealing
In the outhouse, in the chill dark all enclosed;
And there he thought, tranquilly, opening his nose.

When the garden, washed clean of the smells of noon,
Behind the house, in winter, was filled with the moon;
Interred in marl, at the foot of a partition,
And rubbing at his bleary eyes to conjure visions,
He listened to the barren fruit trees moan and bend.
Alas! The paupers' children were his only friends;
Who, unfed, heads bare, with eyes sunk in their cheeks,
And sickly fingers, black with mud, jaundiced and weak
Hidden beneath quaint consignment rags, fragrant with stool,
Sweetly conversed with him in the gentle speech of fools.
And if, catching him immersed in sinful sympathies,
His mother took offense, with soothing pleasantries
The child would try to calm her, to temper her surprise.
All was well; she still received the blue look – that lies!

At seven years he wrote passionate romances
On life in the vast desert where shimmering freedom dances:
Forests, shorelines, suns, plateaus! He would aid
His fantasies with picture books. The drawings made
Him stare, the Spanish women made him blush with shame.
But when that brown eyed, crazy neighbor's daughter came,
(Eight years old in a calico dress – a little brute)

*continued on next page*



La petite brutale, et qu'elle avait sauté,
Dans un coin, sur son dos, en secouant ses tresses,
Et qu'il était sous elle, il lui mordait les fesses,
Car elle ne portait jamais de pantalons;
-Et, par elle meurtri des poings et de talons,
Remportait les saveurs de sa peau dans sa chambre.

Il craignait les blafards dimanches de décembre,
Où, pommadé, sur un guéridon d'acajou,
Il lisait une Bibile à la tranche vert-chou;
Des rêves l'oppressaient chaque nuit dans l'alcôve.
Il n'aimait pas Dieu; mais les hommes, qu'au soir fauve,
Noirs, en blousse, il voyait rentrer dans le faubourg
Où les crieurs, en trois roulement de tambour,
Font autour des édits rire et grondes les foules.
-Il rêvait la prairie amoureuse, où des houles
Lumineuse, parfums sains, pubescences d'or,
Font leur remuement calme et prennent leur essor!

Et comme il savourait sourtout les sombres choses,
Quand, dans la chambre nue aux persiennes closes,
Haute et bleue, âcrement prise d'humidité,
Il lisait son roman sans cesse médité,
Plein de lourds ciels ocreux, et de fôrets noyées,
De fleurs de chair bois sidérals dépolyées,
Vertige, écroulements, déroutes, et pitié!
-Tandis que faisait la rumeur du quartier,
En bas, - seul, et couché sur des pièces de toiles
Écrue, et pressentant violemment la voile!

She jumped at him, he hid from her, she gave pursuit,
Cornered him, mounted him, *then* through storms of hair,
Note: the savage never bothered wearing underwear,
Maneuvering to deflect her blows, he bit her ass.
And, still smarting from his tussle with the feral lass,
He took the taste of her sweet flesh back to his room.

He feared the wan December Sundays when, well-groomed
And powdered, he would stand and read long passages
From a Bible with pages green as cabbages.
Dreams oppressed his sleep each night in the alcove,
He loved men, not God, men like those he'd see rove
The streets on mazy evenings, dressed in over-alls
Gathering round the criers to mutter and guffaw
At each new edict they announced with drumming din.
-He dreamed of loveswept plains, where golden perfumed winds,
Pubescent zephyrs of invigorating light,
Would rustle calmly in the sage, and then take flight!

And since it was the somber that he savored above all,
When, in his empty room with sweating acrid walls,
Dark behind drawn blinds, with a ceiling high and blue,
He'd read his storybooks, he'd read them each straight through:
Taken in by ponderous ochre skies, drowned tree tops,
Flowers of flesh unfolding in a starlit copse,
Vertigo, collapses, betrayals, and sympathy.
-The streets still murmured on outside his fantasies –
Alone, he sat transfixed by these transfiguring tales,
On linen sheets, which violently suggested sails.

**Aswan**
*Karin Ekholm, A'00*

# Highway 4 New Mexico

*Peter Heyneman, '02*

Looking down upon the valley
ringed by red mesas
patchwork shadows of perfect clouds
quilt the low green weed hills but
    forever wide.
Wide as the inside of Christ's mouth.
Swallowing the world between the cows
and the molars of sun and sky.
The breath of the wind,
as a solid wall of air, marching up
the mountains and into
the wild peaks. Wider than one man
can see without swivelling around, wider
than he can stretch his arms or the distance between his eyes.
    As the blanket of shadows ripples
in the breeze and the breeze
hums to him foolishly
a man could feel awe, fear,
    that the expanse
    the space
is engulfing him, ingesting his car,
his camera, his shoes, his hands and .
leaving his bones to be bleached beside Highway 4
to be ignored by less observant travellers.
But this is not the valley.
This is looking
down upon it.

**3 Sketches**
*Melina Hoggard, A '00*

# The Legacy of Claudius Ptolemy

*Cordell D.K. Yee, Tutor*

When we use a map, we take it for granted that it will present accurate information. We usually don't think much about maps until they fail us. Still less do we think of those who make maps, especially now that they can be computer-generated. We can go on the Internet (e.g., MapQuest) and find a map of just about any place we want and, in many cases, have one made to our specifications.

We owe a good deal of our cartographic good fortune to one of the authors in the St. John's Program, Claudius Ptolemy. We study one of his works, the *Almagest*, as one overturned by the Copernican revolution. The most memorable features of what we read are probably the errors: a geocentric conception of the universe, uniform circular motion, epicycles, and the equant. We do not study what is probably Ptolemy's most lasting contribution: the *Geography*.

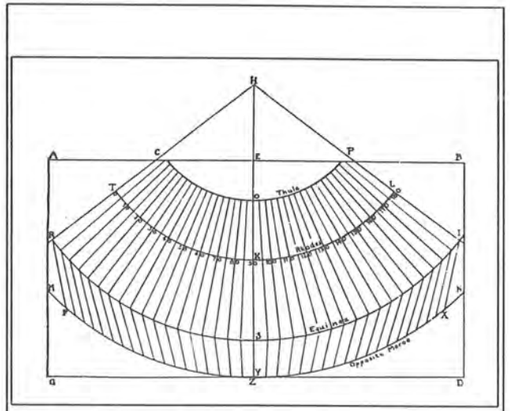


**Figure 1. One of Ptolemy's transformations. (From Claudius Ptolemy, *The Geography*, tr. and ed. Luther Edward Stephenson [1932; rpt. New York: Dover, 1991].)**

This book represents the completion of Ptolemy's astronomical work. If the *Almagest* shows how mathematics helps one understand divine and heavenly things, the *Geography* shows how mathematics helps us to order earthly things. In the *Almagest*, Ptolemy placed a network of meridians and parallels on the sphere of the fixed stars as a way of locating objects in the heavens. He saw that the same network could be reduced and placed on the earth's surface. All positions on the earth would then be uniquely identified by a pair of coordinates. In the *Geography*, one of the things Ptolemy does is extend his method of ordering heavenly space to earthly space. He also provides coordinates for about 8,000 places. Tables of these coordinates make up the bulk of the *Geography*. For that reason, it is not a particularly readable book.

Nonetheless, the *Geography* is important because it is a precursor to the coordinate space that supposedly marks the transition from ancient to modern mathematics, a focus of the sophomore mathematics tutorial. It seems to be no accident that a number of key modern mathematicians—Gauss, Euler, and Descartes, for example—took an interest in maps, and more specifically, mathematical maps made according to Ptolemy's techniques.

Ptolemy described transformations by means of which one could transfer points on sphere to a plane or flat surface (see Figures 1 and 2). Such transformations are needed for practical and mathematical reasons. Globes are more accurate representations of the earth than flat sheets of paper (or papyrus or parchment), but they can be hard to carry around. If one were interested in a small area, the globe would have to be rather large to accommodate the necessary detail. For

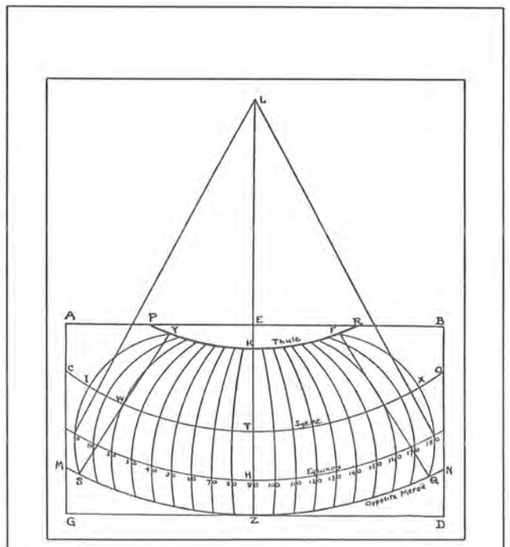


**Figure 2. Another Ptolemaic transformation. (From Ptolemy, *The Geography.*)**

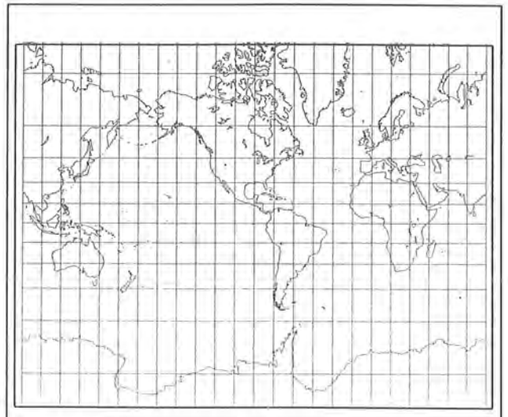


**Figure 3. An example of a conformal transformation (Mercator). (From John P. Snyder and Phillip M. Voxland, *An Album of Map Projections*, U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 1453 [Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1989].)**

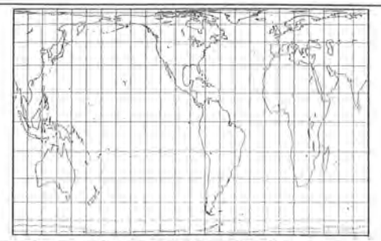


**Figure 4. An equal-area transformation (Gall orthographic). (From Snyder and Voxland, *An Album of Map Projections.*)**

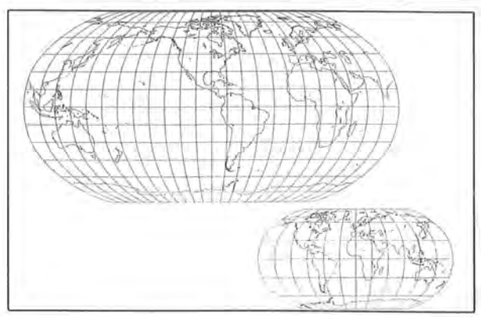


**Figure 5. A compromise between conformal and equal-area transformations (Robinson). (From Snyder and Voxland, *An Album of Map Projections.*)**

such areas, a flat, rollable or foldable medium would be easier to handle.

But one cannot simply take a globe and flatten it out: it is impossible to do so and preserve the original proportions and shapes of the figures on the globe. As a practical demonstration of this fact, one can try to flatten a grapefruit rind that has been hollowed out. It will not flatten out without tearing or overlapping on itself. The same result would happen with the surface of the earth. Ptolemy did not demonstrate this mathematically, but seemed to appreciate its truth. The mathematical demonstration would not come until Euler published a proof in the eighteenth century.[2]

A flattened-out globe would have rips and overlapping areas: distances and directions would be distorted. The discontinuous map would lose some of its usefulness. Ptolemy explains how one can derive a flat, continuous map from the globe. But these flat maps entail some loss: to put it simply one can preserve shape while losing accuracy in area; one can preserve area at the expense of shape.[3] Maps drawn on projections are usually a compromise: they sacrifice a little of both area and shape (see Figures 3-5). Ptolemy's transformations were geometrical: geometrical constructions are employed to relocate points on the globe to a plane. Each point is relocated following the same procedure, as in the Hjelmslev transformation employed in senior mathematics. And, like the Hjelmslev transformation, certain characteristics of the original are retained, while others are lost.

The map transformation, or projection, results in a replotting of the lines of latitude and longitude, altering their configuration on the plane. The transformation associates each position on the sphere with one and only one position on the plane. From here it is not a long jump to the notion of functions. Since the development of analytic geometry, map transformations, or projections, have often been expressed in terms of mathematical functions. These are equations of lines: they describe the behavior of meridians and parallels on the plane surface.

Contemplation of the lines of latitude and longitude on the globe could have led to other insights. A Gauss or Euler might have noticed that on a globe it is possible for triangles (non-Euclidean of course), to contain two 90-degree angles, to have an angle sum greater than 180 degrees. Map projection could have been conceived as transforming a non-Euclidean space into a Euclidean one. Thinking about maps could have been a way of beginning to think about different kinds of space.

None of these possibilities are made explicit by Ptolemy in the *Geography*. It seems to be intended primarily as a manual for mapmaking. But it also seems to be no small coincidence that the development of analytic geometry and non-Euclidean geometry follow close behind the reintroduction of the *Geography* to Europe.



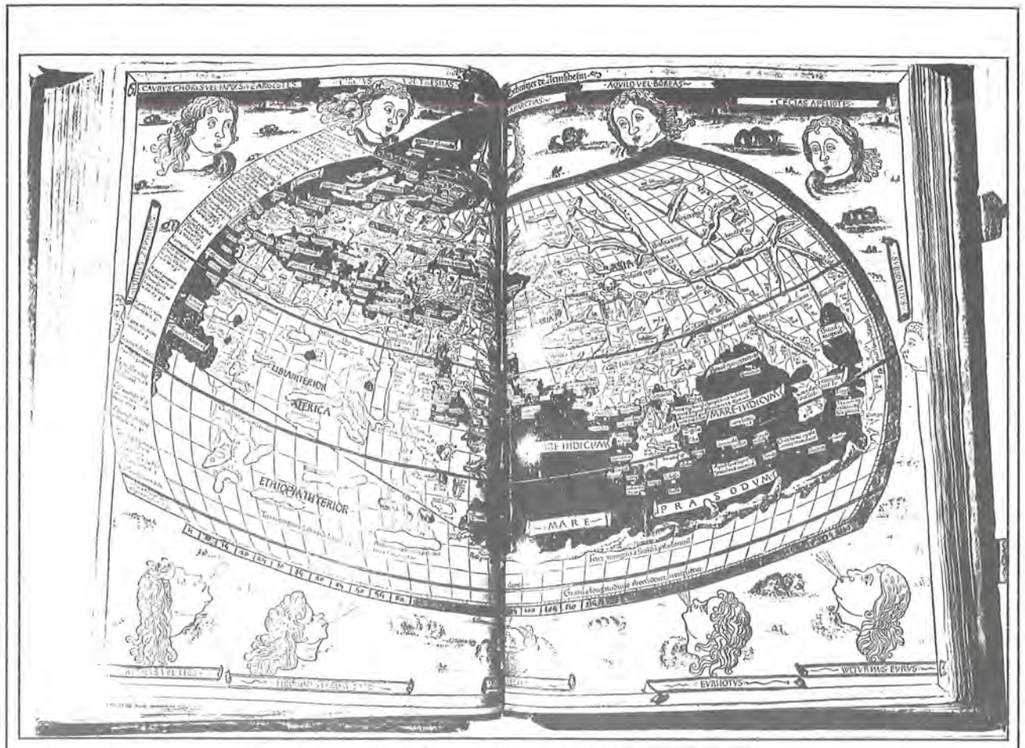



**Figure 6. Ptolemaic world map (ca. 1460). (From Ptolemy, *The Geography*.)**

It is necessary to speak of a reintroduction because for about ten centuries Ptolemy was unknown to scholars in Europe. Ptolemy completed the *Geography* in the second century C.E. After the fall of Rome in the fifth century the work was lost in Europe. European scholars were not reacquainted with it till the end of the fourteenth century.

During this period of Ptolemaic darkness, maps of the world were made more for religious purposes than for the communication of geographic information. Some showed Jerusalem as the "center" of a what appears to be a disk-shaped earth. It is unclear what people in Europe thought of the world during this time. The disk-like representations of the earth could have been attempts to represent a globe by mapmakers who did not fully understand how to achieve an illusion of depth. Scholars would have had access to writings, by Aristotle, for example, according to whom the world was a sphere. What commoners thought is largely unknown, as they had no access to books. In any case, in the absence of the *Geography* and other Greek works, scholars in medieval Europe probably had at best a hazy notion of the earth's dimensions.

The *Geography*, however, was known to Islamic and Byzantine scholars. Contact between Europe and Byzantium was limited until the late middle ages. In the late fourteenth century, Byzantium was under pressure from the Turks, and Byzantine scholars began making their way to Europe. One was Manuel Chrysoloras, who was invited to Florence to teach Greek. In 1400, a Florentine who had obtained a copy of the *Geography* from Constantinople asked Chrysoloras to translate it into Latin. Chrysoloras handed the job to one of his students who finished the translation in about 1406.

Florentine scholars began touting the work, and more copies were transcribed. The advent of printing later in the century hastened the spread of the *Geography*. The print revolution, almost concurrent with cartographic revolution, made mass literacy possible (not to mention a Great Books program). The wide distribution of Ptolemy's work was not simply a matter of technology. The book did capture imaginations. The *Almagest* had been available in Latin translation since the twelfth century, more than two centuries before the *Geography* was translated, and the merits of the *Almagest*'s mathematical model of the cosmos were recognized.

But no one made the leap that Ptolemy had made centuries before and saw that his method of ordering celestial space could be applied to the earth. Roger Bacon had proposed that earthly positions be identified by coordinates but, without a clear notion of the earth's dimensions, lacked a way to make definite assignments: he could not determine a unit. In addition, his proposal, made before printing, was hardly known. With the established authority of the was positioned to stimulate a cartographic revolution.

Once one accepts that the earth is one sphere at the center of another, the reduction of the celestial coordinate system to fit the earth's surface becomes an easy step to take. One sees that taking the height of the polestar at midnight would yield a latitudinal measurement. Longitudinal coordinates can be determined by a combination of astronomical measurements and linear measurements on the earth's surface. The task of those wishing to make a world map was simplified by Ptolemy's inclusion of coordinates. One could, and quite a few people did, reconstruct a Ptolemaic world picture from the data in the *Geography* (see Figure 6).

Such a reconstruction is required since none of Ptolemy's maps survives intact, and the provenance of the fragments of maps that survive in manuscript is unknown. The coordinates Ptolemy provides in the *Geography* are intended for a world map and twenty-six regional maps, and Renaissance editions of the book often include reconstructions of those maps.

Looking at a Ptolemaic world map, one can get a sense of why the *Geography* stirred the imagination. If we accept that the earth is spherical, and if we trust Ptolemy's coordinates, it appears that roughly two-thirds of the earth's surface is unknown. The map ends abruptly just south of the equator. The Eurasian landmass extends at least 180 degrees longitudinally, and perhaps even more. In Europe, human beings stretched themselves out to know the rest.

There were, of course, other reasons for the European expansion into parts known and unknown. There were economic benefits to finding sea routes to Asia that would allow merchants to avoid middlemen in the Middle East. There was also the quest for gold. Good maps were a necessity in these endeavors. Even so, it does not seem plausible to discount completely intellectual curiosity, a desire to fill in the world map.

In hindsight we can see that there is much that is wrong in Ptolemy's world picture. Ptolemy portrayed the Indian Ocean as landlocked. He underestimated the earth's circumference—incidentally, this underestimate probably helped to mislead Columbus into thinking that sailing westward from Europe would be a shortcut to Asia. Since Ptolemy was working before air travel, aerial photography, satellite imaging, and accurate timepieces, errors would have to be expected. Ptolemy himself seems to have expected that his data would be improved. It is impossible that he took the measurements for all 8,000 coordinates by himself. For places far from Alexandria, his home city, Ptolemy would have had to rely on reports from travellers, and he recognizes that such reports would tend to be unreliable.

Thus the world picture he offers is more of a hypothesis than an established fact. He expected refinements and corrections. Measurements need to checked and re-checked, not only because of errors and variations in observations but also because the earth's surface itself changes. Second-



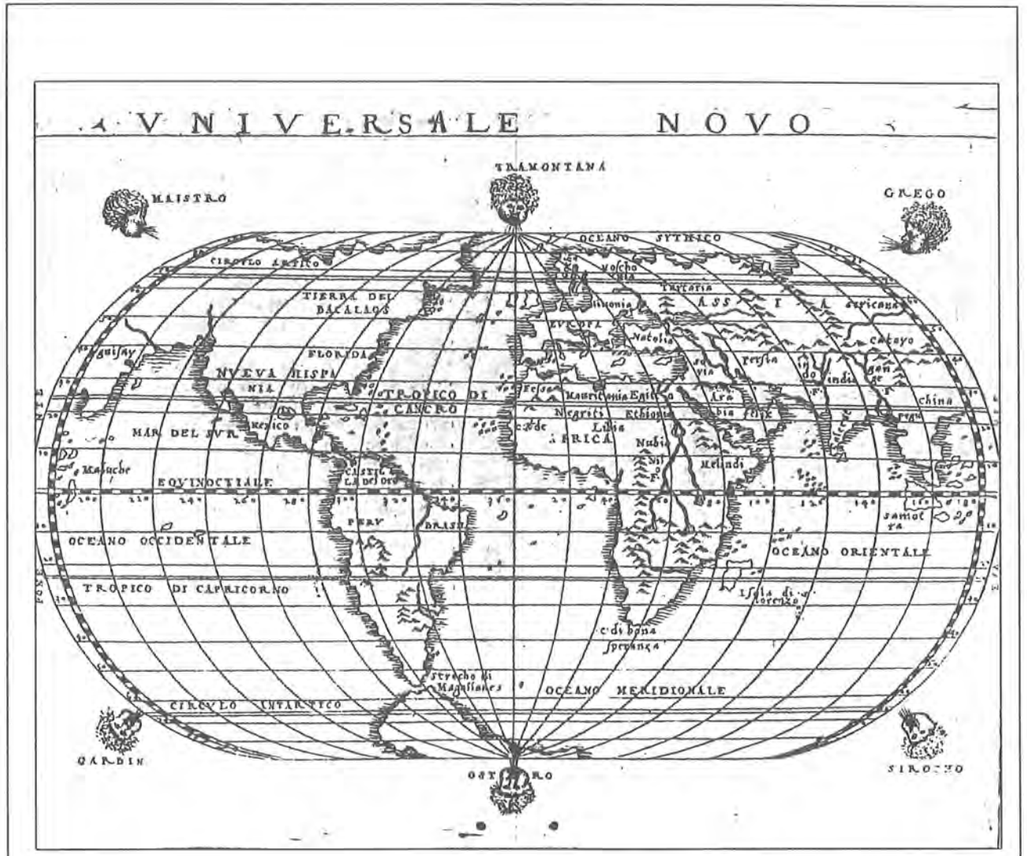



**Figure 7. World map published in 1548 by Giacomo Gastaldi, about 150 years after the reintroduction of Ptolemy's *Geography* to Europe. (From Jonathan Potter, *Country Life Book of Antique Maps* [1988; rpt. Seracuse: Chartwell Books, 1989].)**

hand reports need to be verified, and, if possible, replaced by measurements with instruments.

With Europe's economic expansion into Asia and the New World, mapmakers had opportunities to refine old geographic data and to collect new data. Pilots for the Dutch East India Company, for example, took measurements of their positions, and the English East India Company sponsored a trigonometrical survey of India.

Improvements to Ptolemy's world picture were not steady. Old information has a way of ossifying. It can take some time for correct information to win acceptance, so that old atlases often present both Ptolemaic and Copernican models of the cosmos. Further impediments to progress were laziness and the profit motive. A later map is not necessarily better than an earlier one. The wide availability of print technology made map piracy easy. It was more economical for a map publisher to copy someone's else's map than to draw a new one. (Today with photography, photocopying, and scanning widely and inexpensively available, the temptations to map plagiary are even stronger. Map publishers wishing to protect their intellectual property have been known to include fake place names on their maps in order to trap the would-be pirates.)

Despite the hindrances, the progress made in mapping is clear and distinct (see Figure 7). The easy reproducibility of a map also made geographic data open to scrutiny and potentially to verification and falsification. Reproducibility of results and potential falsification would prove central to the scientific enterprise. The painstaking process of verifying geographic information, not only the profit motive,

Figure 8. Braun and Hogenberg, plan of Paris (1572). (From Phillip Allen, *Atlas of Atlases*.)

also led to greater uniformity in maps. To some extent, the uniformity was the mark of agreement on what was the case.

The easy reproducibility of geographic data, while making it easy to plagiarize, also inhibits unscrupulous practices. Once an updated world picture has won general acceptance, an unscrupulous map publisher will no longer find it profitable to keep reprinting unrevised maps. No one wishing to keep geographically current would want to buy a map depicting California as an island, for example.

When one looks at a reconstructed Ptolemaic map, one question that arises is that of purpose. In his tables of coordinates, Ptolemy provides nothing about roads, and on the reconstructed maps, no roads are shown. The maps were not meant for travel and, since they do not show roads, would not seem to be of much use for that purpose. They seem to have been meant to as reference tools, to give users a sense of where places were. This sort of looking could have been an end in itself. The act of looking at the earth whole in a single gaze is physically permitted to a being that can see two hemispheres at once. In a way a flat map of the earth gave us superhuman power: it lifted us off our planet.

In the *Almagest* Ptolemy says that he is interested in understanding motion, both celestial and terrestrial: "almost every peculiar attribute of material nature becomes apparent from the peculiarities of its motion from place to place."[1] A key element in understanding motions is to know where they occur—where they begin and end, and where they pass. To gain an understanding of human movements, often one begins by considering where they took place. Not surprisingly, then, history was one of the ends of cartography in the surge of mapmaking that began after the European rediscovery of Ptolemy. Abraham Ortelius, a Renaissance map publisher, called mapmaking the "eye of history."[2] The earth, as the poet Samuel Daniel put it, is the "universal map of deeds."[3] Maps do help us to understand that geography at least contributes to destiny, as in the case of Athens' Sicilian expedition.

There is one respect in which modern mapmaking has not followed Ptolemy's instructions. The *Geography* focuses on mathematical cartography based on measurement. This sort of mapmaking, *geographia*, is what lent Ptolemy's book its name. But Ptolemy describes another type of mapmaking, one for small areas, *chorographia*. This type of mapmaking does not require the skills of a mathematician, but those of a painter. The emphasis of *geographia* is on the quantitative (to poson). In contrast, the emphasis of *chorographia* is not on position, but on the quality (to poion) of a place. *Chorographia* is more detailed than *geographia*:



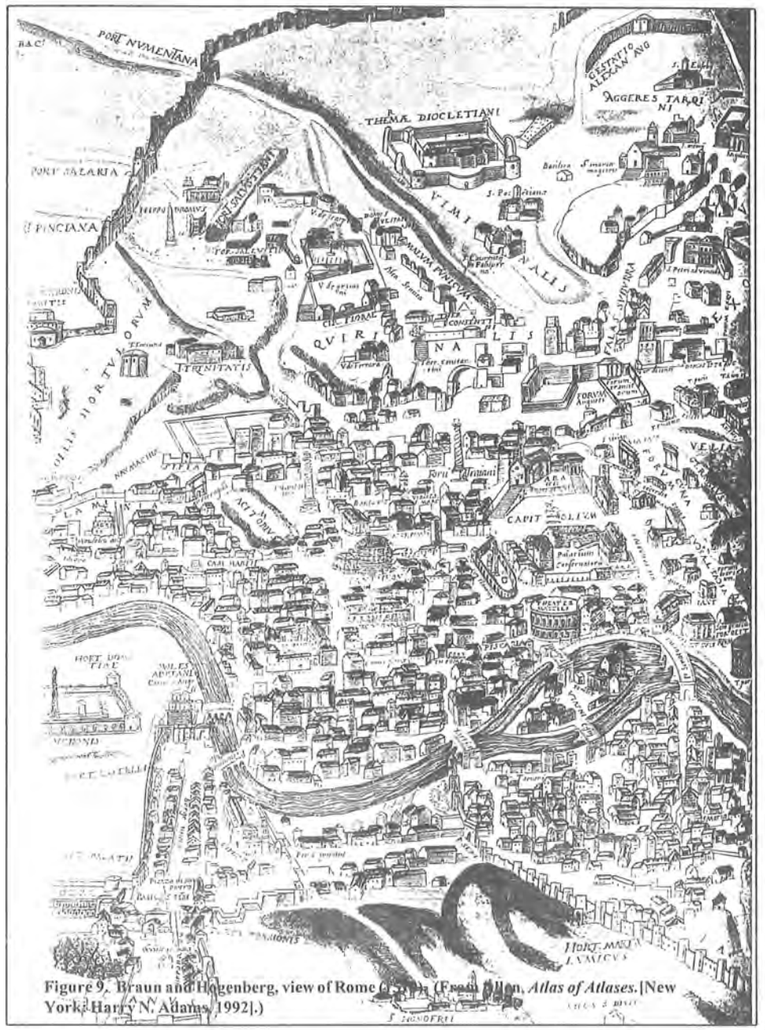



Figure 9. Braun and Hogenberg, view of Rome (1572). (From Allen, *Atlas of Atlases*. [New York: Harry N. Adams, 1992].)

if *geographia* presents the entire body, *chorographia* focuses on a small area such as the eye.

Ptolemy does not say much about chorography, but Renaissance interpreters all seem to agree that it is meant to be pictorial rather than abstract and geometrical. With the triumph of mathematics in the natural sciences, pictorial maps have become less and less important in mapmaking. If atlases today include city maps at all, these tend to be plans, which tell little about the architectural character of the places they represent, suggest little about the look of places. On plans, distinctive local characteristics tend to be lost—features that say something about and often affect the people living there (see Figures 8 and 9).

By including a brief mention of chorography in a manual of mathematical mapmaking, Ptolemy may have been warning of the limitations of a mathematical approach to the world. It is reductive in more ways than one. A quantitative approach to mapmaking not only regularizes the earth's surface, but is also less challenging, less demanding than a qualitative approach. According to Ptolemy, a mathematical map can be made by almost anyone. These are the types of maps that are readily available in this newly christened information age. Ptolemy implies that such ease

is not characteristic of chorographic, pictorial maps. Modern examples of such maps are hard to find, even in this age of computer-aided design. So there seems to be something to what Ptolemy says. It seems that we should be describing quantitative studies as soft, and qualitative studies as hard.

### ENDNOTES

[1]*Almagest* 1.1 (Toomer trans.).
[2]Abraham Ortelius, Preface, *Theatrum orbis terrarum* (1570; English-text edition, London, 1606).
[3]Samuel Daniel, *Musophilus* (1599), l. 910.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

(all of which have been used here)

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**Untitled**
*Sara Wilson, A '02*

**Paris, France**
*Rizo Popovic, A '00*

# Selection from *On the Sublime*: Longinus
# Greek Translation Prize, 1998-99

*Samuel Garcia, A'99*

Εἰδέναι χρή, φίλτατε, διότι, καθάπερ κάν τῷ κοινῷ βίῳ οὐδὲν ὑπάρχει μέγα οὗ τὸ καταφρονεῖν ἐστι μέγα, οἷον πλοῦτοι τιμαὶ δόξαι τυραννίδες καὶ ὅσα δὴ ἄλλα ἔχει πολὺ τὸ ἔξωθεν προστραγωδούμενον οὐκ ἂν τῷ γε φρονίμῳ δόξειεν ἀγαθὰ ὑπερβάλλοντα ὧν αὐτὸ τὸ περιφρονεῖν ἀγαθὸν οὐ μέτριον—θαυμάζουσι γοῦν τῶν ἐχόντων αὐτά μᾶλλον τοὺς δυναμένους ἔχειν καὶ διὰ μεγαλοψυχίαν ὑπερορῶντας—τῇδέ που καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν διηρμένων ἐν ποιήμασι καὶ λόγοις ἐπισκεπτέον, μή τινα μεγέθους φαντασίαν ἔχοι τοιαύτην, ᾗ πολὺ πρόσκειται τὸ εἰκῇ προσαναπλαττόμενον, ἀναπτυττόμενα δὲ ἄλλως εὑπίσκοιτο χαῦνα, ὧν τοῦ θαυμάζειν τὸ περιφρονεῖν εὐγενέστερον. φύσει γάρ πως ὑπὸ τἀληθοῦς ὕφους ἐπαίρεταί τε ἡμῶν ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ γαῦρόν τι ἀνάστημα λαυβάνουσα πληροῦται.

χαρᾶς καὶ μεγαλαυχίας, ὡς αὐτὴ γεννήσασα ὅπερ ἤκουσεν. ὅταν οὖν ὑπ'ἀνδρὸς ἐμφρονος καὶ ἐμπείρον λόγων πολλάκις ἀκουόμενόν τι πρὸς μεγαλοφροσύνην τὴν ψυχὴν μὴ συνδιατιθῇ μηδ'ἐγκαταλείπῃ τῇ διανοίᾳ πλεῖον τοῦ λεγομένου τὸ ἀναθεωπούμενον πίπτῃ δέ, ἂν αὐτὸ συνεχὲς ἐπισκοπῇς, εἰς ἀπαύξησιν, οὐκ ἂν ἔτ' ἀληθὲς ὕψος εἴη μέχρι μόνης τῆς ἀκοῆς σῳζόμενον. τοῦτο γὰρ τῷ ὄντι μέγα, οὗ πολλὴ μὲν ἡ ἀναθεώρησις, δύσκολος δὲ μᾶλλον δ' ἀδύνατος ἡ κατεξανάστασις, ἰσχυρὰ δὲ ἡ μνήμη καὶ δυσεξάλειπτος. ὅλως δὲ καλὰ νόμιζε ὕψη καὶ ἀληθινὰ τὰ διὰ παντὸς ἀρέσκοντα καὶ πᾶσιν. ὅταν γὰρ τοῖς ἀπὸ διαφόρων ἐπιτηδευμάτων βίων ζήλων ἡλικιῶν λόγων ἕν τι καὶ ταὐτὸν ἅμα περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ἅπασι δοκῇ, τόθ' ἡ ἐξ ἀσυμφώνων ὡς κρίσις καὶ συγκατάθεσις τὴν ἐπὶ τῷ θαυμαζομένῳ πίστιν ἰσχυρὰν λαμβάνει καὶ ἀναμφίλεκτον.

One must know, dearest friend, that, just as in our daily life nothing is truly great which is great to despise, such as riches, honors, reputations, sovereignty, and as many other things which have an exaggerated exterior—nor would one in his right mind deem things to be surpassingly good whose very contempt is good without measure—indeed, one admires those capable of having these things, but through a greatness of soul choose instead to look down upon them, rather than those who have them—just so, must one consider it here, in the case of the elevated in both poetry and prose; one would not have some image of greatness such as that in which many works are artlessly conceived; unfolded differently, these would only prove empty, works which are more fittingly held in contempt than admired. For, our soul is uplifted by true sublimity and, seizing pride at such a height, is filled with both joy and exultation, as if it itself had produced the very thing heard.

Whenever, then, something is heard many times by a sensible man, one well acquainted with words and also possessing a greatness of mind, something which neither disposes his soul towards, nor leaves his soul behind in a thought more considered than the word alone, but instead falls, like a visitation, into disesteem, it is no longer true sublimity in so far as its sound did not outlast its utterance. For this, true sublimity, by being great, whose rebellion against is not only difficult, but impossible, for this, the memory is strong and indelible. Speaking generally, consider sublime and truly beautiful those things which please everyone always. For whenever men differing in their pursuits, lifestyles, interests, ages and languages share one and the same opinion, then the verdict and assent from such discord makes our faith in the object of their admiration strong and indisputable.

# *La Promenade d'Automne*: Marceline Desbordes-Valmore
# French Translation Prize, 1998-99

*Robert Dickson, A'00*

**La Promenade d' Automne**

Te souvient-il, ô mon âme, ô ma vie,
D'un jour d'automne et pâle et languissant?
Il semblait dire un adieu gémissant
Aux bois qu'il attristait de sa mélancolie.
Les oiseaux dans les airs ne chantaient plus l'espoir;
Une froide rosée enveloppait leurs ailes,
Et, rappelant au nid leurs compagnes fidèles,
Sur des rameaux sans fleurs ils attendaient le soir.

Seule, je m'éloignais d'une fête bruyante,
Je fuyais tes regards, je cherchais ma raison.
Mais la langueur des champs, leur tristesse attrayante,
A ma langueur secrète ajoutaient leur poison.
Sans but et sans espoir, suivant ma rêverie,
Je portais au hasard un pas timide et lent;
L'Amour m'enveloppa de ton ombre chérie,
Et, malgré la saison, l'air me parut brûlant.

Je voulais, mais en vain, par un effort suprême,
En me sauvant de toi, me sauver de moi-même.
Mon œil voilé de pleurs, à la terre attaché,
Par un charme invincible en fut comme arraché.
A travers les brouillards, une image légère
Fit palpiter mon sein de tendresse et d'effroi;
Le soleil reparaît, l'environne, l'éclaire,
Il entr'ouvre les cieux . . . Tu parus devant moi.
Je n'osai te parler; interdite, rêveuse,
Enchaînée et soumise à ce trouble enchanteur,
Je n'osai te parler: pourtant j'étais heureuse;
Je devinai ton âme, et j'entendis mon cœur.

Mais quand ta main pressa ma main tremblante,
Quand un frisson léger fit tressaillir mon corps,
Quand mon front se couvrit d'une rougeur brûlante,
Dieu! qu'est-ce donc que je sentis alors?
J'oubliai de te fuir, j'oubliai de te craindre;
Pour la première fois ta bouche osa se plaindre,
Ma douleur à la tienne osa se révéler,
Et mon âme vers toi fut prête à s'exhaler!
Il m'en souvient! T'en souvient-il, ma vie,
De ce tourment delicieux,
De ces mots arrachés à ta mélancolie:
"Ah! si je souffre, on souffre aux cieux!"

**The Autumn Walk**

Oh soul, oh life, do you remember the day,
In autumn, so languid and pale?
As if departing, it seemed to bewail
The forest it darkened with sorrow to gray.
From the birds in the air, no more hope was sung;
Their wings by a frozen dew were encased,
And, calling their friends to their nesting place,
For evening they waited, to barren boughs they clung.

Alone, I withdrew from a noisy herd,
I sought my reason, I fled your gaze.
But the pastoral languor, its sadness allured
My internal languor with poisonous haze.
Along with my dreaming, without hope or goal,
My slow, timid stroll transformed into toil;
Love enshrouded me with your shadowy soul,
And in spite of the season, the air seemed to boil.

As much as I wanted, as hard I tried, it was something I could not do:
I sought to save myself from me by saving myself from you.
My eye, veiled with tears, to the cold earth bound,
By invincible charm was wrought from the ground.
My breast started pulsing, with softness and fear
As from foggy murk a dim image grew;
The sun appears 'round it, makes vision clear,
The heavens half-open . . . Before me stood you.
I didn't dare address you; confounded and suppressed,
Dreaming and submissive underneath your misty spell,
I didn't dare address you: I was happy nonetheless;
I divined your spirit, I heard my own heart well.

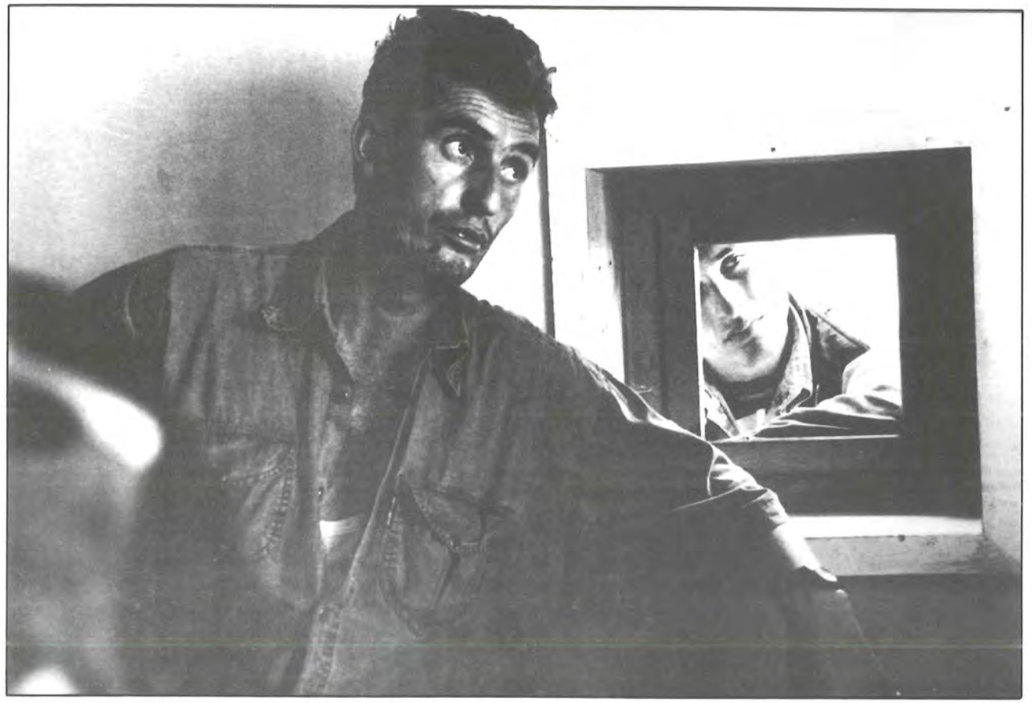
But when my trembling hand was by your hand pressed,
When my body was shivered by a delicate chill,
When a fiery color flushed my face and chest,
My God, tell me, what did I feel?
You, I forgot to fear; You, I forgot to shun;
Complaint for the first time streamed off your tongue,
My grief to yours was finally self-revealed,
And my soul to you was almost exhaled!
I remember it! Do you recall it, my life,
This delicious despair,
These words in your strife:
"They suffer in heaven if I suffer here!"

*continued on next page*

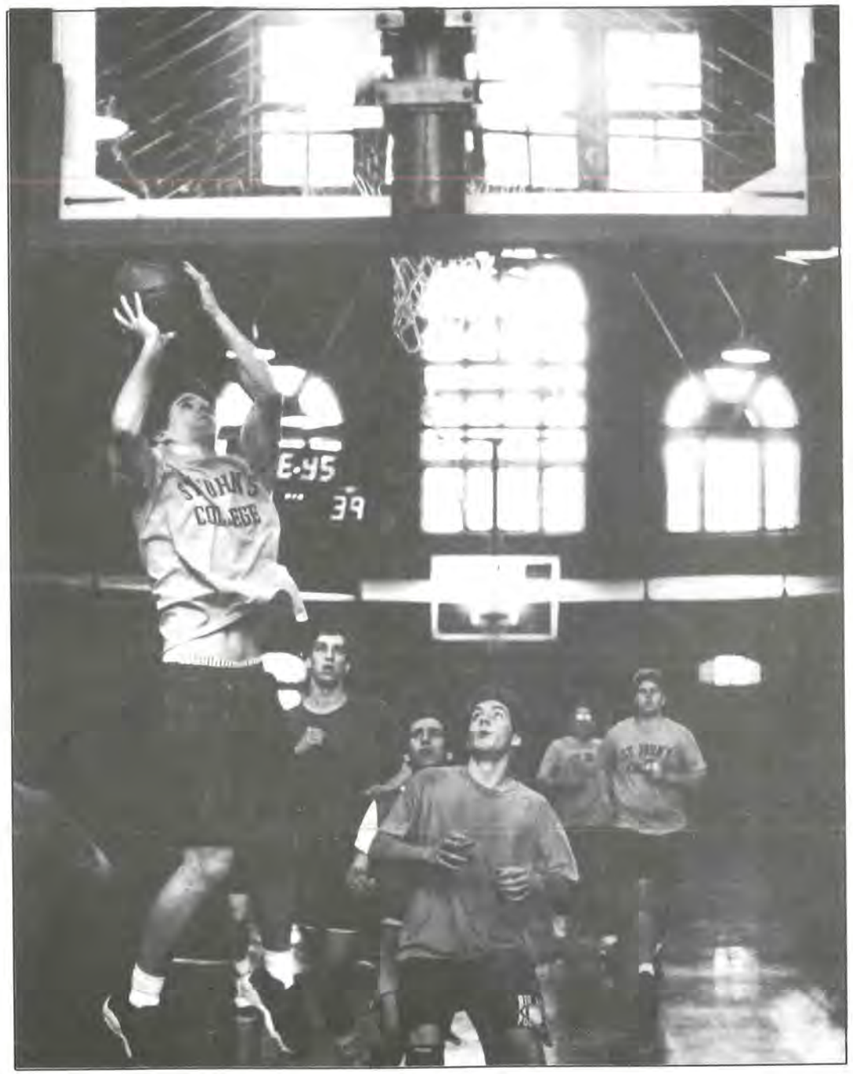
Des bois nul autre aveu ne troubla le silence.
Ce jour fut de nos jours le plus beau, le plus doux;
Prêt à s'éteindre enfin il s'arrêta sur nous,
Et sa fuite à mon cœur présagea ton absence!
L'âme du monde éclaira notre amour;
Je vis ses derniers feux mourir sous un nuage;
Et dans nos cœurs brisés, désunis sans retour,
Il n'en reste plus que l'image.

The forest said no more to disturb the silence.
This was our sweetest, most beautiful day;
It finally stopped about us, prepared to die away,
And its quick escape foretold to me your absence!
The soul of the world made our love bright;
Under a cloud I saw the death of its flames;
And in our shattered hearts, which could never again unite,
No more than their image remains.

**Aidan Dreaming-Elk**
*Karina Hean, A'00*



**Vrbnica, Kosovo; June, 1999**
*Vada Mossavat, A'00*



**Guardians, 1998-99**
*Anne McShane, A '00*

# Cain and Saul
# The Men God Rejected

*Sarah Whitesel, '01*

> If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire and thou shalt rule over him. (Genesis, 4:7)[1]

This verse describes the biblical stories of both Cain and Saul. Both men try to serve God as they see best and are rejected. Both are much desired by sin, succumb to its seduction, and, because of their own failures, seek to punish others for their successes. Both wander the land in anguish, marked so that other men will not slay them. Yet it is the contrast between these two lives that ultimately allows their similarities to inform one another. Cain's story realizes the formula of rejection, sin, and punishment with perfect simplicity. Abel dies, Cain's crime is complete, its consequences absolute, with personal reprimands from God at every misstep. In his exile he builds the first city and founds a glorious dynasty. Saul's situation is more complex. He strives to kill David several times, each time failing, humiliated and repentant until his fury blazes anew. With every fresh iniquity, he becomes further seduced by sin, committing progressively more grievous misdeeds, punctuated by terrible, hopeful moments of pain and remorse. At last, thoroughly steeped in wretchedness, having lost many battles, his kingdom, and his sons, Saul commits suicide.

The origins of sin and the possibility of conquering it are the two most important issues in these tales. All we are given in the austere case of the Second Man Alive is that God "had not respect" unto Cain and his offering (Gen. 4:5). His failure is briefly touched upon, mysterious. The disgrace of the First King is more complicated. Saul's fears on the battlefield are stronger than his faith and he offers sacrifices without waiting for God's prophet, Samuel (I Sam. 13). Two chapters later he bows to the will of the people and disobeys Samuel's order to destroy all of the Amalekites and their goods, saving some to burn on God's altar. It seems to be the combination of these errors by which Saul is lost. After the first, Samuel declares that his kingdom will not continue. After the second, the Lord regrets ever making Saul king, Samuel abandons him, David is anointed, and an evil spirit descends upon Saul. Just as the villainies later engendered by his failure are compounded, so is the failure itself.

Both of Saul's misdeeds involve putting immediate, worldly concerns before his obedience to and trust in God. Each of his failures comes from looking at the people around him to make decisions which ought to be made with his eyes on the Lord alone. The standard for acceptance comes down to a recurring image of the orientation of a man's heart. In I Samuel 10:9, when Saul is anointed, God gives him another heart. Yet even with this reborn spirit, Saul is unable to keep his attention focused upon the Lord. In 13:14, Samuel tells him that he will lose his kingship to a man after God's own heart. That man is David, who is chosen because, even as a child, his heart is filled with love and reverence for God (I Sam. 16:7). Saul falters by misplacing his priorities. His heart is guided by a fear of and preoccupation with men like himself, rather than God's commandment.

Cain and Saul have not done well. They have not earned God's acceptance. Sin crouches desirously at their doors. The dreadful undoing of these men is so much more significant than their initial rejections. When reading these texts there is a powerful temptation to justify how Cain and Saul began unworthily, to find a primary reason that will explain away what follows. We long to justify *why* an offering of the soil deserves rejection. For instance, the harvest of Cain came from land bearing Adam's curse. His sown fruit was lifeless while Abel's lambs yielded up their breath on God's altar. When he kills his brother he spills onto the cursed earth the blood that he failed to offer God, now as a sacrifice to his wounded vanity. In the same way, Saul was made king for his stature, a soulless value, while David was chosen for his noble heart, an animate versus an inanimate virtue. Saul's position as king exists only because God finally relented in disgust to the pleas of the faithless Israelites who wanted a powerful human figurehead to lead them in battle. They desired him as cravenly as sin longs for weakness in men; and as the tall, unholy sovereign they had asked for, he pandered to their fears instead of ruling over them in the name of the Lord. Saul and Cain had to be rejected and once their rejections have been explained, their jealous bloodlust that follows dwindles to a vicious misery ravenous for other men's ruin.

Such explanations of rejection are attempts to sew up the lives that proceed from them with threads of demerit and necessity. They render the infinite potential for human strength and frailty in the narrow terms of a balanced equation. They also gloss over the weight of the choices rejected men must constantly make between, on one hand, following sin's compelling call which grows louder and louder

with each error, and, on the other, the increasingly difficult, but always present, possibility of resisting it. This is particularly important for Saul whose conditions of failure are so detailed. The life that comes afterwards is so indeterminate that one cannot dismiss him as a man justly and irrevocably lost, possessed by the evil spirit of his own guilt and anger, consumed by an impotent pantomime of malice that he must reenact until he can bear it no more and kills himself. Saul's gradual decay is actually far more sophisticated. In that bitter sinking, he wrestles desperately with his corruption, calamitously choosing sin more often than God.

For Saul and Cain, in narrative and psychological terms, rejection is an instigative engine. Without dictating what their reactions will be, it is the condition of pain which calls for an answering choice. Cain's immediate response to rejection is a scowl, the loss of self-control. Unable to accept that he has not been accepted, his ungoverned countenance falls "wroth" (Gen. 4:5), wounded and defiant. Then God makes the crucial speech cited at the beginning of this essay:

> And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire and thou shalt rule over him. (Gen. 4:6-7)

This warning makes explicitly clear that his rejection is just. Cain cannot have done well and receiving even such a painfully true judgment is no cause for anger, exactly because it is true. This is enough. This is all. Perhaps Cain should have known better or perhaps God could have respected his offering for its earnest submission. Neither of these possibilities matter once they are no longer possible. The thing now at stake is Cain's future acceptance or corruption. The only significant reflections he can make are those that apply to doing well now, as opposed to the bitter attempts at justification which prevent him from moving beyond the past.

Outrage against truth, the determination to challenge and transform the hurtful verdict, seeking other people to blame and punish—making the destruction of their well-being the cure for one's own despair—these seem to be the streaming lights of weakness summoning sin to the door of a man who has failed. In this speech God acknowledges for the first time how vulnerable man can be to sin—that wickedness actually lies in wait, lusting after him. Never before has a man been tempted as the result of a previous misstep. Juxtaposed with this peril is the possibility of subjugating that iniquity. Cain may still master his sin. "Thou shalt rule over him." It is framed almost as a declaration, promise, or command. Man is not to be the passive victim of his own weakness, rendered defenseless by pain and anger. Failure may bring man closer to evil but it remains in his power not merely to resist sin, but to conquer it.

Anger is very clearly sin's access point to Saul as well. Until he tastes fury, Saul is not drawn to sin. After the failures that cause him to lose his kingship and the favor of God, Saul listens penitently as Samuel upbraids him. His countenance is meek and abashed. He accepts God's judgment and asks for forgiveness. One of the most poignant moments in Saul's life occurs in his final hours with Samuel. The elderly prophet has just ripped Saul's royal cloak to signify how his kingdom will be torn from his hands. Samuel, who made Saul king, must soon abandon and mourn him. This point marks the culmination of Saul's failures and he asks Samuel, "Turn again with me that I may worship the Lord thy God" (I Sam. 15). Although Saul is broken and alone, having lost his throne and God's counsel, it is still possible for him to look to God. He knows what penalties he has earned and accepts the Lord's judgment. Until he becomes jealous of David's glory and anger kindles within his breast, Saul, with all of his inadequacies, has still chosen God.

Back in Genesis, one verse after he is cautioned by the Lord, "Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him." In Cain's simple narrative, rejection, anger, and envy climax in sin. But what exactly is Cain's sin? Is it fratricide? There are still no commandments, no prohibitions against murder. Abel is the first man ever to die. Human mortality, one of the curses of Adam's fall, has just entered the world and it is wrought by sin rather than nature.

Is Cain's crime attempting to deceive God? Abel's blood cries out from the ground, from the earth cursed by Adam, from the land where Cain raised his unfortunate offering. When asked where his brother is, Cain naively and clumsily dissembles, "Am I my brother's keeper?" offering the Lord a flippant and defiant answer (Gen. 4:9). God's own asking implies that even God must gage Cain's understanding of what he has done. There is no reason to assume that before he kills his brother, Cain comprehends that men's lives must end or that other men can end them. He has some knowledge of good and evil from the error of his parents—enough to realize that what he has done is wrong and to speak of it disingenuously to God.

Does Cain's fault lie in claiming an office of God? The Lord's jealousy of his own authority has already been evidenced in Eden. Propitiating wrath has the flavor, if not the character, of justice. Is Cain's crime a sorry parody of God—establishing his own pathetic pride in the place of divine judgment, dispensing life and death in his defective way? Or does he try to punish the Lord by destroying the man God has blessed? This account hardly seems adequate. Cain's brutality is neither intelligent nor controlled enough to be worthy of the name of judgment.

All of these things, brother murder, deceit, and the presumption to God's power, are merely peripheral evils blossoming from the actual sin of Cain. The essential nature of Cain's—and later Saul's—sin is really an unwillingness to accept the Lord's initial judgment, which brings them to violate the intimacy of each's relationship with God. Cain and Saul both err in believing that what lies between God and other men can somehow become part of their own dynamic. Cain has disregarded God's explicit warning. The Lord's respect for Abel's sacrifice is no more connected to Cain's rejection than David's triumphs are the result of Saul's decline. Their jealous anger comes from a failure of personal responsibility. Their misbegotten and misplaced feelings of rage and jealousy become violence. This inappropriate connecting of blame fosters the false idea that killing another man could possibly amend or assuage the pain of their original failures.



Saul is able to bear his disgrace until his tortured soul lays it beside David's honor. His fatal purpose is born as the people sing, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (I Sam. 18:7). Then, with the evil spirit upon him, filled with guilt and anger, Saul rises up and tries to slay David. However, the Lord is with David and the javelin misses its target (I Sam. 18:11). Then in the hopes that David will fall in combat, Saul offers the young man his daughter's hand in marriage on the condition that he twice defeat and collect a hundred Philistine foreskins. The pitiful king contrives an accidental escape from his will to sin, but the plot fails and David is victorious (I Sam. 18:17-27). Saul endeavors to avoid his wicked purpose but will not relinquish the bitterness that goads him forward. In chapter 19, when Jonathan speaks in defense of David, Saul hearkens to his righteous cause and swears his first oath to respect David's life. However, as soon as the evil spirit returns to him, his anger and guilt recalled, Saul hurls another ill-aimed javelin at David before he flees and Saul's pursuit begins.

At this point, the simple (Cain's) and complex (Saul's) stories diverge; one moves while the other tangles. Abel is dead. Cain's malice is brought to complete fruition and God renders Cain's sentence (Gen. 4:11-12). He is cursed by the earth into which he poured his brother's blood, may no longer till the soil nor reap its harvest, and must wander in barren exile. To soothe his fears, Cain is given a protective mark that carries sevenfold vengeance for any man who would slay him, a mark to shield him from becoming the victim of a crime like his own. As Cain has dearly learned, and Saul will later recognize, it is necessary that the right of judgment and punishment belong to the Lord alone. So Cain roams away, far from the presence of God, where he builds the first city and sires a family ingenious in music and metalwork that flourishes for many generations. That is the end of Cain's story.

Saul's murderous efforts cannot be completely analyzed without also considering his wandering, since it is the pursuit of his lethal fury that drives Saul to vagabondage. Just as Cain was condemned to rove, hidden from God's face, Saul too suffers the affliction of a fugitive as the price of his sin. He flees before his guilt and anger. He runs to lay the bloated burden of his failures on another man's head. Saul makes two more bloodthirsty expeditions in search of David, and, with each new resolution to plunge back into wickedness, Saul commits graver and graver atrocities. The second time Jonathan speaks in David's defense, Saul attempts to kill his own son by casting yet another poorly aimed javelin (I Sam. 20:33). He orders the slaughter of the priests who gave David food and armor and then commands the execution of their entire city (I Sam. 22). His next predatory foray brings him into the wilderness of Ziph and Maon, but David proves elusive and Saul must cut short his hunt to repel a Philistine attack (I Sam. 23).

In the following two pursuits, God almost seems to be mocking Saul's determination to satiate his rage. Saul assembles three thousand men and marches to the wilderness of Engedi where he immediately makes camp and falls asleep in a cave in which David and his men lie concealed (I Sam. 24). David cuts Saul's robe but spares his life, refusing to raise his hand against the Lord's anointed. In the succeeding pursuit, Saul returns to the wilderness of Ziph where he chased David once before. The Lord covers Saul and his host with a deep sleep. David easily enters his camp and takes Saul's spear as a trophy and evidence of the respect he has shown the anointed of the Lord (I Sam. 26).

Saul, like Cain, has a protective mark, only for Saul the value of the mark is blurred. It preserves his life each time the Lord delivers him into David's hands, except this protection carries with it an intense humiliation. The noble mercy of his intended victim compounds Saul's already monstrous shame. It is unclear whether God means for Saul's anointing to keep him safe. David, not God, declares his respect for Saul's status. The Lord simply delivers Saul defenseless into the hands of his enemy over and over again. David's anointment doesn't prevent Saul from trying to kill him. Perhaps David is being tested and Saul is genuinely in peril. Perhaps he is safe, made ridiculous by his inability either to kill or be killed. Either way, this mark of anointment, originally a blessing upon Saul, has become the mark of Cain, a testament to his cursed failure.

In Genesis 4:7, God cautions Cain that failure will make him desired by and vulnerable to sin, and promises the potential for still ruling over that weakness and conquering the temptation to further abasement. It is still possible to do well and win acceptance. For Saul, the key to this acceptance lies in the living example of David. When David confronts Saul, after each double deliverance (Saul into David's hands and David sparing Saul), his words apply to the wretched king's entire life:

> The Lord judge between thee and me but mine hand shall not be upon thee. As saith the proverb of the an-

> cients, wickedness proceedeth from the wicked: but mine hand shall not be upon thee. After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea. The Lord therefore be judge and judge between thee and me, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand. (I Sam. 24:12-15)

David places judgement in the hands of the Lord and submits his will to that judgement. Of the biblical proverbs, there are three that David might be paraphrasing (Proverbs 11:15, 13:6, and 26:26). All of them describe how wicked actions undermine their perpetrators, just as each of Saul's misdeeds increase his rapacious appetite for sin. David understands how every offense disposes a soul to further evil. The power of sin is a desire, a negativity, a yearning. Mastery of sin lies in resisting that compulsion. David's relationship with God is perfectly intact, a fortress many leagues away from sin. This completeness, this safety make it impossible for him to sympathize with or even comprehend Saul's anguished jealousy. When David cannot understand why Saul finds any meaning in chasing after him, like hunting for "a dead dog, a flea," his speech portrays a man so secure that he is almost incapable of entering into this aching world.

David may be secure, but David has never failed. It seems impossible that Saul and Cain could simply turn their eyes to God, regardless of their flawed histories. Wouldn't such callous progress really constitute the dismissal of God's judgement? The answer appears paradoxical. By concentrating on the vindications and vengeance that would unmake his failure, a man amplifies its results, arousing the event in his struggle to tame it. A wroth countenance cultivates a disposition to sin. There are three ways in which a man might respond to rejection and only one of them makes him stronger against iniquity. He might try to forget the disaster and move on, accept it and move on, or clutch hold of it and let his bitterness fester. The first is not really an option because the impact of rejection is undeniable and any attempt to void its meaning could only lead to deeper error. The third response is an invitation to sin. In this context, moving beyond each failure without trying to deny its consequences and returning to God—with the understanding that there is no effective alternative—is the real hallmark of respect and reconciliation that drives sin away from one's door.

When he puts aside his anger and listens to Jonathan's first intercession, Saul resolves to change. However, he does not rule over sin for long and this promise is soon broken. In the wilderness of Engedi, faced with David's integrity and having come so close to death, Saul acknowledges his enemy's righteousness and swears to end his wicked quest. He concedes David's right of succession to his throne and David pledges to preserve Saul's descendants. After breaking this second oath and encountering David again in the forest of Ziph, Saul repents once more. Even David's diction recalls the slaying of Abel when he entreats Saul, "Let not my blood fall to the face of the earth" (I Sam. 26:20). Saul recognizes his own error, "I have sinned . . . behold, I have played the fool and erred exceedingly" (I Sam. 26:21). David is able to redirect Saul's gaze to God for brief interludes in which Saul, having acknowledged his guilt, is relieved and conscious of his potential to do well and conquer sin. After each contrition, Saul's wandering is permitted to end. Both apologies are followed by Saul returning home.

Yet Saul continually loses his intermittent sovereignty over sin. His gaze always falls back to the figures of his own guilt and anger and the man gloriously before him. This may be because he is continually led aright by *David*'s words, rather than forging his own independent reconciliation with God. It is only in the presence of his external compulsion, the human object sought by his sin, that Saul is able to repent. Just as David's harp soothed away Saul's evil spirit in their early days, so David's virtue mends him at moments in their confrontations. It is as if David's voice has become the only one that Saul can hear—even Jonathan's cannot reach him anymore. The only person able to penetrate his fixation is its object, just as the Lord might succor one who looked upon him.

Thus, though God no longer answers Saul, God is no longer what Saul seeks or craves. Saul does not ask the witch of Endor to raise Samuel's spirit so that he may ask how to serve God well. He rouses the dead prophet hoping to receive the reassurance in battle that he deservedly lost, committing a new sin in search of a promise that the penalty of his old sins may fall more lightly (I Sam. 28). It is no wonder Samuel declares the Lord to be Saul's enemy: for Saul, in his weakness before sin, has chosen to be the enemy of the Lord. David helps him to turn to God, but only Saul's own sustained resolution could have held him on that path. His repeated assurances and oaths, while sincere, are shortlived. David knows this and flees to the land of the Philistines after their second encounter because he mistrusts Saul's ability to keep his promises. Though genuinely wretched each time he glimpses at what he has become, Saul throws away this insight over and over when he chooses instead to slake his iniquity and avoid the fact of his rejection.

Since God will not permit the harming of David, there are only two ways for Saul to halt his descent. He must either truly abandon his obsession or die. The latter fate is how his sin ultimately ends. Just as Samuel prophesied, the next day the Lord delivers the host of the Israelites into the hands of the Philistines. The battle turns overwhelmingly against Saul. The arrows of his enemies sorely wound him. All three of his sons are slain. He entreats his armorbearer to kill him that he might not fall into the hands of his foes, but the servant refuses. Saul falls upon his own sword.



These two lives have such different final acts. Cain builds a city. His ending is also a beginning. Saul falls on his sword. His situation doesn't close with either of the conditions, renunciation or murder, that could have fully concluded it. Saul spends his reign wavering, suffering between these two opposed states, and his death only reinforces this limbo. His tale is complete, not because it actually resolves, but because the possibility for any closure dies with him. So where does the distinction between these stories begin? Cain killed Abel. Saul was never able to kill David. As a result, Cain's sin was fulfilled and discrete. Punishment clearly followed. It is this crucial difference that makes Cain simultaneously more fortunate and more miserable than Saul.

Like the farmer he is, Cain sows and reaps his sin. He is more fortunate than Saul in that this fruition, this crime as irrevocable as his rejection, brings him to accept his chastisement and the history that caused it. Cain crosses over his sin and moves beyond it. He is never forgiven, never reverses the meaning of his past, but assumes its weight and makes that burden a foundation for his future accomplishments. Cain succeeds, not because his sin at last proves acceptable, but because he relinquishes the belief that it could ever be made so. He is more miserable than Saul in that, despite God's warning, he never even dimly admits the possibility of ruling over his sin until it is too late and he is a murderer.

Saul's position is more ambiguous, his struggle more complex. Sin and punishment are intricately entwined for him. His castigation is the escalating product of his sin. Cain does not work past his wickedness until it is realized. It is as though Cain must pass through his sin before he is able to abandon it. Saul is unable to commit the crime that might help him make such a passage. The first king sees the innocent alternative to his evil, the repudiation of his unconsummated malice, but this resolution never holds sway for long over his wrath. Yet, although Saul cannot take credit for his repeated deliverance from error, he does not kill the man he hates and therefore never loses the possibility of renouncing his terrible purpose forever.

So Saul and Cain are never doomed by their previous evils. Although every descent makes Saul a more cherished object of sin's yearning, increasingly vulnerable to choosing deeper wickedness, there is always the possibility of turning aside and conquering sin. The potential for redemption is always present. Saul proves that dishonor is neither a direct nor inevitable fall. Rather, he welds a sinuous chain of causality—his descent is causal, but not deterministic. His weakness nourishes his corruption, corruption weakens him but this only means that it becomes more difficult, but never impossible, for Saul to break free. Every link, every crime, draws the next one nearer, but only because Saul fails to sustain his resistance and pursues the siren song of sin, forging his own shackles. This is emphasized by Saul's periodic epiphanies when, however briefly, he truly repents and promises to change. For that moment he recognizes that such a choice is possible.

Cain and Saul look to the mundane context surrounding them to resolve their own struggles over serving God. Unless such a man claims personal responsibility, unless he assumes self-control and the sense of exclusive and absolute accountability to God, he cannot conquer sin's desiring. Sin supine at one's door is the characterization of unfortunate proximity to something external, to a lure from the realm beyond its prey's concerns. This image delineates the ties to and pressures from circumstances foreign to one's situation. Both men judge themselves reactively from within such a context. This meager, mortal perspective constantly fabricates false relevance between itself and other people, refusing to accept responsibility for the choices it pursues among the fibers of this web. Cain and Saul evaluate their failures before God in terms of other men's successes. It is so easy to sympathize with Cain because one immediately misunderstands the same thing he does, that is, why he should kill Abel, a response which clearly cannot address the source of his misery. It is the way in which both men misconstrue and react inappropriately to their original errors that makes them vicious, not some necessary product of the original errors themselves.

For this reason, sin is never justified by the events that precede it. Saul and Cain's awful conclusions that murder might assuage rejection stem from their denials of God's judgement. They do not realize that, for God, their failure is irrevocably over. Its consequences are immutably set. There is no cause for anger. If they do well, they shall be accepted. The painful severity of such a firm ending is what makes choice and change possible at all. In this finality lies the possibility of redemption, human freedom through divine justice.

**Elephantine Island**
*Karin Ekholm, A'00*

**Gjinovce, Kosovo; July, 1999**
*Vada Mossavat, A'00*

# The Importance, to Consciousness, of the Discovery of Self

*Piroska Kopar, A '99*

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel introduces a new, revolutionary way of understanding both the world and philosophy. He does not follow the traditional route of presenting an argument with an extensive commentary in its defense, or the even older method of Plato's dialogues; nor does he merely record some selected facts, like a historian. Instead, Hegel invites us into a theatre—the theatre of philosophy. He asks us to take a seat in the front row and let him show us a play in which we can see all the phases of our cultural and philosophical evolution. He takes it upon himself to narrate the play in the order that will reveal the necessary logical progression of the different scenes. Let this play be called The *Becoming of Spirit*.[1]

We philosophers are not used to such peculiarities; we want to know the truth, and we want to know it now. According to Hegel, our impatience is understandable, but unacceptable; the evolution of truth takes time, and it is only at the right time that our minds are prepared to take in the truth. In the Preface, Hegel claims that his time is the birth-time of Spirit, or of Truth (11).[2] The time, then, is right for us to step off the stage of philosophy, and look at it from the outside, with the eyes of a viewer and not those of a participant. Only thus will we be able to see the truth in its progression and comprehend it as a whole.

It is essential that we keep the distinction between viewer and participant perfectly clear throughout this exposition. The *participant*, or the main character on the stage, is the consciousness of the Universal Individual. The consciousness of the Universal Individual is the consciousness of all human beings past and present, joined together. Its being is superimposed on the individuals of the world, and its development overarches all cultural progress. The transformation of the Universal Individual begins with the primary form of consciousness and is completed with its final maturity. The *viewer* of Hegel's theatre is the student of his philosophy. He is a very advanced participant who is ready to step off the stage and whose testimony will earn him the last step in the development of consciousness. He has already been through most of the transformation, and is at the stage in which he can proceed only if he steps down and observes. While the participating Consciousness sees everything subjectively, the audience takes an objective point of view. By the end of the play, the viewer will have seen who he himself is, generated by the truths that he carries within his consciousness. He will then know that he knows, and this knowledge will elevate him to become the completely transformed Consciousness, or Spirit. "The goal is Spirit's insight into what knowing is" (29).

But why should we commit ourselves to become students of Hegel? What would convince us that his play might reveal Truth to us? Do we even have the capability of seeing the truth? Hegel addresses this question in the *Introduction*:

> Should we not be concerned as to whether this fear of error is not just the error itself? It presupposes that the Absolute stands on one side and cognition on the other, independent and separated from it, and yet is something real; or in other words, it presupposes that cognition which, since it is excluded from the Absolute, is surely outside of the truth as well, is nevertheless true, an assumption whereby what calls itself fear of error reveals itself rather as fear of truth. (74)

Hegel reasons that we should have no scruples about suspending our disbelief in our abilities, because the kind of knowledge that we are investigating is phenomenal knowledge. Consciousness knows its object, as the object is present *for* Consciousness. What this means is that the object of our investigation is *our* knowledge of the object. It is nevertheless a true knowledge, because the object *is* for Consciousness. If the object were in essence something else, Consciousness would never have any knowledge of it. The nature of this phenomenological knowledge will become clearer as we examine it in the context of the actual transformation.

Consciousness, in its most primary form, is made up of two moments. "The immediate existence of Spirit, consciousness, contains the two moments of knowing and the objectivity negative to knowing" (36). The first moment corresponds to what Consciousness knows of its object. The second moment corresponds to the knowledge that Consciousness has of its own knowledge of the object.

At the outset of the play, then, the protagonist is the immediate, yet undeveloped, form of Consciousness; he is natural Consciousness. Now consciousness contains two moments: knowing and objectivity. Imagine that the actor portraying consciousness enters in a white costume, and starts to examine an object on the stage. This corresponds to the first moment, to knowing. No sooner does he begin his examination, however, when a figure, of the same shape and size but wearing a black costume steps out from behind him to one side, and starts examining the first actor in his



examination of the object. Here the object for Consciousness is its own self, which in the first moment was a subject. This corresponds to the moment of objectivity; this is when Consciousness is aware of the fact that it knows something about an object.

But both of these moments evidently lie within Consciousness. The immature, yet undeveloped, Consciousness is not aware of this. It thinks that what it takes to be the case about its object is indeed the case. But in reality it finds this is not true, because when Consciousness compares what it knows of the object with the criterion provided by its own self, it keeps discovering contradictions in its knowledge of the object. It therefore enters on a path that Hegel calls the "pathway of doubt, or more precisely . . . the way of despair," which will constitute the learning experience of Consciousness (78).

On this road, whenever Consciousness attains a new truth, it removes another one of its veils. Consciousness manages to get behind the object by transforming its own understanding of it. All of the same veils are also present in the object, but it is only for Consciousness that they exhibit themselves as obstacles of the development. The object contains all the phases of the logical progression of Consciousness, not as its own logical progression, but as simple truths. While on stage, however, Consciousness does not recognize its own alteration; it believes that it is actually removing the veils of the object. This subjective knowledge will become objective knowledge once we understand what Consciousness has learned on this road. Once we see the veils that Consciousness removes from itself in their true light, our knowledge will also present itself in its full truth.

Before we examine this process more closely, we must understand the nature of truth in this play. For Hegel, the True is the whole, or the Absolute.

> The True is the whole. But the whole is nothing other than the essence consummating itself through its development. Of the Absolute it must be said that it is essentially a result, that only the end is what truly is; and that precisely in this consists its nature, viz. to be actual, subject, the spontaneous becoming of itself. (20)

For Hegel, the ultimate truth can only be the Absolute that contains the truth of the entire development in itself. A blooming red rose is a fragile, green bud before it opens its petals to the sun. Its final beauty is the result of all the phases of its growth; the flower carries their truth within it. The true result is the developed flower that contains, but supersedes, its first truth, the bud. To access a truth of this kind, we have to follow a progression, a movement, to which Hegel often refers as the dialectical movement, or a simple reflection. The method of the dialectical movement is the principle of all of Hegel's philosophy. It is a three-step process, a circle that repeats again and again. It is, nevertheless, more than a pure formalism, because the completion of each circle invariably depends on the content to which one applies this method. As the content determines the outcome of the cycle, and the contents may be varied indefinitely, the dialectical movement is an ever-changing, dynamic, vital experience.

Hegel writes in the Preface, "it must be maintained that truth is not a minted coin that can be given and pocketed ready-made. Nor is there such a thing as the false . . ." (39). We, the spoiled children of mathematical thinking, need some convincing of the superiority of such a conception of truth. Dogmatic systems (including mathematics) are defective, because they are based on a few principles from which the sequence of the propositions do not follow in a necessary order. Their arrangement is not a strict succession; the order of arriving at them may be varied to our liking. In addition, the result of a proposition, the very point of it, is completely detached from the body of the proposition: we can prove a proposition in countless different ways. These systems therefore cannot justify their principles. This kind of science can indeed supply us with the answers to the practical questions of everyday life, but it is unable to penetrate into the deeper realm of truth where everything is dependent upon everything else, and where the end result contains everything that is true within it (42-44). We are therefore in need of a method that will provide a system that is organized according to necessity. This method is the dialectical movement.

In the particular case of the metamorphosis of Consciousness, the dialectical movement begins with the first truth Consciousness discovers. Consciousness now tries to hold fast to this as the ultimate truth. But soon Consciousness recognizes that its truth cannot be the ultimate truth, because it does not include the opposite of the first truth within it. The first truth cannot said to be the Absolute, because it cannot account for the existence of its opposite. The quest of Consciousness for the Absolute truth must continue. Since its first truth has proven to be untrue, Consciousness takes its opposite to be true. Naturally, this will give rise to the same problem that arose in the case of the first truth. The second truth cannot be the Absolute, because it does not contain the first truth within it, since it is its direct opposite.

Consciousness, thus defeated in its attempt to find truth in its second object, returns to its first truth. It realizes, however, that to avoid having to switch its objects again, it must find a new truth in its first object. It in fact discovers that the second truth gave determination to the first truth: it defined the way in which the first truth was defective. The third, new truth for Consciousness is created out of the union of the first two truths. For its third truth, Consciousness invents an object in which both of the first truths are necessarily brought together. In the third truth the contradiction

of the first two moments is no longer an opposition, but a distinction. This completes a cycle of the dialectical movement and a scene of the play.

In terms of the actors on the stage, the play should continue from where it left off: the two moments of consciousness portrayed by two different actors. But Consciousness, just because it is in essence a unity, cannot remain thus alienated from itself, so it returns into itself. On the stage, we see the actor in the black costume stepping behind the first actor. But the first actor now changes completely: his size, his shape, his figure have become completely different, and his costume is half-black and half-white. Consciousness thus returned into itself contains both of its moments; it is the whole movement.

Hegel calls the three truths of the dialectical movement the three moments. On stage, the three moments correspond to the three actors. The first moment is always the initial truth for Consciousness; the second is its negation, or its opposite; the third moment is a creation of Consciousness that necessitates the existence of the first two moments as distinct. This, of course, is still only the empty form of the dialectical movement that will be filled with specific content once the transformation begins. From our seat in the audience, we see that in fact the third moment is a deeper truth in Consciousness, because it necessitates the first two moments. Each time a cycle of the dialectical movement is completed, Consciousness reaches a truth that, because it includes all the previous moments, is closer to the Absolute.

Whenever Consciousness uncovers a defect in its truth, it starts a new cycle of the dialectical movement or begins a new scene of the play. The movement is initiated by what is missing in the object of Consciousness, and is driven by the necessity for a truth that encompasses the whole. The quest can end only when Consciousness discovers an object that satisfies this desire. Only the Absolute can put an end to this movement that is set in motion by what is lacking, or the negative. "Notion" is the name of this moving negative, and "Logic" is the organizer of this movement. But Notion, because it displays the defect of the previous moment, is also a form of knowledge. Logic is what guides Consciousness in the direction that will compensate for the defect of the previous moment. Logic is what dictates to Consciousness the character of the new object to which it can appeal for the solution of a contradiction. Consciousness, thus driven by the Notion in the direction indicated by Logic, continues its exhaustive search for the Absolute.

I shall now give a brief description of the first two chapters of the *Phenomenology*, in preparation for considering the third chapter, which will constitute the core of this essay.

### SENSE-CERTAINTY

Consciousness steps on stage and is instantly astounded by the richness of the world. What is the first experience Consciousness is likely to have upon encountering an object in the world? An object appears to Consciousness unexpectedly, and it overwhelms Consciousness with its presence. Consciousness wants to seize the object as it finds it, just as it is "now" and "here." But how can Consciousness possibly say what it sees "now" and "here"? By the time it does so, the truth of its claims will vanish. Consciousness immediately faces a new "now" and a new "here" of whose content is quite different from what it was a second ago. In fact, Consciousness itself changes from one moment to the next. Consciousness tries to say what its first "now" and first "here" were, but it cannot. Instead, it points out the moments, but even pointing out takes time. Thus Consciousness learns that its object is not the particular that it faces at any one moment, but the universal that is indifferent to the specific contents of the "now"s and "here"s.

### PERCEPTION

Ever since Consciousness stumbled upon its object it has been trying to grasp the truth of it. Sense-Certainty failed to do this: its object slipped away from it. At the stage of Perception, Consciousness faces the object not in its living immediacy, but as a thing. Perception has given up on defining the object in terms of the "now" and "here;" it wants to describe its object, the thing. In the process of description, however, there arises an antithesis. The thing, on the one hand, is a "One": it can be distinguished from another thing. On the other hand, the thing is a "Many": it can be described in terms of its color, shape, size, and so forth. For example, if I talk about a book, I am talking about this book here; it is one thing. On the other hand, this book is small, and blue, and box-shaped; it has many different properties.

These properties do not seem to affect each other; in fact, each seems indifferent to others. The book is blue and also small, and also box-shaped. But if they do not affect each other at all, how can this book be distinguished from another thing? It seems that the properties must demarcate the boundaries of the thing. But if they are definitive properties, what allows me to talk of them independently? Perception alternately makes the object and Consciousness itself responsible for the "oneness" and the "manyness" of its object. To avoid contradiction, it posits the object as the cause of "oneness," and Consciousness as the cause of the "manyness," and then it reverses its position. But as a consequence of positing alternating truths in the same place, Consciousness is unable to find a way to grasp both of these truths simultaneously. Instead, it introduces the "sophistry of in-so-fars"(130). Hegel equates this activity of Perception with sound common sense. The thing is "Many" in-so-far as it is in itself, but "One" in-so-far as it is contrasted with other things. As a "One" the thing is a unity, as a "Many" it holds the distinguishing qualities of the object, or it gives the object "determinateness."



But it is through its "determinateness" that the object preserves itself. This means, then, that the thing preserves itself through its outside opposition: the thing has its essential being in another thing. But to have the essence of a thing outside of the thing is absurd! Perception can see the truth of a single moment, but is unable to see the object as the entire movement of the different moments. It holds fast to the idea that its object is a real, sensuous thing, and is unable to give up the solidity, the "thinghood" of its object. Not being able to justify the antithesis concerning its essence, it must give up the object itself.

### FORCE AND THE UNDERSTANDING

This brings us to the main topic of our examination: the section on Force and the Understanding. Why is it necessary to go on to this phase? How does this phase of consciousness differ from, and accomplish more than the previous ones? One thing is readily apparent: as a result of this chapter Consciousness becomes Self-consciousness. By the end of this phase, the object of Consciousness will have changed into itself; it will be a Consciousness that knows itself to be Consciousness. This suggests that in the course of investigating the truth about the world, we find it in ourselves; in some sense we become one with truth. Again, Hegel claims that this progression is a logical necessity.

Perception has failed, but the object is still in front of Consciousness. In giving up the object, Consciousness cannot ignore what is physically present before it, so it starts on the only available path: it lets go, not of the object, but of the object as a thing, or of its thinghood. Consciousness cannot hold that a concrete thing could be essentially a "Many" and also a "One." As a result of the failure of perception, Consciousness now *thinks* of its object, because it realizes that it is possible to hold the contradictory moments together in thought.

Hegel now begins to discuss the new object of Consciousness that is such a thought: Force enters the stage. Why is Force the next phase of the development? How is Force a solution to the problem of Perception? Consciousness was confronted with a contradiction. Were Consciousness to stop at this point, it would be forced to admit that it found no truth in its object. A contradiction is simply not acceptable as an end, for Truth must be a One. Consciousness needs to create the third moment of this cycle of the dialectical movement. It needs to find a truth that will necessitate the existing contradiction, not as a contradiction, but as a distinction. That is to say, Consciousness needs to find an underlying cause that will result in the two distinct moments of the "One" and the "Many" not as opposites, but as two aspects of the same thing.

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> To every action there is always an opposed and equal reaction: or, the mutual actions of two bodies upon each other are always equal, and directed to contrary parts. (13)'

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The same inherent necessity that revealed Force to be the new truth of consciousness is what brings about the failure of this new truth. This plot complication comes about when Consciousness realizes that since Force is essentially both of its aspects, the distinction that Consciousness has made between its two forms is merely its own distinction; it is a distinction in thought (136). Consciousness sees that both of the moments of Force, "Force expressed" and "Force proper," are essentially forces; it is therefore impossible to make a distinction with respect to their essence, or content.

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Force is now most definitely not the end of the quest for Truth.

The Understanding must give up Force as the perfect object, and so it becomes the "Notion of Force." It is the "Notion of Force" because it is the moving negative principle that drives the dialectical movement.

After the effort of Consciousness to distinguish between the moments of the "One" and "Many" in terms of their content as an "inner" and an "outer" force proved unsuccessful, it next endeavored to differentiate between them according to their form (137). If Consciousness managed to draw an essential difference between different forms of force, it could still retain force as its new object. With the vaporization of the difference in the content of the two moments, they were reduced to pure forces. The only remaining way for Consciousness to distinguish between them is to determine which one of the two forces initiates the struggle. This distinction would identify one of the forces as the active and the other as passive.

Consciousness, however, is unable to assign activity and passivity to these forces. One moment, or one force, approaches the other as something alien, or as Hegel says, "solicits" it. Now Consciousness realizes that the first force could not have approached, or "solicited" the second force in the first place, had the second force not approached the first (137).

Consciousness sees that the distinction between the two moments in terms of their form is a trivial, merely nominal distinction. Thus the second trial of Consciousness to distinguish between the forces failed as well. Force as substance, or as existing in its separate moments, slips away from our hands.

The "Notion of Force qua Notion" is the failure of Force recognized as a failure. It is more than the simple Notion of Force in that Consciousness realizes the essence of Force to be just this—that the distinctions made in it are insignificant. Having watched the struggle of solicitation it sees that the moments of Force have lost actuality: Consciousness takes Force to be the thing in which these determinations lose their individuality and become one as the Notion.

### Law

This moment [the "Notion of Force qua Notion"] is nothing less than the death of Force as a real object. What is the new object, and how does it overcome the problems of Force? Since it is the result of the previous movement, it must be the "Notion of Force qua Notion," only viewed from a different angle. Following the spiral of the dialectical movement, it must be the positive result yielded by the lack of actuality of the forces. This Hegel christens the "inner being of things":

> This true essence of Things has now the character of not being immediately for consciousness; on the contrary, consciousness has a mediated relation to the inner being and, as the Understanding, looks through this mediating play of Forces into the true background of Things. (143)

One thing seizes our attention immediately: Hegel has suddenly switched to the plural. Instead of having one thing for its object, the Understanding now concerns itself with things. In fact, however, its object is still one: it is the "*inner being* of Things," and the plurality exists not in the object of the Understanding, but in the number of things in which this object is present; that is to say, *all* things. Having had to bury Force because it fell short of the absolute, the Understanding must produce an object that extends to all things. Its focus changes from one thing to an object that is in everything in the world; it is trying to find the heart of this world. At the very least, then, this new object is one that contains the truth of all objects, and in this sense, it has greater potential to become the Absolute.

> The inner world, or supersensible beyond, has, however, come into being; it comes from the world of appearance which has mediated it; in other words, appearance is its essence and in fact, its filling. The supersensible is the sensuous perceived as posited as it is in truth; but the truth of the sensuous and the perceived is to be appearance. The supersensible is therefore appearance qua appearance. (147)

The truth of the inner world is thus the truth of appearance. Perhaps one would like to call this movement the saving of appearances, because Consciousness does not have to give up its truth; it is contained in the new result. When talking this way one must exercise caution. Logic teaches us that the object is no longer beyond our reach. There is no object existing in a separate world with inaccessible form and properties. The object is what Consciousness has made of it, and as the development has been a necessary logical progression; the playground of forces, or appearance, necessarily determines the content of the next moment.

What is saved here is that which remains constant in the play of forces: "appearance qua appearance." This means that this next moment will take appearance as it really is, or a disappearing moment. But since the very essence of this new true world was to conserve what is stable from the playground of forces, it logically follows that its content should come from this playground.

This new moment therefore ought to contain the play of forces, but contain them in their disappearing: "What is *immediate* for the Understanding is the play of Forces; but what is the *True* for it, is the simple inner world" (148). We have seen that in the play of forces all the differences that distinguish the two participating moments collapse. The different moments of the "One" and the "Many" with respect to content, and the "soliciting" and "solicited" with respect to form, become interchangeable. The defining factor of this next moment is precisely the loss of all differences. The truth of the playground of forces, or appearance recognized as appearance, is Law.



Before we begin the examination of what has thus filled in the emptiness of the "inner," let us notice that "Law of Force" is a distinctly physical expression. What Hegel means by Law is what is common to all of the Newtonian Laws.

Recall Newton's Corollary 1 to the Laws in the *Principia*: it demonstrates the construction and validity of a force parallelogram. Such a force parallelogram can be constructed out of any number of forces, whether by separation or integration. One simple rule governs the procedure, and the extent of its power is undeniably one of the most far-reaching in physics. Here the individual forces are independent of experience; that is to say, we are free to separate the force of gravity into two or more vectors. In the process of integrating forces, the result is similarly a force that does not belong to any one of the participating bodies. We talk about the force *of* gravity and the force *of* a string holding an object, but when combined according to the First Corollary, we talk of a resultant force. The resultant force cannot be assigned to any one thing. It will certainly be expressed in the change or motion of something, but strictly speaking, it does not belong to any one body. The procedure according to which the resultant force is obtained remains indifferent to the forces of experience. It is detached from the struggle itself. Its truth originates in the struggle, but is itself devoid of any such struggle. Here Force in its actuality has died; what subsists is a rule that is universal. By Law, Hegel must mean something like the truth of the First Corollary.

Consciousness has thus filled in the emptiness of the inner world. The content of the inner world are laws, which give a new form to this realm. They incorporate the constant struggle of the appearances, but in themselves are stable:

> Consequently, the supersensible world is an inert realm of laws which, though beyond the perceived world — for this exhibits law only through incessant change — is equally present in it and is its direct tranquil image. (149)

In the form of Law, Consciousness has arrived at a new truth. By positing a unity beyond the constant change of the play of forces, the play [of forces] becomes justified. If one can assert that Law is true, its expression in the struggle of forces can also be asserted to be true. If one can think of Law as the cause of the play of forces, then the effects become parts of the truth of Law.

There is, however, a negative consequence to saving the forces. This is what Hegel tells us in 150: "What seems to be defective in it (i.e. in the law) is that while it does contain difference, the difference is universal, indeterminate." To have proper causes for all appearances requires many laws. But the plurality of the laws is something that goes against the very thing Consciousness was hoping to find in this solution: Law was supposed to be a unity. As the underlying heart of the world, its truth was supposed to consist precisely in its singularity as a governing principle.

To find a solution to this new problem, Consciousness must create a "container" for all of the laws. This new object should include all the specific laws within it; it should be their unification. The name of this new object, by virtue of the place it occupies in the dialectical movement, is called the "Notion of law." At this point it seems to Consciousness that its new object is merely the negation of the many laws.

Science in general aims at abstracting the accidental, unessential qualities of occurrences, and thus the majestic Moon is placed on an equal footing with the our planet of imperfections. But Hegel finds that the loss of all particularities leaves the general form empty. In the fusion of the specific laws, the new object loses all specificity and is stripped of any determinate significance. It is completely universal and lacks any reference to actuality. The object of Consciousness is now the "Notion of law," the essence of which is to express this emptiness.

Logic, however, impels Consciousness to seek content for its new object. What it finds is that there is inherent necessity in the "Notion of law," though this necessity supersedes the truth of Law. This necessity is the common denominator of all the laws: they are laws because they are necessary. Consciousness grabs this necessity and makes it the positive content of the "Notion of law." Through this positive result Law regains its form as a one: it is that which is necessary. Consciousness thus recognizes Laws, on the one hand, containing several rules for distinct phenomena, but on the other, the unity of pure necessity.

As Hegel goes on to explain, however, the necessity arrived at here is meaningless in a twofold manner. First, because given positive electricity, negative electricity is given by definition. In other words, "positive" would mean nothing without "negative." But that these two forms of electricities should be united in the one notion "Electricity," does not seem necessary. Second, because in the case of motion, time and space—the two moments of motion are completely indifferent to one another. Without any difficulty we can think of space by itself, or time by itself; there seems to be no inherent connection between them (153):

> The difference, then, in both cases is not a difference in its own self: either the universal, Force, is indifferent to the division which is the law, or the differences, the parts, of the law are indifferent to one another. (154)

Without a necessary connection between two things, one cannot call them parts of a whole. If they were parts, they would have to have something common to them that was essential to the being of both.

The necessity of the connection between the parts, or laws, and the whole, or Law as the "Notion of law," is precisely that the Understanding made an abstraction and found the truth of the former in that of the latter. Similarly, the necessary connection between the independent parts (for example space and time) arises from the Logic of the Understanding. Consciousness *understands* the separate moments of time and space as united in gravity, because Logic has connected these moments for it. For the Understanding, the moments of electricity are the same thing as Electricity, except one is the abstraction of the other two. When Consciousness alternates between the two forms of Electricity, it is said to "explain":

> The moments are indeed distinguished, but, at the same time, their difference is expressly said not to be a difference of the thing itself, and consequently is itself immediately cancelled again. This process is called "explanation." (154)

Generally speaking, the purpose of an explanation is to shed some light on an obscure phrase or definition. The one who explains, in order to remain faithful to the truth of the phrase at hand, must find alternate means of expressing the exact content of the phrase. Thus, while the words used in the explanation are different, what is said is the same. In the process of "explanation," the Understanding switches back and forth between thinking of Law in its two separate components and thinking of it in its entirety.

Both ways of looking at the matter belong to the Understanding's view of the truth. Thus since the content of both forms of the explanation are the same, they are in fact connected in the object. Electricity is really positive and negative electricities, and space and time really compose gravity. To us, the audience, it is clear that here Consciousness is switching back and forth between truths that it has discovered in the object, but in which the distinctions are really within Consciousness:

> The reason why 'explaining' affords so much self-satisfaction is just because in it consciousness is, so to speak, communing directly with itself, enjoying only itself; although it seems to be busy with something else, it is in fact occupied only with itself. (163)

The process of explanation is the perfect mirror-image of the play of forces, or appearance. The struggle between the soliciting force and the solicited force is the same as the struggle between Law expressed in its specificity, and Law as unity:

> In the process, then, of explaining, the to and fro of change which before was outside of the inner world and present only in the appearance, has penetrated into the supersensible world itself. (155)

Consciousness is here faced with a problem opposite to that which it had to overcome in the sensible world. On the playground of forces, Consciousness saw a constant opposition that lacked determination. What was determined about it was only the existence of differences that gave rise to their underlying unity, Law. Law solved the problem of the play of forces by giving a stable ground to the constant change, or "absolute flux." In this law, all the differences were brought together into one medium.

Here in the explanation, however, differences arise that are in fact not differences. Consciousness therefore devises a solution parallel to its earlier solution. What was missing from the first Law, or the way it was defective, was precisely the lack of flux. Without this, Law fell drastically short of reflecting the dynamic nature of the play of forces. This dynamism, this flux, is found in the process of explanation. This is the second time that Consciousness is presented with a scene of constant change. In the first case, the opposing forces of appearance lost their difference in the Law of the supersensible world. Now in the second case, the fluctuating moments are evidently identical at the outset. But Consciousness, to complete the correspondence between the sensuous world and the supersensible world, is in desperate need of constant change. Consciousness therefore creates a new Law that it calls the "law of appearance." The "law of appearance" is what disturbs the unity of the first Law; it is what makes two electricities out of one. The supersensible world is thus defined by two Laws:

> The Understanding thus learns that it is a law of appearance itself, that differences arise which are no differences, or that what is selfsame repels itself from itself; and similarly, that the differences are only such as are in reality no differences and which cancel themselves; in other words, what is not selfsame is self-attractive. (156)

Here we have Hegel's brief summary of the two laws of the supersensible world. One of the Laws unites the differences: in the first Law, moments that are different become one. This "self-attractiveness" is exactly what we have seen between the soliciting force and the solicited force. The other, or second Law, to preserve the dynamics of life, breaks up the unity into different moments.

The supersensible world is thus divided into two separate worlds. To wit, the first Law governs the first world, and the second Law governs the other one. These two kingdoms, the first supersensible world and the second, or what Hegel calls the inverted world, are not only different, but are the direct opposites of one another. While the first kingdom satisfied the need of Consciousness to find truth in a unity, the inverted world supplies the change that is also so indispensable to this truth.



### THE INFINITE

The strife of the "One" and the "Many" here takes on a yet different form. With the opposition of the Laws, Consciousness has still not escaped the same problem. The first Law is what makes the "Many" a "One," while the second Law is what makes the "One" a "Many." There are, however, still two Laws. As a necessary step in the transformation, Consciousness must unify these two, separate, in fact, opposite Laws, and this opposition is just what allows Consciousness to do this. What Consciousness is trying to do is to identify a world that is the cause of the appearances of the sensuous world, but which, just because it is the cause of the sensuous world, also mirrors every aspect of that. Therefore this new world should contain the particular opposites found in the sensuous world, but should also be a world that is a unity. To raise the two kingdoms of the supersensible world to this new level, the two kingdoms have to be direct opposites of each other that are nevertheless the same, or one world. Upon first examination, the second world is merely the opposite of the first one.

The inverted world turns the first supersensible world upside down. It is fascinating to watch how the sensuous world has managed to completely duplicate itself. The birth of the inverted world has not only given motion to its stationary counterpart, but also allowed for the return of particularity. By being the opposite of the first supersensible world, the content of the "beyond" can be more specific than pure Electricity, for example. Because of the introduction of the second Law, both of the moments of "explanation" are present in the inner world. Thus both negative and positive electricity have their place in the "beyond." This admission is extended to other particulars. Because the content of the first supersensible world is immediately posited as an opposite in the second one, determinate contents, such as a particular color, or an individual taste, can now become the filling of this world.

But the significance of the inverted world is more than to provide an opposite. What Hegel means here is that we must not assign reality to the objects of the inverted world. Thus if there is an object in the sensuous world that is dark, we must not think of it as *really* being light. The inverted world is not the world of opposite *things*, but the world of opposition.

The reason for this is that Consciousness is trying to leave behind its object as a thing by entering into the supersensible world (hence the name "supersensible"). If one were to conceive of the inverted world as a realm filled with the opposites of what exist in the appearances, one would have to realize that the creation of the inverted world was in fact a waste of effort. There is absolutely no need for Consciousness to invent an inner, inverted world for the opposites of things. Whenever one sees something dark in appearance, or in the actual, sensuous world, one is bound to see something light immediately next to it. In fact, one would be unable to notice what is dark without the contrast provided by the light object. The significance of the inverted world, then, must be greater than being an opposite thing.

The inverted world is not a thing that simply has an opposite somewhere. It is its essence to be an opposite, a "pure change," and as such, it must provide the something of which it is an opposite. The purpose of its very Law, the "law of appearance," is to create an opposition not outside, but within the object.

It thus comes to be the case that the inverted world contains the first supersensible world in it. Now, since the first supersensible world developed out of the sensuous world, while the inverted world developed out of both of these, the inverted world also contains the sensuous world. In the inverted world we see a new, higher level of the Absolute: its truth includes the truths of the previous levels.

[The] power of God is what is often referred to as the infinite power, or infinite goodness of God. Similarly, Kant[4], when writing about the logical function of the Understanding, insinuates that the "Affirmative" and the "Negative," when combined, yield the "Infinite" (B96). It is therefore no great surprise to us that what Consciousness finds in the inner difference of the inverted world is, in fact, the Infinite (160). Infinity here has three meanings (161). First, as we have said, the difference is one *within* the object. Second, if Infinity is the "beyond" of appearance, it provides the sensuous world with a firm, true ground. And third, through the firm ground, the opposite moments have a necessary connection to each other: they have a common "container" from which springs their difference.

Hegel calls Infinity the "absolute Notion" because in it everything is negated. The negation at the same time is positive; it yields knowledge of the thing through its opposite. We, the viewers of the *Becoming of Spirit*, recognize that Infinity has been there all along; it has been the heart of the dialectical movement. The product of each new circle of the dialectical movement proves to be a truth that includes both an assertion and a negation.

About Infinity, Hegel further says:

> Appearance, or the play of Forces, already displays it, but it is as 'explanation' that it first freely stands forth; and in being finally an object for consciousness, as that which it is, consciousness is thus self-consciousness. (163)

The new, true object does not merely contribute to the development of Consciousness, but fundamentally reforms it. Enter Self-consciousness. Infinity, the catalyst, has been

implicit in the entire movement. In "appearance," the opposites are already in the process of disappearing: the forces consume each other. In "explanation," the Understanding is already aware of the fact that the difference between its moments is only a verbal, nonessential difference: Consciousness sees two different ways of expressing the same content. At last, Infinity is unveiled for Consciousness in the inner world: it becomes the object of Consciousness.

## CONCLUSION

As Infinity becomes the object of Consciousness, Consciousness realizes that because of the nature of its object, it itself can simply no longer be a separate entity. Infinity includes everything: the distinction between subject and object vanishes, and Consciousness recognizes its object as its own self. The difference between subject and object was the final obstacle Consciousness had to overcome in order to see its object as we see it. Once Force became an object for the actor, Consciousness first had to remove the veil that was the distinction between the "One" and the "Many." The "One" was the moment that expressed the thing as it was in-itself, or a single object, while the "Many" was the way the thing exhibited itself for-another, with many properties. When Consciousness removed this veil, it saw that the difference between the "inner" and the "outer" had disappeared.

Next came the task of eliminating the seeming difference between "force that solicited" and "force that was solicited." By the removal of this veil, Consciousness has reduced the distinction between the "active" and the "passive" into nothingness: Law became its new object. Finally, in the medium of the Infinite, Consciousness learns that there is no distinction between itself and its object: the difference of subject and object is demolished.

In the next section Hegel provides a brief description of what self-consciousness is, not merely as a result of the transformation, but in our ordinary experience:

> I distinguish myself from myself, and in doing so I am directly aware that what is distinguished from myself is not different (from me). I, the selfsame being, repel myself from myself; but what is posited as distinct from me, or as unlike me, is immediately, in being so distinguished, not a distinction for me. (164)

To justify this account, one can only appeal to everyone's private experience. It should suffice to recall a situation in which one is particularly uncomfortable with an action of one's own. In the midst of such a situation, I begin, in a sense, to observe myself from the outside. But no sooner have I divided myself in this way than I realize that I feel both embarrassed and disapproving: to distance myself from myself is impossible.

Of course, we, the audience, have seen all along that while Consciousness believed that it was digging deeper into the truth of the object, it was deceived, and in fact, was uncovering its own depths. Consciousness has never been able to access the object alone; it had to remove its own veils to see the truth of the object. All along, its object has been its own self. The transformation has allowed Consciousness to recognize this as well.

Self-consciousness, this amazing result, is now the new shape on our stage. At this point it is still colorless: Self-consciousness, just as all new truths in the course of the development, is at first an empty truth. Consciousness has not exited the stage; it has only changed form. In order to see the truth about self-consciousness, one has to look at it objectively, from the seat of the audience. Though Consciousness can now look at itself objectively, it is still far from looking at self-consciousness itself objectively. Self-consciousness is the end of this cycle of the dialectical movement, but it is still only the beginning of the Science that will expose the Absolute. Consciousness does not yet know the content of self-consciousness; it does not know its problems.

For us, the audience, this result is astonishing in a different way. We are not merely taken aback by the recognition of our object as the actor on the stage is; we are amazed by the implications of this result. What this result tells us is that *we are the truth*. The doubts of Descartes are now washed away and Kant's wall is burned to ashes. There is no room for despair: the philosopher can trust his philosophy. The question of many centuries is answered: Truth is within our reach.

But why now? How is it that self-consciousness is a result of the movement of something that was only clearly articulated at least three thousand years after man was first ashamed of his actions? What possible sense does it make to arrive at such a self-explanatory notion *after* understanding the ways in which remote physical objects interact? We must recall that Hegel is not trying to set up a table for the chronological evolution of the human mind. Hegel's object is a logical order, a progression that makes sense of philosophy as a whole, even though it does not coincide with chronological order. Nevertheless, it is a bit strange that self-consciousness should come so late in the progression.

Everything in the metamorphosis of Consciousness is dependent upon the dialectical movement. The dialectical movement takes for granted that true knowledge arises from phenomenological knowledge. It accepts as a fact that Consciousness cannot touch the object alone, but must reform itself in order to find truth. Everything else that Hegel presents in his exposition of the birth of self-consciousness simply follows the necessity prescribed by the Logic of the dialectical movement. To question the truth of self-consciousness, we have to question the truth of Hegel's Logic. This is a complex and difficult task. Hegel puts forth some compelling arguments in favor of his method, and I have discussed the essence of his method earlier. But however persuasive his arguments may be, they cannot be completely convincing. If we are to take the phases of Consciousness as true results, we must have some *faith* in the Logic of Hegel. After all, Hegel himself admits that principles, just because they are beginnings, are defective in themselves (24). Only the entirety of the system can justify the beginning. Self-consciousness, however, is not yet Spirit.



The only way I can imagine testing the truth of this result is by examining whether self-consciousness, as described by Hegel, makes sense to us. Since we are not yet at the final stage of the play, I cannot attempt to provide a rigorous proof here. I can, however, suggest a way in which Hegel's self-consciousness accords with our experience. What has come before it? 1. Sense-certainty; 2. Perception; 3. Force; 4. Law; and 5. Infinity. Now, is it not the case that these concepts are all prior to and included in the concept of self-consciousness?

Though inner reflection is a peculiarly human attribute, we are outward beings. Everything about us is defined by our physical circumstances. To this effect writes Hume:

> I never can catch myself at any time without perception, and never can observe any thing but perception. When my perceptions are removed for any time, as by sound sleep; so long am I insensible of myself, and may truly be said not to exist. ( Book I Section VI)[3]

We are outreaching beings, with primarily outward experiences. Sense-Certainty and Perception are precisely the beginnings of these experiences. Force, as I have already pointed out, is fundamentally physical, and only in abstraction is it intellectual. But this abstraction is not particularly sophisticated; simple induction will yield an intellectual force. We must have abstracted the concept of force from our elementary experiences well before Newton. To continue, the early existence of law is perhaps the most evident. We see things according to an order. Whether the order really exists, or is a mere imposition of our imagination, we nevertheless recognize it in everything we see and do.

Our concept of infinity is probably the most difficult to account for. It seems to me that our understanding of infinity is merely intellectual. What I mean is that the kind of experience from which it could have stemmed would be one in which we fail to see the end of something. Imagine someone looking at the sky and aspiring to see beyond its obstinate blueness. He might decide that the sky is a never-ending, ever-growing aether, or he might conclude that it definitely ends somewhere, only its boundary is beyond the reach of his eyes. Most of our experiences would support the latter conclusion: plants dry out, animals and people die of old age. All of these experiences suggest not the infinite, but, on the contrary, the finite. But the concept of infinity can also be grasped as the power that destroys everything, or the might that puts an end to all oppositions. Thus death is infinite because nothing is exempt from its hands. The Infinity of Hegel is infinity in this sense. Of course, we cannot *experience* death. We are fully aware of its existence and of its power, but we cannot *feel* it. The concept of infinity thus remains solely intellectual for us. We know it, but we don't understand it.

I have organized a short list to summarize how our ordinary understanding of self-consciousness may be present in the metamorphosis of Hegel's Consciousness:

1. Self-consciousness is what allows me to notice myself as an object. But since I am an outward being, I must have had an experience with noticing objects outside me: I must have experienced Sense-Certainty.

2. Self-consciousness is what allows me to perceive my own actions. But for this I need the ability to describe myself as a being that is one, but with many actions. Me and my actions are my object here: to describe them I must have experienced Perception.

3. Self-consciousness is the medium in which I tear myself apart from myself: it is the greatest force imaginable. To understand this as a force, I must have experienced physical force and then abstracted it: I must *understand* Force.

4. Self-consciousness is that which renders me competent to make moral judgments of myself. For this, I must have an order, or law, within me: I must know Law.

5. And finally, self-consciousness is the medium in which all boundaries are destroyed. It is that which includes the opposite moments of subject and object, it is that in which all distinctions vanish: it is Infinity.

Again, Self-consciousness is not the end of the journey of Consciousness. The transformation continues until Consciousness becomes the Absolute. Since the necessity of the progression is only exposed in the exposition of the progress itself, one can only speculate about where self-consciousness will lead. The overall movement up to this point has transformed the object of Consciousness into an object that is its own self. We have seen the way in which Consciousness has been distancing itself away from thinghood, and into the intellectual. The static nature of the object was replaced with the dynamics of Force, and the absolution of the Infinite.

The birth of Self-consciousness fundamentally reforms the nature of the transformation. Whatever the Absolute Truth is going to be, it will have to be seen in self-consciousness. With self-consciousness comes life, and with life comes war. The journey will be long and arduous with countless hardships and a myriad of obstacles. In the course of the development, more and more boundaries must be destroyed and more distinctions must collapse. Eventually the distinction between man and divinity must arise in the play.

Naturally, the result of this opposition must contain the truth as seated in self-consciousness. It is as if Consciousness has discovered that its object is a mirror in which it can see its own reflection. But the mirror is still foggy and the reflection obscure. Consciousness still has to wipe the mirror clear in order to see its ultimate truth, the Absolute. Consciousness has yet to learn that what it sees in self-consciousness is not merely itself, but Spirit, and it has yet to see that its actor shall enter the stage not solely as a consciousness, but as God.

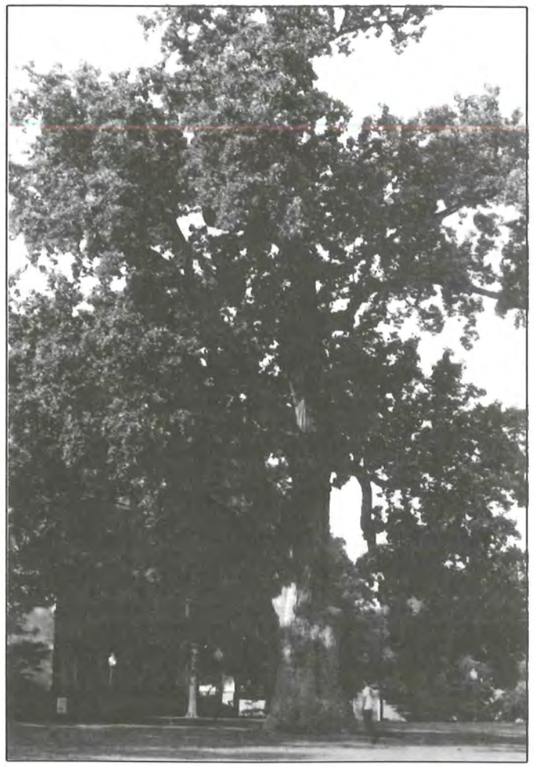
> O Light Eternal, who in thyself alone
> Dwell'st and thyself know'st, and self-understood,
> Self-understanding, smilest on thine own!
>
> (Canto XXXIII, 124-126)[6]

**ENDNOTES**

[1][Due to space considerations, this essay has been considerably modified from its original form, which is available at the St. John's College Library.—Ed.]
[2]All quotations from: Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*; Translated by A.V. Miller, Oxford University Press, unless indicated otherwise. The number marks the paragraph, not the page.
[3]All Newton references from: Newton, *Principia* Vol. I; Translated by Andrew Motte, University of California Press
[4]Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*; Translated by Norman Kemp Smith, St. Martin's Press.
[5]Hume, *Treatise on Human Nature*; Ed., L.A. Selby-Bigge, Clarendon Press
[6]Dante, *Paradiso*; Translated by Laurence Binyon, The Viking Press

**Part of Me**
*Karina Hean, A'00*

**Sketch (woman)**
*Melina Hoggard, A'00*



**Liberty Tree**
*Cara Gormally, '02*