ENERGEIA

SPRING 2001

Energy. [ad. late L. *energia*. Gr.

ἐνέργεια

f. ἐνεργής, f. ἐν + ἔργον work. Cf. Fr. *énergie*. Sense 1 and 2 belong to ἐνέργεια as used by Aristotle. . . .]

1. With reference to speech or writing: Force or vigor of expression.
   b. *transf.* Impressiveness (of an event).
2. Exercise of power, actual working, operation, activity; freq. in philosophical language. † Formerly also *concr*: The product of activity, an effect.
   b. Effectual operation ; efficacy.

—from *The Oxford English Dictionary*

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Untitled
Rebekah Coleman, A'04

Biblical Doppelganger

Moshe Marvit, A'02

Isaac is born to laughing old people. He falls into a waiting position that was tailored to fit his father and now must fit him. Isaac is incongruous with his position and quickly shows his inability to react to people and situations in the ways of his father. In his deviated pantomime and overzealous attachments Isaac appears as a pathetic and tragic character. This makes it possible to laugh at Isaac. From the moment the idea of Isaac is conceived, throughout his shadowy life, up until his death, Isaac fits awkwardly into the rank of forefather. As he lives his strange life, Isaac allows all those around him to laugh. Out of this laughter grows fraternal and marital love, and relationships become defined. Isaac's ineptness also allows Fear for God to finally be understood and put into practice.

At the beginning, God makes a promise to Abram, "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing" (Genesis, XII.2). For this promise to come true, Abram must necessarily have a son. Abram begets Ishmael with Hagar, but Ishmael is not the one to fulfill the prophecy. After Ishmael is born, Abraham pleads with God to make Ishmael the chosen son. "And Abraham said unto God: Oh that Ishmael might live in your presence!" (XVII.18). But it cannot be Ishmael, because he is the child of Hagar and does not fit the definition of the man "that shall come forth out of [Abraham's] own bowels" (XV.4). The bowels of Abraham are defined by the womb of Sarah. God replies to Abraham's plea with a resounding refusal. "And God said: Nay, but Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son; and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish My with him an everlasting covenant for his seed after him" (XVII.19).

Isaac is born to define what relationships are. One of these relationships is the marriage between a man and woman; because of the provisions that accompany Isaac's birth, he shows that only husband or only wife can define the marriage. Until Isaac's birth, the children that are born hardly have a relationship with their respective mothers. It is written that they are children of their fathers and they act in relation to their fathers' houses, but there is not a serious mention of mothers. There is Eve who gives birth to Cain, "with help of God" (IV.1), and then to Abel soon after. After birthing, Eve is not mentioned again in relation to her children or otherwise until she gives birth to Seth, meaning 'appointed', saying, "for God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, for Cain slew him" (IV.25). This formulaic approach towards the death of Abel and the banishment of Cain, where a new child can take the place of a dead one, is indicative of the lack of maternal affection towards Cain or Abel. Her statement here shows that she is aware of the incident, but there was never any talk of sadness when Cain killed Abel; nor was there any pleading with God on Cain's behalf. Instead, she seems content with the replacement child that God gives her, and names him as if it is a fair trade.

This world of Adam and Eve decays and is flooded, leaving only a different sort of Adam and Eve. Noah and his wife, and his sons and their wives, and representatives from all the animals in the animal kingdom are saved. Noah is the new father in this third new world. In the Garden of Eden, man has a wife, but there are no children. East of Eden, children are born, but they are not described as children of their parents in any other way than that the parents begot the children. The parents follow the commandment of, "Be fruitful and multiply" (I.28) in the same way that the animals do, but they hesitate to take the commandment to a human level. Now, in this new world after the flood, Noah has children, but is missing a wife insofar as she remains nameless and never acts. "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and He said unto them: Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth" (IX.1), but there is hardly any mention of who Noah is to be fruitful with.

Under this system, God makes a new covenant with Noah and all who are alive that "neither shall all the flesh be cut off any more of the waters of the flood; and neither shall there be any more a flood to destroy the earth" (IX.11). Even without the threat of a flood, this new world quickly disintegrates. Noah plants a vineyard and waits the necessary time to get drunk and naked. In this instance of drunkenness, Noah falsely loses the sense of shame in his nudity that Adam and Eve picked up in the Garden. He is arrogantly opening himself up to the world and allowing the control that is natural of a man to escape him. While Noah is naked and unconscious, "Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside" (IX.22). There is an ambiguity here in what is implied in seeing Noah naked. Since when Noah awoke, "[He] knew what there had done unto him his youngest son" (IX.24), this "seeing" sounds more like an impressionable act, most probably sexual. Noah knows—with all of the Biblical connotations included in the word, 'knowing'—what had been done to him. This is difficult to imagine if seeing only meant seeing. It must be remembered that Noah's sons are children of the pre-flood world, where the men "took themselves wives, from all that they chose" (VI.2). This description is not restricted to women, or even human beings, so that raping one's father while he is unconscious would not necessarily be beyond the realm of their imaginations. Ham shows here that he is confused in how to relate to his father and where to place his sexuality. Before the flood, man placed it anywhere, but that warranted the destruction of the earth; when Ham places his sexuality with his father, it warrants the destruction of the family.

Ham's action is one that is abhorrent in the eyes of Noah and Noah shows the final mark that the family has disintegrated in his reply to his son, the father of Canaan. Noah curses Ham saying: "Cursed be Canaan: a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said: Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem, and let Canaan be their servant. God enlarged Japeth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be their servant" (IX.25-7). In Noah's impetuous over-severity, he shows that one cannot curse or remove one piece of the family without it having resounding effect on the family as a whole. Here, he means to curse only Ham, but inadvertently curses all of his children. Noah curses Ham to be the servant of servants, but these servants that Ham's descendents will serve are none other than Noah's other two children, Shem and Japheth. This new familial hierarchy that Noah sets up, where every member is a slave and one slave is a lower-level slave to the other two, cannot work. To be a member of a family one must periodically reaffirm the bonds that exist. In slavery there is no such reaffirmation. Service is a difficult thing to perform properly because in addition to these reaffirmations it involves knowledge of position in relation to the master, a trust of the master, and an acceptance by both parties of their respective positions. Both the servant and the master must be in his or her position voluntarily. Once one person becomes confused, the situation quickly shows its fragility. An instance of this on a much larger scale is what follows almost immediately after Noah's curse.

The people in the famous city in Shinar, with its infamous tower, take their service to God to an extreme. They are a people, united under one language and a paranoiac fear, which may indeed be trying to serve God in their monumental endeavor. The people of Babel have no firm conception of their place in relation to their master's place and they wish to solidify it. This family of servants may be speaking honestly when they say, "Come let us build a city, and a tower, with its top in the heaven, and let us make us a name; lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (XI.4). After Babel the solitary people are spread out all over the earth and new families grow from them. In one of these lands, from one of these families, God chooses a man named Abram and tells him, "get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee" (XII.1). Abram is told that if he follows God and starts a family under Him, then this family will be a great people that will only have to be slaves for a short period (XII.2, XV.13). Abram follows God, but the family does not form. Abram grows old and begets Ishmael, but this cannot be his chosen son because it does not involve Sarai. Abraham and Sarah follow God and a son is finally born to them whom they name Isaac.

Thus far, every major character in the Bible is named a certain name because of something related to his birth and, generally, his life. Many of them have lived up to their names in such a way that it was changed midlife to something more befitting their individual character. Adam means 'ground', which is in reference to where he came from and, because of his disobedience, where he must sweat; God says, "cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life" (III.17). Adam's wife is named 'Woman', "because out of Man was this one taken" (II.23), and then Adam changes her name to Eve, meaning 'life', "because she was the mother of all living" (III.20). Cain means 'to get' or 'acquire' because, Eve says, "I have gotten a man with the help of God" (IV.1) and Abel means 'vanity' or, more literally, 'an exhalation of a breath', which fits Abel because he was the first to take his last exhalation of breath. Each of these characters' names meant something throughout his or her life, but each personified his or her name when each had reached his or her end. Abram and Sarai are the first to have their names changed at a pivotal moment in their lives so that the two names of each person mark different chapters in each life. Originally Abram meant 'father of Abram' and Sarai meant 'my princess'. Abram's name was changed to Abraham (XVII.5), meaning 'father of all' and Sarai's to Sarah (XVII.15), meaning 'the princess'. Abram's and Sarai's names were changed when they were both close to one hundred years old. The impossibility of them begetting children has been apparent for some time and as they get their names changed together there is a demand that they have children together. The act of naming in the Bible is never an empty event that haphazardly attaches any word to a thing; it is always a personal characteristic that determines the name and follows the person throughout his or her life. When the name is changed, the two names gain more significance because with two names there is a documented evolution in time of the change of that character. Then there was Isaac.

Isaac is a shadow. He is born a child of necessity under the most auspicious of circumstances. He is the first sign of God's covenant, but the very thought of him induces laughter, a laughter that is, in many of its manifestations, improper. The laughter takes form and Isaac is born to ancient parents. He is the first to be born, have a life, and die in the Bible. All those before him, such as Abraham, Noah, Cain, and others are either chosen or they have no mention of either life or death. In a way, he is the first to be placed in the situation that he is in. Abraham was chosen, and agreed, to be father of a great nation, but Isaac was born into the position. The position that Isaac found himself in was right for Abraham, a man who will argue with God about mortality, but is far too big for Isaac. Throughout his incongruous life, Isaac mimics his father in a seemingly unholy way. He repeats the actions with different intentions and a change in the details, so that they end up appearing shameful. Isaac is unable to understand the actions of Abraham because he hardly has a relationship with him. It is of the utmost importance that Isaac be related to Sarah in a certain way, but almost at the expense of any relationship with Abraham. Even his relationship with Sarah is overzealous. It is difficult for Isaac to find a mean concerning his mother and father because he is the first in his situation. His inability to place himself properly in relation to other people is further manifested throughout his life and then in his confused relationship with his sons and wife. Isaac is not necessarily blameworthy for these ways. Ever since he was born, Isaac was born to be a forefather, a forefather much like Abraham, but with further purposes. These further purposes are what require that Isaac be a pathetic and unable character.

Isaac is only one in a string of characters not to personify his name such that it is changed. He does laugh and cause laughter several times, but God never changes his name to something bigger than laughter. For Isaac there is nothing larger than laughter. His ability to introduce it into the Bible allows for strong and defined relationships to exist that could not have existed before. Although Isaac's name never changes, the notion of laughter and how to laugh changes and redefines how those after him can relate to each other.

Isaac is a product of laughter. Whenever anyone hears of the possibility or of the actuality of Isaac, he or she immediately laughs. When God makes his covenant with Abraham by changing

Abram's name and promising him a kingdom in return for circumcision, Abraham does not reply in the expected God-fearing way. "Then Abraham fell upon his face and laughed" (XVII.17). Abraham is very aware of his and Sarah's age and capabilities. The very possibility of a child being born to such an elderly couple, even with the aid of God, is ridiculous. God has already given Abraham wealth and helped him, with only three hundred and eighteen men, defeat four rampaging kings who have captured Lot (XIV); but these miracles are of a different quality. These events are miraculous, but they happen. The birth of a child to hundred-year-old parents is an inconceivable possibility, even with the aid of a God. It is so inconceivable that all Abraham can do is laugh in the face of God.

Laughter is generally not the beginning or cause of a thing, but rather the end. It is induced when the unexpected comes from the normal. An example of this is the punch line of a joke. The anecdote is told and instead of the natural and expected ending, an unanticipated ending grows from the story and causes laughter. This is easiest to see in the most banal forms of humor such as a "knock, knock" joke or simple pun[1]. Laughter is also induced when two or more things, none of them having to be necessarily funny alone, are juxtaposed in an absurd or comical fashion. These combined things will fit together awkwardly such that their original placement and their development will cause laughter. This is the reason why a "So a priest walks into a bar. . ." joke is invariably funny.

When Sarah first hears the prophecy of her giving birth, she also can do nothing but laugh and point out the absurdity of the words. "And Sarah heard in the door of the tent, which was behind him . . . And Sarah laughed within herself, saying: After I am waxed and old shall I have pleasure, my lord being so old?" (XVIII.10,12). Sarah knows what is pleasurable to her and is aware of her limitations so that laughing is all she can do. The possibility is indeed laughable of God practically reversing time and bringing her a son, pleasure, and what "had ceased to be with Sarah after the regularity of women" (XVIII.11). Sarah is an old woman and she knows her body and its limits. She hoped that she was fertile when it was proper for her to give birth and now that she is old, she knows with certainty that she is barren. It may be wholly within God's limits to rescue Sarah from the Pharaoh of Egypt (XII) and from Abimelech, king of Gerar (XX), not only without harm, but even with a reception of gifts. These things God has already done for Sarah, but still she laughs at God's ability to bless her with a child. This laughter contains the incongruity that made both of the earlier types of jokes funny. The former is funny because of the unexpected surprise at the end, while the latter began incongruously and developed that way. Isaac is the same. He is the unexpected child of ancient parents that causes laughter, but his birth is the beginning of laughing in his life. In both these ways laughter manifests itself through Isaac, laughter that is the beginning of a solid definition of love, fear, and relationships.

Isaac is a different sort of miracle than Abraham and Sarah are used to. He is an occurrence that does not, and cannot, happen. Abraham claiming a military victory over those that are far more powerful than him or putting fear in the hearts of kings is amazing, but it is a conquest over men. It is no more miraculous than the Greeks defeating the Persians in the Persian War or the occurrence at the famous battle of Thermopylae. The possibility of an extremely old man and a woman who has not seen the signs of the potential to conceive in years begetting a child is against nature. The thought of it is absurd and the possibility of it becoming real can produce only laughter.

The thought of Isaac creates a laughter that produces fear and lies. When Sarah laughs about the possibility of both her and Abraham having a child, God lies to Abraham. God has not yet lied nor is He ever expected to lie, but here He is less than truthful to Abraham. "And the Lord said unto Abraham: Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying: Shall I of a surety bear a child, who am old" (XVIII.13)? These words were not Sarah's words nor were they paraphrasing Sarah's question. She said, "After I am waxed and old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?" (XVIII.12). God lies to Abraham, saying that Sarah only doubted herself and not Abraham. In the way that Sarah actually phrases

her laughter, she leaves an ambiguity as to whether she is referring to the pleasure of childbirth or to the act of sexual intercourse. In either case, this sort of laughter and doubting of Abraham would cause tension in the family. When God removes Abraham's name from the laughter, the statement shows that she only found it absurd that she, as an old barren woman, would have the pleasure of birthing. When God relays the laughter thus, there will be no conflict between Sarah and Abraham. There cannot be strife between them now when they are about to start a family, and God is willing to lie to make sure that this strife does not occur. After God lies, Sarah quickly denies that she ever laughed, "saying, 'I laughed not'; for she was afraid. And [God] said: No, but thou didst laugh" (XVIII.15). After lying, God quickly condemns Sarah for trying to lie, whatever her reason may be. God must lie because the tensions of the family have prematurely torn it apart three times in three different worlds, but with this family Isaac will be the one to pull the family apart. Isaac must tear it apart because through him come laughter, love, and fear; and it is only through these things that the family can come back together.

The first time Isaac pulls the family apart is fairly early in his life. Soon after Isaac is weaned, "Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian whom she had born unto Abraham, making sport"[2] (XXI.9). The word that is translated as 'making sport' denotes something improper, but literally means 'laughing'. Sarah witnessed Ishmael improperly laughing or Isaacing, possibly with Isaac, and this laughter is enough for her to send Ishmael off to a potential death in the wilderness of Beer-Sheba. Ishmael's laughing is enough to tear apart the family against Abraham's liking. But God tells Abraham to listen to Sarah and cast off his mistress and first-born son with the promise that "in Isaac shall seed be called to thee" (XXI.12).

Soon after the loss of Ishmael, God said to Abraham, "Take now thy son, thine only son whom thou lovest, Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains that I will tell thee of" (XXII.2). In spite of God having already told Abraham on several occasions that Isaac will be the one to carry on his seed, He tells Abraham here to offer Isaac as a sacrifice without any explanation as to how to reconcile God's earlier covenant with this commandment. How is Abraham to be the father of a great nation if he must die without children? It is more absurd and makes far less sense than Isaac being born at an impossible time; but Abraham does not object or laugh. Abraham rises early the next morning to take Isaac as a sacrifice on a mysterious mountain that God promised he would tell him of (XXII.2). When Abraham was Abram, God told him that He was planning to go down to Sodom and Gomorrah and see if they deserved to be destroyed, and Abram argued with Him (XVIII). Abram argued with God several times in this exchange, beginning with fifty and bargaining down with God, omniscience and all, until he reaches ten. At one point, Abram goes so far as to accuse God, "Shall the Judge of all the earth not do justly?" (XVIII.25). These are ambitious and demanding words for the sake of a nephew, whom he feels a primitive form of brotherly affection towards (XIII.8), and two cities full of wicked people. Before Isaac there was no love and brotherly affection held little weight. In the same sentence where Abraham tells the Lord that they are as brothers, he also suggests that they separate due to the petty strife between their herdsmen. If Abraham is willing to argue with God for these people, then where are his pleadings for Isaac? When Sarah told Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away, Abraham became distressed at the very thought of doing such an action. "And the thing was very grievous in the sight of Abraham on account of his son" (XXI.11). Due to this grief being in response to the sending away of his other son, who is generally not even referred to as Abraham's son, into the wilderness, the Bible is forcing the reader to ask, "Where is this show of emotions when Isaac must be sacrificed?"

Isaac is the first person in the Bible who is mentioned in reference to love. In the beginning there was no love; with Adam and Eve there is no love, only a precedent for cleaving; throughout all generations until Isaac there is no mention of love either directed at or originating from a wife or a child or even God. But when God told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, He refers to Isaac as, "thine only son whom thou lovest" (XXII.2). Since Abraham

loves Isaac, there can be no pleading about justice or the fairness of Isaac having to die. A judge cannot judge fairly concerning one whom he loves and Abraham cannot judge the situation.

Laughter and love are intimately related. Laughter requires a participation that is based on self-awareness. If the person observing the incongruity were so far removed from the situation that he was merely an observer and not a participant, then he would only be able to have an academic appreciation for the absurdity. Once the person develops the self-awareness that is required for laughter, love becomes possible. For love requires that the people involved have an understanding of themselves in relation to their surroundings. Love is an outgrowth of the self-awareness that is necessary for laughter.

Now that love is present in the world, the scene of the sacrifice to God points to something that is indescribably greater than love. Abraham loves Isaac, but he does not plead with God to save Isaac. This lack of pleading is not missing to show that Abraham doesn't love Isaac, for his love is not only assuredly stated by God, but is also shown in the details of the scene that Abraham has control over. Abraham must bring certain materials to make this sacrifice and God has not specified the method by which He wants them brought. This detail is therefore up to Abraham, and Abraham divides the supplies in a loving and subtle way. Abraham carries the deadly objects such as the knife and the fire and gives Isaac the wood to carry (XXII.6). Even the act of giving Isaac something, rather than nothing, to carry is an act of love. For he is allowing Isaac an active role in a sacrifice to God, making him more than merely a passive sacrificial lamb. Isaac is only able to ask the question that he asks his father on the mountain because previously his father included him in the rituals at such a young age. Although Abraham loves Isaac, there is still no mention of emotion on Abraham's behalf.

Abraham travels three days with Isaac and there is no mention of him doubting the action he is about to commit or the mysterious reason behind it. Abraham approaches the mountain, the altar and Isaac's neck with the same unquestioning and undeviating devotion that would be expected, when the sacrificial lamb does not poignantly ask, "Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" (XXII.7) Any traces of emotions are conspicuously missing from Abraham, except in the beginning where God makes the bold and revolutionary statement that Abraham loves Isaac. If Abraham truly loves Isaac, then this feeling that he has for God must be incommensurably greater for him to perform the sacrifice with such faithful and silent obedience. And the angel calls out to Abraham, saying, "Abraham, Abraham . . . lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him; for now I know that thou art a God-fearing man" (XXII.11-2). Abraham has spoken of fear before. When he explained to Abimelech why he said that Sarah was not his wife, he said, "because I thought: surely there is no fear of God in this place" (XX.11). Abraham had a fear for God at that time but it was not yet formed until this scene, so that he could not recognize it in others.

Through Isaac and the first instance of love that is directed through him, God knows that Abraham possesses the right sort of fear. This fear is not properly symbolized in the English word, 'fear." The fear that Abraham has for God is a fear mixed with reverence and faith and trust and similar feelings too numerous to list. By Abraham offering Isaac as a sacrifice to God, he is showing that his fear for God is something that cannot be stripped from him. It is even through this action that the previous promise and covenant has any meaning. For although God has already said that He will bless Abraham and give him a people through Him, it means little until this scene. This is shown in the second time that the angel calls down to Abraham on Mount Moriah saying, "By myself have sworn, saith the Lord, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that I will greatly bless thee, and I will greatly multiply thy seed as the stars in the heaven, and as the sand which is upon sea-shore . . . and in thy seed shall be blessed all the nations of the earth; because thou hast hearkened to my voice" (XXII.16-8). These words are not new to Abraham; they were said several times before in chapters XII, XV, and XVII. But until this action these words and this promise are empty and un-

formed. Until Abraham shows that his fear for God is so great and irremovable that he is willing to give up all that God promised him for God, the covenant is not complete. The covenant is actually erected at this moment, but at the same time Abraham's relationship with Isaac is destroyed.

On the mountain, Abraham bound Isaac on an altar and stretched out a knife to cut Isaac's neck, while Isaac bore witness. At the time of his binding, Isaac finally knew that he had traveled three days with his father for the purpose of his father sacrificing him to God. After the sacrifice of the ram in lieu of Isaac, "Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beer-Sheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beer-Sheba" (XXII.19). There is no mention of Isaac coming down the mountain or dwelling with Abraham because after the incident on Mount Moriah, Isaac does not go to Beer-Sheba with Abraham. Instead he goes to live in Beer-lahai-roi (XXIV.62), the same place that God found Hagar when she ran from Sarai (XVI.14). Isaac and Abraham are never mentioned together again until Abraham is nearing death. Not long before Abraham died, "Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. But unto the sons of the concubines, that Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts; and he sent them away from Isaac his son" (XXV.5,6). Abraham spent seventy-five years concurrently with Isaac (XXI.5, XXV.7). Yet they are never together in the great time span between Isaac's weaning and Abraham's death.

Isaac's relationship with his father is practically nonexistent, but his connection with his mother is stronger than has yet been seen. It was originally necessary that Isaac is born to Sarah, but his affinity to her does not end at birth. Throughout his childhood Sarah shelters Isaac and Isaac clings to his mother in a new way. When Isaac is born, Sarah is not only blessed with a child but also with something unexpected. She is given the gift of laughter through Isaac, she even expresses this in the statement she makes immediately after Isaac's birth, saying, "God hath made laughter for me" (XXI.6). Before, when she heard the prophecy of the conception of a son, Sarah laughed improperly. After his birth she receives laughter from God and has an understanding of it that allows her to pass judgement on another's laughter. She knows laughing is a gift and that there are specific ways not to accept it. She realized after laughing at the prophecy of Isaac that it was wrong to laugh by oneself. And just as it is wrong to laugh by oneself, it is wrong to laugh with a sibling because it is an action that must be performed with someone who is different. There is too much sameness that is present alone or with a sibling that is not proper for laughing. She shows her judgement of laughter when she tells Abraham to send Ishmael away because Ishmael is laughing. God's agreement with Sarah indicates that her judgement is founded. The act of sending Ishmael into the wilderness is also indicative of the way that she deals with Isaac. She shelters him from any harmful influence and, consequently, from his own brother. Isaac in turn clings to this sheltering, rather than to the one who took him up the mountain to offer him as a sacrifice.

It is in reference to Sarah that the second instance of love is used in the Bible. "And Isaac brought her [Rebekah] into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her. And Isaac was comforted by his mother" (XXIV.67). Until Sarah dies, men leave their mother and father and cling to their wives (II.24). Sarah leaves Isaac and because of the comfort that Rebekah offers, Isaac loves her. In this tent in the middle of the desert, it happened that a man loved his wife. He did not cleave to her or know her or go into her; Isaac loved Rebekah. Isaac and Sarah had a reciprocally caring relationship, but there was never a mention of love between them. They could not love each other because Sarah cannot offer Isaac comfort and Sarah cannot treat Isaac as anything more than a weak baby that rid her of her shame and gave her laughter. When she dies, Isaac may love someone through her, but only as someone he clung to.

After Sarah dies, a resolution occurs that did not happen in the woods with the other families. Ishmael and Isaac have not been together since Sarah witnessed Ishmael laughing and told Abraham to send him away. Abraham sent Ishmael away and separated the two brothers. Similar instances of familial tension have pulled families apart before, but they have never come back together. Cain and Abel fought and Cain killed Abel. Noah was wronged by his son and proceeded to

condemn all his children to slavery. Abraham separates Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael is sent into the wilderness, while Isaac remains at home. There is no reason to believe that they will ever come back together again and it is extraordinary and unprecedented that they do. When Abraham dies, "Isaac and Ishmael his sons buried him in the cave of Machpelah" (XXV.9). These two brothers have been apart for over seventy years and are never mentioned together again. The reunion is unexpected and brief, but meaningful in that this is the first time brothers have ever really come back together.

The reason Ishmael and Isaac come back together is because of their father. Abraham loves Isaac. He also pleads with God that Ishmael is chosen. Nevertheless, Abraham offers to sacrifice both Isaac and Ishmael for the sake of his God. Abraham has severed himself permanently from both his children and placed them into situations where they have extreme and isolated relationships with their mothers. The Bible doesn't speak in extensive detail about these two relationships. It does, however, give the mothers' reactions to certain formative events. In these instances, one is privy to the strong bind between mother and son, which was conspicuously missing in every generation prior. The caring and protective manner in which Sarah deals with Isaac has already been shown in her reactions to his birth and young childhood, but Hagar also shows similar feelings for her son, Ishmael. When Ishmael was young and he was wandering in the wilderness of Beer-Sheba with his mother, he reached a point where he was very close to dying of thirst. Hagar had no water and there was nothing she could do for her son. Hagar had already been in a similar despairing situation in the desert when she was pregnant with Ishmael. She ran away from Sarai and God found her alone in the wilderness and blessed her and told her to return. So, "She went, and sat her down over against him, a good way off, as it were a bowshot; for she said: Let me not look upon the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lifted up her voice, and wept" (XXI.16). Hagar knew that she was impotent in the situation, that she could do nothing to help the lad, so she set herself apart from him and wept loudly. All that Hagar could do is put Ishmael at a distance from her, because she could not let him die in her arms or even look at his death. If she could gaze at it as Eve coldly looked at the death of Abel and the expulsion of Cain, then she would be as unmotherly as Eve, "the mother of all living" (III.14). But in putting Ishmael only in God's view and crying loudly and setting herself apart from him twice, Hagar is placing Ishmael in a place where he can either die or fulfill his name. Ishmael's name means, 'the Lord heard' or 'the Lord will hear' (XVI.10). When Hagar cries for Ishmael, God's Angel says, "What aileth thee Hagar? Fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad as is there" (XXI.17). Hagar cries for Ishmael, but she is not heard. Hagar places Ishmael at a shot's distance from her and, as he is there, he is heard by God. This scene, in its entirety, shows the intense way that Hagar feels for her son Ishmael. This feeling and action may be taken for granted today in a world where parental relations have been defined, but it is extraordinary in Abraham's time. After God speaks to Hagar and opens her eyes to the quenching sight of a well, "She went and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink" (XXI.9). She has also had no water to drink and is alongside him, thirsty in the desert, yet the first thing she does is similar to the selfless and giving action that Eliezer looks for while searching for Isaac's wife (XXIV.14). Hagar and Rebekah both give to others without even giving thought to their own thirsts.

Hagar has a bond with Ishmael; Ishmael has a bond with Hagar; Sarah has a bond with Isaac; Isaac has a close bond with Sarah. When Abraham dies, "Isaac and Ishmael his sons buried him in the cave of Machpelah" (XXV.9). Abraham is not part of this equation except in the beginning, when he pushes them from himself and unto their mothers, and at the end when the brothers reunite. It is through these close unions with their mothers that Isaac and Ishmael are allowed to perform the first real act of fraternity. Though this act is unique and new, it is short-lived. After their brief reunion, the Bible separates Isaac and Ishmael again and begins describing their individual generations. Through this first confluence, brotherly love can exist and familial tension can have a proper resolution. Before that, however, Isaac must live his life as the

awkward shadow of the Bible.

Unlike his father, Isaac and Rebekah beget children relatively quickly. Sarah was barren for a long time, while Abraham prayed and begged to God repeatedly for children. After the course of many years, another wife, and a child by this other wife, Sarah finally gives birth to Isaac. For Isaac this long patient process leading up to the conception is not necessary. It is written, "And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah . . . to be his wife. And Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord let himself be entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived" (XXV.20-1). The wait was necessary for Abraham and Sarah to create the laughter and all the things that ensued from it. For Isaac the wait would be superfluous because this laughter is already present.

As soon as Rebekah conceives a child, the problems begin. The problems begin because she does not give birth to one child, but rather to two children. With two children there is an inevitable conflict that has been present throughout the story of man. In a way, the story of Isaac and Ishmael is reoccurring. This time, however, the siblings are not half-brothers who are born at different times; they are twins. Their closeness calls for not only greater conflict, but also for a greater resolution. God says to Rebekah, "Two nations are in thy womb, and two peoples shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one shall be a stronger people than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger" (XXV.23). As soon as Esau and Jacob are born love is mentioned once again. "Now Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison; and Rebekah loved Jacob" (XXV.28). This love is, again not a uniting love–as love is generally depicted outside the Bible–it is one that divides. And so the pull begins, with different parents loving different children and the younger child buying the elder's birthright (XXV.29-34).

Soon after the birth of these twins, there is a famine similar to the one that Abraham experienced. Instead of going to Egypt as Abraham did in the first famine, Isaac goes to another land that Abraham had journeyed through. When Abraham went to Gerar, Abraham said that Sarah was his sister because he thought, "Surely there is no fear of God in this place" (XX.11). Abimelech showed Abraham that this fear is not validated, by returning Sarah and giving him gifts and land. When Isaac goes to Gerar, he shouldn't have to lie as Abraham lied because Abimelech, the king who respected his father, still reigns. In addition, when Abraham said that Sarah was his sister, there is something more right about the lie. Firstly Abraham treats her more as an equal in asking her beforehand to perform this favor for him in order to save his life (XII.11-3). Secondly, what has been described as Abraham's lie to Abimelech may not be completely truthful, but it is also not a lie in that Sarah is the daughter of Abraham's father through a different mother (XX.12). None of these things are true for Isaac. Isaac does not ask Rebekah beforehand if he may put her in this sort of danger and she is not in any way his sister. Isaac is repeating actions that his father performed and deviating only in the subtleties that made Abraham's actions appear right. His inability to perform actions is a result of his being a forefather who was born into the position. Just as many of the characters that are placed in the position of being a first, such as Eve, Cain, Ham, Saul, and many others, Isaac is either overzealous in his relationships with others or mindlessly repetitive in his actions.

After Isaac spoke this unnecessary lie, "Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out the window and saw, and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife" (XXVI.8). The verb this translates as "sporting" has a sexual connotation and is the same verb used to describe what Ishmael was doing with Isaac and literally means laughing. Again Isaac is caught laughing with another person. When Isaac was caught with Ishmael, the brothers were separated for over seventy years, but with Rebekah it is not wrong. For although Isaac unnaturally puts them as siblings in the eyes of others, they still are husband and wife. As siblings it is wrong to laugh together, but as husband and wife it is expected and even serves as a proof to Abimelech of their marriage (XXVI.9). Before this instance, every person laughed alone and that was not proper. The only time that someone laughed with another was when Ishmael laughed with Isaac. When Ishmael and Isaac laughed together it was

wrong because laughter is right only in certain types of relationships. Isaac laughs with Rebekah here and Abimelech is sure that they are not siblings, that they must be husband and wife.

After this quasi-imitated action of Isaac, Isaac proceeds to follow his father yet again. "And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham; and he called their names, after the names which his father had called them" (XXVI.18). Again, when Abraham went into the land of the Philistines and dug his wells and made a covenant (XXI) there was a pioneering significance that accompanied the action. When Isaac goes back to the same land and re-digs the same wells, the spirit behind it is pointedly missing.

This inability of Isaac's to understand actions and circumstances in relation to other people does not end with strangers. Isaac has a strange relationship to God, Rebekah, and his two sons. Through Isaac it has been shown that Abraham is able to be a God-fearing man, but Isaac possesses this fear naturally. When God speaks to Isaac, one of the first things he says is, "I am the God of Abraham thy father. Fear not . . ." (XXVI.24). When God is described in reference to the forefathers, many times it is stated, "the God of Abraham and the fear of Isaac" (XXXI.42, XXXI.53). There is no test that Isaac must pass or sacrifice that he must offer to show that the way he feels for God is Fearful. This bizarre relationship to God is further manifested in Isaac's dealings with his wife and children because with them as he acts incorrectly, somehow he acts correctly.

When Isaac was old, he was old and blind. Somewhere in the part of his life that is skipped, between marrying Rebekah and digging wells, or digging wells and becoming old, Isaac became blind. Being blind does not change Isaac's confused and misapplied relation to the world, but it does offer an excuse. In the scene where Isaac must bless his sons, his true confusion as a forefather is pathetically striking, but since this is the first time he is ever fleshed out, he becomes an individual human character. Every one of his senses that makes one human is deceived here to show that although Isaac is confused, he is the most human character in the Bible. Touch, Isaac's most basic sense, is tricked by means of alternate clothes and some goat skins (XXVII.16). Now Jacob, who is a smooth man, will feel just like Esau who is a hairy man. When Jacob speaks, Isaac recognizes that "the voice is the voice of Jacob . . ." (XXVII.22), but he convinces himself otherwise, saying ". . . but the hands are the hands of Esau" because he thinks touch to be truer. Isaac also smelled Jacob, "and said: See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed" (XXVII.27). Not only is Isaac confused here on what he smells, but he also expresses a sort of synaesthesia in speaking of smells as something visible rather than strictly olfactory. Even if it were visible, Isaac would not be able to see it; he is blind and cannot see anything. Taste is the main deception that must be made because the whole story rests on food. The reason that Jacob is allowed to deceive his father about the blessing is because originally Esau sold Jacob the birthright for some "red, red pottage" (XXV.30). Then when Isaac is old and ready to give the blessing, the only time that the word love is used is in reference to the food that Isaac loves to eat (XXVII.4, 9, 14). Isaac loves venison and he loves Esau because of his love for venison (XXVII.4, XXV.28). Even with his strong love for venison, Isaac still does not know how venison tastes. Rebekah replaces the venison that he is expecting with goat (XXVII.9, 17), but Isaac never mentions that he tastes the difference[3]. With Rebekah's help, Jacob attempts to deceive not only all five of Isaac's senses but also confuse his perception of time. Isaac knows that it takes a certain amount of time to kill and cook a deer and asks Jacob, "How is it that thou hast found [the deer] so quickly, my son? And [Jacob] said: Because the Lord thy God sent good speed before me" (XXVII.20). With all his senses misdirected and his askew feeling of time, this scene shows how human Isaac is and how confused Isaac's outlook on the world really is.

When Jacob tricks his father into giving him the blessing, Esau becomes angry and hates Jacob, but Esau's hatred did not begin at that moment. Esau's hatred for Jacob began at birth, the first time that Jacob took hold of Esau's heel. After Esau marries Judith it is written, "they [Esau and Judith] were a bitterness of spirit unto Isaac

and Rebekah" (XXVI.35). Esau has hated Jacob from birth for taking hold of his heel, he hated him throughout his young life, and he hates him more when he takes hold of his heel a second time during the blessing. Jacob's name means "to take hold of the heels" and Esau fully understands this name when his hatred is fullest, saying "Is not he rightly named Jacob? For he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing" (XXVII.36). This hatred, accompanied by a deep desire to murder pervades Esau as it did Cain, but because of a sense of duty to his father, God does not have to get involved as he did with Cain. Esau is willing to give Jacob a stay of execution until Isaac dies. This deferment allows Rebekah to have knowledge of Esau's plan and separate Jacob from Esau.

Jacob goes to the house of Laban for many years waiting for Esau's anger to subside, but it does not. Jacob marries several women and has eleven children waiting for Esau to forgive him, but Esau remains angry. Finally, Jacob leaves Laban's house to meet Esau again, but he first sends before him waves of gifts to soften Esau's anger (XXXII). When Jacob sees Esau approaching, Esau has four hundred men with him and is walking in such a way that Jacob expects war (XXXII.7-13). Jacob expects a conflict because the previous events and threats demand a conflict, but still he does all he can to avoid violence between him and his brother. After the numerous gifts, Jacob "bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother" (XXXIII.3). Instead of attacking Jacob, "Esau ran to meet him, and he embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him; and they wept" (XXXIII.4). This is a serious event that cannot be overlooked. Esau has every reason under the sun to hate Jacob, but no reason to forgive him. Jacob has no rational reason to want or attempt to reunite with Esau and the more natural ending to this scene is the imminent war between Esau and Jacob. The reason Esau had for not killing Jacob when he had the chance was Isaac and the reason they hug and kiss is still Isaac. Before Isaac this could not have happened. But through the love that Isaac created, the tension that he produced, and the duty both brothers feel for their father, brotherly love is formed.

When Ishmael and Isaac come together because of their father, they stay together for the length of one Biblical passage; when Jacob and Esau come together because of their father, they stay together long enough to talk. The conversation is a sincere version of the meeting of Jacob and Laban (XXIX.13), or the conversation that Abraham had with Ephron the Hittite after Sarah died, in reference to a tomb for her burial (XXIII.7-18). With Ephron, the attempted gift of the cave was a sycophantic and insincere gesture that was abandoned without argument. Laban's reason for the great show of affection was also insincere, as is shown in his conniving mistreatment of Jacob. Between Jacob and Esau there is a mutually sincere desire to show their individual affection towards the other through an overflow of emotions and gifts. Although they are sincere in their feelings towards each other and in their exchange of gifts, they also know that they cannot live together as Abraham and Lot tried to do. The idea of Brotherly love is more of a formed reality now, but it is still not complete. After the exchange between Esau and Jacob, Jacob says to Esau, "My Lord knoweth, that the children are tender, and that the flocks will die. Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant; and I will journey on gently" (XXXIII.13-4). Esau does not plead that they should remain together because he knows that it cannot work yet. He still wants to give him, however, a piece of himself to take with him. Esau says, " Let me now, leave with thee, some of the folk that are with me" (XXXIII.15). Thus Jacob and Esau separate and stay separated until the day Isaac dies. On that day, Esau broke the promise that he made in his heart. He said, "Let the days of mourning for my father be at hand; then I will slay Jacob my brother" (XXVII.41). On the day that Isaac died, his sons did not fight; they came back together from being apart and "Esau and Jacob his sons buried him" (XXXV.29).

Jacob and Esau were the greatest of enemies who formed a bond that outlived either of them. Through Isaac they defined what brotherhood was and how strong the pact between brothers really is, but only when it is affirmed and reaffirmed. This bond is again tested and strengthened in

Jacob's twelve children. They pull apart in a larger way than any before them did, but their reunion is also grander. Each of Jacob's children becomes a tribe of Israel and is separate from the others, but they always remain bound by the original relationship that was defined by Isaac. Even the relationship between Esau and Jacob that was conceived by Isaac lasts throughout the Bible. In Deuteronomy, when Israel is making its way into Canaan, the general way they are told to deal with the land and resources of other nations is to "take possession" (Deuteronomy, I.21, II.31, III.2-7). The way Israel must deal with Esau is different. As Israel is traveling close to Esau's ancestors, God says, "You are about to pass through the territory of your kindred, the descendents of Esau . . . They will be afraid of you, so be careful not to engage in battle with them" (Deut., II.4-5). When Jacob and Esau reunited, the peace and affection that occurred between the brothers was unexpected because the definition of brotherhood was still dim. When Jacob's descendents meet Esau's descendents hundreds of years after the story of Esau and Jacob, there are formed rules on how to relate to kindred that even apply to cousins many times removed.

The laughter that formed through Isaac was not only responsible for the foundations of fraternal relations, but also marital relations. Before the conception of the idea of Isaac it was inconsequential whom men took as their wives. With the possibility of Isaac, Sarai comes out into the foreground and becomes essential. From her and the unique relationship that she has with Isaac the first loving marriage is possible. In this marriage, boundaries of deception, responsibility, and laughing are defined that evolve through the next few generations and ultimately allow for the marital laws that are later commanded (Deut. XXI, XXII, XXIV).

These relationships could not have gained any meaning without Isaac. In the world of the Bible, it cannot be taken for granted that before Isaac awkwardly came into the world and caused laughter there was no serious relationship between people. The family meant little other than one generation begat the next one. When any tension or conflict pulled the family apart, the family remained apart. That Isaac was born and the incongruity that Isaac created produced laughter. This laughter created self-awareness, which was necessary for love and a resolution to conflicts that were otherwise fatal.

EPILOGUE

"Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah. . ."
(2 Chronicles, III.1)

There is an old legend that is based on a Midrash that grew out of the Psalm 133, verse 1. The legend has it that there was a man who had two sons and a plot of land with a hill dividing it. When he died, the land was split equally between the two brothers. It came to pass that one brother got married, had children, and became wealthy, while the other brother was poor and grew old alone. One day the brother who had no family began to think about his older brother. He thought that although he was poor and his brother rich, his brother needed more grain to support his family. He resolved that he would give his brother all the grain that he could spare. He decided to act under the guise of night because he didn't want to shame his brother with an outright gift of charity. So the poor brother loaded up his wagon at night and surreptitiously made his way over to his brother's house and deposited the grain. In the morning the poor brother checked his grain and it was the same level as it was before he took any to his brother.

The poor brother loaded up his wagon with grain every night and every night deposited it in his brother's store-house, but every morning he found there to be no grain missing. One night, the poor brother was making his way over the hill with a wagon-full of grain. The wealthy brother had noticed his poor brother and his wagon and they both dismounted kissed and wept.

Every night, as the poor brother traveled over the to the rich brother's house, the rich brother was sneaking grain into the poor brother's house. The rich brother thought that he had children and they would take care of him when he was old. But his brother was alone and would have no one to take care of him.

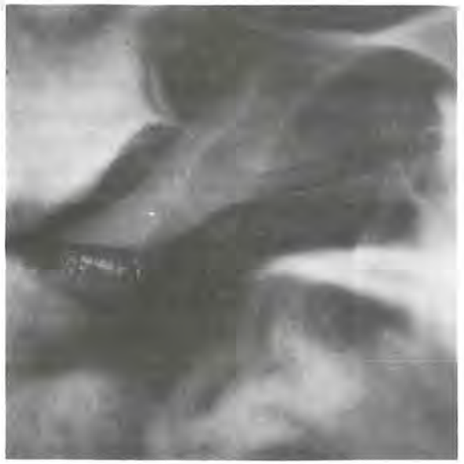
When King Solomon heard this story he decided to build the temple on the hill where these brothers accidentally met that night. He said that the temple was most fit to be built on that hill because it witnessed the greatest manifestation of brotherly love.

Endnotes

[1] "Knock, knock." "Who's there?" "Boo." "Boo who?" "Oh, don't cry, it's only a 'Knock, knock' joke!"

[2] In the Septuagunt it is added that Ishmael is " . . . making sport with his son Isaac" (XXI.9).

[3] Based on a survey of 10 meat-eaters who have eaten, but do not necessarily love, both venison and goat; all 10 of them said that venison does not taste exceptionally similar to lamb. Most even went so far as to claim they could distinguish one from the other in a blind taste-test.



Smoking
Kristin Masser, A'01

TWELVE YEARS, FIRST WORDS

for Mark

Alicia Potee, A'02

You were a small thing,
eyelashes curled like smoke rings,
a heartbreak baby.

I held you lightly,
some origami bundle,
thin enough to tear.

Watching you sprout now,
past the grass which you once seemed
to meet, blade to brow,

reminds me that time
(clocks, breath) has beaten through me,
stumbled onto you.

Too old for blankets,
you now sleep in knots, on sheets.
Often, I watch you.

Fetal, a seedling,
you shift as if in the womb,
swimming through darkness

inside our mother,
dreaming within the walls I
too have known so well.

Awake, I think of
cradling you for the first time,
marveling at how,

in time, your hands would
be large enough for grasping.
I would teach you then.

Unable to speak,
now twelve years later, I see
that my time has passed

almost as quickly.
I hear myself whispering
those very first words

I said to you, perched
like Buddha on my lap: *"Will
you remember this?"*

Untitled
Sarah Wilson, A'03

Eating Human

Death and the Good Life in Homer's Iliad

Alan Rubenstein, A'00

Prelude

Homer's Iliad begins and ends with a feast. The opening feast occurs in the darkness of some unspecified time after all the action of the poem has ended. The warriors have left, the clamor of fighting has disappeared. Where all this was, there are now only dogs and birds and their meal. Before ever entering into the narrative and beginning his journey through the events of the epic, Homer gives us this picture of the distant aftermath, where life has deserted what we come to know as the bustling shores of Troy. Where there were heroes there are now corpses and, perhaps, the wind left behind by souls hurled into Hades. In a story where anonymity never elsewhere accompanies death, our opening picture is a deserted battlefield full of men not assigned any identity other than their role as the spoil for division of animal scavengers. This vivid panorama is laid out for us in words that modify the first, and most essential, word of the poem–μῆνις, the μῆνις of Achilles.

There is a corpse, again, at the center of the closing feast, though now its flesh has been burned away and its bones lie beneath the earth in purple robes and a casket. This feast occurs at a very neatly specified moment in time–nine days of gathering timber from the time of recovering the body, one day devoted to its burning and then the day of burial and the feast. The men preparing the feast are keenly aware of their situation in time, living under the foreboding twelfth day when the safety assured by Achilles' promise will have run its course. That day, the next appearance of rosy-fingered dawn, will bring what the Trojans have accepted to be the beginning of their destruction. The hope they had of survival is burnt on the pyre. So, here is a meal taken out of time, as well–a meal taken not in men's expectation of nourishing themselves for a life of stretching out after their goals, but one taken under the resignation to impending death. The μῆνις of Achilles has created the context for this meal as well. Now, though, it is the whole poem, the action in all its detail, and this final meal as its last moment, that shows forth as a modification of this word.

Eating is the activity that is common and essential to all life. The incorporation of the outside world, of a nourishing other, into the substance of an individual is the very heart of identity as it exists amongst living things. But surely the meals of men are as unlike the metabolizing activity of plants and the devouring done by animals as they are like. We must imagine that the meal taken by Priam and the Trojans at the completion of the ceremonial burial of Hektor has all the traits of a distinctively human eating. Here is Homer's description:[1]

> χεύαντες δὲ τὸ σῆμα, πάλιν κίον αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
> They piled up the grave-barrow and went away, and thereafter
> εὖ συναγειρόμενοι, δαίνυτα ἐρικυδέα δαῖτα,
> assembled a fair gathering and held a glorious feast
> δώμασιν ἐν Πριάμοιο, διοτρεφέος βασιλῆος.
> within the house of Priam, king under God's hand. (24.801-803)

The word δαίς indicates no ordinary object of eating. It is reserved for the kind of eating that involves division, its related verbs all carrying this sense of partitioning. It is an eating that follows preparation–deliberate treatment of foodstuffs with consideration for who is to be fed. This is an eating that is put off while an activity like piling a grave barrow is accomplished and that requires its partakers to assemble and allows them to address one another (part of the connotation of ἀγείρς, related to ἀγορά). It is a kind of eating to which can be applied such modifiers as 'fair' (εὖ) and 'glorious' (ἐρικυδέα). It is an eating carried out in a man-made structure, even a palace whose visitors are convened by a king whom God cares for (διο-

τρέφω). Thus, the human delaying of satisfaction, the human powers of speech, building with tools, and political organization, as well as the human closeness to the divine are all a part of this kind of meal. The distinctive way in which his nourishment is carried out can be a doorway to discovering the uniqueness of man.

Now turn back to the opening lines:

> μῆνιν ἄειδε, θεά, Πηληϊάδες Ἀχιλῆος
> Sing, goddess, the anger of Peleus' son Achilleus
> οὐλομένην, ἥ μυρί' Ἀχαιοῖς ἄλγε' ἔθηκε
> and its devastation, which put pains thou sandfold upon the Achaians
> πολλὰς δ' ἰφθίμους ψυχὰς Ἄϊδι προΐαψεν
> hurled in their multitudes to the house of Hades strong souls
> ἡρώων, αὐτοὺς δὲ ἑλώρια τεῦχε κύνεσσιν
> of heroes, but the men themselves it prepared as spoil for dogs
> οἰωνοῖσί τε δαῖτα, Διὸς δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή
> and as a feast for vultures, and the will of Zeus was accomplished

Homer begins his epic with a series of engaging contradictions. Achilles, the greatest hero of the Achaians puts pains a thousandfold on those very Achaians. The intangible ψῦχή, originally and still in Homer breath, 'breath' is qualified by ἰφθίμος, an adjective meaning 'sturdy,' 'stout,' a manner of being for massive bodies. Also, this breath of life is the object of προιημι, hurling, whose subject is μῆνις. Spears are hurled by the hands of men. Emotions, except in this extended metaphoric use, have no power to grip and propel, nor is wind something to be so handled. But of the utmost importance for our inquiry, we encounter the difficulty of what the men *themselves* - not their souls - are made into or prepared as (τεῦχω). These corpses, as we find them in this dark aftermath, are ἑλώρια and δαίς for the birds and dogs. We have already seen what is entailed in using the latter of these words. Much attention will be given in this paper to the importance of the δαίς, but suffice it to say for now that the application of this word, with its distinctively human connotations, to the scavenging activity of animals both makes the opening panorama more horrific and sows the seeds for a question about mortality and the meaningfulness of human striving that will dominate the work. The same effect of startling his listeners by using language expressive of man's uniqueness to describe the non-human world is accomplished by choosing the word ἑλώρια. This word is derived from αἱρέω and developed into the meaning of 'spoil,' 'booty,' that which is taken by men in their exalting moments of victory in battle. In no other place is this word used in conjunction with the activity of animals. Its most powerful use comes in Book Eighteen, in Achilles' plaint to his mother:

> ...since the spirit within me does not drive me
> to go on living and be among men, except on condition
> that Hektor first be beaten down under my spear, lose his life
> and pay the price for stripping (ἑλώρια) Patroklos, son of Menoitios .(18.90-93)

The stripping of Achilles' divine armor from Patroklos is a critical moment of the action on the battlefield, involving pinnacle acts of heroism on both sides. It is the moment of greatest triumph for Hektor and the act that, here in Book Eighteen, Achilles singles out as the most deserving of requital by himself. It is with this grand importance to human affairs that ἑλώρια (or ἑλώρα) conveys in mind that we should read it in the opening lines of the poem. So, after all the struggle and drama of Achaians and Trojans has died down, it is dogs who triumphantly claim their war spoil and birds who engage in the kingly feast.

The dogs and birds play an essential role in the Iliad, as a whole. This, in spite of the fact that we rarely see them at all and never (after these opening lines) see them engaging in the activity with which they are most predominantly associated—devouring the corpses of men. These scavengers play their role by looming forever in the background, just at the periphery of each man's field

of vision. The threats that fighters issue at one another invariably involve the notion that defeat will mean becoming a meal to these animals. Such a fate is repeatedly pointed out by Homer himself when he wants to convey the tragedy of a man's death, whether he be a great man or a meager one. Then there are, of course, the great battles that are waged over the corpses of such men as Sarpedon and Patroklos, and the crucial chain of events that leads to the recovery of the corpse of Hektor. All of these pivotal movements of the story are driven by the looming presence of the dogs and birds and the horror that is represented by becoming food to them. The very awareness of death that characterizes humanity, we might say, is symbolized by this glimpse that is caught out of the corner of one's eye of the birds and dogs waiting to make all human striving for naught—to make men, who eat in order to carry out the most developed goals, into nothing more than foodstuffs for another creature. Let us linger for a time on this death-awareness and its fundamental role in creating the very notion of meaningfulness in human life.

All life is, in a manner of speaking, characterized by the effort to preserve itself. The act of metabolism is the distinguishing activity of the organic. Here is a helpful characterization of metabolism from Hans Jonas' The Phenomenology of Life:[2]

> In this remarkable mode of being the material parts of which the organism consists at a given instant are to the penetrating observer only temporary, passing contents whose joint material identity does not coincide with the identity of the whole which they enter and leave, and which sustains its own identity by the very act of foreign matter passing through its spatial system, the living *form*. It is never the same materially and yet persists as its same self, *by* not remaining the same matter. Once it really becomes the same with the sameness of its material contents... it ceases to live; it dies. (75-76)

Thus we can understand life as being in continual activity and, as such, sustaining its identity as an organism. Death is the cessation of this activity, with its shifting of material. The plant's act is describable *by an observer* as a continuing effort to sustain itself, driven by what Jonas calls the 'life-urge.' On the level of life beyond the vegetative, however, the life-urge is a *subjective* striving associated with the activity of metabolism. Food for an animal is not immediately contiguous with it in the way that it is for a plant. In fact, an animal's environment generally is characterized by being distant from the animal, so that the distinctive animal powers, motility, perception and emotion are meaningful and even determinative of what the 'world' is for it. Our interest, in particular, for this paper, is the last of these powers, emotion. Again, Jonas is helpful in tying emotion together with the basic life-principle of metabolism:[3]

> Fulfillment not yet at hand is the essential condition of desire, and deferred fulfillment is what desire in turn makes possible. Thus desire represents the time-aspect of the same situation of which perception represents the space-aspect. Distance in both respects is disclosed and bridged: perception presents the object "not here but over there"; desire presents the goal "not yet but to come": motility guided by perception and driven by desire turns *there* into *here* and *not yet* into *now*. (101)

Animal eating always involves fulfillment not yet at hand since distance, both spatial and temporal, is an inescapable fact of the animal encounter with the world. *Hunger* is an entity inseparable from animal metabolism, though non-existent in that of plants. So, the constant flux that makes for the identity of an animal organism—for its form, beyond the ever-changing matter— is a life-urge tinged with the emotional quality of desire. An animal maintains itself as what it is by not just being at work, but by wanting, *striving* to live.

It should be clear that what we are doing in this progression is identifying the various stages of complexity of life and doing so, primarily, by noting the different powers that appear. For animals, these are motility, perception, and emotion, *on top of* and supporting vegetative metabolism. When, in this progression we reach the level of man, we encounter what seems to be an unspeakable tragedy. Whatever other powers may be identifiable as unique to man, one distinguishing trait

is clear: he is aware of his mortality. This awareness is particularly tragic in light of the fact just described that life is what it is because it works to preserve itself and, for animal life–which includes man–this work has the character of desire. Man is unique among living things in that he sees that despite everything that the life-urge does to continue the process of living, death waits as the end for all living things. The encounter that men have with the corpses of those who have died is the crucial point. Jonas calls this encounter an ever-recurring particular fact that seems to deny the basic truth of the self-sustaining activity of living beings: to be is to live.[4]

Homer does well to recall the most essential moment of human consciousness when he specifies, αὐτοὺς δὲ ἑλώρια τεῦχε κύνεσσιν. Man sees the corpse and knows that this is him, himself. By some awareness of an invariable fate for a common category of being, be it *man* or *animal* or *living thing*, and by some power of anticipation of his own future, a man sees the cessation of life in *that* thing as a sign that all of his striving to live will end in the same way. Homer gives an added dimension to this distinguishing awareness that man possesses by presenting it as dominant in his consciousness not just that he will cease to live, but that he will become food for another organism. Here it is difficult to see if we describe tragedy or comedy: all the animal's effort to live by altering other living things into an element of its fluctuating metabolism ends by that animal being a helpless meal for the first scavenger who comes along. There is a basic irony here for the animal who lives without any intimation of this fate, believing, so long as it lives, that the world was made for its consumption. For man, however, above this irony are all the avenues of meaningfulness that he creates in response to the awareness that the urge to live is guaranteed to end badly. Knowing his life will be short he must find the means to make it *good*. Above all, this paper seeks some answer to the question, 'what is the good life?'

Introduction

The power of Homer's beginning lies in the way that it makes vivid for us the fundamental struggle of the self-conscious mortal being. What the rest of the poem–and really all story-telling–is about is the ways in which man finds meaning, goodness in life, both in spite of and because of his mortality. In addition, through its most reflective characters, the poem will consciously address the question of whether this meaning, whatever be its ways of manifesting itself, is real or illusory. Achilles, in particular, will take us back to the picture of the opening lines, to gaze upon it and ask whether it is the truest image of the end of the life of men.

Of course, men must live as if they were more than carrion. Of the experiences that characterize the way that they do so, there are two categories that this paper will single out. We put these two under the headings of honor and love. To get a beginning into these themes, we can look to Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit:[5]

> Self-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged... The detailed exposition of the Notion of this spiritual unity in its duplication will present us with the process of Recognition. (section 178) Honor and love are modes of recognition. They exist in the human realm because men are self-conscious–because, for them, *being* means being for themselves. Hegel brings immediately to the fore the essential duplication that is presumed by self-consciousness. There can not be only one man–the *encounter* of self-conscious beings is essential to the existence of such beings. Hegel's account of the most primordial of such encounters is the life and death struggle, the "trial by death." On the battlefield of Homer, we see many encounters to the death of self-conscious men. By applying Hegel's account of the emerging self-consciousness to these encounters and to the movements in the souls of the men who engage in them, we can shed light on the question of how men respond to their mortality.

We must not, however, allow the literal staking of lives that occurs on the battlefield to mislead us into thinking that it is only there that Hegel's account and, generally, the conclusions that our inquiry will draw, are relevant. It is the very core of self-aware man, of you and me, to seek recognition. The life and death struggle of Hegel is at

the center of every one of these endeavors, even when the staking of lives is not so easy to see. Even on Homer's battlefield we are far removed from the simple life and death struggle–the men are men, not the isolated self-consciousnesses that Hegel describes. This paper's project will be to justify these claims of the pervasiveness of recognition-seeking in the life of mortal man by distinguishing its elements in the story and characters of the Iliad.

When we allude to the removal from the isolated encounter of self-consciousnesses that is implied when we speak of 'men,' we have in mind the more complex modes that human beings find to attain recognition. Hegel, himself, moves quickly from his account of the basic life and death struggle to the manifestation of the same (superceded in) the more complex master-slave dialectic. Our account will not make explicit use of this movement of Hegel's though there will be similar elements to be found. Rather, we will seek to discover how Homer would have us pick up from the primordial encounter and move to the next stage. Having said this, a word is in order about the structure of what follows.

The first part of this paper will be an interpretation of a speech of Sarpedon that is found near the exact middle of the poem (Book Twelve). Our primary goal, here, will be to uncover the presence of the core life and death struggle in the more complex affair of the struggle on the battlefield. In this section we will develop an idea that will guide what follows, what we call the 'honor-metabolism.' It is in hopes of expanding upon this image that we will move into our close reading of the main story of the Iliad, through its most important character, Achilles. The second section of the paper will examine how the *raw-materials* of the honor-metabolism can be made into substantive nutrition through the mediation of men not involved in the struggle to the death–men we call, primarily, friends or allies. The struggle between Agamemnon and Achilles, we will argue, is based on a disagreement over how this transfiguration of honor won on the battlefield (the, above-mentioned 'raw-materials') into honor that can sustain a man's being-for-self ought to be effected. Running through this exposition will be a side-long glance at the basic questions of economics, since the material of the honor-metabolism, we will argue, is the foundation of 'value' in a political community. Agamemnon's is the 'economic' side of this debate, his rule standing for the translation of value, which always bears the stamp of its source, into *cost*, which is, in its essence, transferable. On Achilles' side is the argument for value sustained by the reverence, or love, of one's fellow men. Honor and love, in his vision, must be put into an appropriate dynamic in order to make substance out of battlefield honor.

We should not be misled by my philosophical characterization of Achilles' stance in opposition to Agamemnon; Achilles' holding of this opinion is manifested as a part (the moral part) of his rage, his μῆνις. An interwoven, but somewhat distinct, project of this paper will be to explore anger, generally, by watching the movements of fury and self-realization that take place in Achilles. Between the first and second parts of this essay, there will be a transition that, using an illustrative simile, will bring anger on to the stage of man's struggle for recognition in the face of death. Through the second part of the essay I will trace what I identify as the three stages of Achilles anger, allowing this to structure my inquiry into honor, love and mortality. By the end of this part, I will be able to draw some general conclusions about anger. Among these, I will bring back Jonas' characterization of emotion as the bridging of some distance (my pg. 5) and ask the question of what distance it is that human anger bridges.

Although love will make its appearance in my account as but one of two means to make nourishment out of the raw-materials of the honor-metabolism, I will have more to say about love's presence in the life of man independent of the life governed by the quest for honor in the final section of the essay. Where the second part ('Honor and Achilles') strives for completeness in its analysis particularly of Books One, Nine, Sixteen and Eighteen, the third part ('Love, Hate and Cannibalism') will be more speculative and brief. There my interpretation will be of four small pieces of text that convey much of the emotion of the last six books of the poem and fill out the account that has come before.

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All is not well, however, for the hero, not even in this, his greatest moment of exultation. The piercing cries that men let out in the midst of their battle-fury, as an inseparable part of the vaunts over their fallen enemies, betray an emotion that, at first, seems to have no place in this scheme of satisfied desire. This emotion is anger. We have painted the picture of men who stand face to face with their mortality and find ways to respond that involve staking their lives for something that would prevent death from having the final word. The moment of triumph for the hero's subjective mode of being that has shown that it is not attached to life raises man to divine status insofar as he has tasted of the power to eliminate the self-conscious other. It is this that he was eager for, this that he has won. So why is he angry? For an answer to this we can return to the Hegelian scheme.

We have already made note of how upon seeing the corpse of a fellow man, a self-aware human being sees his own mortality. Hegel provides a nice image for this, since he describes the two self-consciousnesses encountering one another as a single action with a double significance. Insofar as both live and both stake their lives, they are free equally from their mortality. The death of one, however, does not give to the first what he sought—the recognition that he *is*, indeed, and is the true subject for whom the world exists. Rather, it simply destroys him as well, by destroying the other, whose recognition was the basis of his existence. Now, of course, men in the Iliad do not encounter one another in the isolated way that Hegel describes as somehow primordial. A victory means much in the way of recognition—*but only from other men*, allies in particular. If we try to look behind this kind of recognition we can see the Hegelian moment of self-destruction still present in the encounters of the various heroes. What a man responds to when he stands over his fallen adversary, then, is death, itself, as a real force in his own life. What he shouts his invectives at is his own corpse. All of the glorifying exaltation of divine origin aside, the victor is just as mortal as the man slain and now he faces this mortality more than ever. As the sickening weakness that sets in after sexual satisfaction attests, that which one seeks with all possible eagerness can, upon the satiation of the desire, turn out a unique kind of pain. The hero is enraged by his kill at the same moment as he is elated. At bottom of this rage is his recognition of the futility of his striving after what seemed like his best hope to combat his own mortality. We will see in what follows the source and nature of this futility.

It will be helpful to our inquiry to pause a moment on this idea of the satiation of a desire before proceeding. A satiation is a kind of end, though it has the peculiar nature of resetting the forces at work at the same moment that it completes them. Hunger for food is the simplest and most illustrative example. When we eat we stop our hunger pains, stop the dominion that seeking food holds over our attention. Our hunger does not reach any real end, here, however, as we set ourselves in motion to be hungry for out next meal. The truth, I would claim, is that in this world of becoming much of what we take for ends is of this kind. One way to understand this cycle of satiation and renewal of appetite is by labeling these as moments in the process of metabolism. As Jonas pointed out to us earlier, the only moment of real completion from the standpoint of a living body, when the form of an organism becomes the same as its matter, is death. Other than this, metabolism in an animal works by never reaching completion, but by alternating between greater and lesser *feelings* of completion as the animal changes its relation to its environment. So we see that there is a very tight analogy between the organic metabolism of the animal and the waxing and waning of the appetite for glorifying honor of man. Man, seeing his own inevitable death, feels the same type of incompleteness as any animal feels when it is hungry. He, too, is urged on toward filling this lack and does so until he reaches a point of satiation. This point, however, much as it seems like the end of the road for his appetite is really just a moment of resetting, in which he realizes that he must go on exerting himself in whatever activity it is that will bring his next round of satiation. He must live forever from one meal of honor to the next, incorporating the sustenance that his victories win him into his identity as a being, recognized by the world and, most especially, by himself. The second part of this inquiry will look at how this incorporation can occur. First, though, we turn to a beginning exploration of anger, a theme that will weave together, through the person of Achilles, with our explication of honor-metabolism.

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What we have put forth so far with regard to honor, life and death is a scope through which we can peek at the mystery of the signification of the word θῦμός. θῦμός is the most common word used by Homer for life and for what we would call the soul. We, however, through Plato especially, associate θῦμός in particular with the spirited part of the soul that takes the leading role in those who live the life of honor. I bring this word up not to make reference to any particular use of it in the Iliad, but to point out the intimate connection between having the appetite for honor—in fact, the system of 'honor-metabolism,' in general—and living. To face the impossible odds that death deals us—death, which is both the discouragement of all that men, as living beings, can hope for and the parent of all that men, as men, find meaningful—is to hunger for recognition. We are not merely animals. Our life-urge must find an outlet via distinctly human powers and, as we have uncovered it, the value foundation of this outlet is the honor won on the battlefield. The good life, as we have seen, is measured in the currency of honor and the value of this currency is only its power to combat the necessity of death. What life is *worth*, and thus what life *is* for the animal aware of his mortality, is decided at those places in the universe where honor is won or lost. Then, from the mouth of the central character of the poem, and the most thoughtful about the question of mortality, we hear these words:

> Fate is the same for the man who holds back, the same if he fights hard.
>
> We are held in a single honor (ἰῇ τιμῇ) the brave with the weaklings.
>
> A man dies still if he has done nothing, as one who has done much.
>
> Nothing is won for me, now that my heart has gone through its afflictions
>
> in forever setting my life on the hazard of battle. (9.318-322)

This comment should terrify us, even as it rings true. Achilles sees the same spirits of death around him as Sarpedon, but sees no reason to respond to this by striving to win honor. To strive to win honor, in the picture I just painted, is to live and so we find death—the true death of hopeless living—very close to Achilles when we hear these words. One can hear in the background the howling of the dogs and the flapping of the vulture's wings from the opening lines. αὐτοὺς δ ἐλώρια τεῦχε κύνεσσιν. Men, themselves, strive as they might, are but objects, food for scavengers.

In fact we have already seen the grounds, on one level, for this critique of Achilles. The anger that is present in the vaunt of the hero betrays his recognition that not thus will he defeat death. We have noted that the man who vaunts over his slain foe sees in the corpse of the other his own death. But this overlooks one step in this critical moment. The vaunt is always spoken to the man immediately after the fatal wound is administered but before the fallen man's life has expired. This is the moment of the ψῦχή. This word for life, breath, soul is almost exclusively reserved for the moment when one is just about to expire (or long after this has happened). It is the ψῦχή that *leaves* the body, not that animates it. It has its foot already in the underworld as soon as it is ever heard from. This is the entity to which the vaunt is addressed. The heroes want the last thing that their enemies hear to be their boast—their name and the angry expression of their prowess. It is as if this were their means to carry themselves beyond the world where death has mastery. I have made the claim that this moment of exultation is, for the heroes, a moment of transcendence. Here for a vanishing instant they can bask in the κῦδος, the divine eminence, of victory and satiate their spiritual hunger. Now we can understand both the true and illusory nature of this transcendence even more clearly. By means of the ψῦχή to which they address their vaunt they touch the world beyond mortality. We see, then, that the ordinary conception of the soul and the afterlife needs to be reversed. The ψῦχή is less the means by which the

hero who *dies* lives beyond his death, but the means by which he who *lives* does so. But that ψῦχή is an insubstantial thing to touch. When a man reflects on this insubstantial quality he finds the food in his mouth to have taste but no nutrition. His hunger is a spiritual hunger, born of the knowledge of his mortality, but his meal is just as insubstantial to ward off death beyond this passing moment as the meal of the animal. Nourishment is sought in this moment, but in the fallen enemy, rushing to become a corpse, it is lacking; and its lack in the other is a lack in the self. It is this fact, in part, on which Achilles reflects when he refers to the 'single honor' in which death puts us all. It is this fact that the opening lines convey by telling us

> πολλὰς δἀϊφθίμους ψυχὰς Ἄϊδι
> προΐαθεν
> ἡρώων, αὐτοὺς δ ἑλώρια τεῦχε
> κύνεσσιν.

The men *themselves* are food for birds and dogs, not for the θῦμός of other men.

This is not the final word, however, on the ψῦχή and the death-transcending glory that the address to it is meant to afford. The anger of seeing the ψῦχή flee just at the moment that it appears as one's only means to escape mortality is so primordial that from its roots are grown all the relations that men develop with one another in order to live the good life. Men, as has been pointed out, never simply engage one another in the life and death struggle of the primordial self-consciousness. Off the battlefield, men are allies to one another, friends and fellow citizens, in addition to enemies. By finding the foundation of this friendly relationship in the efforts to capture the fleeing ψῦχή we can discern at least two different modes of life among allies, the life of political honor and the life of honor governed by love. The conflict between these two modes of life, between Agamemnon and Achilles, is the central story of the Iliad.

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These objections to the imbalance between merit and wealth and the transience of material things are the most recognizable elements of Achilles' position. We can find a deeper objection, however, if we reflect on the moment of decision that Achilles lives through in Book One as to whether he should kill Agamemnon on the spot or heed the injunction of Athena and restrain himself. As was the case with Agamemnon, Achilles has both a personal anger well up inside of him at the insult to his own honor and a more comprehensive anger. His own recognition as the best fighter is damaged by Agamemnon's actions. For this the remedy would, indeed, be to

> ...draw from beside his thigh the sharp sword,
> driving
> away all those who stood between and kill
> the son of Atreus. (1.191-192)

But Achilles realizes, or is told by Athena, that Agamemnon is loved by the gods as Achilles is. This translates into saying that he is a power among men equal to Achilles, though certainly not by virtue of his spear. To kill Agamemnon would not serve the purposes of the overpowering anger that Achilles feels in response to the political order that the son of Atreus represents. This anger will ask something else of him. Thus we hear him say,

> δημοβόρος βασιλεύς, ἐπεὶ
> οὐτιδανοῖσιν ἀνάσσεις
> King who feed on your people, since you rule
> nonentities
> ἦ γὰρ ἄν, Ἀτεΐδη, νῦν ὕστατα
> λωβήσαιο.
> otherwise, son of Atreus this were your last
> outrage. (1.231-232)

Achilles expresses just the order of things that we have adopted from Hegel. That which is fed on, insofar as it is considered the object of desire, is nothingness, has no intrinsic being. Agamemnon's rule, which is meant to make out of the nothingness of the fleeting ψῦχή something substantial to feed the spiritual hunger of death-bound men, turns out to make nothingness out of those very men. Recognition is not real in the Achaian camp, Achilles would argue. The honor of material possessions has been alienated from the personal honor won in meritorious action. These goods are what men see when they recognize each other in a political context and, so, men do not see the *being* that each one has but merely the *having*; and this having is the object of their own desire. Thus, what the men see in one another verges on mere objects of desire—most of all in the case of one's vision from the head of the table. Recognition, sought on the field of battle and carried back into the political arena, is capable of becoming a mere mask for the perception of other men as objects of desire. Beneath the stripped armor the enemy, in fact, the food, poses as the friend.

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A brief restatement of where we have come is in order here: on the battlefield men put their lives at grave risk for the sake of recognition. The life-urge within them seeks to sustain the being-for-self that is born with self-awareness and consciousness of mortality. Death, in the form of a world of other things that each make the claim to subjectivity as the self-conscious man does, must be fought against by making the world know that *he* is the subjective point of view. But the recognition sought in killing the enemy is not found there—the ψῦχή from whom it is most acutely asked flits away—and so the life-urge finds, in other self-conscious men, allies. These are the men who can give recognition for meritorious deeds done. Here the rupture between Agamemnon and Achilles begins to form. How are these men, allies, to regard one another? We have shown that the answer to this question for which Agamemnon stands, the political answer, is regarded by Achilles as making of men οὐτῖδανοι—nonentities for the repast of their king and of each other.

The alternative, we are now prepared to say, is for allied men to do just what Hegel says that animals do *not* do in the presence of sensuous things (which, of course, includes other animals)—'stand idly in front of them as if they possessed intrinsic being.' In other words, to regard other men as *friends*. We need to look hard into this category of relations among men, on its own account, and then turn to the question of how it works together with the all important winning of battlefield glory. Thus we will see how Achilles believes it provides a real alternative means of capturing the ψῦχή.

We can go quite far in setting down the foundations of the friend relation between men by examining Aristotle's ἄλλος αὐτός ὁ φίλος, 'the friend is an other self.' We may take this statement on one level to mean that the friend is another instantiation of one's own person—skills, dispositions, values are shared. We will find this reading quite helpful when we turn to Achilles' friendship with Patroklos. On another level, though, the statement means simply this: the friend is that *other* whom one views as possessing intrinsic being, as having a subjective point of view, rather than being a mere object. In this way, the friend would be the inverse to the οὐτῖδᾶνος or, generally, to food. We would then say that even the enemy whom one encounters on the battlefield is a friend, *insofar as* he is regarded as something besides an object to be sacrificed to the hero's hunger for recognition (as a θῦμός rather than a ψῦχή). Moreover, the political ally is a friend *insofar as* he is recognized for who he *is* rather than what he *has*. In truth, Achilles' perspective amounts to saying that only via friendship and its concomitant motion in the soul, love, can there be genuine recognition among men. The means of transfiguring battlefield glory, the taste for which is born of knowing that one is to die, into nourishment must be to receive recognition from allies in the form of love. Recalling our earlier work with the speech of Sarpedon, we can say that this sort of mediation of the raw materials for the honor-metabolism still falls under the category of κλέος. Now it is the fundamental imaging power of men—singing songs and making speeches—that does the work on this material rather than the secondary imaging power of making symbols, the currency of wealth, to stand for this honored status in the minds of men.

Now let us return to Aias' speech in Book Nine and see how it is spoken according to Achilles' own mind. To begin with, we have already noted that it is spoken outside of the bounds of the official embassy. Achilles must sense immediately that Aias speaks not from the position of a political counterpart but simply as a man, a guest under Achilles roof, as indeed he has the good sense to point out (9.640-642). In this context, Aias speaks. Most revealing for us are these words about

ately that Aias speaks not from the position of a political counterpart but simply as a man, a guest under Achilles' roof, as indeed he has the good sense to point out (9.640-642). In this context, Aias speaks. Most revealing for us are these words about Achilles,

> He is hard, and does not remember that friend's affection (φιλότητος ἑταίρων)
> wherein we honored him by the ships, far beyond all others (ἔχοψον ἄλλων)
> (9. 630-631).

To neither Odysseus nor Phoinix, Agamemnon nor Nestor, did it occur to point out to Achilles the love–on top of the honor–that is shared between Achilles and his comrades. This, in spite of the fact that Achilles greets the ambassadors with

> Welcome. You are my friends (φίλοι) who have come, and greatly I need you,
> who even to this my anger are dearest (φίλτατοί) of the Achaians. (9.197-198)

He does not see the men approaching him as what they obviously are–officials on a mission from Agamemnon. He sees them as friends, whose company he needs *in spite of* his dispute with the sceptered king. Aias, alone, picks up on this and accuses Achilles in a way that is capable of having an effect. In his final remarks, we hear from Aias more emphasis placed on the love of the Achaians in addition to a repetition of the formulation ἔξοχον ἄλλων:

> Respect your own house; see, we are under the same roof with you,
> from the multitude of the Danaans, we, who desire beyond all others (ἔξοχον ἄλλων)
> to be to you the most cared for and beloved, out of all the Achaians. (9.640-642)

To recognize another as a thing possessing intrinsic being is to hold it apart (ἐξ + ἐχω) from other things. For the being that sees the world only as food nothing is so held apart.

Now let us bring honor back into the picture with respect to love. What it *does* seem relevant to the other ambassadors to remind Achilles of is that the Achaians will honor Achilles, even honor him as a god (cf. 9.302-303, 9.603). In Aias' speech, on the other hand, honor comes up only in the first lines given above (626-627). Honor is indeed what the Achaians can offer Achilles if he gives over his anger, but honor *inside of* love: 'the friend's affections *wherein* (η) we honored him.' This is the essence of Achilles' alternative system of bringing glory off the battlefield and making it last in the community of men. Again Aristotle is of help:

> Life is desirable especially for good men, because existence is good and pleasant to them; they are pleased when they are conscious of the presence in them of what is in itself good. Also the attitude of a morally good man is the same toward himself as toward his friend, since a friend is another self. From all this it follows that just as one's own existence is desirable for each man, so, or nearly so, is his friend's existence also desirable for him. Now as we saw, his existence is desirable because he perceives his own goodness, and this kind of perception is itself pleasant. (Nicomachean Ethics 1170b3-10)[6]

What we read in Aristotle as 'the morally good man' we can read in Homer as the courageous man, the man well suited to winning glory in the fighting.[7] A man who wins great glory ought to be honored by friends since his existence is desirable for them *in its own right*. As a man revels in his own glory at the moment he stands over his fallen enemy, he should be able to revel in another man's meritorious deeds and to recapture the ψῦχή that has fled him by having his achievements so reveled in.

Notice how well this complements the other fundamental encounter of self-consciousness. There, too, in Hegel's picture of the life and death struggle, the other, is in a sense, one self with the first self-consciousness–its recognition of you and your recognition of it are one movement. But, in that encounter, the other must be destroyed in order to strip from it any claim to intrinsic, i.e. subjective, being. In the friendly encounter of self-consciousnesses, on the other hand, the other's being-for-self is supported in the true mutual recognition of one another–'true' since each sees the other as something besides a means to satisfy its appetite, as something besides food. In the orientation of the world that Achilles would wish for, the appetitive glory of the Hegelian encounter would be substantified by the friendly recognition of the encounter, under the auspices of love. The political system of honors, which Achilles rejects, finds a mean between friend and enemy, as I have laid them out: the 'political ally.' This person is, to a certain degree, seen as food rather than something with intrinsic being (to a very large extent, Achilles would claim) but is still capable, through the mediacy of wealth, of offering recognition of a lasting kind.

We have, then, uncovered two opposing means for the honor-metabolism to digest its raw materials: by recognition through wealth and by recognition, simply, from those whom one loves. We can understand these two opposing means better by pausing a moment to address, what I have called in my introduction, the 'economic' facet of the question. When, among political men, the glory won on the battlefield is made accessible to others for recognition by being transfigured into material goods with symbolic significance, a standard of value is created. As honor in the form of possessions is further translated into power, this standard must be measurable. For this to be possible, one can not rely merely on the value objects carry from the battlefield as signs that victories have been won. Rather, one must determine the worth or, more properly, the *cost*, of goods based on an independent criterion–independent, that is, of the value of the labor that produced them. For example, why is Chryseis more valuable as a prize than Briseis? It is not because it took more noble deeds to win her, but because of some independent criteria such as her birth or her beauty or her still at the loom. I specify 'cost' since what comes into being here is a value for goods that can be transferred from one man's hand to another, though, of course, the merit that won the reward can not be so transferred.

Now we can understand better the significance of Achilles' words to Agamemnon in Book One:

> Always the greater part of the painful fighting in the work of
> my hands; but when the time comes to distribute the booty
> yours is far the greater reward, and I with some small thing
> yet dear to me (ὀλίγον τε φίλον τε) go back to my ships when I am weary with fighting. (1.165-168)

Achilles knows that his reward is more meager than Agamemnon's according to the standard of worth that is set up when honor is transfigured into wealth. Nonetheless, what he takes from the fighting is loved, showing us that love measures value on a different scale than does the political organism. The object of love, in fact, is that which has value but no 'cost.' Briseis, insofar as she is a γέρᾶς, has a transferable worth that Agamemnon wishes for himself–a worth that is, of course, increased by the increase in demand on her brought about by the fight between him and Achilles. But Briseis, as 'some small thing' that Achilles loves can not be enjoyed by Agamemnon.

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Whether one ought to respond to all of these deifying components of anger by calling them delusion or revelation of truth is the central question of our human condition as both god and animal. Though events often seem to expose Achilles as deluded (and he comes to think himself so, in certain respects) we can not allow this to be our final answer too easily. Achilles might have discovered a great truth in his designation of Agamemnon as a δημοβόρος and the Achaians as οὐτιδανοι. He certainly seems to have perceived the dominion of death as deeply as Homer, himself, does in the opening lines of the poem. As regards his controvertial fasting in Book Nineteen, he does quite well in the fighting after denying his belly as Odysseus instructs him that it is madness to do. I make no effort to deliver a final judgment on the question of whether anger is a cloud of smoke that obscures our vision so that we see ourselves as gods or is the smoke that carries our natures up to heaven as the smoke of the sacrificial animal carries its savor.

I would insist, however, that anger is the emotion present where our being as animals meets our being as gods. Earlier, we characterized anger as that emotion that we feel in response to seeing the futility of one effort or another on our part to escape mortality. We can now go one step further. Anger is a species of desire. Hans Jonas, in a passage that I quoted in my prelude, gives us an excellent description of this kind of emotion. It is worth revisiting it here:

> Fulfillment not yet at hand is the essential condition of desire, and deferred fulfillment is what desire in turn makes possible. Thus desire represents the time-aspect of the same situation of which perception represents the space-aspect. Distance in both respects is disclosed and bridged. (101)

Emotions that are species of desire are, in essence, expression of some *distance* between the holder of the desire and the object of his desire. Jonas has in mind the desires that distinguish the animal soul from the plant's, for whom, there being no desire, there is no distance whatsoever. Anger, an emotion distinctive to man, however, also expresses a distance. *The object of desire in this case is transcendence of mortality.* The distance between the man experiencing anger and this object is neither spatial nor temporal but, for want of a better term, *spiritual.* Anger being tied to the *futility* of our efforts to transcend death corresponds to the *pain* of desire that is an inseparable accompaniment to distance. I leave it an open question, but one well worth exploring, what the nature is of this new dimension of distance that exists only for self-conscious animals.[8] I reiterate, though, the constant desire of men to conquer the recurring fact of death, in the form of the emotion of anger, *is* this distance.

Conclusion: Love, Hate and Cannibalism

Love has made its entry into our inquiry as one possible means, the other being political recognition, of making substance out of the transient glory that is won on the battlefield. We do not do full justice to love, as a presence in human life wrapped up with our awareness of mortality, if we allow it only to have this mediating role between our spiritual hunger and our spiritual nourishment. Love does not always manifest itself as a means of finding a role for honor in our lives. Love, itself, is the name for a spiritual hunger that runs as deep as the hunger for recognition that we have identified as the parent of honor. In the last days of the Iliad, we find the story to have shifted focus and love, far more than honor, taking center stage. The center of the story becomes the trials of love gone through by the living Achilles, Priam and Hecuba as they react to the corpses of Patroklos and Hektor. Man faces the corpse and sees his mortality. Here is love's response.

From Achilles, over the dying body of Hektor, whose windpipe has been spared the spear stroke that has fatally taken him through the neck, allowing him to beg for the return to his parents of his body:

> αἴ γάρ πως αὐτόν με μένος καὶ θυμὸς ἀνείη
> I wish only that my spirit and fury would drive me
> ὤμ' ἀποταμνόμενον κρέα ἔδμεναι, οἷα μ ἔοργας.
> to eat your flesh, raw and hacked away—such things have you done to me. (22.346-347)

And from Hecuba, to her husband, who informs her that he will go naked to the huts of Achilles to recover their son,

> ... τοῦ ἐγὼ μέσον ἦπαρ ἔχοιμι
> ...I would have it be that,
> ἐσθέμεναι προσφῦσα τότ' ἄντιτα ἔργα γένοιτο
> growing into the middle of his liver, I might eat it—That would be vengence
> παιδός ἐμοῦ...
> for my son... (24.212-214)

Love and anger, eating and death, all come together in these moments, which ask for an answer to this question: why would one, in their fiercest moment of vengeful anger, want to eat the body of the person they hate, the person who has taken the life of their loved one? And what does it signify that both

Achilles and Hecuba, at the very moment that they express this wish, realize the impossibility of it?

We can begin to address these questions with this paradox: food, the object of our appetites is nothingness. The desire that both Achilles and Hecuba express clearly has its roots in the wish that their enemy could be merely this, merely a sensuous being to be negated. In fact, though, the person that one hates, as these two hate, is far closer to a friend than to food in the estimation of the one hating. Reflect for a moment on hatred. One person becomes your obsession, your world—the stock that you put in its intrinsic being is the stock that you put in your own. It *must* exist for you to exist, since what you are becomes an expression of feeling toward it. As much as the friend, defined as that other whom you are willing to acknowledge as a *self*, has intrinsic being enough to give you pause, so does the enemy. Faced with this other who, in their estimation *is*, if anything *is*, Hecuba and Achilles behave like they are encountering food, nothingness. Their frustration is an intimation of this fact. We must spell out these steps more slowly.

What does Achilles see lying before him? He sees his renowned armor, with only the smallest bit of flesh showing through (cf. 22.322). He sees Patroklos, the last man to have been before his eyes looking exactly like the man before him. He sees himself.[9] But he knows what hides underneath this shell. Within the friend is the enemy. This enemy has taken the place of his friend. His flesh lies inside the armor, his existence carries all of Achilles attention. When one hunts food, one does not specify a particular hare or deer to take down and make the satisfaction of the appetite. To do so would be to acknowledge the being of that animal apart from its role as food. Achilles sees being in what lies before him. The same being, even, as he allowed to leave his tent.

Hecuba speaks, in the lines before what we have quoted, about giving birth to Hektor. This loved one who is now dead and far away from her was once inside of her, attached to her own source of life. Now she would 'grow towards,' attach herself to (προσφῦσα) the liver (ἦπαρ) of Achilles. Later Greek poetry uses the expression ὑφ ἥπατος φέρειν, 'to carry under the liver,' to signify pregnant women.[10] At that part of the body where Hektor was attached to her at one time she would now attach herself to Achilles. He has become her world, thrust into that role by the departure of her son, just as Hektor has become so for Achilles. For all the same reasons, her remarks betray the real and true being that she ascribes to her hated enemy; to he whom she would have be mere nothingness.

But why do these two wish for their enemy to be *their* food—food for the dogs and vultures ought to be enough. Let us look deeper into the nature of a friend.[11] A friend is that person with whom one seeks to share one consciousness. To grant to the other a *self*, to recognize it as partaking in subjectivity, to honor it with the thought that the world was made for it as well as you, all of this is to look at yourself as part of the same consciousness with it. This one consciousness looks out at the world of objects that lies apart from it. But we are bodies. αὐτοὺς δ ἑλώρια τεῦχε κύνεσσιν. As I have mentioned, our material selves are insolubly distinct. So, between one's self and one's friends there remains this impassible gulf.

Impassible, though, with certain significant, though insufficient, exceptions. The lover becomes one flesh, in a manner of speaking, in sexual intercourse. The mother is one body with her child. Achilles, facing the ghost of Patroklos, wants to press himself to it. But the shade, like smoke (καπνὸς, 23.100, but cf. 18.110), can't be grasped. Achilles has lost his companion whom he would take in his embrace; Hecuba has lost her son whom she carried in her womb. Each seek to fill the *physical* gap left by their friend with the *physical* substance of their enemy. The identity of the one loved is his body, not the memory of him, not the shade that might appear in the night. For one living body lost, Achilles and Hecuba turn all their attention to another living body, whose consumption alone seems to them the answer to this loss.

For Achilles, the κῦδος that he will consume through his vaunt and the κλέος he will receive from the Achaians are no nourishment. Achilles has died to the life run by his honor-metabolism.[12] He has no hopes of returning home or living to hear his name sung. His grave site is selected, his companion to the earth waits, in bones, within

his tent (23.126,254). Achilles, as he told his mother, lives only for the death of Hektor. When he kills him, he kills himself. Thus there can not be the normal order of things around the slain opponent. The vaunt at the ψῦχή and the stripping of the armor that would allow this meal of honor to be carried off the battlefield have no nutrition for the man Achilles has become. The body of Patroklos has made Achilles vulnerable to a living death, his source of life, his θῦμός, being unable to nourish itself. Achilles sees his suicide in the death-stroke that he delivers to Hektor. But he is by no means reconciled to death. He wants, in that corpse lying before him to reclaim the life of his friend and his own life as well.

But he cannot eat Hektor; and Hecuba cannot eat Achilles. At the same time as all their furious desire impels them to this act, they are aware that it will not satisfy their loss. So, the Iliad reaches a point of dreadful stagnancy. Hecuba would have her husband remain in Troy, covered in the filth of his mourning while she pines only for Achilles' flesh. Achilles, who has the body of his loved one in his care, is not comforted in this. Instead, day after day, he attempts to mutilate the corpse, dragging it behind his chariot. No desecration occurs, however, the body even flourishing while it lies in the dust by his shelter. How long can this continue? It seems like there can be no end to the vengeful obsession set up in both these lovers' minds by their association of the body, the identity, of the one lost with the body of the one they hate. Into the midst of this endless misery, wise Priam finds the solution.

In Achilles' tent, we hear from Priam what I will argue is the third in this series of expressions of hatred mixed with love, of the need to deal with the *body* of the dead loved one through the body of the living object of hate. Priam falls at the feet of Achilles, grasps his knees and kisses his hand. He begs him to remember his father, considering Priam's own misery and he describes that misery:

> Ἔτλην δ' ,οἰ' οὔ πω τις ἐπιχθόνιος
> βροτὸς ἄλλος,
> I have gone through such things as no man
> on earth
> ἀνδρὸς παιδοφόνιο ποτὶ στόμα χειρ'
> ὀρέγεσθαι.
> I reached out my lips to the hands of the man
> who has killed my sons. (24.505-506)

Priam does what Achilles and Hecuba would do but can't–he puts the body of the man he hates to his mouth. For Hecuba and Achilles, inside the friend they found the enemy. For Priam and Achilles, inside the enemy they find the friend; and their self. They weep together, though neither, in this weeping, sees the one whose company he is in. Achilles sees his father and Patroklos, Priam sees his son. Clearly, Priam makes the association of his son, for whom his love was a recognition of intrinsic being, with his enemy. But his focus remains the body of Hektor. Putting Achilles to his lips is a *means* to recover that body. He makes Achilles his food, insofar as he is this means. But he remains conscious of the *being* of this enemy that his hatred compels him to grant. Thus, in a moment when Priam, as hateful of the man he is with as are the two at whom we have looked, would be compelled to the same action as they, he kisses rather than bites.

This ability to remain conscious of Achilles' being and, generally, to be aware that love and hate are expressions of the same motion in the soul, provides the two men with the opportunity for the pinnacle moment of recognition in the Iliad. The two men share a meal at Achilles' urging. Neither has truly eaten, having been living in the stagnancy of a living death, since these events began. Neither has sought sustenance and strength for their bodies to continue the effort of life. After this meal, the two men gaze at each other and wonder. Notice the striking parallel structure of lines 629 and 631:

> 629 ἦ τοι Δαρδανίδης Πρίαμος θαύμαζ
> 'Αχιλῆα,
> and then Priam son of Dardanos gazed upon
> Achilleus and wondered
> 630 ὅσσος ἔην, οἱός τε θεοισι γὰρ ἄντα
> ἐΐκει.
> so great was he and of such a kind, for he
> seemed like an outright vision of the
> gods
> 631 αὐταρ ὁ Δαρδανίδην Πρίαμον
> θαύμαζεν 'Αχιλλεύς

> In turn upon Priam son of Dardanos gazed
> Achilleus and wondered
> 632 εἰσορόςν ὄθίν τ ἀγαθὴν, καί μῦθων
> ἀκούων.
> as he saw the brave looks and listened to his
> words.

Priam impresses Achilles and us by making possible this moment of truest recognition amongst hated enemies. Honor and love come together in that encounter of two men of which Hecuba (cf. 24.208) believes Achilles incapable–reverence. This mode of recognition, at this moment, is the removal of the stagnation of a life that lost love, lost hope of living in another despite death. Achilles will find other occupations than, in utter futility, dragging the corpse of Hektor. Hecuba will take the body of her own son into her arms and, we imagine, forget the obsession with the body of Achilles.

Concretely, then, the fruit of Priam's success is the recovery of the body of the one he loves. Achilles specifies that he wants Hektor's flesh raw (ὠμὰ). Whether he eats it or not, he has promised Patroklos that raw it will remain (23.22). Hecuba calls Achilles ὠμηστὴς, 'raw-eating.' Priam's recovery of Hektor saves him from this status. He will be burned on the pyre as a part of his burial, the final act of the poem and the subject of the very last line. The question that has dominated this paper is 'how do living men respond to the ever-recurring fact of death?' We have seen the response shape the way that men live. Death makes life meaningful insofar as meaning is sought in honor, recognition, wealth, love of comrades, love of sons. All these things are man's way of beating death; and yet nothing beats death. Death and life are the greatest paradox imaginable. It is tombs, Hans Jonas informs us, that "acknowledge and negate death at the same time." (8) To make the death of the loved one a part of life by the ritual of the corpse is, in concrete terms, the only response to death and the one that men in the Iliad always put their hopes in. To die is not to be food for dogs and birds if you are loved or honored enough to receive burial. Even Zeus, as he cries tears of blood over the loss of his son, ensures that his body finds its way into the hands of those who will give it the rite of fire. Death bears meaning. Death bears life. Life, in this act, takes death into its embrace.

Endnotes

[1] The text that I quote is predominantly taken from Lattimore's translation. Where it differs, the translation is mine. It is often at these points of difference that I give the Greek text as well but I refrain from diverging from the argument to explain my emendations explicitly. Otherwise, I give the Greek where I wish to make particular reference to the language in my argument.
Also, I used both the Cunliffe Lexicon of the Homeric Dialect and the LSJ for my translations.

[2] All references to Jonas are taken from essays in The Phenomenon of Life. Page numbers refer to the edition published by University of Chicago Press, 1966. This first quotation is found in the essay "Is God a Mathematician? The Meaning of Metabolism."

[3] From "To Move and To Feel: On The Animal Soul."

[4] See "Life, Death and the Body in the Theory of Being," especially pg. 9.

[5] I use the Oxford University Press edition translated by A.V. Miller for all references to Hegel, citing section numbers rather than page numbers.

[6] I use the Library of Liberal Arts edition, translated by Martin Ostwald.

[7] Both ἀρετή and ἀγαθός usually have this connotation. Consider also Homer's prototype of a man without moral qualities–and without friends–Paris.

[8] We might begin to address this question, for example, by wondering if this dimension is analogous to a form of intuition, as Kant describes space and time.

[9] If we doubt the rightness of this identification of Hektor with Patroklos, and thus with Achilles, we need only note the exact repetition of the words describing Patroklos' death in the words Homer uses to describe Hektor's. These are the only two men to receive these words. Cf. 16.855-858, 361-364.

[10] See LSJ pg. 599.

[11] It is a very deep question why we apply the same term to our feelings for a child of ours and to a beloved peer. Without attempting to answer this question, I follow usage calling the feeling for both 'love' (φίλος) and even extend English usage a bit, calling both 'friend' (φίλος).

[12] Although the embers of that life still burn and threaten at one moment (22.381-385), at least, to burst into flame.

Translation from Pindar's Olympians

Laura Strache, A'02

ΘΗΡΩΝΙ ΑΚΡΑΓΑΝΤΙΝΩΙ ΑΡΜΑΤΙ
Πίνδαρου
Antistrophe β (lines 28-34)

λέγοντι δἄ ἐν καὶ θαλάσσᾳ
μετὰ κόραισι Νηρῆος ἁλίαις βίοτον
ἄφθιτον
ἄἰνοῖ τετάχθαι τόν ὅλον ἀμφὶ χρόνον.
ἤτοι βροτῶν
γε κέκριται
πεῖρας οὔ τι θανάτου,
οὐδἄ ἡσύχιμον ἀμέραν ὁπότε παῖδἄ
ἀελίου
ἀτειρεῖ σὺν ἀγαθῷ τελευτάσομεν· ῥοαὶ δἄ
ἄλλοτἄ
ἄλλαι
εὐθυμιᾶν τε μέτα καὶ πόνων ἐς ἄνδρας
ἔβαν.

AN EXCERPT FROM PINDAR'S ODE: TO THERON OF AKRAGUS FOR CHARIOT (OLYMPIAN TWO)

They say, in the sea
among the sea-daughters of Nerus,
Ino was given imperishable life for all time. Truly
for mortals, no boundary at all
has been decided for death,
nor the quiet day when we will
complete the child of Helios with the help of
untiring good. Different rivers at different times
come to humans with kindness and with toil.

Translation from the Greek Anthology

Anderson Tallent, A'04

V.xiv Rufinus
Εὐρώπης τὸ φίλημα, καὶ ἢν ἄχρι ψείλεος
ἔλθῃ,
ἡδύ γε, κἂν ψαύσῃ μοῦνον ἄκρου
στόματος
ψαύει δ' οὐκ ἄκπροις τοῖς χείλεσιν, ἀλλ'
ἐρίσσοσα
τὸ στόμα τὴν ψυχὴν ἐξ ὀνύχων ἀνάγει.

Europa's kiss, although she touches but the lips
With her mouth is still voluptuous;
For not the lips alone she touches the mouth close-pressed,
She charms the soul out of the fingertips.

No to 509
Peter Speer, A'02

Badlands
Caroline Picard, A'02

The Problem with Reason in Kant's Critique of Pure Reason

A-Jin Kim, A'01

We cannot help but think about the pains that Kant takes to define understanding, so as to make it clear what it is not by showing what it is properly. Then Kant takes upon himself the task of describing pure reason. The question this essay seeks to understand is why Kant makes such a clear separation between understanding and reason. Why is this distinction so important for him? This might answer the question of what happens when we do not distinguish between the two.

Everything that Kant relates about the faculty of the understanding points exclusively to its employment in the realm of the empirical. Through *a priori* concepts the understanding conditions the unity of appearances. It specifies the mode in which our intuition receives objects, the presentations of which, of course, are determined *a priori* by the understanding with respect to pure intuition. Kant sets up the *a priori* relation of the understanding to intuition, but what comes out of this relation is that objects are only appearances for us. Only appearances hold objective reality for us. Thus when we talk about objects of our understanding, that is, any knowledge that is held by the understanding, we are speaking of appearances given by the intuition:

> The principles of pure understanding [...] contain nothing but what may be called the pure schema of possible experience. For experience obtains its unity only from the synthetic unity which the understanding originally and of itself confers upon the synthesis of imagination in its relation to apperception; and the appearances, as data for a possible knowledge, must already stand *a priori* in relation to, and in agreement with, that synthetic unity [B 296][1]

The understanding through its categories conditions the synthesis of the manifold given in intuition. The understanding through schematism, which contain the categories, directs the imagination in the synthesis that it performs on the manifold given in intuition. In this way, the synthesis of the imagination makes a unity out of the manifold of intuition after apprehending it. The synthetic unity of the imagination then yields material as knowledge for the understanding. The categories are rules for the synthesis of the manifold of our intuition, and this relation to intuition (or sensibility) is the only relation that understanding can determine. Because Kant sets up the understanding in relation to intuition in this mode, the only possible employment of the understanding is empirical. But we say that it is empirical because given the mode of intuition, namely as presenting manifolds of appearance that the imagination synthesizes to produce a unified appearance, the only objects that the understanding has are appearances. And if all that we have are appearances, then they contain the entirety of our experiences, i.e. appearances are our only experience.

Given the mode of intuition which presents only a manifold of appearances to the imagination to be synthesized, appearances are the only things that are proper to our modes of knowledge. Our appearances are the extent of our experiences and, therefore, anything outside of our appearances are not objects for us, i.e. anything and everything that is not a reference to those objects that we have no concepts for, which is to say objects that are not able to come to us as appearances. But Kant does not want us to stop there at the mere separation of appearances from everything else and rule out anything that is not an appearance *per se*. He also wants to expressly point out the things that the employment of our understanding cannot apply to. Kant gives us a very clear distinction to work with. It is a distinction between transcen-

dental and empirical employment: "The transcendental employment of a concept in any principle is its application to things in general and in themselves; the empirical employment is its application merely to appearances, that is, to objects of a possible experience" [B 298]. We are already acquainted with empirical employment as that which is applicable to appearances as objects. Transcendental employment, on the other hand, would pertain to things in themselves, that is, to the actual objects the appearances of which are all that we are able to experience.[2]

The distinction is a reference to those objects from which appearances come to us. On the one hand we have the appearances and, on the other, the actual objects themselves that correspond to our appearances. Those objects themselves would be transcendental. The concepts in our understanding are not in any way applicable to the objects themselves but only to the appearances. This sets up boundaries for the understanding; the proper sphere of the understanding is the empirical and, most importantly, it is to the exclusion of transcendental employment.

Now, the distinction is clear for us, but fascinatingly enough Kant attributes this distinction to the understanding itself. It, too, knows where its boundaries lie, and determines them for itself. Kant sets up noumena (intelligible entities) in opposition to phenomena (sensible entities). Phenomena are objects as appearances given to us in our sensibility, or mode of intuition. Noumena are the things themselves, considered in their own nature, or "other possible things, which are not objects of our sense but are thought as objects merely through the understanding" [B 306, middle]. The understanding discerns that its categories cannot be applied to noumena since noumena are not given through sensibility, and only such objects can be known through its categories.

Consequently, the understanding admits of the existence of things it knows absolutely nothing about, though only in so far as they are unknown. Thus the understanding does not concern itself with noumena:

> What our understanding acquires through this concept of a noumenon, is a negative extension; that is to say, understanding is not limited through sensibility; on the contrary, it itself limits sensibility by applying the term noumena to things in themselves (things not regarded as appearances). But in so doing it at the same time sets limits to itself, recognizing that it cannot know these noumena through any of the categories, and that it must therefore think them only under the title of an unknown something. [B 312]

The understanding itself knows that it cannot employ any of its categories with respect to objects in themselves. In forming its judgments it does not pretend to do so with respect to objects in themselves, but rather appearances.

Recognizing that without the material given through intuition it is devoid of any knowledge, it restricts itself to making judgments about appearances. It knows that it needs to rely on intuition, for it can have no concepts without intuition. This is the resting ground of the understanding. The understanding is assured of its own proper sphere and is secure in its territory. But this is not the extent of the land. In conjunction with the understanding is something called reason. There the understanding is with its various judgments, content with having made them and not seeking to go any further because it has clear sight of its own limits. This is until reason becomes it neighbour.

Let us entitle the faculty of understanding the faculty of rules. It conditions the synthesis of unity of all our appearances into modes of knowledge which are expressed through the categories of judgment. It generates knowledge according to its various concepts which allow the appearances of our intuition to be apprehended under formal rules to yield that very knowledge. And the understanding stops there. But the picture is incomplete. In the end we have a multitude of judgments, as many as the understanding has ever produced.

There would be a danger of a vast, expansive surplus of judgments if we did not have the faculty of reason to comprehend the particular knowledge of the understanding under universals, that is, to organize and manage those judgments.

Reason's relation to the understanding is analogous to that of understanding to intuition. Reason takes the products of the understanding and brings it into a synthetic unity. The understanding is not able to do this for itself. It is only concerned with the synthesis of appearances for the purpose of making judgments and can go no further and do nothing more. Because it is working to make a unity out of objects of possible experience, another faculty apart from the understanding has to render a like service unto it.

Since reason is to render such a service, Kant argues that the faculty of reason does so in *a priori* relation to the understanding, through its concepts. In other words, the modes of knowledge of the understanding must conform to the concepts of reason in the same way that the manifold of appearance (formally conditioned by time and space) must conform to the categories of the understanding. The concepts of pure reason condition the modes of knowledge of the understanding.

Kant is very clear from the outset that reason has nothing to do with objects as appearances. Reason has no part in the conditioning of our experiences. The manner in which the manifold of appearances is connected is not determined in any manner by the concepts of reason. Reason only acts directly on the understanding and its judgments, and presupposes that all experience has already been synthesized. Reason enters the scene *after* all experience has been given. It has no empirical employment whatsoever and "leaves everything to the understanding–the understanding applying immediately to the objects of intuition, or rather to their synthesis in the imagination" [B 383]. Reason has no interest in objects as appearances and does not profess to having anything to do with them, leaving phenomena solely to the understanding. Another restriction on reason is that it is utterly incapable of the determination of objects in themselves. Because reason has no say in the mode in which appearances of objects are given to us in experience, neither can it know anything about the objects themselves that are given to the understanding. This is very important in light of the fact that it is the understanding that has any interaction with objects in themselves. But, the understanding knows that it knows nothing about these transcendental objects, that is, objects considered in their nature and of themselves, and does not offer up any knowledge of this kind to reason.

Here we have a sharp division between understanding and reason. The sphere of experience lies solely in the hands of the understanding and reason can have no part of it. Thus what reason is responsible for must lie outside the sphere of experience and the understanding is left behind when reason takes over. The division is made between reason and understanding and what happens now is entirely in the province of reason.

In the logical employment of reason, inferences are made through syllogisms. What Kant gives us in addition to this merely formal mode of making inferences is an *a priori* relation of the faculty of reason to the understanding.

It is the nature of reason that it looks upon all knowledge of the understanding gained through experience as "being determined through an absolute totality of conditions." Reason is equipped with concepts that require this of knowledge given to us. The concepts of pure (taken *a priori* to the understanding) reason are concepts of the unconditioned–that which has no prior member and is the cause of a thing. The unconditioned "conceived as containing a ground of the synthesis of the conditioned" [B 379] is the only thing that allows for the totality of conditions, that is, the series of conditioned knowledge as a totality.

With these principles in hand, reason descends upon the understanding in order to synthesize the conditioned knowledge of the understanding and take it all the way back up to the unconditioned "in order to prescribe to the understanding its direction towards a certain unity of which it has itself no concept, and in such a manner as to unite all the acts of the understanding, in respect of every object, into an absolute whole" [B 383, middle]. Reason assumes that the unconditioned is given, which is as much to say

that it thinks that the totality of conditions is also given. Thinking that the series of conditions has already been given *a priori* to the understanding through the concept of the unconditioned, reason has every right to believe that it can jump from the conditioned knowledge of the understanding, once there, all the way up to the unconditioned, for the unconditioned is what fashioned that very knowledge to begin with, as far as reason is concerned.

It is clear that concepts of pure reason have no relation to experience whatsoever, being not all applicable to objects of possible experience. They are not at all concerned with the mode in which objects are received by sensibility and consequently given to the understanding. "[T]hey are transcendent and overstep the limits of all experience; no object adequate to the transcendental idea can ever be found within experience" [B 383, end]. The transcendental idea is outside experience because it itself conditions experience. This is the very demand of reason. Its nature is to require that there be an unconditioned for any series of conditions in which the conditioned of the understanding is given. If reason found an object in experience corresponding to the transcendental idea of it, it would be compelled to seek for a prior condition that was unconditioned. But this could never happen because reason only sets out assuming that the unconditioned is already given.

This is uncharted territory: the field of reason is properly wholly outside the world of appearances. The abode of understanding within experience is utterly foreign to reason. In accordance with its nature, it is outside the bounds of possible experience. The lines between reason and the understanding are ever so distinctly drawn. Each has its domain and what other intention can Kant have than for us to attribute to each its proper sphere of influence? If one should happen to encroach upon the other, we shall know who the aggressor is. Unfortunately for the understanding, reason does not have the same limiting function that noumena provide for the understanding. This we shall see is to the detriment of all concerned.

Reason and the understanding are linked together very closely, but made very distinct. Kant emphatically draws the line between where reason ventures and where understanding makes its home. But these two entities touch at all times and it is, at least, apparent what danger there is if the two are not kept wholly distinct—we might easily mistake the one faculty for the other or, worse yet, overlook the distinction all together.

We have established that reason is entirely outside the bounds of possible experience. It is the nature of reason to view all things given to the understanding as unconditioned according to the principle that "*if the conditioned is given, the entire sum of conditions, and consequently the absolutely unconditioned* (through which alone the conditioned has been possible) *is also given*" [B 436, end]. Reason must leave experience behind because it is concerned with making a complete unity of the empirical synthesis of the understanding by extending the unity of the understanding up to the transcendental idea of the unconditioned.

In logic, reason makes inferences through syllogisms, seeking "to find for the conditioned knowledge obtained through the understanding the unconditioned whereby its unity is brought to completion" [B 364, middle]. In doing this, reason endeavours to subsume a condition under a universal rule, thereby pronouncing a judgment as its conclusion when it is able to apply the universal rule to the conditioned. What is peculiar to *pure* reason, however, are *a priori* principles. They allow for the transcendental employment of reason beyond the mere logical function. In addition to the capacity for moving through syllogisms in making inferences, pure reason is equipped with principles that enable it to think that the unconditioned is given even before it moves to any conditioned knowledge. Reason needs to believe that the unconditioned is already given in order to think that conditioned knowledge is even possible. It needs to assume that "if the conditioned is given, the whole series of conditions, subordinated to one another—a series which is therefore itself unconditioned—is likewise given" [B 364, end]. This endows reason with the certainty of thinking that all knowledge of the understanding necessarily comes about through this *a priori* determination.

Since the unconditioned furnishes a totality of conditions, reason assumes that it is already given when it comes upon any conditioned knowledge. It then takes the conditioned knowledge and

aims to ascend to the unconditioned. Reason is only interested in the ascent from knowledge of the understanding to the transcendental idea of the unconditioned, and does not care about the descending series: "Absolute totality is demanded by reason only in so far as the ascending series of conditions relates to a given conditioned" [B 437]. Reason is indifferent to what the understanding generates by way of conditioned knowledge and to how numerous that knowledge is because it is the province of the *understanding* to seek for and collect conditioned knowledge:

> Once we are given a complete (and unconditioned) condition, no concept of reason is required for the continuation of the series; for every step in the forward direction from the condition to the conditioned is carried through by the understanding itself. [B 393, end]

The understanding is equipped with the categories that make a synthetic unity out of appearances. It aims to bring the conditioned to fruition. Reason simply thinks that the conditioned, already given in light of the unconditioned, is waiting to be discovered by the understanding, however it accomplishes this.

Once the conditioned has been discovered by the understanding, reason can proceed in the synthesis of conditions up to the unconditioned, compelled as it is by its transcendental ideas. The understanding provides the "material" for such determinations as reason is fit to make, for "through [the concepts of understanding] alone is knowledge and the determination of an object possible. They first provide the material required for making inferences, and they are not preceded by any *a priori* concepts of objects from which they could be inferred" [B 367]. Without the understanding, reason has nothing with which to proceed in moving to the unconditioned. The procedure of gathering knowledge and giving it the unity which it lacks in the understanding is merely formal and itself produces no object, appearance or otherwise. The formal process allows for a particular judgment to be comprehended under a universal condition, but does not enable reason to think anything about the knowledge itself. Reason's only object is to direct the act of synthetic unity of the understanding.

As we already know, reason only has to think that all the material which the understanding furnishes is already determined as conditioned by the unconditioned. But since the idea of the unconditioned itself can have no empirical employment whatsoever, it makes no determination of appearances as objects of possible experience for us. Thus reason has no relation to any objects at all, save the appearances which the understanding determines through its categories and offers up for the synthesis of conditions.

We have ascertained that the understanding makes no claim to know anything about objects themselves, in fact, on the contrary, it proclaims that all its knowledge is of phenomena only. It is the first to assert that its concepts make no determination of objects in and of themselves, but only of appearances. But, when reason endeavours to make a synthetic unity out of the knowledge of the understanding the distinction between noumena and phenomena that was advocated by the understanding is lost.

The problem rests with reason. We saw that the understanding limited itself through the concept of a noumenon; reason has no concept performing such a function. The understanding makes a clear separation between phenomena and noumena. Reason makes no such separation. It is supposed to seek for synthetic unity under the concept of the unconditioned. Now, this procedure cannot take place at the level of possible experience and is wholly outside of it. Reason starts out with concepts of the unconditioned—which are noumena because they are beyond the reach of possible experience and, therefore, are not objects of sense, and in this way reason begins outside all experience. It then has to go down to the appearances of the understanding and immediately transcend the empirical realm in synthesizing the totality of conditions. But, in bridging the divide between phenomena and noumena, reason commits a gross indiscretion. Reason blinds itself to the fact that it is moving between the two distinct regions of noumena *and* phenomena.

Reason overlooks the distinction between appearances and objects in themselves that the understanding sets up. Reason is compelled by its very nature to seek out the conditioned that is to be brought under the synthesis of conditions, but it pays no attention to the true nature of what it perceives. It simply neglects the fact that it has *appearances* as conditioned objects and makes the presumption that it is taking possession of objects in themselves in moving away from the understanding.

From the beginning of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant rigorously establishes the transcendental ideality of appearances, i.e. "that appearances in general are nothing outside our representations," [B 535] which is as much to say that all we have are appearances. We then see why the discovery of the "true constitution of things, as objects of our senses" [ibid.] is so important for him. It shows that what reason is doing is tricking us into thinking that we are dealing with objects in themselves. We cannot possibly know things outside our appearances. Reason falls into a trap and unwittingly causes a trouble for itself that it cannot reason its way out of:

> [T]here are fundamental rules and maxims for the employment of our reason (subjectively regarded as a faculty of human knowledge), and that these have all the appearance of being objective principles. We therefore take the subjective necessity of a connection of our concepts, which is to the advantage of the understanding, for an objective necessity in the determination of things in themselves. [B 353, end]

Reason takes its "rules and maxims" as relating to actual objects and applies these concepts, which are only fitted for appearances, to objects in themselves. The pure concepts of reason condition our appearances but, without ever even recognizing that they are appearances, reason takes the conditioned appearances for the things themselves. This misapprehension breeds the following problematic situation: naturally, reason is lead to think that *all* possible objects (in themselves) taken as a whole are subject to the conditions of the unconditioned, that is, determined by the unconditioned, for it wrongly views the sum of all appearances (or world-whole) as the sum of all possible objects in general.

Firstly, reason makes the mistake of thinking that it is dealing with objects in themselves; it thinks it is making judgments about things in themselves as opposed to appearances of things. What reason does is breach the divide between appearances and objects in themselves. It refuses to accept appearances for what they are and, secondly, is lead to a false conception of the world-whole as consisting of all possible objects in general. Thus, in moving from the world-whole (which, in actuality, is the sum of appearances), it does not think that it is moving from phenomena to noumena, but rather that it is the entire time moving from one noumenon to another.

We have arrived at the head of a large complication. Whereas the understanding sees the sharp divide between appearances and their transcendental counterparts, reason is blind to it. Though the domain proper to reason is indeed outside experience, it forgets that it is at the same time connected to it. Granted, reason in the synthesis of conditions has to operate outside the bounds of possible experience, inasmuch as the unconditioned which governs the synthesis is not given in intuition. But, in accomplishing this task, reason does so with the material of the understanding in hand. We observed that reason does not set limits to itself in the way that understanding does. This is to say that reason does not distinguish between objects as such and appearances—no difference exists for reason. We saw that the understanding, once it had differentiated between objects in themselves and appearances, set its own parameters. In contrast, reason knows no such boundary. This amounts to saying that reason does not even distinguish between the two "worlds", so to speak, of what we can and can*not* know, if we define the world of what we can know as the world of appearances.

Now, because reason refuses to distinguish between appearances and objects in themselves, it falls into the unavoidable conflict of contemplating the nature of the world-whole. The world-whole is the sum of all appearances as given in *experience*. But because reason fails to comprehend it strictly as such, it thinks of them as objects in themselves. And in this way we see how appropriate it is to view the problem of reason, as we did just above, as its failure to recognize that there are indeed two worlds—one which we can know and one which we absolutely cannot, simply because it is beyond what is defined as experience. Reason thinks there is only one, and that it can know everything in it. For reason there is no discriminating between noumena and phenomena—it takes everything as noumena.

The problem which arises is the consideration of the condition of objects in themselves; reason thinks it must reconcile their nature in general. In other words, reason struggles with how it is to view these objects in relation to the unconditioned. It is a struggle that has no bearing on the true material with which it is dealing.

The root of the problem is found in the very nature of reason which, "in the continuous advance of empirical synthesis, is necessarily led up to [the dialectic play of cosmological ideas] whenever it endeavours to free from all conditions and apprehend in its unconditioned totality that which according to the rules of experience can never be determined save as conditioned" [B 490, middle]. Reason is so used to operating completely out of the bounds of all possible experience that it gets carried away. Reason only succeeds in inducing dialectical conflict when, as a result of thinking that it can know noumena, it tries to make sense of them in light of the unconditioned and comprehend objects in their totality. It has a difficult time reasoning through it.

Because reason fails to take as the world-whole as the sum of appearances, the resulting play between the ideas it has about it is called dialectic, by Kant, because it pretends to deal with knowledge that it does not have in any respect, that is, knowledge of the objects themselves. Reason attempts, in vain, to make assertions about objects in themselves, through what are only "formal conditions of agreement with the understanding" [B 86, middle]. The pure concepts of reasons by no means provide a mode of generating knowledge since the content of knowledge can only be given through our mode of intuition, on which reason has no grasp. And, consequently, reason is in no way equipped to make any judgments regarding what are, for us, objects—it cannot possibly be in any position to judge of their nature.

Kant gives us the battle of reason that ensues, painting a hopeless picture. Hopeless because "the side that is permitted to open the attack is invariably victorious, and the side constrained to act on the defensive is always defeated" [B 450, middle]. This is hardly a fair fight—the upper hand is gained by whosoever should provoke the onslaught. This is how Kant describes the antinomy of pure reason, which is consequently ceaseless and inconclusive, and which forces reason to vacillate. This is a problem that will never find a solution, and it is dangerous, for reason might give itself up to despair.

But, in spite of this obstacle, Kant shows us that the problem of reason is not entirely irremediable. The antinomy can be done away with if reason is corrected with the reminder that the proper view of objects is only as appearances:

> Thus the antinomy of pure reason in its cosmological ideas vanishes when it is shown that it is merely dialectical, and that it is a conflict due to an illusion which arises from our applying to appearances that exist only in our representations, and therefore, so far as they form a series, not otherwise than in a successive regress, that idea of absolute totality which holds only as a condition of things in themselves. [B 534]

Superficially, the antinomy vanishes because reason is made to realize that it is making baseless assertions—baseless because they are about things it knows nothing about. The world-whole is not the sum of all possible objects in themselves, but of all possible objects of appearances. Once reason accepts this, it must give up seeking to reason about the world-whole, and be content with the single assertion that the unconditioned determines

our appearances.

Kant leaves us only a slight problem with reason where the antinomy never really all together disappears for, in Kant's words, "even after it has ceased to beguile still continues to delude though not to deceive us, and which though thus capable of being rendered harmless can never be eradicated" [B 450]. It will always persist and rear its head now and again because reason will fall back into its former practice of mistaking appearances for objects in themselves. Despite the fact that reason can be shown how it errs in being plagued by the antinomy, it will time and again fall into the same error. Just as soon as reason is corrected, it will suffer relapse because it is in its nature to cause itself problems while it romps beyond the threshold of experience.

If only reason could be forever disabused of its imperious position. Then it would not be caught in the distress of contemplating two worlds, unable to make an abiding choice. Reason presents these two worlds to us, unwittingly assuming there to be something more than what is, for us, the only possible experience, that is, a world of appearances. The assiduous attention to detail paid by the understanding is debased by reason's blind refusal to accept appearances *as* appearances.

The understanding cannot exercise its influence on reason because once reason takes over, the understanding has no hold over it. Reason runs away with the distinction between noumena and phenomena, and it is lost to us. Reason is in no position to help us keep the distinction in mind and we do ourselves a disservice if we do not hold onto to it with all our might.

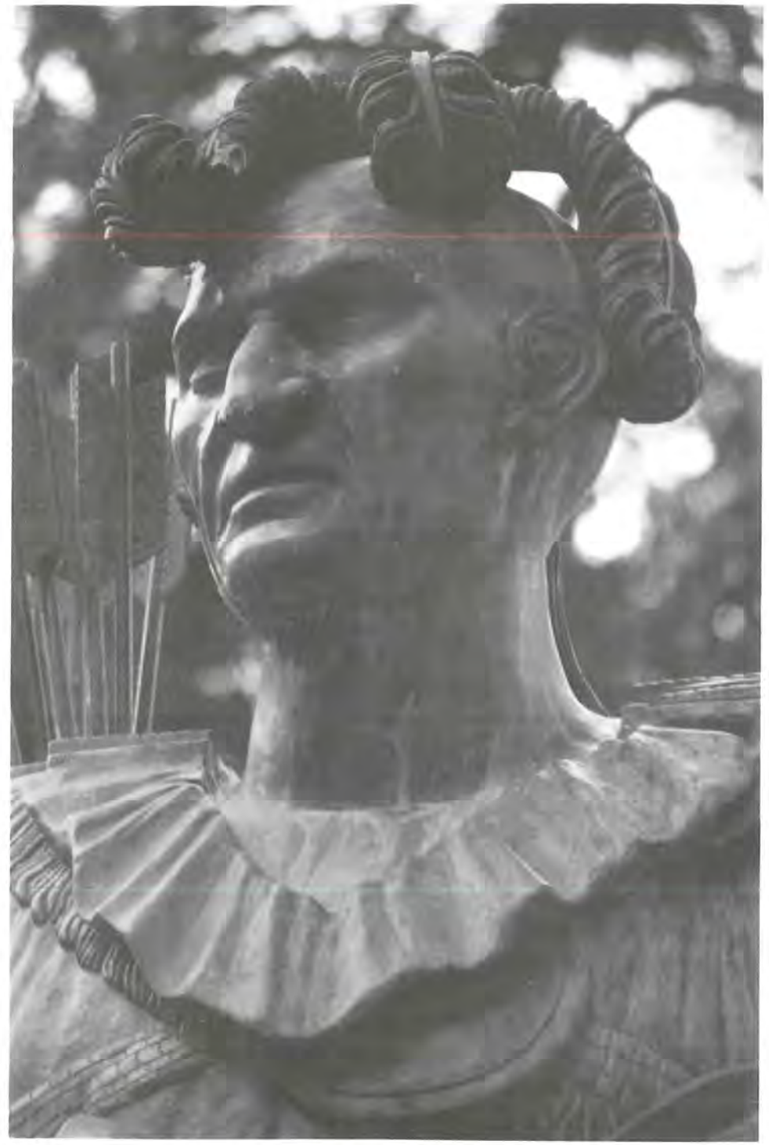
Kant wants us to see that the distinction between understanding and reason is imperative. The understanding plants its foot firmly on empirical ground and it is reason that rips that root out of the soil. The difference between actual objects and their appearances is very important to the understanding—reason neglects the difference entirely. We can no longer be confused about when the line between actual objects and appearances begins to bleed away. Our contention is not with the understanding, but with reason. If we do not make this distinction between the two faculties, hearing only the arguments proffered by reason, we too might forget that there are such things as appearances.

It is, at last, sufficient for us to acknowledge this difference, in order to have clear sight of where problems really begin. The distinction between reason and understanding should be just as important for us as it is for Kant.

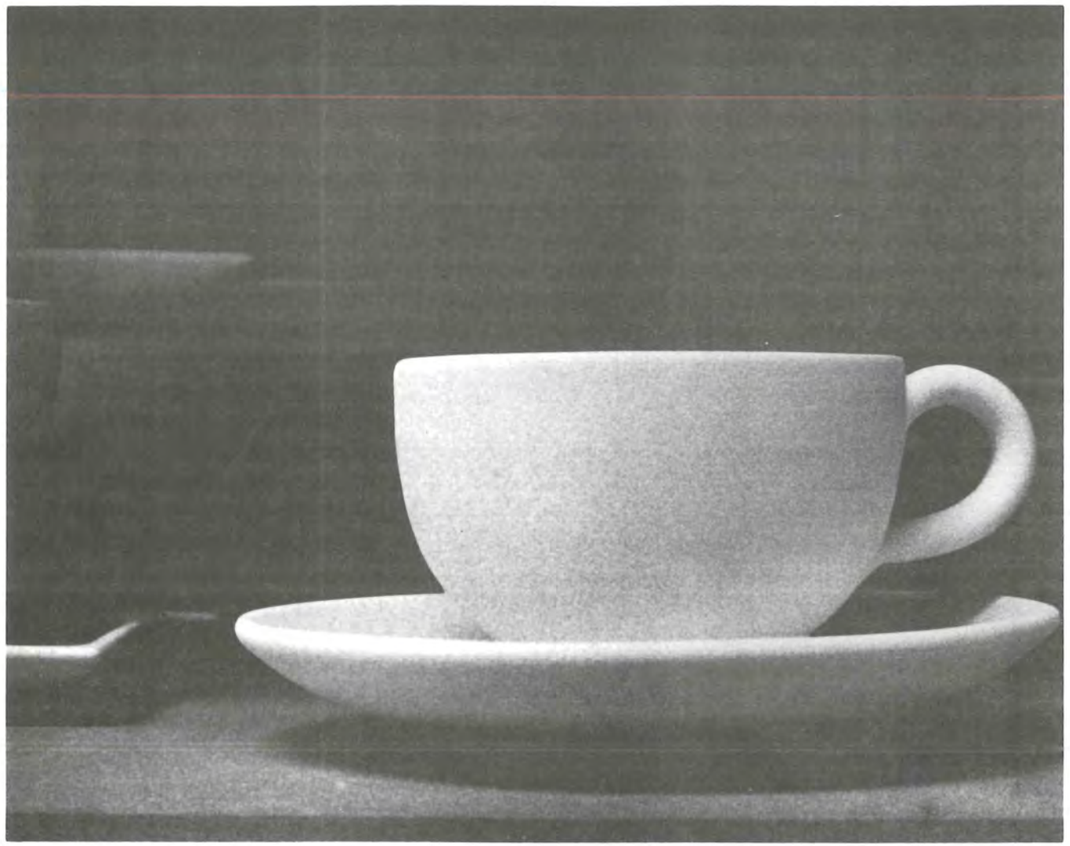
Endnotes

[1] All quotations are cited from the Norman Kemp Smith translation of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason. Unless otherwise noted, references (given in square brackets) to the text are to where the passages cited begin.

[2] Kant seems to use two working definitions of the word transcendental. In the first part of the "Transcendental Doctrine of Elements", he says: "I understand by transcendental exposition the explanation of a concept, as a principle from which the possibility of other *a priori* synthetic knowledge can be understood" [B 40, middle]. Here, Kant uses transcendental to signify a concept that is related *a priori* to knowledge and, hence, conditions it. Taken in this sense, transcendental *employment* would refer to the *a priori* application of a concept. For the



Tecumseh
Cara Gormally, A'02



Untitled
Amelia Murchio, A'04

BRAHM'S REQUIEM

Alek Chance, A'02

For all this flesh is as the grass we're told,
But only deafened creatures weep
About our gone-tomorrowness,
Resigning grass away as wretchedness.

For nothing is more beautiful to him
Than swimming in the softly swimming grass,
When thinking that its heaven-reaching spurt
Is only ever brief escape from dust.

In grave Germanic requiem we hear
Again: denn alles fleish es ist wie gras.
Some try to sulk this substance from the air,
But life but grows by singing in its chains.

Not only now is sickly flower flesh
Substantialized in its few throes through time,
But music brings the sullen void to move,
Defying stillness in strong-dying life.

Inside the pounding temples of a tune
That marches through apparent emptiness,
The tremble of a grassy plight resounds
With glory no immortal can possess.

Fire and Rain

Andrew Ferguson, A'01

The epic expedition of the *Commedia* begins with Dante spewed forth from the deep onto a desolate, thickly wooded shore. In his newborn state, he is helpless, unable to explain his presence in the world yet expected to undertake the arduous trek up the hill. The harsh reality of nature bears down on him; ultimately, no man survives the passage from the womb. However, he has left his dreamlike existence in the churning maw of nature and must become acquainted with both himself and the solid ground on which he walks. After his initial burst of self-consciousness, he remembers that he was at some point on the true path—his current state is not the beginning of his existence. (Indeed, a transcendent poetic personality must be assumed from the beginning because we as readers share in the experience of the pilgrim.) Thus, his birth is a renaissance.

But how can a man enter a second time into the womb and be born? His birth is necessarily dichotomous: first physical, then spiritual – first water, then the Spirit.[1] Yet the spiritual and physical are intertwined from creation; the remaking of the one necessarily involves the renewal of the other. Common to both is emergence from the chaotic deep—the first metaphor, not only in the *Commedia*, but also in the Bible, and thus possibly of recorded history. In creation, light is torn from the formless void, and then the firmament is belched out of deep waters. Spiritual decay eventually leads to divine intervention in the form of a cataclysmic deluge. The world is cleansed, and only Noah and his family are brought out of the torrent. The destruction of everything they have known is a type of death; their plight reflects the earth as a whole—a renewal of life out of the grasp of death. However, their harsh salvation is calamitous damnation for the rest of the world.

This pattern is absorbed in the New Testament by the sacrament of baptism, of which the deluge is an antetype.[2] John baptizes with water unto repentance, preparing the way for the One to come, baptizing with the Holy Spirit and fire. He will clean out his threshing floor,[3] gathering the wheat into His barn but burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.[4] Yet this One must undergo the first baptism in order to bring the second, as He had to be born of the flesh to bring the birth from above. At the baptism of the promised Christ, the redemptive cycle is presented in a microcosm. The Spirit descends and hovers over the waters of the Jordan, as it presided over the deep in creation. Jesus is buried in the water, but rises up again, foreshadowing his death and resurrection. The Christian is buried with Christ through baptism into death, so that as He is raised, so the Christian walks in newness of life.[5] In this mysterious union is the source of every element of salvation.

In the *Commedia*, the initial situation of both poet and pilgrim is tangled indeed. He has seemingly experienced death within life in escaping into the forest, yet he is not allowed to proceed up the sunlit hill. His birth is complete, but his baptism lacks the element of purifying fire. Oddly, his path first leads him through the unclean, unquenchable fire of Hell, the resting place of those who do not survive the deluge.

Baptism is introduced as a thematic thread early in the Inferno. The first group of souls mentioned in Inferno proper are the virtuous pagans—those who lived nobly, but were blocked off, by time or culture, from the salvific ritual of baptism. To reach them, the stagnant river Acheron must be traversed. Rivers flowing through Hell form several of the boundaries Dante encounters. Each denies the baptismal ideal with its own characteristics. Passage of Acheron is by boat; neither Dante nor the damned find their destiny beneath its murky current. The Styx is also crossed by boat, but submerged within the melancholy stream are the wrathful and sullen, trapped for eternity beneath the shadowed waves. In bloody Phlegethon boil

the souls of tyrants and murderers; in this torrent, water does not cleanse and fire does not purify.[6] All the rivers run off into the frozen waste of Cocytus, where the sinners are denied both the fluidity of the water and the heat of the fire.

Within the pestilential pits of Malebolge reside several particularly striking images. In the second pouch is the foremost mockery of ritual catharsis; the souls are immersed not beneath a cleansing flood but in excrement, the filth left in the wake of physical existence. The barrators in pouch five are forced to lie beneath boiling pitch, punished severely for any attempts to rise up from the viscous mass. Also included is Dante's enigmatic personal experience introduced in pouch three, of having been forced to break one of the baptismal fonts in Florence to prevent someone from drowning.[7] Can a sinner slipping under the waves be rescued, or is the attempt a losing fight against the divine will? Either way, the sacrament is shattered and ineffectual, deprived of its ability to save.

The deconstruction of baptism culminates in the appearance of Ulysses in Canto 26. Appropriately, he is eternally consumed by fire, indicative of the second and final death. He speaks as with a tongue of flame, evoking images from the Day of Pentecost, when the people of God were born anew through the baptism of the Holy Spirit.[8] The journey of Ulysses is a falsified pilgrimage, running parallel to the true path. His insatiable thirst for knowledge compels him onward, not in search of the Deity, but for the fulfillment of his own desires. Reaching beyond the established limits of human knowledge, Ulysses ascends to the very pinnacle of his corporeal capacity before being swept away by the divine whirlwind.[9] Denied access to the fountain that would sate his craving[10], he sinks to a watery grave. Death, therefore, reflects the dual nature of baptism just as birth, and Ulysses is its emblem. He dies first by the water, and then by eternal fire.

Even in death, Ulysses remains a false counselor. Dante seems inordinately drawn to him, peeking over a ledge precariously, even empathetically bending towards him, as might a flame. Virgil takes pains that the pilgrim not be led astray, interposing himself between the two. Dante clings to his union with God by the slimmest of threads; as the waves close over Ulysses, he nearly drags Dante down with him. The deliverance of the pilgrim is miraculous and ineffable—a literal resurrection, as his sense of direction must be reoriented. The pathway out of hell is carved out by the runoff of the river Lethe; its flow allows Dante to undertake the journey that Ulysses failed.

His spirit is not entirely exorcised, though, remaining in the shadows of the text of *Purgatorio*. Purification is attained gradually, through an odyssey of ascetic torments. This realm is the only portion of the afterlife that is temporally governed, as it will pass away at the Final Judgment. The passing of time is strictly observed, and hesitation is a dangerous wavering of commitment in the journey towards the Empyrean goal.

As Ulysses is largely emblematic of the lost soul perishing beneath the deluge, the ephemeral transition between the damned and the blessed is most fully symbolized in the person of Statius. His conversion is surprising, given that his poetry is well within the epic pagan tradition. The shift from pagan to Christian faith comes upon him extremely slowly, especially striking when viewed against the single flash of remorse that saved some of those now in Ante-purgatory. His willingness to accept another year of purgation in exchange for having lived in the time of Virgil is a remarkable vacillation that characterizes the uncompleted salvation in *Purgatorio*. After his conversion, he continued writing in the mythological vein, but his Greeks halt at the Theban streams while he himself has taken the baptismal plunge. Although blind itself, the Virgilian poetic legacy can lead to the caves of Parnassus[11], where divine illumination displays the pure distillation of the draught of truth.

Dante is led blindly through the winding passage from hell to the mountain of Purgatory, arriving on a lonely shore. To prepare for his ascent, the sooty filth of Hell must be cleansed from his face. After washing, he sees a boat approaching across the hemisphere of water, filled with souls newly arrived. The exuberant psalm they sing links them with Israel being led out of Egypt, and the spiritual progression of the Exodus will be a constant theme. The boat itself is quick and light, so

that the water does not swallow it.[12] An angelic presence, like to the glory-cloud which led the Israelites, ensures both that the redeemed are brought safely clear of the watery depths and that the uninvited and unguided sink into the abyss. As the Israelites sought Sinai after being borne across the Jordan, under the gaze of the patriarch Cato the souls proceed towards the illuminated mountain of God, of which Sinai (and Parnassus) is but an antetype.

Climbing the mountain is, in a way, seeking to reverse the flow of time, moving against the current. The journey of man after sin was away from Eden; the journey back to the earthly paradise necessitates wiping away the perversions that have accumulated. To ascend higher is to grow younger and lighter, eventually reaching the garden-temple, the womb that produced mankind. Entry is gained by passing the wall of fire[13], completing the purgative baptism begun on the bark below. Yet in a sense, the baptism begins anew here; the rebirth into Eden allows souls to be prepared for the ascent to the Empyrean.

The rise of the soul into the presence of God is the ultimate fulfillment of the prophesied Promised Land. This is the culmination of the Exodus, the return from physical and spiritual exile. A particularly elegant statement is found in Isaiah 4:4,5—the twin actions of washing and purging result in a perpetually present glory-cloud. As such, the preparation of the soul for its blessed state proceeds through water and fire as before. This time, the baptism of water is dual: the first erases memory of sin and punishment, the second serves as a constant memorial to the good accomplished in life. This sequence follows the pattern of the Exodus; while the crossing of the Red Sea provides an opportunity to submerge all transgressions and rejoice in merciful deliverance, the passage of the Jordan is marked by the placement of stones forever reminding the children of Israel of their benevolent Lord.[14]

The distinction between the two rivers is not a pure dichotomy, as the experience of Dante proves. His first submersion cannot be final, for such would be contrary to the progressive nature of Purgatory. Dante collapses, overwhelmed by guilt and repentance, and wakes to find himself immersed in the waters of Lethe. He rises with the firmament as creation begins anew around him, and a complex, microcosmic history plays out. This forward progression of time runs counter to the backwards redemptive motion seen before, yet it too contains a hope of salvation[15]. The pilgrim closes off both loops by being washed in Eunoe, for both find their end in baptismal birth. Even at the end of *Purgatorio*, the purification ritual remains incomplete, for Dante still must be cleansed by the spirit of fire so he can rise through the heavenly spheres. This incompleteness within completion is the usual state of Purgatory, and the intricate web the poet weaves is a reflection of this nebulous uncertainty.

In *Paradiso*, the poet aims himself toward contemplation of the divine, not through his own efforts, for then he would be lost at sea.[16] He has been brought safely through the baptism of water, and invokes the aid of the nine new muses and Apollo (with his parallels to Christ) in surviving the second. The elements of baptism, falsified in Hell and used incompletely in Purgatory, are seen in their full and original forms in Paradise. Upon reaching the Empyrean, Dante views an amazing synthesis of fire and water—the river of sparks[17], overflowing not with the miserable torment of the damned, but the effulgent joy of the redeemed. This is a picture of the sacrament that needs no restorative purgation, because it has never been broken. Even the personal experience of the poet has been transformed; the shattered Florentine baptismal font has been remade into the scene for Dante's triumphant return from exile.[18]

Throughout the *Commedia*, baptism is seen, in statements and in metaphors, intertwined with birth and death in a complex tapestry. In each of the canticles, the sacrament is used as an evaluation of those who dwell in the realm. The damned in *Inferno* are baptized into the fiery lake of the second death; the pilgrims in *Purgatorio* undergo a series of interlocking baptismal cycles, each in succession closing off a parenthetical set; the blessed in *Paradiso* are baptized into new birth and eternal life. Baptism is not only the sign in each case, but also the seal of each soul's fate. Having survived Hell, crossed the ocean, and climbed Parnassus, Dante ultimately becomes the emblem of the final, synthesized baptism, subtly weaving themes and patterns into a tapestry every bit as beautiful as the glorious river of fire.

[1] John 3:4,5
[2] 1 Peter 3:20,21
[3] Paradiso 22.151, 27.86—used of the earth in both of Dante's earthward gazes
[4] Matthew 3:10-12
[5] Romans 6:3,4
[6] Revelation 19:20, 21:8
[7] Inferno 19.16-21
[8] Acts 2:1-4
[9] Proverbs 10:25
[10] John 4:13,14
[11] Purgatorio 22.64-69
[12] Purgatorio 2.40-42
[13] Genesis 3:24
[14] Joshua 4:1-7
[15] Perhaps this is the reason why the usual order of baptism is reversed within the Earthly Paradise: fire, then water. The two appear to be parts of different loops of ritual, but the reversal is a subtle reminder of the unorthodox workings of redemption.
[16] Paradiso 2.1-7
[17] Paradiso 30.61-69
[18] Paradiso 25.8-9

Untitled
Rebekah Coleman, A'04

Encomium:Translation of Pierre Ronsard

Ian Jungbacker, A'01

This past winter the college community marked the passing of one of its foremost promoters of letters. Leo Raditsa, who was the author of numerous books and articles on a host of subjects, founded the St. John's Review, among other journals, and served as its editor during the publication's first years.

For a brief period of time I had the opportunity to call myself one of Mr. Raditsa's students. Few will disagree that he was a demanding tutor who required a reason to respect some one before conferring his approval. There was, of course, no science to this method, which often left one with an aggravating feeling of frustration. My experience with him seemed no different. Our views never seemed to run concurrent with each other. For the longest time I was generally under the impression that I could do no right in his eyes, despite my best efforts.

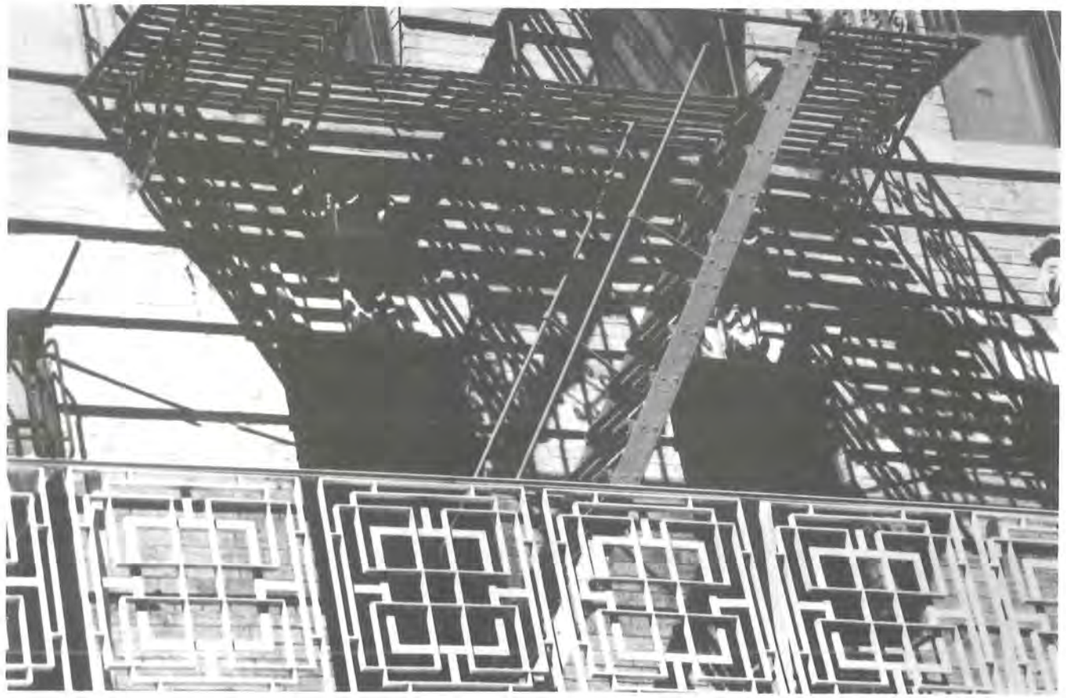
On the last day of the semester he returned to me a translation of a poem that had been assigned several weeks prior and was submitted several weeks late. He passed the paper across the table, lightly tossing it so that it could reach me. I quickly slid it into my notebook, having no desire to read what I anticipated to be disparaging comments about my work. But before I could complete the task Mr. Raditsa asked me if I would read my translation out loud to the class. I did so, in a slightly self-conscious panic, praying that I would not be the subject of a critical exercise in which the class occasionally engaged. Much to my relief this did not turn out to be the case. Mr. Raditsa simply enjoyed the translation and wanted share it with the rest of the class.

Before the reader is my translation of Pierre Ronsard's eighth poem of his Sonnets pour Helene, complete with the corrections made by Mr. Raditsa. It is a humble tribute from one editor to another and from a student to a teacher. The translation is perhaps void of any accuracy, poetic value, or social significance (in truth, I am quite ignorant of such things). I only offer it to the reader because it pleased a man who was so difficult to please and who wanted others to hear it.

Tu ne dois en ton cœur superbe devenir,
Ny braver mon malheur, accident de fortune:
La misere amoureuse à chacun est commune;
Tel eschappe souvent, qu'on pense bien tenir.
Tousjours de Nemesis il te faut souvenir,
Qui fait nostre avanture ore blanche ore brune.
Aux superbes Tyrans appartient la rancune,
Comme ton serf conquis tu me dois maintenir.
Les Guerres et l'Amour se semblent d'une chose:
Le veinqueur bien souvent du veincu est batu,
Qui paravant fuyoit de honte à bouche close.
L'amant desespré souvent reprend vertu;
Pource un nouveau trophee à mon mal je
propose,

D'avoir contre tes yeux si long temps combatu.

In your great heart you do not need to defy my
Unhappiness, nor become an accident of fortune:
The loving misery is common to each;
That cuts often, such as you thought you had.
Every day you must remember the Nemesis
That makes our journey now white, and now dark.
You have maintained me like a conquered slave,
Like the malice of stately tyrants.
Wars and love resemble each other in one thing:
The conqueror, who appears to have a closed mouth
From shame, is often beaten by the conquered.
The lover despairs often taking back virtue;
I suggest a new trophy for my evil,
For having fought so long against your eyes.



Untitled
Sara Wilson, A'03